

SERMONS OF J A TRENCH

by J.A. Trench

Trench's writings on the truth of the one body of Christ, addressing spiritual foundations and the importance of maintaining focus on Christ as the true object of faith and spiritual perception.

44 Chapters

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S. A Letter on the Truth of the One Body.

A Letter on the Truth of the One Body.

J. A. Trench.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 169. My Dear H-, I was delighted to get a letter from you, and to hear of blessing round you, and amongst those you are with. And now I trust this question of the truth of the ground upon which you stand, which hitherto has been made so easy for you, has only come up to make it the more real, through the exercise to your own soul.

Many of us have had to fight our way into the path against the circumstances, that, brought up as you have been, have been, as it might seem, favourable to you. But no one can escape exercise of soul in having to do with God and His truth, and so it meets you in this form.

It is a precious principle of God, that "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Even the clearest truth without this fails to give the light we need, though with the eye single to Christ, as our object, the truth will not be withheld. But what constant diligence of heart, seeking to keep ourselves before God that His Word may detect the heart's being diverted by any other - it needs, that He Who gave Himself for me may shine in the excellency and glory before the eye of my soul: that takes the light and power out of all that would divert in attracting or distracting from Him; then the eye will see clearly to discern between men's maxims and motives and principles and God's. And how great the contrast! But now what is God's object for the glory of Christ in this present time on earth? What is He doing? Are there given us in His Word principles to form and direct our path in everything? Or are we left free, through lack of these, to choose for ourselves in anything? Is the question a worthy one for our redeemed souls, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The answer is found in the revelation of the mystery of which Paul's epistles are so full. See Rom 16:25-26; 1Co 2:7; Eph 3:3-11, Eph 5:23-32; Col 1:24-27, Col 2:2-3; namely, the eternal counsels of God for Christ, that when His work was done, and He was raised from the dead and glorified, He should have the Church given Him as His body. It is formed by the Holy Ghost, come down from that glory where He has first taken His place as its Head, of all who have received the glad tidings of their salvation, who are thus united to their Head as His body, and to one another by the indwelling Holy Ghost. This body is the only one we find in Scripture - "The Church, which is His body." (Eph 1:22-23.) In Eph 1:1-23 the general standpoint (so to speak) of the truth presented to us, whether of our individual position (Eph 1:4-7), the inheritance or of our corporate position, is that of God's counsels in eternity. Hence here, and here only, as far as I am aware, the body is presented as the complete number of all who are Christ's, from the coming of the Holy Ghost to His coming - each little one of His necessary to "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," from Pentecost till He comes. Of course myriads of these have fallen asleep, and, their bodies in the grave, their spirits are with Christ, awaiting with Him the moment we await here away from Him, 1:e., the resurrection morning.

If this were the only aspect of the Church given us in Scripture (and this is as far as most evangelical Christians see), it would be impossible to act on the truth of it, the most part of those who compose it being out of the scene of action. But it is not so. When we take the Word, we find that in every other passage where the body of Christ is spoken of, it is an existing company on earth that is in question. This flows from the great leading fact of the Church's existence, 1:e., that the Holy Ghost who has formed the body (1Co 12:12-13), and maintains it in its unity, has come down upon earth and dwells, as to His given place,* for the glory of the Son of God in the Church on earth.

*As to His given place, I say, because, as God, of course He is in heaven and everywhere just as Jesus could say when on earth, because of His divine glory, "The Son of man which is in heaven." (John 3:13.) As to the place of the Holy Ghost - on earth dwelling in the believer - see John 14:1-31; John 15:1-27; John 16:1-33, where this is largely developed in its individual aspects. For His corporate presence see 1Co 3:16; Eph 2:22; and, as to its effects, 1Co 12:7-13, where we have the manifestation of His presence in gifts, which clearly do not belong to heaven but to earth.

Thus, for instance, see 1Co 12:25-27, addressing the Corinthians, the apostle treats them as the body of Christ in Corinth; responsible to express this their existing unity on earth, by having mutual care for each other, suffering and rejoicing together, if one member suffer or be honoured. All this of course is out of the range of those who have passed into the Lord's presence. They belong to the unity of the body, and will be manifested as such in glory, but for the time being they have passed out of the sphere where the Holy Ghost has formed the body, and maintains it in its unity down the lapse of ages since Pentecost. But what marvellous privilege for you and me, dear H-, to be united, from the moment we received the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, to the Lord Jesus in heavenly glory, and therefore to all that are His, and that by grace we know it, when so many of His dear ones round us know nothing of it! But with the knowledge of our union comes our responsibility to act on it. And if we begin to see something of what this unity was to God, the object of His eternal counsels for the glory of Christ - what it is to Christ's love as having given Himself for it (Eph 5:1-33), and how it is the present work of the Holy Ghost on earth come down to be the servant of His glory, how could we consent to the sorrow and sin of taking any place, or identifying ourselves in any way, with what wilfully, or more generally in total ignorance, sets up for man's right to choose for himself of what association he will become a member? God has chosen in His sovereign and abounding grace to make us members of a body that has for its Head the glorified One who gave Himself for us, and embraces all who are His in an indissoluble unity, the only body that He recognizes, with which too He connects inseparably the central act of the Church's worship on earth, 1:e., the Lord's Table: "For we being many are one loaf, one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf." How dreadful to think that what Christ instituted as the symbol of that unity should have been taken by men to be the symbol of each sect in its sectarian place, and thus of utter disunity. For you will see that in the light of these principles of Scripture, every association that does not in principle embrace every member of the body of Christ as such must be a sect.

Well, dear H-, if ignorance of and indifference to the truth is widespread, and those whom Christ died to gather together in one are scattered by the enemy through thirteen hundred differing human associations. on earth, what is one who has learned the precious mystery of our union with Christ to do? Does our most exalted privilege cease to be the measure of our individual

responsibility? Does God change the principle of the dispensation because we have failed from almost the first to walk according to it? No trace of such a thing is to be found in Scripture. On the contrary, the later epistles all indicate the very state of things in which we find ourselves, and give us instructions how to walk according to God's principles in the midst of the evil. And here comes in the abiding principle for faith, whatever the dispensation, and by which alone there can be a walk according to God (2Ti 2:19), that is, separation from evil. And see the three steps in the path so clearly marked out. (1.) I purge myself from all that has come into God's house to His dishonour. (2Ti 2:19-21) (2.) 2Ti 2:22. Watch your own heart, and keep it diligently, lest Satan get in there and mar your outward separation by inward unholiness. (3.) Seek out those similarly separate from evil and walk with them, following what is suited to God. But, as the Word says, "He that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey," so we must expect, dear brother. But it is worth loss and reproach and suffering here to win the approval of Christ. (Rev 3:8) - (belonging just to the time we find ourselves in, see Rev 3:11) The Lord give you to be faithful in the testing circumstances you find yourself in, your heart large to rejoice in all that God works in His sovereign grace around you, your feet in the narrow path. (See 2Co 6:13; then 2Co 6:14, etc.) The Lord keep you very near Himself! Only in communion with Him can we find strength to withstand the flood of worldliness and false association of Christians that we meet with everywhere, and to pursue with patience the path of His will. J. A. T.

S. An Address:

An Address:

(Scriptures read John 20:19-23; John 21:18-22; Rev 2:1-7; Rev 3:14-22.) In these scriptures I have read there is something very solemn for our consideration, and yet there is blessed encouragement — the Lord's encouragement, and we do well to thank God for all His grace and mercy to us, and take courage. The scriptures show us that it is becoming in a day of gloom, when everything seems against us, when everything wears a dark aspect, to do as David did at Ziklag: he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. His followers who had left everything, and for love of him shared his rejection, were now ready to stone him, and he was shut up to the Lord. This was one way in which David was a man after God's own heart — he ever turned to the Lord. When his guilt was so great that no provision of the law in the dispensation in which he lived would meet his case, he cast himself upon the multitude of God's tender mercies. Never distrust the love of Christ, but ever turn to Him, and you will be after God's own heart.

We were reminded today of the prayer of Epaphras. I think he had been greatly used of the Lord at Colosse, but had been neglected; yet he loved them, as Paul loved the Corinthians, and could say, though the more abundantly, I love you, the less I be loved. And that is just the liberty we have down here by love to serve one another; not to be looking every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. How deeply interested we ought to be in the things of Christ! May our hearts go out in prayer for all the church, every day! The character of Epaphras' prayer is well worth notice; he agonized for them, and desired that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. The service of prayer is open to every brother and sister. If we were subject and obedient in nine-tenths and doing our own will in the other tenth, can we say that we are doing His will at all? Some take the law as a rule of life, but what is God's standard for His beloved children? Himself. Far beyond the claims of the law. "Be ye therefore imitators of God as beloved children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

It is sweet to realize, however much we fail, there is never any failure in the Head of the body; the members may sadly fail, but not the Head. And the body will be complete in glory, for the Lord would not be satisfied to be in the glory and leave one member out. This time the Lord calls a day — "In that 'day' ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" — a day that extends from Pentecost to the Rapture, and is characterised by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. We who are indwelt by the Holy Ghost are one Spirit with the Lord: we are joined to Him, are members of Him as Head, and of each other.

These scriptures, in picture, bring before us the grace of God in beginning to form the church, and our blessed privileges and responsibilities up to the very end. These two chapters in John are brimful of precious truth. It is not of ten we get dispensational pictures in John, but there are some; and here we get first the portion of the church, and afterwards that of the remnant; and the Lord showing the wonderful superiority of the place we are in.

You will remember that Thomas who represents the Jewish remnant, said, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." He was not present on the first occasion when we get a picture of the church, but the Lord appeared again the next first day of the week, and Thomas was there; so the Lord said to him, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas was at once convinced and said, "My Lord and my God." Then Jesus said to him, "Thomas because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." They will look on Him, by and by, and mourn: real repentance will be wrought in them. The Lord does not say "Blessed Thomas," but blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. That is characteristic of the present time. "Whom not having seen ye love, in Whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." On this evening of the resurrection day the disciples were assembled, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews. They knew what the Jews had done to their Master, and He had told them "if they have persecuted me they will also persecute you," so they were a trembling, fearful, company. There they were, not knowing what was going to transpire — a gloomy prospect for them. But Jesus knew all about them: all about their sorrows and fears, and knew the gladness it would bring to their hearts to have Him in their midst. So, "the same day at evening . . . came Jesus." Jesus, the sweetest name in heaven and earth. There is no name, or love like His, our safe, unfailing Friend.

"Earthly friends may fail or leave us;

One day soothe, the next day grieve us; But this Friend will ne'er deceive us;

Oh, how He loves!" His love never changes, and in Him we have an infinite ocean of blessedness that is never diminished. A little drop of which is enough to make our cup run over! This Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever the blessed One Who loved His own and loved them to the end, Who had died for them, Who had gone through all the woes of Calvary for them, and had exhausted all the wrath of God for them! In the type the fire consumed the sacrifice, in the Anti-type the sacrifice exhausted the fire; but the love is not changed, that remains undiminished, and when we are in the glory the Lord will not love us more than He does now.

It rejoices our hearts to think there is no place He likes so well as in the midst of His redeemed. In John 18:2 — How did Judas know the place? The Spirit tells us "Jesus oft-times resorted thither with His disciples." He loved to have them all to Himself, and it is the same Jesus, the unchanging One up in the glory, yet with us here; He cannot give up that place. It is the joy of His heart to be the centre of His saints. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." How much there is contained in that verse. Where two or three, divine limit; are gathered (not "meeting"), divine separation; to My name, divine authority; there am I, divine presence; in the midst, divine centre.

What a delightful thing! we might have been left in some human religious system, but God has brought us to Christ's name, and we have everything in Him. Will He be satisfied in the glory without occupying the same place? Not at all. In John 17:1-26. He expresses His will once. Unbosoming Himself to His Father, we are allowed to hear, and He says "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am." He will have us all around Himself. How blessed! the same Jesus Who gathered them around Himself on the Mount of Olives, the same

One Who came into their midst when gathered on the first day of the week. But if unchanging He changes everything for them. Here in verse 20 is the living, loving, triumphant Lord Jesus, the centre of the company, occupying the place He loves so well. If this were better understood how we should have more at the meeting — knowing that it gives Him joy to have us there. He said, "Peace be unto you." I don't believe it was just an ordinary salutation. He had made peace by the blood of His cross, and brought that peace to them. "And He showed them His hands and His side" the tokens of His passion, telling of a love that was strong as death, which many waters could not quench, though deep did call unto deep at the noise of Jehovah's water spouts, and all His waves and billows passed over His holy soul! How much we owe Him, and what a sense of indebtedness should possess our souls! How much there is to draw out our souls, to Him in praise and worship!

1919 316 In Luke's Gospel it is His hands and feet, but here hands and side. Only John's Gospel tells us of the spear. In the accounts of the Lord's death there is no mention of the blood in either Matthew, Mark, or Luke. It was from the dead body of Christ that the blood and water came forth. We owe everything to the precious blood.

"Our every joy on earth, in heaven, We owe it to Thy blood."

We need the water too. This is He Who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." The blood tells us of expiation, that which meets perfectly the mind of God, Who was not only satisfied, but glorified in all His holy nature, and in every attribute. But the word of God shows us that the blood gives the believer a judicial cleansing. If not from all, not from any. And then He would have them firmly established as to that peace, and He would have us also firmly established in that peace. In Rom 4:1-25 you get a contrast between promise and the death and resurrection of God's beloved Son. The gospel is not a promise but something better. In the case of Abraham, Jehovah "brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness." Abraham was "strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification."

Redemption is accomplished, and all that the Father was as revealed in Christ required that He should be raised from the dead. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and the facts of His death and resurrection present to us the gospel. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There we get the two sides: the divine side and that which applies to us.

Oh, Christ is the One who changes everything for us! It was very gloomy for the disciples at first, but is not Christ enough the mind and heart to fill? Our hearts are too large for the world to satisfy. If we go to any other stream in the hope of getting our cup filled we shall be disappointed, for upon everything under the sun has been written vanity and vexation of spirit. God has given us the blood of Christ that we might have the blessing of a purged conscience, and the person of Christ as an object for our hearts. In the new creation all earthly distinctions disappear and Christ is

everything as the object. We don't want anything but Christ: in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and we are filled to the full in Him. How "blessed! They found a satisfying portion here. It makes our cup run over whatever our capacities may be, and if we have Christ as our object our cup must run over. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

Then again He says, "Peace unto you." He would have their hearts established in that. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." He had been sent from heaven, the One who was eternally in the bosom of the Father, and as such perfectly. told Him out. Now He says here to them — the company He had made exceeding glad — "So send I you." We once belonged to the world, but by grace have been called out of it, and are now heavenly ones. So you see, we were in the world, and by Christ were chosen out of it; He has called us out of it, and joined us to Himself, and sent us back into it to tell Him out. Oh, that "For me to live is Christ," was true of all of us! We have no resources in ourselves to do it. We are His own as the gift of the Father to Him, and He has also made us His own by purchase, and we have become His bondslaves.

"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Forty days after, He said they should be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence; and the Holy Ghost came down ten days after. But here, I judge, most of us would see the more abundant life the Lord had previously spoken of. They had life before, but, now more abundantly. I have no doubt, it is that which is spoken of in Rom 8:1-39, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." We are upon resurrection ground, and the eternal interests of our souls are placed beyond the reach of any change. Would that we had a larger estimate of it!

While that is true, I cannot help thinking that in the picture of the assembly we are reminded how every blessing is connected with the Holy Ghost. All this remains with us by the grace of God.

I remember that five years ago, at the last Conference, the verses read in John 21:1-25 were touched upon, but it will be well to look at them now in connection with what has already been before us.

Peter and John are representative men. Peter of the early days of Christianity — days of power and miracles — even the shadow of Peter was used for the healing of the sick. But those days were to end. Peter himself was to die a martyr, as foretold by the Lord. In contrast to this when Peter desired to know John's future, saying to the Lord, "What shall this man do?" the Lord, replied, "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." So that in a sense we get John up to the coming of the Lord. It would mean this too, that the Lord's triumph over death is so complete that it is simply a question of His will as to the duration of the life of His saints upon earth. The Lord's words concerning John would evidently suggest that the features presented in John and his writings would remain to the end. John followed the Lord, we too nay all follow Him; he also leaned on His breast at supper, and said "Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?" John valued the love of the Lord, and hides himself behind the words, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." In Luk 22:1-71 we read, "And when the hour was come He reclined, and the twelve apostles with Him," and we learn that John occupied the nearest place. Reclining next to the Lord he could pillow his head upon His bosom — thus telling us of sweetest intimacy; and the like intimacy is ours if we value it.

I firmly believe that God gives us of Christ all that we value. Keeping close to the Lord will save us from many a snare. John is in the secret of the Lord as to the betrayer, and is used of God to tell us of the many anti-christs. He also teaches us that the two tests of truth are the person of Christ and the written word. There is nothing so jealously guarded by the Holy Ghost as the person of Christ; and we ought to be on our guard, surrounded as we are by betrayers, and never should we consent to a speck being put upon the spotless One. John not only tells of the many anti-christs, but he is the one chosen to give us the promise of the Lord as to His coming: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." This blessed hope will remain.

Just a closing thought as to those verses read from the Revelation. In chapters 2 and 3 we have God's church history, giving an account of the course of that which was set up in divine righteousness (the golden candlesticks) as a responsible witness for Christ in the world. But everything fails in the hands of man, and the church is no exception. The church has utterly failed, but at the end the Lord presents Himself as the true and faithful witness. In the first church, Ephesus, there is much to commend: their labour, their patience, their attitude toward them which were evil, the Lord also commends them for testing those who assumed to be apostles. They had borne, they had patience, and for His name's sake had laboured and had not fainted. Now, if there had been no more said to this church, we should be ready to say, Here is a perfect church — everything exact, orderly, correct. In listening to brethren sometimes, I feel that such an assembly, as here described, outwardly correct, would satisfy them. But it did not satisfy the Lord. He wants our hearts, our love, our affection, so He says to the angel of the assembly, "Nevertheless I have against thee that thou has left thy first love." This is the beginning of the long line of evil culminating in Laodicea, which has to be spued out of the Lord's mouth.

Sad as was the state of the Laodiceans, they had high thoughts of themselves. Let us be warned. Let us heed the Lord's solemn words, "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see."

Here the Lord discloses that they were minus the three great Christian essentials, minus divine righteousness, minus the true Christian character, and minus the Holy Ghost. Because of their evil state the Lord has to take an outside place, but still waiting to be gracious: knocking at the door of the assembly. Because of what the Lord is to the very end may we be encouraged. May we be kept humble and may it be our desire that God in all things be glorified. I trust this will be the result of our having been together the past few days. J.A.T.

S. Chosen in Christ.

Chosen in Christ.

Notes of an address by J.A. Trench, 1890.

It is a wonderful thing for our souls to be carried back, as we are in Ephesians, to God's counsels for us from all eternity, in contrast with His ways with man on earth. There are these two distinct lines in Scripture-the history of the first man, and God's counsels in the second. How blessed to have all that belongs to the first man blotted out, so that nothing remains before our eyes but the perfection of the second. Have we been able so to learn the history of the old man, as to have done with it, so that we may be free to bask in the wondrous truth of Eph 1:1-23. We cannot begin there. The first thing is that God has to deal with us about our sins, that our links may be broken with the first man. All through the Old Testament we have the history of the failure of the first man when tried in every way. Placed in innocence in Eden man is given one command, and he breaks it: Noah, set over all the world after the flood, fails to govern himself: God chooses one nation and commits to them His testimony, and the first and cardinal commandment is broken before it reaches the camp: He sets up priesthood, strange fire is offered before Him, and the priesthood breaks down: He gives them a king, and how soon the kingdom fails. Turn where we will, we find the same thing. The last test was applied to man when God said, I have yet one son it may be they will reverence my son. The only answer to this was, "This is the heir, come let us kill him." Stephen sums up that history in Acts 7:1-60. the promises despised, the law transgressed, the prophets slain. What a history! From the first act to the culmination, nothing but sin, and all this is ended in the cross of Christ. It is a blessed thing when the trial of the ages, carried into the conscience, discovers me to myself as belonging to a lost race before God.

There is, however, another side to the presence of the Lord Jesus here on earth; it was the dawn of the accomplishment of God's eternal counsels. How sweet to trace Him in that lowly path, as we find Him in the Gospels fulfilling God's pleasure. We see the heavens opened over Him, and hear the Father's voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But God's glory had to be made good. We follow Him to the cross, there we see Him Who knew no sin, made sin for us-identified with all that we had been found to be; the infinite One infinitely enduring God's judgment of sin, and sin turned into the occasion of infinitely glorifying God. All that I am, there judged, condemned, and crucified with Him; the history of the first man ended, so that now God can reveal His own eternal counsels for us. Up to the cross man was dealt with as alive in the flesh, now as dead in trespasses and sins. Into that scene of death God comes to raise up one Man from the dead. Before the dear women could be at the grave, He had been raised by the glory of the Father. In this epistle the Spirit of God fixes our eyes on the risen Christ in the glory of God. Carried back into God's eternal thoughts and counsels, the apostle's heart can only find relief in worship. Then the Spirit of God leads him on and back. Having chosen us before the foundation of the world, Christ was there before Him, and we chosen in Him, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. He was alone in that perfection when here. "Except a corn of wheat die

it abideth alone." Now we see in Him the full fruit of His death, in that He has united us to Himself where He is, and we stand before God in all His perfection. How sweet to be able to drop everything connected with ourselves, and to enjoy His eternal thoughts and counsels for us. He has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." This is not something for you and me merely, to satisfy us; but to satisfy His own heart. He could have made us angels, but that was not what was in His heart for us; He has made us sons. Christ's place before God, is the only measure of the place which He has had for us before Him in His eternal counsels. Redemption is but the threshold of all the fulness of the blessing into which we are now brought, and now revealed that faith may know it. By redemption, God the Holy Ghost is given to us, as surely as we have received salvation. He is the earnest for us, of all that lies before us in the glory. What rest, to be set up in all the perfection of Christ! If responsibility entered into that glorious position, how soon would it break down. Blessed be God, there is no question of responsibility there. Have we entered into the truth that we are in the perfection of the second man?

Now we come to the responsibility that flows from this position. With the first man, his position depended on how he walked, therefore he had no standing before God: now our responsibility flows from the place in which we are set. We come, out of heaven, to walk here on earth as sons before the Father. God, the Holy Ghost, given to us, as that mighty power working in us: He must not be grieved! Oh! that we might have a deeper sense of it, that there may be nothing of the old man in us to grieve the blessed Spirit of God. As children beloved we are before God the Father, sent out to shine before men. If God has shined into our hearts in all the perfection of the revelation of Himself, so He is to shine in the two characteristics of His life, love and light. What a confirmation of the place that the responsibility which flows from it, should be that we come from heaven, and manifest nothing but what God is. (Eph 4:17; Eph 4:30; Eph 5:1-2; Eph 5:8).

We may say who is sufficient for these things? We have the power working in us to walk according to it. Turn to the service of the Lord Jesus for us, as set before us in ch. 5:25-27. He "loved the church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." This is not only a love of the past; He is now sanctifying and cleansing it, presenting Himself to our hearts, so that we may be more and more answering to Him, that He may at last present us to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." The distinct object before His heart is, that we should answer perfectly to what we are in Him as we find it revealed in Ch. 1. How blessed, when humbled at the thought of all the failure to be able to turn to Him. He did not cleanse that He might love the church, but because He loves it. Oh that we may yield ourselves to the power of the truth, so that we may be formed more like Him, until He will be satisfied, when He has us before Himself! What rest to know that not one will be missing there!

S. Christ's Absence and Return; the Holy Ghost's Presence

Christ's Absence and Return; the Holy Ghost's Presence

There are three things that seem to me chiefly to give character to the Christian's path on earth, and to form him in it:-The Lord Jesus is not here; the Holy Ghost is here; and, lastly, the Lord Jesus is coming again.

Now before ever the presence or absence of anyone can be anything to me, I must first have learned to know them; and if I have learned to know one that has drawn out my heart to himself and become everything to me, his presence or absence is of the greatest possible moment to me, and gives its whole complexion to my life, Now I ask my own heart, and yours, beloved, How far has the Lord Jesus become known to us, so as that His absence tells upon us, and affects the whole scene of our path through the world? Have we learned to know Him well enough to miss Him It is a solemn question involving so much for the heart of Christ in us; and I feel must deeply humble each one of us before Him. At times, perhaps, some of us may have known what it is to feel His absence as that of the one we love; but, oh, how quickly He is' forgotten again, and the blank scarcely felt at all. Is this, beloved, as it should be? Why is it thus with any who know Him? But I fear that the truth is, that few of us have the person of the Lord Jesus Himself sufficiently before our hearts. I am not now raising the question whether you and I know His work,-or rather the benefits resulting to us from it. You know your sins are forgiven. You know that your peace is made. But do you know the One that has accomplished all for you 4 Has 'His love-displayed in what He has done for you-led you on to such a knowledge of Himself, as has made Him everything to you? "Unto you therefore which believe he is the preciousness." (1Pe 2:7.)

It may well humble us in reading the Gospels, to find how hearts there were attracted to Christ for what they found in Him, when they could have known so little of Him or of His work, compared with what we might know.

Look at the two disciples in John 1:1-51.-John the Baptist's eye marked Jesus as He walked-he is filled with the sight, and cries as though involuntarily, "Behold the Lamb of God I" The Spirit of God hears home to the hearts of two of his disciples these precious words. It bursts in upon them what Christ was, and at once detaches them from all else,, even from their religious teacher, (often the hardest link to break,) by attaching them to Him. " And they followed Jesus!" But the Son of Man had not where to lay His head in the world that was all His own. It had rejected Him; will it make any difference to them? " They abode with him that day," casting in their lot with the One that had now become their all. Precious unison with the heart of God that found all its delight in that lowly One. Well does the Holy Ghost take care to record the very hour of the day on which, in the midst of the heartless rejection of the world, two hearts, found that in Jesus which attracted them away from every other object.

Look again at Mary at the sepulcher in John 20:1-31 " The disciples went away again to their own home," but Mary had no home for her heart where Jesus was not. " She stood without at the

sepulcher weeping." She wept because she could not find the dead body of her Lord. Your intelligence might readily rebuke her tears: but there is something more precious to Christ than intelligence, and that is a heart that loves Him. The tears told Him of one that loved Him on earth, and missed Him now that He was dead, or that she knew not where to find Him. All her affections were ' about that spot where they had laid Him. Bright heavenly visions are seen; angels are at the tomb; but what are they to one who has known Christ-they can but say, " Woman, why weepest thou?"

Beloved, what place has our risen Lord revealed to us now from the glory where He is, with its light, shed back on all that He has done, in our hearts He is gone- from the earth, where we are still. Do we miss Him? Not that I would undervalue intelligence. Only intelligence of Christ risen could have dried Mary's tears. But do our hearts and consciences keep pace with our intelligence? Yet there is a necessary condition of being able to love Christ, and, therefore, miss Him here; and that connected with intelligence of what He has done for us. It is that we should be free to be occupied with Him. Now, this would be impossible if there was still a question as to our interests for eternity to be settled with God. But even when Christ is known as the one that has borne our sins and put them away, there is still a deeper need, in order that the heart should be set fully free for Christ; namely, that we should know how God has dealt with the nature of sin within.

Christ has not only "loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood;" " God hath made him sin for, us, who knew no sin;" so that He has there executed judgment on all that I am, as well as upon all that I have done. He has judged me, condemned and crucified me. Thus, in the cross of Christ a full end has been made before God for the believer. of " sin in the flesh." He can say, " I am crucified with Christ." (Gal 2:20)- Until he sees this there will be inevitably the attempt to improve and make something of the flesh; but this is impossible, and the result is, that the more sincere the effort the more intense the wretchedness. " Oh, wretched man that I am," may then lead on, through the Lord's mercy, to the cry of " Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? But until I see that the first man is gone from before God in the judgment of the cross, and that I am now in the second Man-Christ risen out from that judgment-the flesh still in me, but I am no longer in the flesh-self is still the object, and not Christ. So blessed and perfect is the way that God delivers us from all that would otherwise come in between us and Christ, that the affections may be free to go out after Him. All my need being more than met by Christ, I may now be occupied in learning of the One that has met it. He has loved and given Himself for us, and now, counts upon our hearts for Himself.

Hear Him in John 14:1-31, " Yet a little while I am with you..... Let not your hearts be troubled." Oh, beloved, has His absence ever caused us a tear? It is in the measure we have known the sorrow of His absence that we can enter into the provisions He has made for our comfort while He is away-opening the Father's house to us; with the promise of His coming, and of the Holy Ghost being given to throw us into that wondrous circle of Divine intimacy, that we may know Him as we never could have known Him on earth. And this is just the significance He gives His Supper in 1Co 11:23; 1Co 11:26. Listen to the voice that, speaking to Paul from the glory, tells us what we are to Him even there, " This do in remembrance of me," He cannot bear to be forgotten by those He loves on earth to the end. Worthless hearts, we may say truly. Yes.; but Jesus cares for them-He has died to make them His, and counts on our remembrance of Him-giving us only that that may be the sweet expression of it. If the Supper of the Lord means anything, then, as we partake of it it

means this-that we love Him, and miss Him in the world that has cast Him out. He invests it with just this character Himself: " For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come."

It is the weeds of the Church's mourning in a scene that has been desolated for her by the death of Christ, and in which she finds no rest for her heart, only lingering round the spot where His Cross and grave expresses its heart towards Him. We know Him by faith in the glory, and have rest in communion with Him there: but this only makes the earth's rejection of Him more keenly felt, and the cross, that by which the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world, as we turn to our path through it. " Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him," rings in our ears. It is the judgment of the world;. and the links that connected us with it are broken. The Cross, the death of Christ, henceforth characterizes the one that loves Him. We call in our hearts from the blighted scene, and get away in spirit as far as possible from it, only seeking more complete identification with Him in His rejection, as the best and brightest portion He could give us in such a world. It is not the attainment of an advanced Christian, but what Christ looks for from every heart that knows Him.

Well-lie is gone; and the opened heavens show Him to us, to whom the earth refused a place, raised as Man to the highest point of heavenly glory. And this in consequence of having; glorified God on earth as to every question of sin, so that He is able to give us a place with Himself there, But for a little while we tread the scene of His rejection; yet not to be left comfortless in the desolation of it. This brings us to the second thing that forms the Christian's path. God the Holy Ghost is here. And if we have challenged our hearts as to the effect of the absence of Christ upon them, it becomes us now-solemnly to ask, What sense have we of the presence of the Holy Ghost, that other Gomforteri I am not now speaking of the work of the Holy

Ghost in quickening souls, but of the presence of a Divine Person here, of whom Jesus said, "The world cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (John 14:17.) This is consequent upon the glory of the Son of Man at the right hand of God; for before His ascension it could only be said-" the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified:" (John 7:35) and the Holy Ghost's presence in the world ever, since has been the witness of that glory.

What an important bearing this truth must have upon our path, beloved.. The Lord has even said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." (John 16:7)

But, oh, how sad it is to find that for the most part Christians scarcely know whether there be any Holy Ghost, as for any practical recognition of His being here. Thousands of sincere people pray for Him to come, as though the Lord had forgotten His promise these eighteen hundred years-or else that He be not taken from them, as if He had been unfaithful to it, now that He has sent Him-" He shall abide with you forever."

Beloved, what sense have we in our souls of the presence of God, the Holy Ghost-of One that links us with Christ where He is 7 " At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and 'I in you "-making the scene of the glory our familiar dwelling-place, if the Cross has desolated the earth for us. Of One who at the same time binds Himself up with our every interest here,

making our joys and sorrows His own-Himself the power of the voice of praise or sweet melody of the heart; or, on the other hand, of the scarce uttered sigh of infirmity and need, which is nevertheless His intercession for us. Of One who, uniting us to the Lord in glory, makes our very bodies on earth His temple, the seal of God marking us already in Him-the earnest of all that is yet before us; of One who is the first fruits of that glory, that makes the desert more real as we pass along to it, groaning within ourselves as we wait the adoption, the redemption of our body. Of One who nevertheless is the power of the life we have from God, rising up to its source and level in Him, so as even now to be within us El well of living, water, springing up to everlasting life, of which, as we drink, we never thirst again. The power, too, of the overflow of the joy that goes up to the Father in the worship that He seeks; while there are yet out of the abundance of it "rivers " flowing out in the desert.

Oh, beloved, is it a reality with us that the Holy Spirit has come down to this earth, and dwells within us? He brought us the sweet tidings of the One that is gone, that has won our hearts for Him. He now takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to us, that He may engage us more deeply with Him every moment. He has not come to supplant Christ in our hearts, to present another object to them, but to absorb them with the One we have. Could you tarry "ten days" in the scene from which He calls you away to such an One? Oh, beloved, had we even the decision of Rebecca for Isaac, not a moment longer could we consent to a tie holding its power to connect us with a place where He is not. We will go to the One whom, having not seen, we love; albeit the desert lies between. But the Holy Ghost will keep us sweet company by the way, be it short or long-never ceasing, if we only let Him, to occupy us with Christ.

Thus it is that the Lord has shut us up to Him for comfort.. How far is this practically so with us-all comfort in Jesus' absence flowing from the Holy Ghost's presence with us? How sad when we think how often we grieve Him, and thus hinder all enjoyment of this rich provision of our Lord's love. Too often all positive testimony of Christ to us is hindered by our allowance of the flesh; and the Holy Ghost has to turn to negative this, and thus days and weeks are lost never to be recalled.

Oh, beloved! let us keep watch that our eye may be fixed on Christ, that our ear be only open to His voice, that our outward ways may manifest Him; the inward movements of the heart that they be formed by His word, lest we lightly grieve the blessed Spirit that dwells within us, and so hinder the whole power of our present blessing.

Then, again, if we pass from individual blessing--flowing from the presence and action of the Holy Ghost--there is "The house of God," "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph 2:22.) Committed to man to build (1 Corinthians he has terribly failed in it, and admitted all kinds of corruption; but God, in long-suffering, lingers in it still by His Spirit on earth, although a man must purge himself from all that is unsuited to His presence to enjoy it. But, looking deeper with God, in the midst of the outward profession, there is that which is still more precious, and which is out of man's reach to mar: there is the body of Christ constituted by the Holy Ghost. "For by one Spirit have we all been baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1Co 12:13.) Such is the bond that unites all saints upon earth with their Head in heaven and one with another, in spite of all that by which Satan has for a little time apparently divided them. But is it only given us to know this for privilege and joy? Surely, beloved I such a truth has its practical responsibilities, and to these we are summoned in Eph 4:1-3. How far

have we owned them, and thrown all that we have, and are, by His grace, " Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Few may be found with heart and courage for such a path, apart from all that disowns it, in the varied unities of man; but the Lord Himself will be there, with the two or three that are gathered to His name. What more could we need for joy to the full till we see Him face to face' Nor has He left us without the ministry needed by us till then. Tongues and miracles, manifestations of the Spirit's presence to them that believe not, may be gone; but all that is most precious and requisite for the saints remains, for the Holy Ghost is still here "dividing to every man severally as he will."

Again, I ask, do we own Him in all this, or are we still consenting to what man has substituted in room of the Holy Ghost? But I pass on from a subject of wide bearing and range on our walk as Christians, to speak of that which is given us to fix our hearts in hope and expectation-the coming of our Lord Jesus. It is linked with all that we have seen as to the effect upon us of His absence, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. In the measure in which we miss Him we shall long for Him to come again: and the Holy Ghost revealing Him to us from where He is, only makes Him more necessary to us, and therefore more missed in the place of His rejection. Besides, He dwells in us to bring us into the consciousness of present relationship with Him as His body, His bride, and to form our affections according to it. Has Christ loved her, and given Himself for her I Is she the all-absorbing interest of His, heart even though He must be away I Has He put off the kingdom and possession of all things in heaven and earth that He may possess her heart-now calling her into His own path of rejection, but by-and-bye to share His throne, and crown, and kingdom I Does the Holy Ghost dwell in our hearts to be the power of our consciousness that we are all this and more than words can tell to Him I And is His absence nothing to us? Is His long tarrying nothing to us? Oh, beloved, " the Spirit and the bride say, come." If He waits, He prays that our hearts may be directed into His patience. But He closes the Book of God with the promise-the last words that were meant to ring in our ears, and have such sweetness to our hearts, and sustain us while we wait for Him-." Surely I come quickly." It was not for us to say " quickly," though we felt it; but. He knew it and said, " quickly." Oh, has He had the deep longing response from us that He puts upon our lips" Even so come, Lord Jesus 1" Do we miss Him on the earth I He counts on it. Listen -" I will come again • and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." He misses us in the heavens. But it shall not be always so-" Father I will," and it is the word of one whose will none dare gainsay, "that those also whom thou hest given me be with me where I am." Ah it was not in mercy only that He saved us, it was in love, that must have us now for Himself, and with Him forever 1 He cares to have us with Himself! Who could have conceived such a thing-after all our faithlessness and treachery of heart, and constant backsliding and denial of Him! Oh, if we only believed His love and the place He has given us in it, there must be a response in us: and this is the spring and power of the hope of His coming.

See, too, how blessedly it takes us out of the earth and its objects, interests, and hopes-keeps us, as waiting, loose to all that out of which the One for whom we wait comes to take us. The object of our hope, too, has an immensely formative power over us, even if it be in earthly things. How important, then, that He should be ever brightly before our eyes, as the one only hope we have. Then shall we not only hold the doctrine of it, but be " Like unto men that wait for their Lord." Nor will it be to fold our hands in sloth and indolence; but, as really waiting for Him, we shall be alive to all His interests here, finding it our solace in His absence, that we have something to be doing

Him--something in which we can express our love. 'And it will not be anything we take into our heads to do, but we shall be seeking out the thing that suits His heart, to spend, and be spent in it.

How precious to the Lord to find one thus employed on earth. He looks from the glory for such as love Him, and comes and manifests Himself to them. Do we not hear Him say, "This do in remembrance of me," and again, "Ye do skew forth the Lord's death till he come." "Is it not as though He said, " Do they miss me," " Do they long for me to come again." Oh, beloved, what answer do our hearts give to the challenges of His love?

J. A. T.

S. Christian Obedience

Christian Obedience

1Pe 1:2.

It is my desire, with the Lord's help, to look a little into the place and character of the obedience which this passage shows to have been in the thoughts of God for us from eternity. There is nothing I fear, if one may speak for others, that we enter so little into. Yet it involves the whole principle and blessedness of the Christian position, and the life which belongs to it. In the passage the words "obedience" and "sprinkling of the blood" equally depend on "of Jesus Christ." This at once brings out the distinct character of the obedience. Peter, writing to the believing "strangers [or "sojourners"] of the dispersion," connects their position with the counsels and foreknowledge of God the Father; and in terms that, while I doubt not conveying an analogy, are intended to suggest the great contrast between this position and that of the Jew nationally. If Jehovah had chosen Israel as a nation, to be a special people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth (Deu 7:6), these Christians from among them were chosen individually of God the Father, which at once gives a far more intimate relationship. If for the nation there had been an outward sanctification by ordinances (Lev 18:1-30; Lev 19:1-37; Lev 20:1-27 see especially Lev 20:24-26), theirs was "through sanctification of the Spirit" - an effectual work of God that, applying the truth in power to their souls, had separated them to Him, thus carrying into effect His counsels. (Compare 2Th 2:13.) Then as to the object of these counsels and work - "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." For the nation, from Sinai, the condition of entrance into blessing was obedience to the law, to which they were bound by the blood - the penal sanction of death - which Moses sprinkled upon the people. (Exo 24:6-8.) For the Christian it is a wholly contrasted character of obedience - "of Jesus Christ"; that is, in other words, to obey as He obeyed. For this the heart is set free, by His blood-shedding having met every question of sin for the glory of God, and purged our consciences. The blood of Jesus Christ, instead of establishing the authority of the law by a death penalty on disobedience, becomes the delivering power for an obedience after the only pattern of His own, by His meeting the penalty in infinite grace. The verse presents the beautiful contrast of the Christian position in every particular. And the place it gives obedience, and that so totally new in character, as the end and object of God in the blessing we have been brought into, commands the deepest interest and the subjection of our souls. The first great thing to apprehend clearly is, the difference in the whole principle of it between the obedience, of Jesus Christ and that which the law claimed. The law was addressed to man in the flesh, giving the perfect rule of what he ought to be for God. But now that the full character of the flesh has come out, we know that it is "enmity against God," "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Thus the flesh is in its nature opposed to the rule imposed upon it; and a law given to it must mainly consist, as in fact it did, of prohibitions - "thou shalt not" - "thou shalt not"; or if it be considered in its most positive requirements, what a state of things is revealed that necessitated God's demanding His creature's love! Yet how inoperative, save to condemn: God unrevealed to be loved ["Moses drew near to the

thick darkness where God was" (Exo 20:21)]; no giving of a nature capable of loving Him. Nor was love ever produced by commanding it; or, if thus produced, of what value would it be? Yet it will be found in dealing with souls, that the ordinary idea of obedience does not go beyond what the law claimed, but was ineffectual, flesh being what it is in fallen man, to produce; and the serious thing is, that wherever the idea obtains it shuts out any true conception of what the obedience of the Christian is. Nor is it only the law that accustoms us to the thought of an obedience wholly different in principle to that of Christ's, but even that which we constantly, and rightly, look for from our children. I say to my child at its play, "Go and do your lessons"; and the child gives up its play and sets to work, and we say that is an obedient child. But that is, that the child having a will to do what was pleasant to it, has given up its will to do mine, however distasteful; and the more the thing was distasteful in itself, the more the child's obedience would be shown. It is in principle that of the law's claim; only that the child's known relationship, and the affections flowing from it, are a power to lead to obedience that the law had not. Now in what total contrast to all this is the obedience of Christ, as the word presents it? Come (genomenos) of woman, come under the law, He obeyed it perfectly; He magnified and made it honourable in submitting to its obedience, but not as having to be forbidden what He desired. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Neither was it any way the character of His obedience that He gave up His own will before the authority of the Father; for, He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." As thus come, we see One whose only will was to do God's will.

It is of such a character of obedience that the epistle of James speaks (Jas 1:25), "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein." The revealed mind of God is what is referred to; but first (Jas 1:18) it is "the word of truth" by which we have been begotten of God, so that we have received the nature of Him whose word it is. To the child of God then the word only comes to direct a nature he possesses in that in which it already delights. It is thus "a perfect law" - a law of liberty upon which the mind becomes fixed objectively - the law and the nature going together; or, as if I said to my child, "Go and play," bidding just what pleases it. But that the word should be this to us, far deeper principles are involved, connected with a state subjectively suited to the revelation found in the word. And first there must be deliverance out of a state wholly contrary to it. For if the nature we have received in being born of the incorruptible seed by the living and abiding word of God, delights in what is revealed therein as His will, there is the flesh within that is, as we have seen, diametrically opposed. But when the condition of the flesh has been learned experimentally, as it must be learned, and we know by fruitless efforts under law, after good in it, that it is nothing but evil - if it is not I, but that it is too strong for me - and the point of "O, wretched man that I am" has been reached; the neck of the flesh's will has been broken, and the soul thankfully bows to the absolute necessity of God's way of dealing with it, so long before intimated: (Gen 6:13.) "The end of all flesh is come before me." Then I learn that "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin [1:e. "as a sacrifice for sin"] condemned sin in the flesh." But this condemnation having taken place in the death of Him who gave Himself that I might live, I see that I am entitled to count all that took place in His death as having happened to me. Thus we know that "our old man," that is, all we were as characterized by sin and the flesh, "has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin" - its whole system and power - "might be annulled, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Rom 6:6.) Then in the diligence of faith, reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, of which position in both its parts Christ is the wonderful pattern

(Rom 6:10), we tolerate the will of the flesh no longer. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions thereof." We have died to the law too, that was the "strength of sin" (1Co 15:56) - instead of being any strength against it - "by the body of Christ that we should be to another, to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom 7:4-5.) And not being under the law we are led of the Spirit (Gal 5:18), and the righteousness (dikaioma, full sum of what it required) of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh under law, but after the Spirit as the power of life in Christ. (Rom 8:4.) But the truth goes farther still. It is not merely that, by death to sin and the power of the Spirit, there has been a positive deliverance from the dominion of sin, the flesh in the man condemned; but the man himself must go. The Epistle to the Colossians leads us into this deeper aspect of the death of Christ (Col 2:11-12); "ye have died" (Col 3:3); and this becomes so real, as God presents it to faith, that the practical consequence can be pressed (Col 2:20, "Wherefore if ye have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" Why go and falsify your place as a Christian by subjecting yourself to ordinances that suppose the man to be alive; whereas the truth is that we have died with Christ out of our whole place and living status as such, to have it in a totally new sphere, risen with Him, now to know Christ as our life, and to be directed to objects where He is, to form the life practically by Him here, where we have been left to represent Him.

Yet there is another point, touched on indeed in this epistle (Col 2:13), but not further developed there, that has to be reached in the faith of our souls, in order that we may apprehend our full place in Christ, from which it flows that His path is ours; not now death and resurrection with Christ to clear us out from all that, was connected with man in responsibility here, his guilt and state closed, but what has resulted from the full disclosure of that state in the long, patient trial of the ages, ending in the rejection of Christ; namely, that he is dead in sins. The Epistle of Ephesians brings us to this proved universal condition of the first man (Eph 2:1-10). In 2Co 5:1-21, added light from the cross is thrown upon it; for if God had to give up His Son to death that any might live, it was the plain proof that man was given up of God as dead; and this in contrast to dealings with him up to the cross that supposed him to be alive. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." Now into this scene of universal death of man by and in sin, and where Christ was dead in grace for sin, God came in power to form a new creation, "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation"; raising up Christ as the first act of His power to be the beginning and head of it, and then quickening us together with Him. This involves His whole position as seated in the heavenlies, a position revealed to faith that we might know and enter into it now. To Paul it is given to develop this new creation on the side of our place in Christ according to the eternal counsels of God; while in John's epistle (all we have learned through Paul as to the divine clearance made of the first man in judgment being assumed) it is brought out on the side of Christ as our life, involving participation in the divine nature, John being thus in teaching the complement of Paul. If in Paul the full Christian position has been seen to be of a new creation of God, in John our condition is viewed as wholly of the same; and by the teaching of the Spirit through both apostles, He also being given to dwell in us, we know that the Son is in the Father, and, in marvellous association of thought, that we are in Him and He in us. (John 14:20.) In 1 John then it is not the believer now looked at as with a war of two opposed principles within him, the flesh of which he has been born into this world, and the divine nature as born of God (though "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"); but now, all that is

of the first man gone in the death of Christ, God sets before us the characteristic privileges and nature of the life we have been brought into in the second Man, as if we never had another - a life which, according to the three-fold testimony (1Jn 5:6-12) of the Spirit come from the glory of Christ, of the water for purification, and of the blood for propitiation (that alike flowed from His side in death, the end of man in judgment), is absolutely God's gift to us in His Son.

It may seem to have been a long digression, but the truths that have been before us are necessary in order that we should enter into our having been set apart for the obedience of Christ; so that no lower character of obedience may be seen to belong to the Christian. The Epistle of John puts it into its full place for us, the introductory part (1Jn 1:1-10, 1Jn 2:1-29, 1Jn 3:1-24, 1Jn 4:1-21, 1Jn 5:1-11) bringing out the great principles of the epistle. 1Jn 1:1-4 teaches us the wonderful privilege of the life we have been brought into in "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" that our joy may be full; 1Jn 1:5-10 characterizes this fellowship by the principles of God's own nature as light, going on in grace (chap. 1Jn 2:1-2) even to divine resources for its practical restoration if absolutely interrupted by sin; 1Jn 2:3-11 add tests of the two great principles of the divine nature in man, as manifested in Christ - obedience and love, by which false pretension to the possession of the privilege is judged. Thus the essential principle of the Christian position in its deepest privilege is disclosed. The life that was true in Him alone when He was here, shining as the light of men, but in darkness that apprehended it not, is - now that He has closed that state in the judgment of the cross, and taken His new place as man in the glory of God - "true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light now shineth." The commandments and word, that were the full expression of the life in Him - as He says, in answer to the question, "Who art thou?" (John 8:25.) "Altogether (or "essentially" ten archen) that which I also say to you" - I am in nature what I speak - are now given to form and direct that life in us; wonderfully "new" in such application to us, but really the "old commandment which ye had from the beginning." Thus whatever blessed traits of that life are seen as expressed in Christ's path here, become His word, with divine authority over me as His commandment too, to indicate what alone is true as the expression of the same life in me. Hence the intimate links that constantly connect the gospel and epistles of John. Thus wholly contrasted in principle is the obedience of Christ to anything known or presented to man before. Instead of a law acting from outside upon a nature wholly foreign and opposed to it, it is the revealed will of God, livingly expressed in the commandments and word of Christ, coming home with authority by these to a nature which, as His own in us, responds to and delights in that will, and knows no liberty but in obedience.

Sweet it is then to turn to the lowly life of Jesus, where that obedience is seen in all its perfection; even though the incomparable glory of it humbles us, and we feel more and more the utter poverty of all our thoughts of Him. The Psalm (40) from which I have already quoted brings us to His entrance into the place of it, where for the first time it was possible for Him to obey. All the Jewishly-ordained sacrifices are set aside as having nothing in them for the heart of God, now to find its entire satisfaction in Him who says, "Mine ears hast thou opened," or, more literally, "Ears hast thou digged for me." But as this necessitated His becoming man, the Spirit accepts the paraphrase of the LXX. translators, in quoting it in Hebrews (Heb 10:1-39), "A body hast thou prepared me."*

*Note that in Hebrews the delight of the Lord Jesus is omitted as not so much the point of the Spirit's testimony, but the perfection of the work for God, the contrast of what gave Him no

pleasure being brought out strongly. (Heb 10:5-6, Heb 10:8) In Isa 50:1-11 we find Him come, and in the path - "When I came was there no man? When I called was there none to answer?" But who was it that came? He who had power to redeem and to deliver, who had all nature at His command as its Creator and Lord. In what character then did He come? "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear." He who was Jehovah came, a man to be dependent and obedient; for this was man's perfection suited to the place He had taken: instructed, out of His own deep experience of human sorrow in that place, how to succour the weary by a word, but as Himself looking for direction to God, with His ear wakened morning by morning to receive it. What a study for our hearts! What an obedience is thus foreshadowed - of One to whom alone as man will of right belonged, but become man only to carry out the Father's will, and so waiting upon Him in that blessed communion in which He ever walked for the instruction of it. In the Gospels we trace the actual footsteps of the path of the Lord Jesus. But before we turn to them, the doctrine of the Epistles comes in largely to increase our apprehension of it - I refer especially to Philippians and Hebrews. In both we find the same wonderful truths of who He was and of the place that He had taken, which are indeed inseparable. In Php 2:1-30 the mind that was in Christ Jesus is to be now in us - a mind that, instead of reaching up as the first Adam to be as God, reached down until He could go down no lower. And there were two great steps in this stupendous stoop; for "subsisting in the form of God" it was no question of usurpation of what did not belong to Him "to be equal with God"; but He "emptied* Himself, taking a bondsman's form, becoming in the likeness of men, and, having been found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." As God He emptied Himself, as man He humbled Himself; and His obedience in that place went on up to death, even that of the cross, in which it was put to the last possible test, and proved perfect - all He was thus entering into and giving its character to every step of His path. For it was nothing that man as such should be dependent and obedient; it was his apostasy that he departed from it. But that He, in whom "all the fulness was pleased to dwell," should take man's subject place, to glorify God by answering to it perfectly and never leaving it, gives the humiliation, and dependence, and obedience displayed in it their only measure and infinite glory.

*We can appreciate the hesitation that our English translators may have felt in rendering literally, in such a connection, the most wonderful word they had before them, *ekenose*. (Php 2:7) From Tyndale down (Wycliffe had "lowered himself") they adopted the paraphrase "made Himself of no reputation": and there is this to be said for it, that if "emptied" necessarily involved the thought of something "of which" He emptied Himself, the paraphrase would be truer to the sense; for the word refers, as the participial clauses following shew, to the place He assumed rather than to that from which He came. The same great elements of the truth come out, only if possible, with greater fulness in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For if Heb 1:1-14, while fixing the eye of faith on Him who as man, having by Himself made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, leads us by ever-ascending steps to the full, divine glory of His Person from being born Son of God into this world (Heb 1:5), object of angels' worship (Heb 1:5-6), addressed as God by God according to Psa 45:1-17(Psa 45:8-9), to being owned as Jehovah by Jehovah, and this when in the lowest depths of His humiliation according to Psa 102:1-28(Psa 102:10-12) - Heb 2:1-18 brings out the reality of His manhood, and the purposes of God accomplished in it, not merely as

necessary to His having the place of universal supremacy marked out for man by Psa 8:1-9(Psa 8:5-8), but for far deeper reasons connected with God's glory and the state of those, with whom He became man to identify Himself, and conduct them as the sons of God to glory. (See for four such reasons, Heb 2:10, Heb 2:14, Heb 2:17-18) All in this chapter then depends upon, and is brought out to be the proof of, His true humanity. Only as man could the Sanctifier and the sanctified be "of one," and He "not ashamed to call them brethren." Yet the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, else He must have abode alone in His humanity; it is as the risen Christ that He is able to associate us with Him, as we hear Him say, according to the words of Psa 22:1-31, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," and "in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee" - opening the wilderness for us with a song of redemption more wonderful by far, through such association, than that of Moses and Israel. (Exo 15:1-27) "It is finished! It is finished Who can tell redemption's worth?

He who knows it leads the singing, Full the joy, as fierce the wrath."

Then He has set us the example of dependence for all the way, "I will put my trust in him" (from the LXX. of Isa 8:17); until the last quotation, in the same connection in the prophet, brings us to the end of the path - the remnant of the house of Jacob displayed with Him as His children in glory. Thus the mystery of His humbled place as man, the stumbling-block of Israel's pride, is solved; and we have Him fully in the path of man: suffering being tempted, but thus able to succour the tempted ones: learning obedience by the things that He suffered, thus able to sympathize; and the epistle does not close without bringing Him in as the last of the long line of witnesses to the principle of faith as the power of the just man's life, if in this as in all things He must have the pre-eminence - "the beginner and completer of faith." (Heb 12:2) But obedience is the special point before us in the blessed unfolding of the Lord's place as man, that the epistle gives us. See then how if, in contrast to Israel's priests, who being taken from among themselves could exercise forbearance towards the ignorant and the wanderers, we have a great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; and if His very exaltation and glory as such seems to take Him out of the range and reach of human need to be able to sympathize, the Spirit of God can recall to us (Heb 5:7) "the days of His flesh" in which "when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death," He was "heard for His godly fear" [eulabeia, compare Heb 12:28, His reverent submission to the will of God]. Thus what full capacity, albeit He is in glory, to enter into all that connects itself with human weakness! What are our deepest distresses as compared with His, who," though He were a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered?" But what could surpass the grace that presents Him to our hearts as having passed through our school? He entered it indeed in a very different way, and for wholly different reasons than we who have to learn obedience - it is the great lesson God is teaching in all His ways with us - because, alas! too long Accustomed to disobey; He, because ever accustomed to command. He had never before been in circumstances in which obedience could be rendered. Not that there was anything in that holy nature contrary to obedience; as we have seen, He became man only to obey, and never did anything save in obedience. But thus He learned it. Only that the Spirit would now lead on the Hebrews addressed, from a side of things, unspeakably precious in itself, but connected with what He was down here, "unto perfection," connected as this always is with His place as man in glory according to the counsels of God. (Heb 5:9-14, Heb 6:1) There only all His precious sympathy and succour is now

to be found; thither He would lead up our hearts: and thus the great object of the epistle is carried on, that those whose religious relationships with God had been earthly in Judaism, should be weaned from them to wholly new and heavenly ones.

We have seen then, in the doctrine of the Old Testament and of the New, what gives its character to the obedience to which we are sanctified. That it was that of the Son of God become man, to render it in a perfection beyond all that could have been otherwise conceived, so contrary in its nature to all that man is naturally. But we must turn to the gospels to seek in the power of the Spirit to trace a little the detail of that perfection in His walk: no more wonderful study could be presented to our poor hearts, so slow to enter into it. The test came early. For when, in fulfilling righteousness (Mat 3:15), that is, carrying out God's will, His first public act was to identify Himself in John's baptism with those who, in submitting to it, took their true place before God, confessing their sins, and were thereby proved to be the saints, the excellent of the earth in whom was all His delight - the opened heavens, and the Father's voice, and the descent upon Him of the Holy Spirit, declaring Him to be, in the humble place He had thus taken, the object of the Father's delight - the very next thing is that He is led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. But what circumstances for the Son of God to be found in in this world! "Having fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He hungered. And the tempter coming up to Him said, If thou art Son of God, speak, that these stones. may become loaves of bread." But simple as it would have been for Him, with all divine resources ever at command, to help Himself to bread, He would not put forth power to take Himself out of any consequence of the place He had come into as man. He had not become man to command; man's place was to obey, and the enemy is foiled by His keeping that place perfectly. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He waits therefore, will only act, if it be but in the matter of necessary food, when there is a word from God for it. But more than that, He lived by it, for this was God's will for man according to the passage that He quotes, if now for the first time it was realized in man - not merely a path outwardly directed by the word, but a life formed by it, of every movement of which the word was the motive and source.

Well may we pause at the outset of such a study, and put it to ourselves honestly before God, Do we know indeed that this is the obedience to which we have been sanctified? I am not speaking of failure in walking according to it, but have we bowed without reserve to the principle of it as thus brought to the test by Satan, and proved in its absolute perfection in the blessed Lord. Then we shall know how to judge in the secret of our hearts any spring of thought or action that has not its source in God's known will. I say known, because there is no more subtle form of temptation than when it is pressed upon us that circumstances call for action, when there is no word from God, no intimation of His will. Yet if we act without knowing God's will, nothing can be more certain than that we are doing our own; and this is the essence of sin. "Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, attention than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and self-will is as iniquity and idolatry." (1Sa 15:22-23. New Trans.) Nothing in man is right except obedience. Confidence in God will be surely needed for waiting, as with the Lord, left for forty days without food; and this was the principle brought out in the next temptation: but is it a strange thing to those who know His heart as perfectly revealed in the Son that we should trust Him? This testing took place then alone with Satan, but under the eye of One who appraises it as none else could, and reveals it in grace to us, that delighting in it with Him we may learn man's true place of obedience,

and be formed by it. A very different form of testing arose with the circumstances of His rejection, as it began to come out more and more plainly. We see the effect of it on His spirit in Mat 11:1-30. His testimony, as that of His forerunner, was rejected by that generation; He felt it. "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not," more hard of heart than Tyre or Sodom. But (Mat 11:25) He bows in the deep trial to His Father, answering the rejection of the cities by, "I thank Thee . . . even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." What rest in the known wisdom and love of the Father, and what perfect submission also, as He traces all that pressed upon Him to its source there! Then if He exercises divine will, it is not for Himself, but only, as always (Mat 8:3; John 5:21), to meet need in man, in carrying out the testimony of grace committed to Him. Here it is to reveal the Father, so as to give us into the same resource and resting-place He had in the knowledge of the Father, and then to call us to take His yoke upon us, learning from Him (meek and lowly in heart) that submission in which rest is practically found for the soul, whatever the circumstances. Testing then, in whatever form - whether from Satan or from men - only drew out before God and the Father the sweet savour of a divinely perfect obedience now found for the first time in man upon earth. But for the full positive development of it we must go to the Gospel of John, where, above all, the divine glory of His person shines forth; than which nothing can be more remarkable in the connection of the truth. Here He is the Word that was with God, and was God - for none other could express God - the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, come to make Him known according to that relationship, even as One in it only could. He can say, "Before Abraham was, I am"; "I and my Father are one": yet it is ever the Son become flesh, whom we see, and who, true to the place of man, never assumes anything to Himself, but delights to receive all - even when it belongs to the rights of His person - from the Father. He may speak and act as none but a divine person could; yet He never leaves the place of a servant, subject to the Father, carrying out that for which He was sent. Surely the mystery of His person meets us everywhere; nowhere else is there such an unfolding of obedience as in this Gospel. His ministry opens in John 4:1-54. He had found a poor sinner to whom He could reveal Himself in an activity of grace that formed, as to His life in connection with men, His only joy here. There was manifest refreshment for His spirit in it. He sees the fields already white for harvest in the light of that one soul brought to know herself and Him. But the sources of it lay deeper than the disciples could enter into: "I have meat [or "food"] to eat that ye know not." Wherein did it consist? Not merely in outward acts of service. "My food is that I should do the will of Him that has sent me, and that I should finish His work." What a character this gives His whole path! His food, the sustenance of His life, was in carrying out the Father's will.

John 5:1-47 becomes a complete revelation of the place He has taken. Divine grace, active in power to bless even on the Sabbath day, had clashed with Jewish stickling for forms. How little they knew the heart of God, who thought that He could rest in a world where there was the cry of human misery on every hand. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," revealed that heart, but in terms that they knew well involved the perfect community of nature between the Son who spoke and the Father; and they charge Him with making Himself equal with God. Nothing could be further from the truth, as to One who never sought His own glory, but only the glory of Him that sent Him (John 7:18; John 8:50); yet to be on such an equality was no usurping of what did not belong to Him, as we have seen. But He had emptied Himself, becoming in the likeness of man; and so He answered them, "The Son can do nothing from (apo) Himself, but whatever He sees the Father do." He had not come down to act as an independent divine person on earth in the exercise of His

own will and power; but in perfect dependence, and in the communion in which He ever walked with His Father, we learn further that "whatever things He doeth, these also doeth the Son in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that He Himself doeth;" and this carried out even in quickening whom He will (John 8:21); while John 8:27-30 shew that not otherwise will it be in the exercise of the judgment committed to Him. "I cannot do anything from myself: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I do not seek my will, but the will of Him that sent me." Oh, how it searches and humbles us to hear Him speak of not even seeking will of His, but only that the Father's might be accomplished In John 6:38et seq. it is the same thing that characterizes Him as the bread of God; He came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent Him. For if He found the food of His life here in doing that will, God found His bread,* the food of His own joy as it were, in Him as come down to do it. In wonderful grace - when we have reached Him through His death, "have eaten the flesh and drank the blood of the Son of man" (John 6:53), identifying ourselves thus by faith with His death, without which "there is no life to taste and to enjoy the bread," as another has said - John 6:57 brings us into participation in what He was to God: "He that eateth me, shall live by [or 'on account of'] me."

*Compare for the force of the expression Lev 3:11; Lev 3:16; Lev 21:6, etc.; Num 28:2; Num 28:24; Eze 16:19; Eze 44:7, where "food," "bread," and "meat" are the same in Hebrew (the point being missed by the LXX., save in the last two quotations). Nor can I doubt that the "bread of God" here gets its character from this use; namely, that it is not merely the bread which He gives, but upon which He feeds first of all, as the infinite excellency and perfection of Christ, proved under all testing, in the lowly stoop and place He had taken to carry out the Father's will, yielding Him divine satisfaction and joy.

We have seen this principle of dependent obedience as to the works of the blessed Lord; but nothing gives a greater idea of its absoluteness than to find it also true of His words, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard from [para "from with"] Him," though men would only recognise, when they had lifted up the Son of man, who He was, and how as to the place He had taken He neither acted from Himself, or spoke save "as my Father hath taught me." (John 8:28.) How wonderfully the opened ear of Isa 1:1-31., as of one that is instructed, has been verified in His path. For, as He says again (John 12:49), "I have not spoken of (ek) myself, but the Father which sent me He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. . . . Whatsoever I speak therefore even as the Father said unto me so I speak" - in words and works thus alike, the revealer of the Father; and so, as the verse tells us, "His commandment is life eternal": for it is eternal life to know the Father as thus revealed. But we are nearing the end, for the enmity of man's heart was surging round that only path of perfect light ever seen in this world, where, in the Son of man keeping man's place, in the simple perfection of dependent and delighting obedience, God found His delight and was glorified. The state of all men being thus revealed, it was necessary, because of that state as well as for the glory of God, that such a path should close here; but only in taking up that state in grace to identify Himself with it, and endure the judgment of God in which it is ended for ever. Precious it is to know that meeting the judgment due to sin became only the occasion for manifesting the depth of the perfection of His obedience, laying therein a fresh ground for the Father's delight in Him: "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again." Divine power was needed, for "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down from myself; I have power to lay it down and power to take it again." But He

will only exercise that power as ever in obedience - "This commandment have I received from my Father." (John 10:17-18)

One more passage connects obedience with the spring of it, that whether in Him or in us, gives it all its blessed character and acceptance - LOVE. I refer to John 14:30-31 : "Henceforth I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment so I do." What foothold could the enemy find in a life made up of nothing but love and obedience? Luke brings us to this final assault of Satan; he, who notes that after the temptation in the wilderness the devil departed from Christ for a season, and at the close that, if it was "man's hour," the power of darkness was awfully associated with it. (John 4:13) In that gospel too, in Gethsemane, the full force of the temptation comes before us, as that of Satan who, having by man's sin and the judgment of God, the power of death over man, sought to press it in that character upon Him, to deter Him from going the whole way in obedience. We are permitted to draw near and know what very real conflict it was to the blessed Lord, though none can fathom His sorrow, in anticipating having to pass out of the consciousness of the Father's presence which had been all the light and joy of His path, into that of being wholly forsaken of God. Presenting it before the Father in the unclouded communion in which He yet was did but add poignancy to the sorrow. In His very perfection He shrank from such a cup. "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done" records His giving Himself up to it, in the perfection of obedience here brought to its absolute and final test. And the fiery trial over, in peace we hear Him say in John, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" as He went to the cross to exhaust it, as He alone could, and finish the work given Him to do. Thus in infinite depths of suffering He endured the judgment of the will of the flesh that once characterized us; but that even now we may be so easily betrayed into if not abiding in Him. Oh, that in true dependence and nearness of heart to the Lord we may know how to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," that nothing but His will-less life may be manifested in our body.

Lastly, I would look at what the Word connects with obedience, as the abounding portion of our hearts to be enjoyed in the path of it, and not to be known out of it. We have seen it as the principle, simple but of such far-reaching effect in the soul's history, of rest practically realized, as shown us first in the experience of the blessed Lord Himself. (Mat 11:1-30.) And this is true in every part of the blessing. For all flows out of the fact, so immense in itself, that it is of His own life and nature we live, of which His path here was the perfect expression and revelation.

Thus if in Php 2:12, "as ye have always obeyed" was the condition, whether under apostolic care, as when Paul was with them, or now much more in its absence, of their deliverance from all the present allowed power of the enemy, the mind of obedience (as well as of self-emptiness) was expressed in Him, who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Php 2:5-8). Here was the wonderful pattern for the saints. In the path of obedience the apostle had helped them to work out their salvation; they had only to go on in it now, that he was gone, and work out their own salvation* "with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both the willing and the working according to His good pleasure." The Lord's path had been the complete illustration of the principle; and the verses following (Php 2:14-16) are just the reproduction in the saints of the blessed traits of His own life. His name and testimony involve us in a conflict which is His with Satan: the issue is not uncertain; we are on the

winning side; He will bruise him under our feet shortly. But the enemy works by wiles; it is well not to be ignorant of his devices; fear and trembling have their wholesome place if we have learned to distrust ourselves; but we have only to be occupied with carrying out God's will in obedience, and are carried through all safely to the heavenly glory of Christ, which is the salvation of the Epistle.

*In contrast to Paul's, not to God's.

Still it is in the Gospel of John, where the obedience of Christ has been brought out to the full, that we find the full consequences in blessing of its being wrought in us; and first, in John 14:1-31. This precious instruction of the Lord opens out to us the Father's house, as connected first with the full revelation there had been of the Father in the Son come down here - "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; then with the place He was about to take as going to the Father on the ground of accomplished redemption, "I go to prepare a place for you"; and lastly, with His coming again to receive us to Himself there. But meanwhile, between His going away and coming again, the Holy Spirit is promised as the power of our enjoyment of the new place, that it may become the present home of hearts that miss the Lord out of this place. All that follows from 5: 16 is the effect of the Holy Spirit having been given us; we should not be left orphans, for the Lord Himself would come to us, to be known in a way He could not have been to the disciples. When the world saw Him no more we should see Him, and this intimately connected with living of His life - "Ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." And further, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me and I in you." If the Son has His place in the Father by the glory of His person, we have ours in Him, not only in divine righteousness before God, but - inseparably connected with such a position - He in us, as participating in His life and nature, now to be expressed in this world.

Now from John 14:20 we have the path, the only possible one, in which the Spirit dwelling in us, and ungrieved, can be the power of the enjoyment of all this wonderful blessing. Flowing from a dependent life in Him it is but the path of that life, the reproduction in us of what constituted the life in Him, as John 14:31 shows it - love to the Father and obedience. And so John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus the obedience of love in us, being of His own life, brings with it the manifestation of the Lord Himself. Then when the thought of such a private manifestation to one, and not to another, clashed with Jewish thoughts of an appearing in glory that would be public and before all, the Lord in reply to Jude only deepens the character of the obedience, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The word differs from the commandments of Christ only in that it is the full revelation of His mind, whereas these have to do with details; as, for instance, the oft-repeated one, that we love one another. There is not a commandment for everything, but His word covers the whole range of the life, leaving no room for the subtle plea of self-will, that His will is not revealed. Love keeping His word then brings with it not only the manifestation of the Son, but the coming of the Father and the Son to make their abode with the obedient one. So that the two characteristic joys of what is before us, the Father's "abodes" (for it is the same word in John 14:2 and John 14:23) and the Son's presence, are brought down to our hearts, and made the present portion, in the power of the Spirit, of the obedience of love - this obedience being but the true expression of the life we now possess in the Son.

John 15:1-27 confirms the wonderful character of the path set before us. There (John 15:9) we learn the only measure of His love - it is the Father's love to Him. But His desire is that we should abide in it - be in the enjoyment of it continually; for though the love does not depend upon our walk, the whole realization of it does: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might be in you, and your joy full." It is but the same path of the same life, now true in Him and in us, leading into the same joy - the joy He had in the Father's love.

One thing more is connected with it in John 15:14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Oh, how unspeakable the privilege! to be treated not as servants who receive their orders, and that is all, but as the trusted friends of Christ to whom He communicates His mind - all things that He has heard of the Father - so as to be the depositaries of it in a world that has seen and hated both Him and the Father, and be formed by it as witnesses for Him. The Epistle adds its testimony to the full blessedness found in walking according to our wholly new order of being as of a new creation in Christ. In John 2:1-25 we have already seen this to be the principle upon which the walk of Christ is the pattern of the Christian's. I look at it again as to the wonderful consequences flowing out of it. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." This is not given us as a test by which we may know whether we know Him - as often falsely used to lead souls not in the liberty of grace into doubt and perplexity; for the fact that we are addressed as to the characteristics of the divine nature assumes that we are partakers of it; it is impossible to conceive anything of a nature we do not possess, as that of angels. But it enables us to judge (as do all the tests of the Epistle) the pretensions of human wisdom and the like to have part in Christian privilege when Christ is unknown. For how can we know Him save as having His life and living of it? Certain it is that man in the flesh does not know Him - "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"; but as we have seen everywhere that life consisted of obedience. Hence "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"; while, on the other hand, every footstep in the path of obedience confirms and deepens in the soul the knowledge that we have of Him. The next verse shows the character of the knowledge contemplated; it is not that of ordinary acquaintance, but of communion with the One we know in partaking of His nature: "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him." Keeping His word is not different from keeping His commandments - "The old commandment is the word which ye have heard" - but only carries the obedience further, as in John 14:1-31 His word is that in which all that He is in His own nature of love was perfectly expressed. That love is now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us - God, who is love, thus dwelling in us. In keeping the word then, which is the revelation of the love, there is nothing to hinder the full realization of it; it is perfected in us, and we know that we are in Him. Again, it is but His own path, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Oh for hearts in the power of the Spirit to enter into the character of that walk a little more! So walking - the normal life of the Christian - our heart condemns us not; we have confidence toward God; we are formed by His mind in the intimacy of the confidence in which we walk, and "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (John 3:16-22, compare John 8:29.) And this leads into the last blessed consequence of such a life and path, as brought out in the last verse - there is nothing beyond it forever - "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him." The heart first drawn to Him by all the infinite grace revealed

in Him, as its refuge from itself, and its hiding-place, now in the path of obedience - that is, of the divine nature - knows Him as its dwelling-place and home; the richest fruit individually of all the ways of that grace with us. It is surely an inestimable joy that may thus be our portion now. But as essential to it, in the possession of the divine nature, "He dwells in us," and we know it "by the Spirit which He hath given us" - the power of the manifestation of all that is true of that nature, and that nothing else may be tolerated as the life of the Christian. And now, in closing, I would put it to myself as to my beloved brethren: How are our hearts affected by such a calling that, setting us in Christ by place, and as Christ by life, nature, and relationship before God and the Father, can give us no other path here than that in which He walked, doing always those things that pleased Him? It is profitable for our souls to pass and repass our life in review before God in the light of such an obedience, and consider how much of it would have been left out, how many things in word, action, or thought would never have occurred if Christ had been filling our hearts. Deeply humbling as such a review of the past must be to each of us, it is well if it only shuts us up the more absolutely to the grace that is in Him, for the present and for what may lie before us; that, if sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and seeing it flows from and is alone true of the life we have in Him, we may seek to realize it, not by effort but by abiding in Him. But this abiding in Him must be where He is; and dwelling there in heart and spirit with Him, we shall be formed by the things that are there - the natural home and sphere of the life we possess - so as to live out nothing but that life in a sphere where everything is contrary to it. "I am crucified with Christ: but I live; yet no more I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20.) May we each one know more of such a life - Christ become everything to us as object, in whom He is our life. (Col 3:11.) J. A. Trench.

If we let Christ practically out of our hearts, it costs a deal to bring Him back again.

S. Christian Obedience the Obedience of Christ.

Christian Obedience the Obedience of Christ.

1Pe 1:2.

J. A. Trench.

It is my desire, with the Lord's help, to look a little into the place and character of the obedience which this passage shows to have been in the thoughts of God for us from eternity. There is nothing I fear, if one may speak for others, that we enter so little into. Yet it involves the whole principle and blessedness of the christian position, and the life which belongs to it. In the passage the words "obedience" and "sprinkling of the blood" equally depend on "of Jesus Christ." This at once brings out the distinct character of the obedience. Peter, writing to the believing "strangers [or "sojourners"] of the dispersion," connects their position with the counsels and foreknowledge of God the Father; and in terms that while, I doubt not, conveying an analogy, are intended to suggest the great contrast between this position and that of the Jew nationally. If Jehovah had chosen Israel as a nation, to be a special people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth (Deu 7:6), these Christians from among them were chosen individually of God the Father, which at once gives a far more intimate relationship. If for the nation there had been an outward sanctification by ordinances (Lev 18:1-30, Lev 19:1-37, Lev 20:1-27 see especially Lev 20:24-26), theirs was the "sanctification of the Spirit" — an effectual work of God that, applying the truth in power to their souls, had separated them to Him, thus carrying into effect His counsels. (Compare 2Th 2:13.) Then as to the object of these counsels and work — "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." For the nation, from Sinai, the condition of entrance into blessing was obedience to the law, to which they were bound by the blood — the penal sanction of death — which Moses sprinkled upon the people. (Exo 24:6-8.) For the Christian it is a wholly contrasted character of obedience — "of Jesus Christ"; that is, in other words, to obey as He obeyed. For this the heart is set free, by His blood-shedding having met every question of sin for the glory of God, and purged our consciences. The blood of Jesus Christ, instead of establishing the authority of the law by a death penalty on disobedience, becomes by His meeting it in infinite grace the delivering power for an obedience after the only pattern of His own. The verse presents the beautiful contrast of the christian position in every particular. And the place it gives obedience, and that so totally new in character, as the end and object of God in the blessing we have been brought into, commands the deepest interest and the subjection of our souls. The first great thing to apprehend clearly is, the difference in the whole principle of it between the obedience of Jesus Christ and that which the law claimed. The law was addressed to man in the flesh, giving the perfect rule of what he ought to be for God. But now that the full character of the flesh has come out, we know that it is "enmity against God," "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Thus the flesh is in its nature opposed to the rule imposed upon it; and a law given to it must mainly consist, as in fact it did, of prohibitions — "thou shalt not" — "thou shalt not"; or if it be considered in its most positive

requirements, what a state of things is revealed that necessitated God's demanding His creature's love! Yet how inoperative, save to condemn: God unrevealed to be loved ["Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (Exo 20:21)]; no giving of a nature capable of loving Him. Nor was love ever produced by commanding it; or, if thus produced, of what value would it be? Yet it will be found in dealing with souls, that the ordinary idea of obedience does not go beyond what the law claimed, but was ineffectual, flesh being what it is in fallen man, to produce; and the serious thing is, that wherever the idea obtains it shuts out any true conception of what the obedience of the Christian is. Nor is it only the law that accustoms us to the thought of an obedience wholly different in principle to that of Christ's, but even that which we constantly, and rightly, look for from our children. I say to my child at its play. "Go and do your lessons and the child gives up its play and sets to work, and we say that is an obedient child. But that is, that the child having a will to do what was pleasant to it, has given up its will to do mine, however distasteful; and the more the thing was distasteful in itself, the more the child's obedience would be shown. It is in principle that of the law's claim; only that the child's known relationship, and the affections flowing from it, furnish a motive to lead to obedience that the law could not give.

Now in what total contrast to all this is the obedience of Christ, as the word presents it? Come (genomenos) of woman, come under the law, He obeyed it perfectly; He magnified and made it honourable in submitting to its obedience, but not as having to be forbidden what He desired. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Neither was it any way the character of His obedience that He gave up His own will before the authority of the Father's will: for, He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." As thus come, we see One whose only will was to do God's will.

It is of such a character of obedience that the epistle of James speaks (Jas 1:25), "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein." The revealed mind of God is what is referred to; but first (Jas 1:18) it is "the word of truth" by which we have been begotten of God, so that we have received the nature of Him whose word it is. To the child of God then the word only comes to direct a nature he possesses in that in which it already delights. It is thus "a perfect law" — a law of liberty upon which the mind becomes fixed objectively — the law and the nature going together; or, as if I said to my child, "Go and play" — bidding just what pleases it. But that the word should be this to us, far deeper principles are involved, connected with a state subjectively suited to the revelation found in the word. And first there must be deliverance out of a state wholly contrary to it. For if the nature we have received, in being born of the incorruptible seed by the living and abiding word of God, delights in what is revealed therein as His will, there is the flesh within that is, as we have seen, diametrically opposed. But when the condition of the flesh has been learned experimentally, as it must be learned, and we know by fruitless efforts under law, after good in it, that it is nothing but evil — if it is not I, but that is too strong for me — and the point of "O, wretched man that I am" has been reached; the neck of the flesh's will has been broken, and the soul thankfully bows to the absolute necessity of God's way of dealing with it, so long before intimated; "The end of all flesh is come before me." (Gen 6:13.) Then I learn that "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin [i.e. "as a sacrifice for sin"] condemned sin in the flesh." But this condemnation having taken place in the death of Him who gave Himself for me that He might be my life, I see that I am entitled to count all that took place in His death as having

happened to me. Thus we know that "our old man," that is, all we were as characterised by sin and the flesh, "has been crucified with Him that the body of sin" — its whole system and power — "might be annulled, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Rom 6:6.) Then in the diligence of faith, reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, of which position in both its parts Christ is the wonderful pattern (ver. 10), we tolerate the will of the flesh no longer. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions thereof." We have died to the law too — which was the "strength of sin" (1Co 15:56), instead of being any strength against it — "by the body of Christ, that we should be to another, to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom 7:4-5.) And not being under the law we are led of the Spirit (Gal 5:18), and the righteousness [dikaioma, full sum of what it required] of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh under law, but after the Spirit as the power of the life we have in Christ. (Rom 8:4.) But the truth goes farther still. It is not merely that, by death to sin and the power of the Spirit there has been a positive deliverance from the dominion of sin, the flesh in the man condemned; but the man himself must go. The Epistle to the Colossians leads us into this deeper aspect of the death of Christ (Col 2:11-12); "ye have died" (Col 3:3); and this become so real, as God presents it to faith, that the practical consequence can be pressed (Col 2:20), "Wherefore if ye have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" Why go and falsify your whole place as a Christian by subjecting yourself to ordinances that suppose the man to be alive; whereas the truth is that we have died with Christ out of our whole place and living status as such, to have it in a totally new sphere, risen with Him — now to know Christ as our life, and to be directed to objects where He is, to form the life practically by Him here, where we have been left to represent Him.

Yet there is another point, touched on indeed in this epistle (Col 2:13), but not further developed there, that has to be reached in the faith of our souls, in order that we may apprehend our full place in Christ, from which it flows that His path is ours; not now death and resurrection with Christ to clear us out from all that was connected with man in responsibility here, his guilt and state closed, but what has resulted from the full disclosure of that state in the long, patient trial of the ages, ending in the rejection of Christ; namely, that he is dead in sins. The Epistle to the Ephesians brings us to this proved universal condition of the first man. (Eph 2:1-10.) In 2Co 5:1-21, the added light of the cross is thrown upon it; for if God had to give up His Son to death that any might live, it was the plain proof that man was given up of God as dead; and this in contrast to dealings with him up to the cross that supposed him to be alive. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." Now into this scene of universal death of man by and in sin, and where Christ was dead in grace for sin, God came in power to form a new creation, "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation"; raising up Christ as the first act of His power to be the beginning and head of it, and then quickening us together with Him. This involves His whole position as seated in the heavenlies, a position revealed to faith that we might know and realize it as a present thing in the power of the Spirit. To Paul it is given to develop this new creation on the side of our place in Christ according to the eternal counsels of God; while in John's epistle (all we have learned through Paul as to the divine clearance made of the first man in judgment being assumed) it is brought out on the side of Christ as our life, involving participation in the divine nature, John being thus in teaching the complement of Paul. If in Paul the full christian position has been seen to be of a new creation of God, in John our condition is viewed as wholly of the same; and by the teaching of the Spirit through both

apostles, He also being given to dwell in us as the power of our realization of it, we know that the Son is in the Father, and, in marvellous association of thought, that we are in Him and He in us. (John 14:20.) In 1 John then it is not the believer now looked at as with a war of two opposed principles within him — the flesh of which he has been born into this world, and the divine nature as born of God (though "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"); but now, all that is of the first man gone in the death of Christ, God sets before us the characteristic privileges and nature of the life we have been brought into in the second Man, as if we never had another — a life which, according to the threefold testimony (1Jn 5:6-12) of the Spirit come from the glory of Christ, of the water for purification, and of the blood for propitiation (water and blood alike flowing from His side in death — the end of man in judgment), is absolutely God's gift to us in His Son.

It may seem to have been a long digression, but the truths that have been before us are necessary in order that we should enter into our having been set apart for the obedience of Christ; so that no lower character of obedience may be seen to belong to the Christian. The Epistle of John puts it into its full place for us, the introductory part (1Jn 1:1-10, 1Jn 2:1-11) bringing out the great principles of the epistle. 1Jn 1:1-4 teaches us the wonderful privilege of the life we have been brought into in "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" that our joy may be full; 1Jn 1:5-10 characterises this fellowship by the principles of God's own nature as light, going on in grace (1Jn 2:1-2) even to divine resources for its practical restoration if absolutely interrupted by sin; 1Jn 2:3-11 adding the test of the two great principles of the divine nature in man, as manifested in Christ — obedience and love, by which false pretension to the possession of the privilege is judged.

Thus the essential principle of the christian position in its deepest privilege is disclosed. The life that was true in Him alone when He was here, shining as the light of men, but in darkness that apprehended it not, is — now that He has closed that state of man for God and for faith in the judgment of the cross, and taken His new place as man in the glory of God — "true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light now shineth." The commandments and word, that were the full expression of the life in Him — as He says, in answer to the question, "Who art thou?" (John 8:25.) "Altogether (or "essentially" ten archen) that which I also say to you" — I am in nature what I speak — are now given to form and direct that life in us, wonderfully "new" in such application to us, but really the "old commandment which ye had from the beginning." Thus whatever blessed traits of that life are seen as expressed in Christ's path here, become His word, with divine authority over me as His commandments too, to indicate what alone is true as the expression of the same life in me. Hence the intimate links that constantly connect the gospel and epistles of John.

Thus wholly contrasted in principle is the obedience of Christ to anything known or presented to man before. Instead of a law acting from outside upon a nature wholly foreign and opposed to it, it is the revealed will of God, livingly expressed in the commandments and word of Christ, coming home with authority by these to a nature which, as His own in us, responds to and delights in that will, and knows no liberty but in obedience.

Sweet it is then to turn to the lowly life of Jesus, where that obedience is seen in all its perfection; even though the incomparable glory of it humbles us, and we feel more and more the utter poverty

of all our thoughts of Him. The Psalm (Psa 40:1-17) from which I have already quoted, brings us to His entrance into the place of it, where for the first time it was possible for Him to obey. All the Jewishly-ordained sacrifices are set aside as having nothing in them for the heart of God, now to find its entire satisfaction in Him who says, "Mine ears hast thou opened," or, more literally, "Ears hast thou digged for me." But as this necessitated His becoming man, the Spirit accepts the paraphrase of the LXX translators, in quoting it in Hebrews 10, "A body hast thou prepared me."*

*Note that in Hebrews the delight of the Lord Jesus is omitted as not so much the point of the Spirit's testimony, but the perfection of the work for God, the contrast of what gave Him no pleasure being strongly brought out. (Heb 10:5-6; Heb 10:8.) In Isaiah 50 we find Him come, and in the path — "When I came was there no man? When I called was there none to answer?" But who was it that came? He who had power to redeem and to deliver, who had all nature at His command as its Creator and Lord. In what character then did He come? "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear." He who was Jehovah came, a man to be dependent and obedient; for this was man's perfection suited to the place He had taken: instructed out of His own deep experience of human sorrow in that place, how to succour the weary by a word, but as Himself looking for direction to God, with His ear wakened morning by morning to receive it. What a study for our hearts! What an obedience is thus foreshadowed — of One to whom alone as man will of right belonged, but become man only to carry out the Father's will, and so waiting upon Him in that blessed communion in which He ever walked for the instruction of it. In the gospels we trace the actual footsteps of the path of the Lord Jesus. But before we turn to them, the doctrine of the epistles comes in largely to increase our apprehension of it — I refer especially to Philippians and Hebrews. In both we find the same wonderful truths of who He was and of the place that He had taken, which are indeed inseparable. In Php 2:1-30 the mind that was in Christ Jesus is to be now in us — a mind that, instead of reaching up as the first Adam to be as God, reached down until He could go down no lower. And there were two great steps in this stupendous stoop; for "subsisting in the form of God" it was no question of usurpation of what did not belong to Him "to be equal with God;" but He "emptied" Himself, taking a bondsman's form, becoming in the likeness of men; and, having been found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." As God He emptied Himself, as man He humbled Himself; and His obedience in that place went on up to death, even that of the cross, in which it was put to the last possible test, and proved perfect — all He was thus entering into and giving its character to every step of His path. For it was nothing that man as such should be dependent and obedient; it was his apostasy that he departed from it. But that He, in whom "all the fulness was pleased to dwell," should take man's subject place, to glorify God by answering to it perfectly and never leaving it, gives the humiliation, and dependence, and obedience displayed in it their only measure and infinite glory.

*We can appreciate the hesitation that our English translators may have felt in rendering literally, in such a connection, the most wonderful word they had before them, *ekenose* (Ver. 7.) From Tyndale down (Wycliffe had "lowered himself") they adopted the paraphrase "made himself of no reputation;" and there is this to be said for it, that if "emptied" necessarily involved the thought of something of which He emptied Himself, the paraphrase would be truer to the sense: for the word

refers, as the participial clauses following show, to the place He assumed rather than to that from which He came. The same great elements of the truth come out, only if possible, with greater fulness in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For if Heb 1:1-14, while fixing the eye of faith on Him who as man, having by Himself made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, leads us by ever-ascending steps to the full, divine glory of His person — from being born Son of God into this world (Heb 1:5), object of angels' worship (Heb 1:6), addressed as God by God according to Psa 45:1-17 (Psa 45:8-9), to being owned as Jehovah by Jehovah, and this when in the lowest depths of His humiliation according to Psa 102:1-28 (vers. 10-12; Heb 2:1-18 brings out the reality of His manhood, and the purposes of God accomplished in it, not merely as necessary to His having the place of universal supremacy marked out for man by Psa 8:5-8, but for far deeper reasons connected with God's glory, and the state of those with whom He became man to identify Himself, and conduct them as the sons of God to glory. (See for four such reasons vers. 10, 14, 17, 18.)

All in this chapter then depends upon, and is brought out to be the proof of, His true humanity. Only as man could the Sanctifier and the sanctified be "of one," and He "not ashamed to call them brethren." Yet the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, else He must have abode alone in His humanity; it is then as the risen Christ that He is able to associate us with Him, as we hear Him say, according to the words of Psa 22:1-31, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," and "in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee" — opening the wilderness for us with a song of redemption more wonderful by far, through such association, than that of Moses and Israel. (Exo 15:1-27) "It is finished! It is finished! Who can tell redemption's worth?"

He who knows it leads the singing.

Full the joy, as fierce the wrath."

Then He has set us the example of dependence for all the way, "I will put my trust in him (from the LXX of Isa 8:17) until the last quotation, in the same connection in the prophet, brings us to the end of the path — the remnant of the house of Jacob displayed with Him as His children in glory. Thus the mystery of His humbled place as man, the stumbling-block of Israel's pride, is solved; and we have Him fully in the path of man: suffering being tempted, but thus able to succour the tempted ones: learning obedience by the things that He suffered, thus able to sympathise; and the epistle does not close without bringing Him in as the last of the long line of witnesses to the principle of faith as the power of the just man's life, if in this as in all things He must have the pre-eminence — "the beginner and completer of faith." (Heb 12:2.) But obedience is the special point before us in the blessed unfolding of the Lord's place as man, that the epistle gives us. See then how, if in contrast to Israel's priests, who being taken from among themselves could exercise forbearance towards the ignorant and the wanderers, we have a great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; and if His very exaltation and glory as such seems to take Him out of the range and reach of human need to be able to sympathise, the Spirit of God can recall to us (ver. 7) "the days of his flesh," in which "when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of death," He was "heard for his godly fear." (eulabeia; compare Heb 12:28, where the same word occurs, His reverent submission to the will of God.)

Thus what full capacity, albeit that He is the Son of God in glory, to enter into all that connects itself with human weakness! What are our deepest distresses as compared with His, who "though He were a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered"? But what could surpass the grace that presents Him to our hearts as having passed through our school? He entered it indeed in a very different way, and for wholly different reasons than we, who have to learn obedience (it is the great lesson God is teaching us in all His ways with us) because, alas! too long accustomed to disobey — He, because ever accustomed to command. He had never before been in circumstances in which obedience could be rendered. Not that there was anything in that holy nature contrary to obedience; as we have seen, He became man only to obey, and found His sole motive for everything in obedience. But thus He learned it. Only that the Spirit would now lead on the Hebrews addressed, from a side of things, unspeakably precious in itself but connected with what He was down here, "unto perfection," connected as this always is with His place as man in glory according to the counsels of God (Heb 5:9-14; Heb 6:1) There only all His precious sympathy and succour is now to be found; thither He would lead up our hearts: and thus the great object of the epistle is carried on, that those whose religious relationships with God had been earthly in Judaism, should be weaned from them to new relationships that now were wholly heavenly.

We have seen then, in the doctrine of the Old Testament and of the New, what gives its character to the obedience to which we are sanctified. That It was that of the Son of God become man, to render it in a perfection beyond all that could have been otherwise conceived, so contrary in its nature to all that man is naturally. But we must turn to the gospels to seek in the power of the Spirit to trace a little the detail of that perfection in His walk: no more wonderful study could be presented to our poor hearts, so slow to enter into it. The test came early. For when — in fulfilling righteousness (Mat 3:15), that is, carrying out God's will, His first public act was to identify Himself in John's baptism with those who, in submitting to it, took their true place before God, confessing their sins, and were thereby proved to be "the saints, the excellent of the earth" in whom was all His delight — with the opened heavens, and the descent upon Him of the Holy Spirit, the Father's voice declared Him to be, in the humble place He had thus taken, the object of the Father's delight, the very next thing is that He is led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. But what circumstances for the Son of God to be found in in this world! "Having fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He hungered. And the tempter coming up to him said, If thou art Son of God, speak, that these stones may become loaves of bread." But simple as it would have been for Him, with all divine resources ever at command to help Himself to bread, He would not put forth power to take Himself out of any consequence of the place He had come into as man. He had not become man to command; man's place was to obey, and the enemy is foiled by His keeping that place perfectly. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He waits therefore — will only act, if it be but in the matter of taking necessary food, when there is a word from God for it. But more than that, He lived by it, for this was God's will for man according to the passage that He quotes, if now for the first time it was realized in man — not merely a path outwardly directed by the word, but an inward life formed by it, of every movement of which the word was the motive and source.

Well may we pause at the outset of such a study, beloved brethren, and put it to ourselves honestly before God, Do we know indeed that this is the obedience to which we have been sanctified? I am not speaking of failure in walking according to it; but have we bowed without

reserve to the principle of it as thus brought to the test by Satan, and proved in its absolute perfection in the blessed Lord. Then we shall know how to judge in the secret of our hearts any spring of thought or action that has not its source in God's known will. I say known, because there is no more subtle form of temptation than when it is pressed upon us that circumstances call for action, when there is no word from God, no intimation of His will. Yet if we act without knowing God's will nothing can be more certain than that we are doing our own; and this is the essence of sin. "Behold obedience is better than sacrifice, attention than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination and self-will is as iniquity and idolatry." (1Sa 15:22-23, New Trans.) Nothing in man is right except obedience. Confidence in God will be surely needed for waiting, as with the Lord, left for forty days without food; and this was the principle brought out in the next temptation: but is it a strange thing, to those who know His heart as perfectly revealed in the Son, that we should trust Him? This testing took place then alone with Satan, but under the eye of One who appraises it as none else could, and reveals it in grace to us, that delighting in it with Him we may learn man's true place of obedience and be formed by it. A very different form of testing arose with the circumstances of His rejection, as it began to come out more and more plainly. We see the effect of it on His spirit in Mat 11:1-30. His testimony, as that of His forerunner, was as rejected by that generation; He felt it. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not," more hard of heart than Tyre or Sodom. But (ver. 25) He bows in the deep trial to His Father, answering the rejection of the cities by, "I thank thee . . . even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." What rest in the known wisdom and love of the Father, and what perfect submission also, as He traces all that pressed upon Him to its source there! Then if He exercises divine will, it is not for Himself, but only, as always (Mat 8:3; John 5:21), to meet need in man, in carrying out the testimony of grace committed to Him. Here it is to reveal the Father; so as to give us the same resource and resting-place He had in the knowledge of the Father, and then to call us to take His yoke upon us, learning from Him ("meek and lowly in heart") that submission in which rest is practically found for the soul, whatever the circumstances. Testing then, in whatever form — whether from Satan or from men — only drew out before God and His Father the sweet savour of a divinely perfect obedience now found for the first time in man upon earth. But for the full positive development of it we must go to the Gospel of John, where, above all, the divine glory of His Person shines forth; than which nothing can be more remarkable in the connection of the truth. Here He is the Word that was with God, and was God — for none other could express God — the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, come to make Him known according to that relationship, even as One in it only could. He can say, "Before Abraham was, I am;" "I and my Father are one:" yet it is ever the Son become flesh, whom we see, and who, true to the place of man, never assumes anything to Himself, but delights to receive all — even when it belongs to the rights of His Person — from the Father. He may speak and act as none but a divine Person could; yet He never leaves the place of a servant, subject to the Father, carrying out that for which He was sent. Surely the mystery of His Person meets us everywhere: nowhere else is there such an unfolding of obedience as in this gospel. His ministry opens in John 4:1-54. He had found a poor sinner to whom He could reveal Himself in an activity of grace that formed, as to His life in connection with men, His only joy here. There was manifest refreshment for His spirit in it. He sees the fields already white for harvest in the light of that one soul brought to know herself and Him. But the sources of it lay deeper than the disciples could enter into: "I have meat [or "food"] to eat that ye know not." Wherein did it consist? Not merely in outward acts of service.

"My food is that I should do the will of Him that has sent me, and that I should finish his work." What a character this gives His whole path! His food, the very sustenance of His life, was in carrying out the Father's will.

John 5:1-47 becomes a complete revelation of the place He has taken, as of Him who takes it. Divine grace, active in power to bless even on the Sabbath day, had clashed with Jewish sticking for forms. How little they knew the heart of God, who thought that He could rest in a world where there was the cry of human misery on every hand. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," revealed that heart, but in terms that they knew well involved the perfect community of nature between the Son who spoke and the Father; and they charge Him with making Himself equal with God. Nothing could be further from the truth, as to One who never sought His own glory, but only the glory of Him that sent Him (John 7:18; John 8:50); yet to be on such an equality was no usurping of what did not belong to Him, as we have seen. But He had emptied Himself, becoming in the likeness of man; and so He answered them, "The Son can do nothing from [apo] himself, but whatever He sees the Father do." He had not come down to act as an independent divine Person on earth in the exercise of His own will and power, but in perfect dependence; and in the communion in which He ever walked with His Father, we learn further that "whatever things he doeth, these also doeth the Son in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that he himself doeth;" and this carried out even in quickening whom He will (ver. 21); while verses 27-30 show that not otherwise will it be in the exercise of the judgment committed to Him. "I cannot do anything from myself: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I do not seek my will, but the will of him that sent me." Oh, how it searches and humbles us to hear Him speak of not even seeking will of His, but only that the Father's might be accomplished! In John 6:38 et seq. it is the same thing that characterises Him as the bread of God; He came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent Him. For if He found the food of His life here in doing that will, God found His bread,* the food of His own joy as it were, in Him as come down to do it. In wonderful grace, when we have reached Him through His death — "have eaten the flesh and drank the blood of the Son of man" (ver. 53), identifying ourselves thus by faith with His death, without which "there is no life to taste and to enjoy the bread," as another has truly said — verse 57 brings us into participation in what He was to God; "as the living Father has sent me, and I live by [or "on account of"] the Father; so he that eateth ME even he shall live on account of Me."

*Compare for the force of the expression Lev 3:11; Lev 3:16; Lev 21:6, etc.; Num 28:2; Num 28:24; Eze 16:19; Eze 44:7, where "food," "bread," and "meat" are the same in Hebrew (the point being missed by the LXX., save in the last two quotations). Nor can I doubt that the "bread of God" here gets its character from this use; namely, that it is not merely the bread which He gives, but upon which He feeds first of all, as the infinite excellency and perfection of Christ, proved under all testing, in the lowly stoop and place He had taken to carry out the Father's will, yielding Him divine satisfaction and joy.

We have seen this principle of dependent obedience as to the works of the blessed Lord; but nothing gives a greater idea of its absoluteness than to find it also true of His words, "I speak to the world those things which I have heard from [para, "from with"] him;" though men would only recognise, when they had lifted up the Son of man, who He was, and how as to the place He had taken He neither acted from Himself, or spoke save "as my Father hath taught me." (John 8:28.) How wonderfully the opened ear of Isa 50:1-11, as of one that is instructed, has been verified in

His path. For, as He says again (John 12:49), I have not spoken of (ek) myself, but the Father which sent me He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. . . . Whatsoever I speak therefore even as the Father said unto me so I speak " — in words and works thus alike, the revealer of the Father; and so, as the verse tells us, "His commandment is life eternal": for it is eternal life to know the Father as thus revealed. But we are nearing the end, for the enmity of man's heart was surging round that only path of perfect light ever seen in this world, where, in the Son become man, and keeping man's place in the simple perfection of dependent and delighting obedience, God found His delight and was glorified. The state of all men being thus fully revealed, it was necessary, because of that state as well as for the glory of God, that such a path should close here; but only in taking up that state to identify Himself with it in grace — and endure the judgment of God in which it is ended for ever for faith, as for God. Precious it is to know that meeting the judgment due to sin became only the occasion for manifesting the depth of the perfection of His obedience, laying therein a fresh ground for the Father's delight in Him: "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again." Divine power was needed, for "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and power to take it again." But He will only exercise that power as ever in obedience — "This commandment have I received from my Father." (John 10:17-18.)

One more passage connects obedience with the spring of it, that whether in Him or in us, gives it all its blessed character and acceptance — LOVE. I refer to John 14:30-31 : "Henceforth I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment so I do." What foothold could the enemy find in a life made up of nothing but love and obedience? Luke brings us to this final assault of Satan; he, who notes that after the temptation in the wilderness the devil departed from Christ for a season, and at the close that, if it was "man's hour," the "power of darkness" was awfully associated with it. (Luk 4:13; Luk 22:53.) In that Gospel too, in Gethsemane, the full force of the temptation comes before us, as that of Satan who, having by man's sin and the judgment of God, the power of death over man, sought to press it in that character upon Him, to deter Him from going the whole way in obedience. We are permitted to draw near and know what very real conflict it was to the blessed Lord, though none can fathom His sorrow, in anticipating having to pass out of the experience of communion with the Father which had been all the light and joy of His path, into that of being wholly forsaken of God. Presenting it before the Father in the unclouded communion in which He yet was, did but add poignancy to the sorrow. In His very perfection He shrank from such a cup. "Nevertheless not my will but thine be done" records His giving Himself up to it, in the perfection of obedience here brought to its absolute and final test. And the fiery trial over, in peace we hear Him say in John, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" as He went to the cross to exhaust that cup, as He alone could, and finish the work given Him to do. Thus in infinite depths of suffering He endured the judgment of the will of the flesh that once characterised us; but that even now we may be so easily betrayed into if not abiding in Him. Oh, that in true dependence and nearness of heart to the Lord we may know how to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," that nothing but His will-less life may be manifested in our body.

Lastly, I would look at what the word connects with obedience, as the abounding portion of our hearts to be enjoyed in the path of it, and not to be known out of it. We have seen it as the

principle, simple but of such far-reaching effect in the soul's history, of rest practically realized, as shown us first in the experience of the blessed Lord Himself. (Matthew 11) And this is true in every part of the blessing. For all flows out of the fact, so immense in itself, that it is of His own life and nature we live, of which His path here was the perfect expression and revelation.

Thus if in Php 2:12. "as ye have always obeyed" was the condition, whether under apostolic care, as when Paul was with them, or now much more in its absence, of their deliverance from all the present allowed power of the enemy, the mind of obedience (as well as of self-emptiness) was expressed in Him, who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Vers. 5-8.) Here was the wonderful pattern for the saints. In the path of obedience the apostle had helped them to work out their salvation; they had only to go on in it now, that he was gone, and work out their own* salvation "with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both the willing and the working according to His good pleasure." The Lord's path had been the complete illustration of the principle; and the verses following (14-16) are just the reproduction in the saints of the blessed traits of His own life. His name and testimony involve us in a conflict which is His with Satan: the issue is not uncertain; we are on the winning side; He will bruise him under our feet shortly. But the enemy works by wiles; it is well not to be ignorant of his devices; fear and trembling have their wholesome place if we have learned to distrust ourselves; but we have only to be occupied with carrying out God's will in obedience, and are carried safely through all to the heavenly glory of Christ, which is the salvation of the epistle.

*In contrast to Paul's, not to God's.

Still it is in the Gospel of John, where the obedience of Christ has been brought out to the full, that we find the full consequences in blessing of its being wrought in us; and first, in John 14:1-31. This precious instruction of the Lord opens out to us the Father's house, as connected first with the full revelation there had been of the Father in the Son come down here — "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; when with the place He was about to take as going to the Father on the ground of accomplished redemption, "I go to prepare a place for you; " and lastly, with His coming again to receive us to Himself there. But meanwhile, between His going away and coming again, the Holy Spirit is promised as the power of our enjoyment of the new place, that it may become the present home of hearts that miss the Lord out of this place. All that follows from verse 16 is the effect of the Holy Spirit having been given us; we should not be left orphans, for the Lord Himself would come to us, to be known in a way He could not have been to the disciples. When the world saw Him no more we should see Him, and this intimately connected with living of His life — "Ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." And further, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me and I in you." If the Son has His place in the Father by the glory of His person, we have ours in Him by redemption, not only in divine righteousness before God, but — inseparably connected with such a position — He in us, as participating in His life and nature, now to be expressed in this world.

Now from verse 20 we have the path, the only possible one, in which the Spirit dwelling in us, and ungrieved, can be the power of the enjoyment of all this wonderful blessing. Flowing from a dependent life in Him it is but the path of that life, the reproduction in us of what constituted the life in Him as verse 31 shows it — love to the Father and obedience. And so verse 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus the obedience of love in us,

being of His own life, brings with it the manifestation of the Lord Himself. Then when the thought of such a private manifestation to one, and not to another, clashed with Jewish thoughts of an appearing in glory that would be public and before all, the Lord in reply to Jude only deepens the character of the obedience, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The word differs from the commandments of Christ only in that it is the full revelation of His mind, whereas these have to do with details; as, for instance, the oft-repeated one, that we love one another. There is not a commandment for everything, but His word covers the whole range of the life leaving no room for the subtle plea of self-will, that His will is not revealed. Love keeping His word then brings with it not only the manifestation of the Son, but the coming of the Father and the Son to make their abode with the obedient one. So that the two characteristic joys of what is before us, the Father's "abodes" (for it is the same word in verses 2 and 23) and the Son's presence, are brought down to our hearts, and made the present portion, in the power of the Spirit, of the obedience of love — this obedience being but the true expression and path of the life we now possess in the Son.

John 15:1-27 confirms the wonderful character of the path set before us. There (ver. 9) we learn the only measure of His love — it is the Father's love to Him. But His desire is that we should abide in it — be in the enjoyment of it continually; for though the love does not depend upon our walk, the whole realisation of it does: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might be in you, and your joy full." It is but the same path of the same life, now true in Him and in us, leading into the same joy — the joy He had in the Father's love.

One thing more is connected with it in verse 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Oh, how unspeakable the privilege! to be treated not as servants who receive their orders, and that is all, but as the trusted friends of Christ to whom He communicates His mind — all things that He has heard of the Father — so as to be the depositaries of it in a world that has seen and hated both Him and the Father, and be formed by it as witnesses for Him. The epistle (1 John) adds its testimony to the full blessedness to be found in walking according to our wholly new order of being as of a new creation in Christ. In 1Jn 2:1-29 we have already seen this to be the principle upon which the walk of Christ is the pattern of the Christian's. Let us look at it again as to the wonderful consequences flowing out of it. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." This is not given us as a test by which we may know whether we know Him — as often falsely used to lead souls not in the liberty of grace into doubt and perplexity; for the fact that we are addressed as to the characteristics of the divine nature assumes that we are partakers of it; it is impossible to conceive anything of a nature we do not possess, as that of angels. But It enables us to judge (as do all the tests of the epistle) the pretensions of human wisdom, and the like, to have part in christian privilege when Christ is unknown. For how can we know Him save as having His life and living of it! Certain it is that man in the flesh does not know Him — "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" but as we have seen everywhere that life consisted of obedience. Hence "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him;" while, on the other hand, every footstep in the path of obedience confirms and deepens in the soul the knowledge that we have of Him. The next verse shows the character of the knowledge contemplated; it is not that of ordinary acquaintance, but of communion with the One we know in partaking of His nature, and walking according to it:

"Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." Keeping His word is not different from keeping His commandments — "The old commandment is the word which ye have heard" (John 2:7) — but only carries the obedience further as in John 14:1-31. His word is that in which all that He is in His own nature of love was perfectly expressed. That love is now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us — God, who is love, thus dwelling in us. In keeping the word then, which is the revelation of the love, there is nothing to hinder the full realisation of it; it is perfected in us, and we know that we are in Him. Again, it is but His own path, "he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Oh for hearts in the power of the Spirit to enter into the character of that walk a little more! So walking — the normal life of the Christian — our heart condemns us not; we have confidence toward God; we are formed by His mind in the intimacy of the confidence in which we walk, and "whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (1Jn 3:16-22, Compare John 8:29.) And this leads into the last blessed consequence of such a life and path of obedience, as brought out in the last verse — there is nothing beyond it for ever — "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him." The heart, first drawn to Him by all the infinite grace revealed in Him, as its refuge from itself, and its hiding-place, now in the path of obedience — that is, of the divine nature — knows Him as its dwelling-place and home; the richest fruit individually of all the ways of that grace with us. It is surely an inestimable joy that may thus be our portion now. But as essential to it, in the possession of the divine nature, "He dwells in us," and we know it "by the Spirit which he hath given us," as the power of the manifestation of all that is true of that nature, and that nothing else may be tolerated in the life of the Christian. And now, in closing, I would put it to myself as to my beloved brethren: How are our hearts, affected by such a calling, that setting us in Christ by place, and as Christ by life, nature, and relationship before God and the Father, can give us no other path here than that in which He walked, doing always those things that please Him? It is profitable for our souls to pass and repass our life in review before God in the light of such an obedience, and consider how much of it would have been left out, how many things in word, action, or thought would never have occurred if Christ had been filling our hearts. Deeply humbling as such a review of the past must be to each of us it is well if it only shuts us up the more absolutely to the grace that is in Him, for the present, and for what may lie before us; that, if sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and seeing it flows from and is alone true of the life we have in Him, we may seek to realise it, not by effort but by abiding in Him. But this abiding in Him must be where He is, and dwelling there in heart and spirit with Him, we shall be formed by the things that are there — the natural home and sphere of the life we possess — so as to live out nothing but that life in a sphere where everything is contrary to it. "I am crucified with Christ: but I live; yet no more I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal 2:20). May we each one know more of such a life — Christ become everything as our object to those in whom He is our life. (Col 3:11).

S. Fruit Bearing

Fruit Bearing

John 15:1-27.

Notes of an Address by J. A. Trench.

(from "An Outline of Sound Words" No. 12, p. 10)

John 15:1. In John 15:1-27, Jesus contrasts Himself — the true Vine — with another vine which had been familiar to the minds of His disciples, and of which we have frequent mention in the word. We read of it in Psa 80:8, and again in Jer 2:21. Israel was that vine: God had brought that nation out of Egypt and planted them in most favourable circumstances to bring forth fruit unto Him: but though He had planted them wholly a right vine, they have turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Him. The cause of their doing so we have in Jer 2:13 : "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." First, they forsook the LORD, and so, of course, lost all joy and happiness, and then, as they must have something, they hewed them out cisterns that can hold no water. They turned to the world and tried to find in it what they had lost in forsaking the LORD; but they lost not only their own joy and happiness but also their power of fruit bearing, for we read, ' From Me is thy fruit found," and thus defeated the object for which God had brought them out of Egypt, and planted them in a good land. So Israel, the Old Testament vine, had to be laid aside, and here Jesus sets Himself forth as "the true Vine." He alone ever brought fruit to the Husbandman. The Father never came to seek fruit from Him, without finding in rich abundance that which He sought.

John 15:2. Jesus not only brought forth fruit Himself, but He is the source of fruit in others. "Every branch in Me that beareth fruit," He says, shewing that the branch must be in Him, the true Vine, in order that it may bring forth fruit. This sentence gives us the key to the passage: it shews us that the union here spoken of is an earthly union, for vines do not grow in heaven, and in heaven there is no fruit bearing in the sense of this passage. The heavenly union of Christ with His body was not yet formed or manifested, for Christ was not yet glorified, and until He was we do not hear of a Head in heaven and members on earth. Our union then with Christ as members of His body is not here alluded to; that is indissoluble, and independent of us altogether. The union here spoken of may be dissolved, and is dependent upon our abiding in Him.

It may be said, None are disciples, but those who are true disciples, and as such must bear fruit; but that is a misinterpretation of the word "disciple." In the Bible we read of true and false disciples. If men will call themselves by the Name of Christ and profess to belong to Him, they will be taken on their own profession, and fruit will be sought from them. They will have made themselves responsible to bear that fruit to God which can only be borne by abiding in Christ. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away;" not "cast forth" as in the sixth verse. The distinction is drawn between the false and true professor; if we, His own beloved ones, cease to bear fruit the

husbandman must take us away. This may be done in various ways; it may be by removing us from our position of service for Him, perhaps by laying us on a bed of sickness. There may be also a taking away by temporal life being cut off, which was what happened in the Corinthian church, as we read in Corinthians 11, on account of the manner in which they partook of the Lord's Supper.

"Every branch In Me . . . that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Many of the Lord's dear children are dismayed when they find themselves in trial; they get alarmed and troubled and question why it is that now they meet with trials unknown till they became the Lord's children. They overlook the blessed truth revealed to us here, that purging necessarily follows fruit bearing. Only bear a little fruit and you may be sure that the husbandman will not spare the pruning knife. One time when walking round an orchard I remarked a tree unpruned: on asking the gardener why he had neglected it when all the others bore marks of his care, he replied, "That tree is half dead, I have no hopes of it bearing more fruit, so do not think it worth the trouble of pruning." Another day I remarked a tree very closely cut, to my eyes almost ruined, so unsparingly had the knife been used on it. Again I asked the gardener, "Why was this?" "Ah Sir," he replied, "that is my finest tree. I look for more fruit from that tree in autumn than from any other in the garden." Just so you may expect to feel the pruning knife if you are bearing fruit; but remember it is a Father's hand that uses the knife. "If ye endure chastening God dealeth with you as with sons." Will you consent to be treated as a son, or would you miss this proof of sonship, because "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous?"

John 15:3-5. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." In the first two verses we had the husbandman's part quite independent of us; in the 4th verse we have our responsibility to "abide" in Jesus: words of deepest and most blessed significance. Abiding in Jesus is dependent upon, and connected with, obedience to His word. Jesus kept His disciples clean by keeping them walking in His word, and we learn from this that the way to abide in Jesus is to walk in obedience to His word, learning His will as there revealed to us. Let us take it as one sole rule of life, so shall we abide in Jesus, and so bring forth much fruit to the glory of God the Father. Seek to maintain a tender heart, and a sensitive conscience — a tender heart that instinctively knows His will, and a sensitive conscience that is aware of the slightest departure from Him.

John 15:6-8. In the sixth verse there is a change; we read, "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch." Hitherto, Jesus had been using, to the Eleven, gathered round Him, the word "ye," personally addressing the beloved disciples; but there was a vacant place at the table. Judas, the twelfth, had just left. Already he was on his way to the High Priest's palace, thinking for how many pieces of silver he would sell Jesus, and Jesus knows it. It may be in reference to him He says, "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." But again He personally addresses them in the 7th verse, "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Fruit bearing, we have already seen, is the result of abiding in Jesus: here we have another precious promise and result of abiding in Jesus, namely, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you;" and remark here again how closely are connected abiding in Jesus and His words abiding in us. His words, not His commandments, are here mentioned. But does the heart that is abiding in Jesus' love need more than a word from Him, a passing hint of His

wishes? No! it is all joy to the faithful heart to find out one little thing it can do to please Him. There are some Christians that know but little of this kind of obedience; the language of their hearts seems to be, "Show me His commands and I will follow them." They would put themselves again under law, and seem to think it a higher place to be a servant under law, than a son under grace; but the truth that characterises this dispensation is sonship. Our Father ever seeks for the service and worship of children only.

John 15:9-10. In the 9th verse Jesus tells us the measure of His love to us, even as much as His Father bears to Him, and in the 10th verse He tells us that He abode in the Father's love because He kept His commandments. Would we enjoy uninterruptedly and uncloudedly the sense of the love Jesus bears us, we must keep His commandments. Unbroken communion is another sure result of walking in accordance with the word.

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John 15:12-13. In the 12th verse He gives us the measure of our love to one another, even the extent of His own love to us. How we fail in this! How often, if we judged ourselves truly, would we find that we loved one another because of some natural amiability, or because we suit each others natural disposition, or because we find each others society agreeable. Does Jesus love us for any of these reasons? Ah! Jesus never found anything in us to attract His love: He loved us when we were enemies, and dead in trespasses and sins, and found no beauty in us, but utter entire loathsomeness; and now that He has cleansed us from our sins, and arrayed us in all His own spotless beauty. He still loves us in the same sovereign way of grace. His love knows no limit, and no partiality. Think you He loves the fruit bearing branches better than the barren ones? Those who bring in much service, you might imagine more merit His love; but such is not His way to love. He loves all alike: the difference being that those who are abiding in His word have a clearer, deeper sense of His love.

John 15:14-15. In the 14th verse He shows us that obedience brings us into the wondrous position of being "friends of Jesus." Think of this! What is it to be a friend of Jesus? A friend is one on whom I depend: on whose sympathy I count; to whom I can confide all the secrets of my heart, and disclose the motives of my actions. Such a friend is Jesus to us, and such a friend would He have each of us be to Him. Jesus wants a friend, and He goes to you and asks you to be His friend. Will you be a friend to Him? Then show your willingness by obedience to His will. How can two walk together except they be agreed? And is He not much better able to choose the right way than you are? The difference between my servant and my friend is, that to my servant I give my command without assigning a reason: but to my friend I tell my wishes and also my motives, and this is just how Jesus treats us, as He tells us in the 15th verse. "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what His Lord doeth; but I have called you friends: for all

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S. Heaven Our Home.

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John 13:1-10; John 14:1-18; John 20:11-18.

(Notes of an address by J A. Trench, 1890).

It is a wonderful thing for our souls to have the Father's house revealed to us, so that we can enjoy it before we get there. There is no moral link between the Father's house and this world; no possibility of putting them together in our hearts. Do we know anything of the complete break between these two scenes? The moment the Lord knew His hour was come, His first thought was, to give those whom He left in this world part with Himself where He was going. There is the first communication of divine life and nature, that brings with it the capacity for the entrance into our souls of all these things: it needed the knowledge of what He had wrought, to enter into them. But He knows the need we meet at every turn, and He provides for it. All this is preliminary; up to this the Father's house has not been mentioned. When the Lord Jesus is able to count upon the sorrow of hearts that will miss Him, He says, "Let not your heart be troubled . . . , in my Father's house are many mansions." What a revelation There had been no such thing up to this time in Scripture. Much of the Lord's ministry had prepared the way for it; now the moment has come for the full revelation to break on us, a home where He has gone, His own home, now revealed and made ours.

Then He goes on to address His disciples, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." How were they to know it? Philip thought, if only he knew the Father, he could know the Father's house. Jesus says, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Every trait of the blessedness of the Father's house was revealed and shining forth in the Person and ways of the Son here below. The heart that knows the Son, knows the Father too, even the feeblest babe, for it is no matter of attainment; the Lord Jesus would start us with it. The cardinal truth of the revelation of the Father is found in the Gospel of John, as the One to Whom I am related. For this reason we all turn to the Gospel of John, for there we have all the precious revelation of the Father in the Person of the Lord Jesus here.

"I go to prepare a place for you." There is nothing more important than to seize the meaning of that little sentence; it is not that any preparation is going on now, but how did I ever come to have a home prepared up there? Accomplished redemption prepares us for it. The Lord Jesus closing our whole history here, opens to us a heavenly home, fitting that home for us by His presence there, and fitting us perfectly for that home. Thus, at the very opening of our way, we can give thanks to the Father; He has made us meet. Truth only becomes real to us as it supplies a need created in our souls. That need had been created in Mary Magdalene. The disciples were satisfied when they had inspected the sepulchre; they returned to their homes; but Mary had no home to go to, and she stood without the sepulchre weeping. He had delivered her from the fearful power of Satan, and the sense of what He was detained her there, until His voice broke upon her ear. She wished

to resume the intimacies with which she had known Him before, but He says, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father." He was going to introduce her into far deeper and fuller blessing than she could have known before. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." What additional light this is upon all that we have found of the revelation of the Father's house. He is now able to open to us the place where He has gone and to associate us in the fullest way with Himself. "I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." How simply this gives us our place; the yesterday of my life closed in the cross of Christ; the to-morrow to be with Him in glory, and the present so wonderfully filled with all we have been brought into while here. Are we living in the power of the things that are ours already? Do we know what it is in a little measure to bask in the light of the Father's love? We have the Holy Ghost to be the power of the enjoyment of all these things in our souls, while we are waiting on the tip-toe of expectation for Him to come again, that where He is, there we may be also. What I seek is that we may enter into the power that is given us for the enjoyment of these things. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1Co 2:9). Arrested by this thought, many of us stop there, and put it all off to the future; but the Apostle only quotes this from Isaiah to contrast it with what we have. "But God hath revealed them unto us, by His Spirit." The things that God has prepared in His eternal counsels, are now revealed to us by His Spirit, that we may know them, and enjoy them as our present possession; that our hearts might live in them as a present reality.

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2Co 4:18). Do we know anything of such an attitude? Have we been looking at the things which are seen, today, or at the things that are unseen? These things are revealed so that we can look at them. "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col 3:2). Associated with Him, risen with Him, set your mind (N. Tn.). The affections and the mind are distinct things; the Spirit assumes that the affections will follow Christ there, but is the mind there? The cross upon earth answers to the heavenly glory. How fatal the influence of man that comes between me and that risen, glorified, Christ. Are our hearts lingering in the scene out of which He has gone? Or are our hearts and minds set upon Him, where He is in the glory? "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Php 3:20). Citizenship was everything to a Grecian, it came before the dearest relationship. All that forms the moral life is in heaven now. How feeble is the grasp of these things! What is the practical power of them? Does everything about us, bear witness to them, so that we are only waiting for Him to come, to take us to Himself, in Whom all our joys and our hopes have centred while here? Not one thing has been withheld from us, and He is engaged in service for us in the glory, so that there may be no hindrance to our enjoyment of these things, so that we may be going about this dark world with our faces lit up, or at all events our hearts, with His love. We have found what satisfies us divinely and for ever.

S. Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet

Jesus Washing the Disciples' Feet IN Chapter 12:1 the Lord had closed His public testimony. "He departed and did hide himself from them." From this chapter on to the end of chapter 17, we find Him alone with His disciples, free to make known to them the full depth of the place they had in His love, now that He was about to leave them and go back to the Father, and how that love would be in exercise about them. This is what makes these chapters so peculiarly precious to us, beloved; for we have all our part in what is unfolded in them, as surely as we are His.

Mark the opening words of the Holy Ghost, for they are the key to all that follows. They give us the new position of things on which depends the action of Jesus in this chapter, in all its full significance. "Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father"--such is the place He now takes anticipatively" having loved His own which were in the world He loves them to the end." He is gone to the Father; we are left in the world without Him! But this is just the moment that Jesus chooses to tell us what we are to Him. How sweet for us below to hear Him call us "His own!" Who does not know the delight of being able to call something one's (mil It is not so much the value of what is possessed, but the simple consciousness that it is mine! Thus the heart of Jesus speaks out in the term of His love. It is not with our poor estimation of Him, nor still less with ourselves, He would occupy us. He would have us to lose all thoughts of ourselves, and listen to His thoughts about us. Are you prepared for this, beloved? But listen-" having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end." It is not merely that we are His, but He cares for us. He loved us, and He loves us to the end. But look-"He loved them unto the end." The end of what? The end of the time we need the assurance of His love-the end of the path of His own in the world. We shall not need to be assured of His love when we see Him face to face, and know as we are known. We do need it now. What a resting place for our hearts in this desolated world-the bosom of Jesus! It is where John leant (5: 23), and it is open to each of its still to lean there. Nay, it is to secure and maintain us in unhindered enjoyment of our place there, that the Lord Jesus enters upon the loving service of this chapter for us. And His is not love that changes. That is what gives one. such rest in His love. He knows my whole path through to the end. He knows all my failure and coldness of heart. He knows it all beforehand. There was one in that loved circle round Him. He knew (5: 38) that before the night was out, he would, at the taunt of a girl, deny with cursings and oaths that he ever knew Him. And yet in spite of all, and through all, He loves us to the end. We can but feebly understand such love, but we must believe it.

Now, this love of Christ must be in exercise about its objects, and this is what we get in the action before us. If we delight to dwell upon the love that led Him to lay down His life for us in the past, we must not overlook its present deeply precious activities-those alone which can meet the very real present necessities of our condition.

Verse 3.-"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself: after that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the

disciples' feet." Merely to gather from all this a lesson of humility is sadly to miss the instruction unfolded in the symbolic action. It is in type the Lord's present service for us. We see that it must have this deeper character by 5: 7, and again by 5: 8, which shows it is essential to having part with Christ, and 5: 10, to which I would call special attention. What must be the need that can only be met by the Son of God girding Himself in the glory for the work, and stooping low, even to His people's feet? We shall see.

Water is the well-known symbol of the word of God applied by the Spirit. Here we find a double application of it, the force of which is much obscured in our translation, but which you will understand better if we read, observing a distinction of the Spirit of God, " He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." What, then, is this first application of the water of the word that needs never to be repeated? It is that spoken of in John 3:5, " Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It is the word of God brought home by the Spirit to the conscience in that moment when, for the first time, we have rested on a word from God for our salvation. Thus were we "born of God," "begotten of the incorruptible seed of the word," and made possessors of eternal life in Christ. All previous remedial measures have but revealed more fully the extent of man's fall and ruin. But now, what man could never do-that is, cleanse himself-God has done by His word received into the soul. We are clean in His sight-eye, clean every whit. Sins and the nature of sin within us have received their doom in the cross of Him in whom we have believed, and we have thus received a life beyond the reach of judgment and of death-eternal life in Christ. In the meanwhile, we are found in a sin-polluted world; One only ever passed through it without contamination. Temptation abounds on every side, and finds too ready an answer in the nature within us.

Just as the feet contract uncleanness in a dirty path, so are our consciences liable to contract defilement at every moment as we pass through this evil world. Sin never again can come upon us in judgment and wrath; but it can and must necessarily, if allowed, cloud enjoyment of the love of Jesus, break up communion, and keep us in a place of distance from Him. This is what He cannot allow. We must remember that there is nothing that the eye can rest on, or the imagination be occupied with in the things of nature, that has not this tendency. For all that is in the world is not of the Father, and all that is of the flesh-of the nature and life of the first Adam-is that that God has had to exterminate in the judgment of the cross of Christ.

How great and real, then, is our need, beloved! How sweetly the love of Jesus engages Him in this service for us suited to it! For this is what is symbolized in the washing of the feet. It is the second application of the word given us in 5: 10. We find it again in Eph 5:26, "Christ loved the church and' gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," preparatory to presenting it to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. As surely, then, as we have part with Jesus, He must apply the water of the word to detach us from all that would hinder communion with Himself. Note well, that it is not something He leaves us to do, or it would never be done. It is, "If I wash thee not, thou has no part with me." He discerns, as we could not, what is tending to keep us at a distance, or what has come in to hinder enjoyment of His presence, and He applies His word from the glory to us. Gradually He unfolds His mind to us in the truth-ever seeking to conform us to Himself, judging by it, and bringing us to judge in communion with Him, all that is unlike Him. If we will only yield ourselves to the power of the truth, Jesus ' will lead us on with wondrous patience and grace into a deeper knowledge of

Himself. Thus, by attaching us more closely to Himself, He detaches us from all that enfeebles our joy in the fellowship that is at once precious to Him and necessary to us, now that we have once tasted of its joy! It is not that He would, as it were, tear from us all that is of present interest to us. He knows that nothing can satisfy our new nature now, at a distance from Him. He enables us to judge what would keep up and maintain this distance, and He does it in His own sweet way, 1:e., by the truth of what He is in Himself for us, until our hearts get so taken up with Him, that easily and of necessity, we drop what was incompatible with His fellowship. But what sluggish hearts we have! He has only left it to us to bow to His Word, when He applies it to us. But how often, like Peter, we refuse to let the Lord wash our feet, by resisting the application of His truth to our consciences. Yet there is nothing that He teaches that will not have this cleansing and separating effect, introducing us into more full communion with Himself, if we will only bow to it. Thus it is that the clouds come-we refuse the word, and our consciences get defiled. Peter refused, for he had yet to learn his need of the Lord's loving service. How soon and terribly he made experience of it! Before the night was out, he was tempted to deny his blessed Master, and he fell.

What a look was that, which fell on Peter, telling of the Lord's unchanged love. No wonder it broke his heart. He was forgiven and loved the same, and he knew it. But ah! distance had come in between Peter and the Lord. " I go a-fishing," was the witness that his poor heart was trying, by a return to his old interests, to fill up the void, that nothing could fill up but restored communion. Forgiveness is one thing beloved, but communion is altogether another. Many a one knows that they are forgiven, and are so far happy, but they have never known (or if they have, they are not now enjoying) communion with Christ. But if Peter will try and get on as well as he can away from the Lord, Jesus will not suffer this to be, He proceeds to wash His feet. What a word for Peter's conscience, after all his boasting, was that, "Lovest thou me more than do these?"-that thrice repeated "Lovest Thou me," probing the root of his failure, his self-confidence, and leading him to judge it, while at the same time it forced him. to confide in Christ as he could not in another beside. John and the rest could only know he had basely denied his Lord-" Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee!" Now the cloud is dispelled-&Stance is gone-and in the power of communion with Christ, Peter is given the Lord's pathway of death as his own; one which he sought to take once in the energy of the flesh, but in which he so miserably failed.

Thus it is that so often when the heart is heavy, because of distance from Christ, some little word is borne to the heart or conscience. It just meets your need, and restores you to your joy in the Lord. You say how strange that I should have just thought of that word, when it was exactly what I needed.

Ah beloved, it was Jesus that stooped thus to wash thy feet: and you perhaps discerned not that it was He!

How terrible the character of the carelessness, failures and sin of his own that needs such a stoop of the Son of God, to succor the soul! Do we not loathe ourselves for it? Oh to cultivate the tenderness of heart and conscience, that will yield to each slightest pressure of His truth, that we may spare His loving heart and ourselves the sorrow and darkness of getting away from Him! But perhaps you say "John's place on the bosom of the Lord never could be mine. He was a special favorite. Such nearness is not given to all." You are wronging Christ's love by such thoughts as these, beloved. Partiality is a defect of human love. There is none in divine love. Jesus gives us in

chap. 15:, the one measure of His love for each of us and for all. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." There is no room for degrees here, for the love of each is infinite and cannot be exceeded. Truly the love of Christ passeth knowledge. Besides, if He loves one more than another, it is to say that. He has found something in that one to love. Whereas there was nothing in any of us to draw forth His love. Human love is called forth by something worthy of love in its object, but this is the bright distinguishing characteristic of divine love, that its objects are alike unworthy. The source of Jesus' love is in itself-deep, deep in the secrets of His own heart. Nothing is so sad than if, after all, you will insist on maintaining the place of distance. Love is gratified by having its object near to itself. It delights in the confidence it has begotten, that will quietly take the place of nearness-nor fear that it should be counted intrusion. It is the response His love looks for from us. John knew it, and took the place that Jesus gave him, and, all of us alike. So he writes himself down, " the disciple whom Jesus loved!" It is but the style and signature o' faith, that makes nothing of self, but everything of the love of Christ! Will you not adopt it, excluding as it does all human merit and worthiness? Do you think you cannot be so near now that Jesus has gone back to the Father. Ah beloved, He has sent down the Holy Ghost that you may be brought into far deeper intimacy with Himself, than ever they could have enjoyed while He was still on earth. "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in ME, and I in you." What could be nearer than this? And it is just the object of Jesus in His Service, that we have been considering to maintain us in the enjoyment of this deeper intimacy, without a cloud of moral distance to mar it.

I can only note further that the Lord commits to us a very-sweet participation in this service of love. Ver. 34 gives us His new commandment, " that ye love one another as I have loved you," and we have had both the measure and sample of the exercise of his love. So he says in verse 15, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." If you only love me my brother, as Jesus commands, you will not be able to bear that there should be ought upon. me to keep me at a distance from the Lord, but you will never rest until you have, by the ministry of some word from Christ, washed my feet (having first borne it on your heart before Him), and led me into the place of my privilege and joy, and this, notwithstanding my pride that may resent your interference. The Lord give us the needed grace for this, as we see it-so preciously illustrated in Him; and, above all, give us sensitive hearts to discover the first declining of heart from fellowship with Him and enjoyment of His presence, so that we may be brought to confession and self-judgment, and be maintained where only our heart can rest, in nearness to Him. Amen:-J. A. T.

S. Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled

Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled

IT is of importance that we should note the cause of the sorrow to which the Lord Jesus addresses Himself in these precious words for the comfort of the troubled ones; for, as I am persuaded, they will lose their deepest significance and blessing for any who have not known as their own the sorrow that is the occasion of them. For it is no ordinary sorrow that is here, such as abounds for every child of God in his path through this evil world. It is not any and every sorrow that here finds itself in presence of the Lord for sympathy, whose heart has still upon the throne of God its kindred throb for every throb of ours, and comfort, too, to the full: but the very special sorrow of any who know Jesus well enough to miss Him in a scene out of which He has been cast by the unanimous consent of man. Brighter and more blessed things, it is true, have resulted to us from the cross of Christ, in the wondrous grace of God, that could make this culminating point of man's hatred the moment and place of the brightest display of that grace. But this does not lessen the guilt of the world in putting Him there, nor the sense of His rejection by it in our hearts as we pass through it. And so it is that Paul can say, "By the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Beloved, let us put it to our hearts, do we miss Him? We have known His work for salvation but have we gone on to know Himself for love? Has His work, with all its known results in our blessing, served in any feeble measure to attach us to Him who has accomplished it, and we do not miss Him in this world? Impossible that it should be so! For us, as for Mary, if He is gone, then all is gone that was of any value for our hearts here; and henceforth, in all this world's scene, there is a blank that nothing can fill. It is stained with the blood of our murdered Lord; His cross blights it in our eyes; our hearts can never dissociate the world from His cross that judged it, and we only live to show forth His death in it, while, as strangers and pilgrims, we pass on to our home above. Beloved, do our hearts know enough of Jesus to be desolate in a place where, He is not? Ah, then, we know the disciples' sorrow, and to us as well as them belongs the comfort of the words of Jesus. And see how He counts upon the disciples' love and consequent sorrow: for He has no sooner broken it to them in gentle words, that only "yet a little while" He can be with them, than He adds, "let not your hearts be troubled." Precious fruit of His own love that, wherever it is known, detaches hearts from the world without Him, by attaching them to Himself. Yes; He whom they had known, and loved, and followed on earth in such precious intimacy was about to return to the Father, and they would now no longer know Him after the flesh; yet He was only going to take the same place as the unseen God, where He would be still known by faith, and in all the deeper revelations of the glory of His Person that would result from that place. So that He will even prove that it is expedient for them that He goes away: "Ye believe in God, believe-also in me." And as we shall see, these deeper, revelations of Himself will form the very staple of the comfort ministered to us in His words. Where else could comfort be found for hearts that have known Him ever so feebly? All joy is treasured up for us in the knowledge of Christ. There can be no different joy, but only deeper measures of the same joy; and this is just what He brings us into by going away. But will He enter alone into His joy, and leave us

in our wilderness desolation? No; He only goes to prepare a place for us there too, and to wait for the moment when He can come and fetch us into it. Beloved, He speaks to us of home; and if you say it is of His home, I answer, not more His than yours with Him now: for He has never left us until He has accomplished a work in the world on the ground of which He has introduced us into the very same relationship that He Himself stands in to God. "Go to my brethren," says He, from the mouth of His open and empty grave, "and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Henceforth, His Father is our Father,-His God, our God,-His home, our home. And if there are in it "Amway mansions," His love has already set apart the place for each individual object of it: for such I take to be the force of the words, "I go to prepare a place for you." None but the one for whom each place has been prepared by Jesus can fill it for his heart. How precious to be still and ever the 'objects of such love! Now, in His absence, we need the assurance of it, and He gives it to us. But observe well where it is He gives us our home,-" In my Father's house." Oh, beloved, have our hearts entered into the blessedness of this! The Jewish hopes of the disciples were filled with the displayed glory of the kino.dom, as was natural, from prophecy; but the time for that display, depending as it did upon the presence of the Messiah, was not come yet, as was evident from Jesus' words, "Yet a little while I am with you." And when all seemed lost to their disappointed expectations in His going away, He unfolds to their faith what prophecy never thought of-the Father's house,-and gives them and us our home there, in a love that is beyond all the glory, for the glory can be displayed-the love, never. What rich comfort for our hearts, troubled in this world at the absence of Jesus. But there is more; and more there must be to meet the necessities of those to whom, by these very revelations, Jesus is becoming more precious every day. Is this separation to last forever? No; He could not bear it any more than we. And, coupled with the home presented to our faith to enjoy, He gives us just what He knows hearts that truly love Him could not do without - the promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself: precious hope for us, beloved, till hope shall be lost in the consummation of it, and we shall see Him face to face. Nor is it only that we shall all be with Him-for, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord," and thus in death we go to Him-but His word is, "I will come again and receive you unto myself," and the promise is as sure to-day for our hearts as when first He gave it to us.* Beloved brethren, is the coming of our Lord more than a doctrine among us? Is it a deep spring of joy even in hope? Is it a living power in our souls? But the promise goes on, "that where I am there ye may be also;" and this tells us that the necessity of our hearts is His own; that, not for our joy only but for His, we must be where He is. And, beloved, that is the heaven of the Christian's hope. Man's imagination has a heaven of its own, well suited to it, no doubt; but not the least suited to the desires of Christ for us. Scripture has but little about heaven, for all desire, all joy, all hope, is summed up for any who know Jesus ever so feebly, in that "where I am" of His. His presence is the very heaven of heaven to up.

(* His coming for us, I need hardly say, is not the same as our going to Him.) But we are only approaching the kernel of joy for us, and comfort, while we wait, in the absence of Jesus, for the fulfillment of such bright hopes. And this is contained in what follows-ushered in by the words, "and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." He was going to the Father, of whom on earth He had been personally the full revelation before their eyes: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." So then they knew where He was going, and the way, in the very revelation 'that He was of the Father-"I am the way." He is "the truth" also, consequent as truth is on the revelation of God: for the truth about anything is its

relation to God, which can only be known as God is known. Thus it was that when Jesus came into the world, all was tested and revealed in its true character. Then it was known that all that is of this world was one vast gigantic lie! Jesus alone, the Truth, who thus testing and judging it, was rejected by it. Men "loved darkness rather than light." But He is also "the life:" for, if any found in Jesus the full disclosure of their lost condition by nature, they found also in Him the full revelation of God in grace and truth, and "this is eternal life to now thee-the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Moreover, if God is known in the Son, He is known in the character of this relationship-or, in other -words, as Father. "If ye had known me, you should have known my Father also." And this is truly blessed. He died "to bring us to God;" but having come by Jesus, the only way (5: 6), we find we know the Father. Thus, we not only know our future place in His Father's house, but we know His Father, and we know Him as our Father. And this is needed to complete the consciousness that our home is there. Well may Philip say, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." What joy could go beyond the knowledge of the Father? But then Philip ought to have known the Father as manifested in the Son: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" and "from henceforth," says Jesus, "ye know Him and have seen Him." This, beloved, is our portion of blessing in our Lord's absence. The disciples enjoyed the presence of the Lord Jesus amongst them; in another day the Son of Man will come in His glory, and the blessing of the earth in the kingdom will depend upon the manifestation of His glory. But, oh, beloved, far beyond all in the richness of blessing is the way in which He is revealed to our faith now, as hid in God. Lost to the outward eye, it is only that He has • taken His place according to the intimate nearness of His relationship with the Father; and in this wondrous intimacy we are given to know Him: "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." What is the displayed glory of the kingdom to be compared with the home circle of Divine relationship and love into which such words introduce us? And this is our blessing. Power to grasp the full blessedness of such a revelation is another thing, and we are not left without this also, as we shall see. But such is the revelation, which is the strength of our comfort in the absence of Christ, He is not lost to us, blessed be God, but revealed to us, all the more fully, from the place He has taken in His oneness with the Father,-so that we know Him in the Father, and the Father in Him, and " our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Surely this is privilege beyond all that was ever heard of before in the wondrous dealings of God in grace with His people,-beyond all that-will be enjoyed by Jew or Gentile, blessed in the Millennium in the personal presence and manifested glory of the Messiah; nay, beloved, privilege that depends upon the very place that the absent One has taken with God, having first fully declared Him in the world. Oh, for hearts duly to estimate it, and to take our place accordingly in the sweet and precious fellowship with the Father and the Son to which we are now consciously and intelligently brought as our privilege and joy. Well may the Holy Spirit say, instructing us in these very things, in 1Jn 1:1-10, "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full."

Having said this much, beloved brethren, as to the character of our blessing in the absence of the Lord Jesus, I pass over intervening verses, however important in their Connection, to note next, the power by which alone we can enjoy such a revelation of God. This is promised us in -verse 16, "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, -even the Spirit of Truth..... at that day (namely, when He is come) ye shall know that I am in the Father." Thus has the Holy Spirit been given to dwell within each of us, that by His power we may

grasp the present revelation of the Son in the Father-the power by which, though still in the circumstances of the wilderness, we may ever walk above them, in full unclouded fellowship with the Father and the Son. But more than this is known, now that the Spirit has come: for verse 20 goes on to unfold to us (oh, amazing blessedness!) that we are associated with Jesus in all the nearness and intimacy of His place in the Father: "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Beloved, can anything be added to such blessedness? The whole of our position here lies before. While Jesus is withdrawn from the eye of the World that cast Him out, to come back again for the display Of His power and glory- in the kingdom, the Holy Spirit has come down, sent from the very place the absent One has taken in the Father, to be the power by which our souls are brought into the Divine intimacy and fellowship of such a place, and of our association with the Son in all the wondrous blessedness of it. It will be easily seen, then, that, if our blessing is only to be fully enjoyed by the power of the Spirit of God, it is above all things essential to such enjoyment that nothing should be allowed to grieve Him in our walk. Hence it is that verse 15 occupies the place it does in this instruction: "If ye love me keep my commandments." Nothing grieves the Spirit more than when self-will is allowed to work. Obedience is the very opposite to this. Here, then, comes the third point in the Lord's instruction, as He tells us of the path and order in which alone the joy of these wondrous links with heaven and with God can be entered into and maintained. How blessedly the power of an ungrieved Spirit was illustrated for us in the cloudless joy of the desolate path of Jesus on the earth. And the secret of it is unfolded to us in His words, " I have meat to eat that ye know not of.... my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." Thus it is, only as every thought of our hearts is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, that our portion of divine intimacy be enjoyed by the power of the Spirit. And this is a joy absolutely apart from, and independent of, all earthly circumstances; it springs from the links that connect our hearts with the Father's presence, and the place that the Lord Jesus has taken there in the interval of His rejection by the earth. Oh, that nothing may be tolerated for a moment that would enfeeble the power of such associations in our souls. But the happy spring of this obedience is found in the words of the Lord Jesus, "If ye love me." It is as though He said, Dry up your tears at the thought of my leaving you-albeit, these tears were precious in His sight,-and prove your love, if it is true and real, by the more practical path of my obedience. And when the heart is taken up with Christ as its object, how easy and natural obedience to His commandments becomes: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." But if Christ is not our simple and all-controlling object, there is nothing that is more - distasteful than this obedience. Ah, such is the treachery of these hearts of ours, that we would be serving with unwearied zeal, according to our own thoughts of what He would like, throwing every energy, every power, into such service, rather than yield Him the unreserved obedience that is, for this very reason, the test of true love. Not that I would depreciate service in its own place, beloved brethren; but true service to Christ is rendered in the path of obedience, or else it will want, as Martha's did, that which would make it most sweet and acceptable to Him. As the loving eye of the Lord Jesus rests upon each one of His in the earth, it is not they who seem the busiest and most active and zealous for Him, who most meet His approval, for this suits too well restlessness and pride of nature; but the quiet unobtrusive walk of one, little noticed, it may be by any other, but governed in every detail of it by the commandments of Christ: "he it is that loveth me." And love for Him, thus manifesting becomes, as it were, a fresh bond between us and the Father, for Jesus is the object of the Father's love; and. thus we are found to have an object of love in common with

the Father. And what a bond is formed between hearts by some common object of love: that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him." Not that there is any difference in the love wherewith all of us are loved. For, as to the Father's love, we are each "accepted in the Beloved," and the world shall know in another day that "thou hast loved them AS thou hast loved me; and if we would know the only measure of the love of Jesus for any of us, He gives it us in John 15:9, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." But the obedient one only can enjoy this love, which yet knows no change. The disobedient child misses all the caressings of love; albeit he is not loved the less. But more, "I will manifest Myself unto him." Does the Lord call us by His obedience to a path that few have courage for, there-it may be-to walk alone? Not alone, beloved, for HE is with us in it; and will any heart that knows the Lord dare to say that it will be lonely then? To yield up my own will at His command may bring upon me the frown of all, but if I know the smile and approval of Jesus,- is it not enough? Are we listening for the voice of the Lord to take us, according to His promise to us in verse 3, to be where he is, and is His presence to us the deepest joy of heaven? What shall we say of these manifestations of Himself to any who will but obey Him? It is heaven's deepest joy in character brought down to my heart below! But would you ask with Judas (not Iscariot) what this private manifestation of Himself to one, and not to another, means,-so foreign as such a thought was to Jewish expectations, that waited upon the public manifestation of the Messiah to all, and how it is to be enjoyed while he is hidden to the eye of sense? Then you must learn the meaning of the Lord's answer, "If a man love me; he will: keep my words." This is more, beloved, than keeping the commandments of Jesus. Obedience to his expressed commands leads me into a place of ever-deepening intimacy with Himself. To this place of deeper intimacy belong His "words." I do not command my intimate friend; my mind is expressed in my words, and he knows my mind, and acts accordingly, by the very intimacy and fellowship he enjoys. A little word has ten thousand times greater weight with him, than my command has upon one at a distance. The servant gets his commands, and obeys them, but he knoweth not what his lord doeth; my friend walks with me in intelligence of my deepest thoughts. Oh, beloved, are we walking in this intimacy with Him who has not called us "servants," but "friends," and, hanging upon the precious words of His lips, are we getting into deeper intelligence of His mind? How many at a distance find their excuse for doing their own will, in that they have no express command from the Lord Jesus! Is it thus with us, or has every little word of His its irresistible sway over us? This, again, is the expression of truest love, and what an answer it receives! Is it joy to us to think of being received to Jesus just now in the _mansions of the Father's house? But the promise in verse 23, brings the Father and the Son down to make their mansions (for the word is the same) in the path with 'any Who only thus love the Lord.

Beloved, I can say no more. What more could be given to encourage and sustain the heart in faithfulness to our - absent Lord? Has God resources beyond what are here revealed for our joy? Oh to be filled with the Spirit that we may comprehend the full blessedness of our portion, and have capacity to enjoy it. Well, well may He say, " I will not leave you comfortless." When he only goes away to reveal Himself from His place in the Father's presence, in oneness with the Father, in the full brightness and joy for our hearts, all that He is, even while we tread the path of this dark world. "I will not leave you comfortless, I. will come to you;" and so faith enjoys His presence still, and knows Him in the Father as it never could have known Him while He was in the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit given to us: and all that is wanting to the full consummation of our joy, is to see Him face to face, and be like Him, and with Him forever.-J. A. T.

S. Life and the Spirit

"Life and the Spirit"

J A Trench.

Words of Faith 1884, p. 197-221.

"Life and the Spirit" has been sent me, and I am concerned about it chiefly for the author's sake. For though it tends to hinder unestablished souls in getting into their true christian place, God may use this, as He does every hindrance, only to deepen the exercise by which it becomes more real and firmly grasped when known. On the face of it, stated with an accustomed felicity of expression, the system will commend itself to some who care little for searching the word for themselves by its simplicity. You have only to take all the passages which speak of quickening, or life, or in Christ, and put them together as meaning the same thing. It saves all the trouble of examining the context in which these truths are brought in, and the modifications they have according to the scope of different books and vessels used in the communication of the truth, or the subject the Spirit of God may have in hand. It was the way we all began, I suppose, and only by degrees found out how we limited the truth, and contracted our own apprehension of it by the process. But in attempting to direct serious attention to the way the truth and souls are affected, the difficulty presents itself, that divine truth cannot be judged of apart from our own apprehension of it by faith. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word" — is a paradox in human philosophy, but a principle of God of immense importance for our souls. We must know the thing in what is divine, to understand the way it is presented to us. Now, so many souls are not in their full christian place before God — and this is the worst of such a paper, it commends itself to such as expressing where they are themselves, tending to satisfy them short of God's place for them — that until they know it they will not be able to see the defect of the system. Yet, turning to the word which delivers from all our short-sighted reasoning, we have the truth, "and the truth shall make you free." But in seeking to test what is presented to us by this only standard, the first thing that strikes one is, how almost every term that is used in this paper is employed in some different sense from what it has in the word; and this is a difficulty in seeking to unravel the confusion of it, involving the necessity of examining the word for the scriptural sense of the terms. At the outset, the author's way of stating the question before us is a little misleading. For, speaking generally, no one would object to say that "forgiveness of sins, justification, and acceptance in Christ go with new birth — with life" — and the Holy Ghost, too, if by "go with" were meant that they were characteristic blessings of the new world into which we are born. But we shall see that this is not at all what is meant. And so with the other aspects of the question, save indeed when as to Rom 7:1-25 it is asked, Is it a sinner seeking peace, or a saint fruitfulness? when one taught in the word must answer, as it appears to me, Neither. Nor as to the last question can there be any hesitation in answering, that the seal of the Spirit is in the word, connected with faith in the work, and not simply in the Person, of Christ.

We are not long, however, in being introduced to the divergence of the writer's use of expressions, and system therein expressed, from scripture; for on page 4, (which is really page 2 of the tract) he states "that all Christians are dead to sin and to the law." Now if he meant the Christian in his full place as such, or even in the mind of God, or as to the efficacy of the work of Christ that brings us into it, it would be true. But the tract makes it too plain, that this is not what he means; that he would have you assume from the outset, without even a reference to the word, what is really the point to be proved — and that lies at the root of all the subsequent teaching. In Rom 6:2, "We who have died to sin" is not presented as the absolute fact of Christ's death and resurrection for us, as in chapter 4:25 — true of us before we knew it — but in connection with, and, in a sense, the end of, an experimental process we have gone through to bring us to the reality of our identification with Christ in His death: "know ye not that so many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised unto his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death" — so as responsibly henceforth to take our place only as dead men upon earth. "Knowing [observe "knowing" again] that our old man has been crucified with him that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin." It is not of the abstract truth of our death (as though it were said) in His death before God, that the apostle is speaking; but he addresses himself to the full Christian intelligence of this become a fact for our own souls — of our death "with Christ" — and reasons from it to the practical consequences that flow from it. Now nothing could be more disastrous to souls than to maintain, as this paper does, that every quickened soul is dead to sin, freed from sin, and not under the law, with its necessary consequence that "sin shall not have dominion" over us. (Rom 6:2; Rom 6:18; Rom 6:22; Rom 6:14.) For it is attributing absolutely to everyone who has been born of God, what the apostle speaks of as the ground and fact of an actual deliverance from sin's power, which, if it exists without that deliverance, renders the deliverance hopeless, and shuts up the soul to the state of Rom 7:14-24. This state is necessarily that of a quickened soul, but of one that is not dead to sin, for it is "carnal, sold under sin," is not freed from sin, for it is brought "into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," and is still under the law of sin's dominion — consenting to the law, delighting in it, referring to it wholly as the rule of good for the soul, but proving it in effect to be only the power of evil. And this is simply "a saint seeking fruitfulness"! There is not a thought of fruitfulness according to God. It is the struggle to gain power over sin, with the law looked to as a source of strength in the struggle (not knowing that it is "the strength of sin,") and which must be given up as hopeless, and the bond of the soul with the law broken — deliverance from the first husband and sin found in all its reality — in order to any fruitfulness: "whereof, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom 7:4.) Is not the experience of the close of the chapter diametrically opposed to the condition of fruitfulness as stated in verse 4 — to abiding in Christ? Could words depict more clearly one who is born of God indeed, or else there had been no struggle — (it takes two to fight) — but who, as to the condition of his soul — the state he is in (and this is what scripture is concerned with) — is "to the law," as still having authority over him, a state that verses 2 and 3 declare to be incompatible with being to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, so as to bring forth fruit unto God? Nay, is not the express object of chapter 7 to contrast these two states of a soul alike quickened in each as the basis of them, and to prove that both cannot exist together? And this is all a question of knowledge, we are told, of progress in knowledge — I am free from sin if I only knew it, etc. — of knowledge by the word and subjection

to the Spirit. As if there was no such thing as the conviction of need, of the work wrought in the soul, in order to any divine knowledge of the work for it. Yet the conviction of sins had to precede justification from them — not less surely the conviction of self in order to deliverance from self. But a truth so fundamental from the beginning of God's ways in grace with souls is lost sight of even as to the first, that is, our justification. And we are told (p.7) that "all quickened are justified then, of course from the first moment of quickening." But this is again to use terms as scripture does not — as a student in his study, not thinking of the state of souls. Rom 1:1-32, Rom 2:1-29, Rom 3:1-31, Rom 4:1-25, Rom 5:1-11 of the last, develop this subject of justification. There is not the trace of such a statement that every quickened soul is justified; on the contrary, it is referred to another thing. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness . . . that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Resting thus immutably in divine righteousness on the ground of redemption and faith in His blood, God is the justifier of him who believes in Jesus, and we are reckoned righteous "if we believe on him that raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and faith in His blood, form the ground of justification for the believer in Jesus; and faith in Him who raised Him from the dead carries peace in the divinely assured certainty of it to our souls. It might as well be said, that every quickened soul has peace with God, as to say he was justified, for these two things are thus connected in scripture. The system of the paper would require, therefore knowing that we are justified, etc. But justification from our sins is as real and actual a thing for the soul, as scripture treats it, as deliverance from sin, in its place, namely, a revealed ground of relationship upon which the soul stands consciously with God as the fruit of redemption, and worthless to us here if it were not so. Of course, every quickened soul was ever justified before God, and that before ever they were quickened, in the counsels of God. But it was not the revealed ground of relationship until Christianity; and then it is not by quickening we are brought into it, but by faith in Jesus known in the efficacy of His work, who shed His blood to lay the ground of it in righteousness, and in God who raised Him from the dead as the proof of His acceptance of the work that had so glorified Him; so that now a risen Saviour in the glory of God becomes the glorious proof to the believer that his sins, that brought Him to the cross, are gone for ever, and he has peace with God. I turn to the passages, however, upon which this justification by quickening is sought to be founded, only, alas! to find everything confounded.

We are first asked to identify "eternal life" with quickening as "ours from the first moment of it." (Page 5.) Of course it is in fact: there is not — there never was — any other outside the forfeited life of the fallen man save life as flowing from the Son of God, who, in His own Person, is "that eternal life that was with the Father." But I earnestly press, that it is not so that scripture speaks of eternal life. When the Son of God was manifested, that life was manifested, the Father gave Him to have it in Himself,* and He was a divine and sovereignly quickening source of life in the glory of His Person, as thus manifested on earth. The hour was come that the dead should hear His voice, and live — and live of the life He gave, even eternal life, now recognised as such, because manifested in Him. (1Jn 1:2.) But to identify this with being born of God, through His word, by the Spirit, as Nicodemus ought to have known of it from Old Testament scriptures (page 10); and these, again, with being quickened together with Christ, as in Ephesians and Colossians, is a sad

way of handling scripture. We are told that eternal life "was the possession of every one born of God from the beginning of the world." "Scripture is surely clear;" but we have not one text given to us. But, turning to scripture, why, then, should the Lord say, "I am come that they might have life"? (John 10:10.) They had it all the same, whether He came, or not, according to our paper, which is true as to the absolute fact of the life they possessed — divine life, as born of God — but not as scripture presents it. And it is our only wisdom to abide by the word. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee [the Father, whom He was addressing], the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It was not eternal life, as scripture speaks, to know God as Almighty, or as the Jehovah of Israel, but as the Son came to make Him known — the Father revealed in the Son. Eternal life, then, according to the word, is that which was manifested in the Son, that He came that we might have then, or "more abundantly" when we should possess it in a new way in Him risen from the dead, carrying with it all His own relationship, as Man with the Father and God, as that into which we are consciously brought. Now this last is what is expressed as "life in Christ Jesus" — not simply divine life, or even eternal life, but this life possessed in the power of resurrection, of Christ's new place before God as Man risen from the dead. Thus there was "the promise of life which was in Christ Jesus" — why, promise if it was theirs; but even this unrevealed — unrevealed as promise, but, "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." So Tit 1:2-3 : all the ways of God with the first man coming between this purpose and promise of life in Christ Jesus before the world began, and its manifestation through the gospel.

*A very different thought from the unhappy expression, "life is deposited in the Lord as Son of man, as source of it for men," from any false use of which we are preserved by the passages he quotes: John 1:4, John 5:26. But he was led to it apparently by the desire to deduce "Hence he is last Adam," which is not the scriptural connection of these different aspects of His glory, and confounds His glory as Son of God quickening whom He will before the cross, in the power of eternal life in Himself, with the place He has taken as Man consequent upon it in resurrection, the last Adam a quickening Spirit. And this connects itself closely with the point to which I am now come, namely, the close of Rom 5:1-21, for the expression, "justification of life" (quoted at page 5). In verse 12 we leave the question of the perfection of the way we have been brought to God by the death and resurrection of Christ, clear of every question of our sins, justified from all things, at peace with God, His love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given us, beautifully represented in figure by Israel's position when the Red Sea was crossed, and up to and until Sinai necessarily changed the whole ground upon which they stood. We leave this, as complete, to enter upon a wholly distinct aspect of truth, tracing us respectively to two distinct heads of races, as of Adam, or of Christ. Here it is no longer a question of the acts of individuals, but of the state of those so classed, in which they were involved by the acts of their heads respectively — the race identified with its head, whether as Adam having accomplished sin, and entailing ruin, and wretchedness, and death upon his; or as Christ, having accomplished righteousness, and entailing nothing but life, and righteousness, and blessing upon His. Thus it was, "as by one offence towards all to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all to justification of life" — precious contrast as it is. All who have come under Christ as Head of a new race, possess a life, to which no charge of sin ever did, or could attach. For in that life in which He came in grace, and had to do with sin, as made sin, He died, and died unto sin once, never more to have to do with it again. But

not till His work was accomplished did He take His place as second Man and last Adam — "quickening Spirit He had ever been, indeed, as having the power of divine life in Himself for others ("was made" has no place in the original — 1Co 15:1-58 — and is misleading), but now to exercise this power as Man in resurrection, to communicate life in a new way, in which it never had been, or could have been, possessed before, life in a risen Christ, to which, as we have seen, no charge of sin could attach; in direct and absolute contrast with the effect of participation in the life of the first man. But this is not the justification or forgiveness of our committed sins, of which the first part of the epistle so fully treats, but a life become ours in the risen Christ, where there is no question of any, and thus a justification of life; by participating in which we have part in His death, as judged, condemned, and crucified with Him, as to all we were in Adam; and as having died with Him "we believe that we shall also live with him," and be "of His resurrection," and have title to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, even as He has no more to do with it, and alive unto God in Him, to have nothing but God before our souls for ever. An immensely important consideration now comes in. Is all this transference from one headship to another, from Adam to Christ, from death in sins unto life in liberty of obedience, from the state and position of the fallen man to the whole position and state of the glorified Man — short of the glory, yet to come for us — simply a question of (p. 4) knowledge by the word (not to speak of "instinct or intuition") according to the writer's theory? Far otherwise. It is a work of divine power, not apart from faith in those in whom it is wrought. So far as we have gone (Rom 6:1-23) it is unfolded as connected with the work of Christ, which is ever the ground of it before God, and by faith in which we have part in it. Rom 7:1-25 is introduced parenthetically, expressly to develop the "middle ground" (p. 3) which this paper deliberately ignores and refuses but which is the ground on which numbers of souls are found — nay, the necessary condition of every one sooner or later, in order to know as our own, a deliverance in power by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that "has made me free," from the whole old order of things that was ours in Adam — the law of sin and death. Necessary, I say, because it is the divine conviction of the state to which that deliverance applies, and without which we should never have known our need of it. It is a quickened soul as we have seen, one truly born of God, but who, as to the ground upon which the soul actually is, is still in the flesh, under law that applies to that condition and that condition only. "If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law." (Gal 5:13.) A soul under the law is in the flesh, according to the clear force of the expression in Roman 7 a state fully developed there, and with which that of Romans 8 is directly contrasted. (Compare Rom 7:5, Rom 8:9.) It is a wholly new place and standing, fruit of the power of God, that raised Christ from the dead, when He had been delivered for our offences, and had closed in death our whole first Adam place in the flesh under law and captives of sin, but in Romans applied in its negative aspect, if I may so speak — I mean as to that out of which we are delivered, rather than carried out into the full consequences of it in association with the risen One. It is the Christian "in what characterises him as such. . . without raising the question of how far human failure might come in to hinder the realisation" (to adopt the author's words at p. 5, not so truly applicable in his connection as to Rom 8:1-39). Will it be believed that the expression of this characteristic state of the Christian "in Christ," as his place before God consequent upon redemption, "in the Spirit," as the power of it down here as surely as the Spirit of God dwelleth in us — is taken to prove that the Spirit of God dwells in the directly contrasted state of the undelivered soul in Rom 7:1-25? "It is said we have nothing of the Spirit in all the seventh chapter, etc. The thought seems contradicted by what is said directly afterwards: But we are not in the flesh," etc., quoting chapter 8:9. Is

"directly afterwards" a just account of the order of the truth of Romans 7, Rom 8:1-9? That is, does Rom 8:9 follow directly on Rom 7:14-25? No one could think so who will take the trouble to read the passages and see what comes between.

Now in this description of the characteristic state of the Christian, in which it is said, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is not His, the Spirit is presented in three ways: the Spirit of God (ver. 9) in contrast to the flesh; the Spirit of Christ (vers. 9, 10) as the formative power of the new man, so that Christ may be formed in us, hence with the immediate result "if Christ be in you;" and lastly (ver. 11), as the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead. These correspond with the three parts of our deliverance in answer to the cry of Rom 7:24, as first, by life and nature; secondly, by the objects presented to that life; and thirdly, the body yet future. Nor is it yet the truth of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as a distinct Person, though this is assumed (and taught from ver. 14), but His presence as identified with, as He is the power of, the delivered condition. No wonder then that it should be presented that that condition cannot exist without the Holy Ghost's presence, that where He is not, the man is not of Christ — not in his characteristic christian state, that in which Christ Himself as man now is; for it is not here the question of belonging to Christ, but what is "of Him," that forms the subject of the Spirit's teaching. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." (1Co 6:17.) And mark, that whereas it is by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ we passed out of our condition in the flesh and under law, into that of being in Christ, yet because the operation of divine power in the Spirit of God enters into this, it is here said, "ye are not in the flesh," not because we have eternal life, or even have died with Christ and are in Him risen, but "in the Spirit," so integral and necessary a part does the Spirit of God bear in this total change of our position — "if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you." This intimate association and identification, in wondrous grace to us, of the Spirit with the delivered man, is marked again in verse 10: "If Christ be in you the body is dead" held to be such for faith, for if tolerated in its smallest will it is only sin, "and the Spirit is life" — the simple blessed power of it, as He is its source, unto practical righteousness. And this is as absolute as If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is not of Him, for it is the same full christian condition from another aspect of it — "Christ in us" become our life characteristically, as surely as we are "in Christ" and "in the Spirit." Nor is it without its full significance in blessing, that it is only after this first part of chapter 8, in which the Spirit is identified in the most absolute way with the delivered, that is, the full christian condition, that we find Him presented as a Person distinct from us, dwelling in us; though the former could not have been without the latter, and we received the Spirit to dwell in us the moment we believed the testimony of God to the work of Christ for our justification as in Rom 5:1-21. The order of the truth is as simple and clear in answer to the needs of the soul, as it is divinely perfect in wisdom. "The question as to peace is long before settled" (p. 13). Who introduces it here? To do so would indeed be "to destroy the proper significance of a most needful lesson." But we must have had extraordinarily little to do with the state of souls and their difficulties, not to know how the whole question of peace and relationship with God is often affected by the want of deliverance, and this because until set free from the law of sin, the soul is under the law in its condemning power, and is not beyond the reach of peace even as to justification being disturbed, until in its place in Christ, in all the impossibility of condemnation for Christ — made free from the law of sin and death, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. So far, also, is it from being the case that one must "be consciously a child of God before he can realise that even in a child of God sin dwells," that the consciousness of indwelling sin, till the soul is brought to reckon itself to be dead unto sin, tends

constantly to cause uncertainty as to the relationship. The soul reasons from its own state to the state of God towards it, as "can I be a child of God and find all this evil in me?" Certainly to the soul that has passed through the deeply-needed exercise, and been set free Rom 7:12-25 presents no problem. It is then that peacefully he can look back and recount, as the close of the chapter does, what he has been through. Again, I repeat, it is not the state of one who has been set free, but of one who has not: and this paper plunges the truth and souls, into confusion by seeking to make out that it is the condition of one who has received the Holy Ghost. It is not that there are not those who have the Spirit, who may not have to pass through the experience in a modified way, as the effect of bad teaching or not having previously learned themselves; but this is not Rom 7:1-25 in the principle and true force of its instruction. Of course it is the expression of "a saint," if by saint is meant one who has been truly born of God. All question of fruitfulness only comes after the "saint" has been set free from the bondage of sin. But I pass on to another aspect of truth, very distinct from what has been before us, but bringing out more fully one point of all-importance to our souls, wholly ignored by this paper, namely, the way in which the power of God enters into so as to effectuate the full position of the Christian. I refer to that which we find in Eph 2:1-22, where, when we are viewed as wholly dead in sins,* God came in in the exceeding might of the power that wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and quickened us together with Him — here followed out to its fullest consequences of heavenly association with Christ, seated in Him in the heavenlies. In Colossians we have the same truth (Col 2:12), bringing in faith in the operation of God when it is a question of being risen with Him; only that here it is not as absolutely as in Ephesians, the state in which we were found — only dead in sins — but the Epistle looks at us also, as Romans, as having lived in them, and does not carry us into our full heavenly place. But the point of view as to being quickened together with Him, is the same in both Ephesians and Colossians. It is that of a wholly new place for man, into which we have been as it were quickened out of the grave of Christ by the operation of divine power which put Him into it — "together with" involving union, and in Ephesians that of both Jew and Gentile believers, of the whole body, which is looked at as having been taken by one mighty exercise of divine power out of the grave of Christ when He was taken out, and put into the whole of His new place as man before God. Hence we do not find the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the Epistle; union was so fully involved in the exercise of this power that has put us into His place, "together with Him." The point of view in both epistles is the same as to the power that put us into the place, though in Colossians not carried beyond our resurrection with Christ, and developed more as to the blessed effects of the place, on the side of Christ in us as life.

*Note here, what is of importance to those who observe the way truth is presented in scripture — every distinction with its own significance — that when it is our full new place in and with Christ, it is God who quickens, Christ being looked at as dead, come in grace and under our judgment where we were dead in sins. In the case of eternal life as in John, it is Christ who quickens, communicating divine life and nature as the Son of God to the dead who hear His voice; and with this the exercises of soul begin that lead to the reception of our new place, by faith of our death and resurrection with Him. Only that our death and resurrection with Him is more the way out of the old condition; when it is our full positive position in heavenly association with Christ as the fruit of God's everlasting counsel we were found dead, and were quickened together with Christ into it. We find both in Colossians; the last only in Ephesians. Death and resurrection with Christ are never presented as putting us into the full place of God's counsels in Christ.

Now this is the passage (Col 2:13) that is taken to prove that the forgiveness of sins belongs to the action of the Spirit in quickening by the word, as He ever did before Christ came, or to that of the Son quickening whom He will while He was yet upon earth, or to these operations still, of which it speaks nothing. "This surely teaches that forgiveness accompanies life; having forgiven, refers the time of forgiveness definitely to the time of quickening" (p. 6)* — of life in a new position in a risen Christ, and of quickening together with Him involving union by the Holy Ghost, indeed; but of life and quickening apart from these conditions it surely teaches nothing. From the moment that we are united to Christ, we are taught in His blessed grace to look back and see all as one complete act of divine power when Christ was raised; but, of course, it is another question altogether when we were individually brought into it. Of the quickening of the Spirit, or of being born of God, the passage says nothing; but of our being quickened together with Christ, which is a wholly distinct thought, as any one must see who will read the verses for himself. Divine power, expressed in the resurrection of Christ, has come in and taken us out of all we were in Adam, and put us into the whole of the position of Christ founded upon the finished work of the cross, and made good to us individually when we believe the glad tidings of our salvation, by the Holy Ghost who takes up His place in us, giving us the consciousness that we are in Christ and Christ in us, and of union with Him and with all that are His. All reasoning as to what Old Testament saints had or could not have had, will not take away from the plain force of such scriptures to a mind subject to them. Whither this reasoning leads may be seen: "the direct result to me would be this, that Old Testament saints were neither children of God, nor could they be justified from sin, or in the last Adam," etc. (p. 8.) Thus what scripture applies to a revealed position before God, that we are brought into on earth as the fruit of a gloriously accomplished redemption, is here attempted to be applied to saints before Christ came, which if it were, would have taken them wholly off the revealed ground upon which God placed them. To have our place in Christ according to Rom 8:1, our old man must have been crucified with Christ; but having died with Him we have died out from under the law, and the bond of relationship with that first husband has been absolutely broken; how then could Old Testament saints, who were "kept under the law" have been in Christ? Of course they were children of God, as surely as they were born of God, though the mere possession of the nature carried with it then no more than now the consciousness of relationship, and were justified from sin before God,** and not under condemnation; though none of these things were the ground upon which they stood, as they are, and are characteristic of (in contrast with them) the ground upon which we stand. Read 1Co 15:1-58 and think of an Old Testament saint being "in the last Adam"! Also Gal 3:23 to Gal 4:7 for the contrast of their place and ours, specially Gal 3:28 as to how "in Christ" takes out of Jewish ground, as out of all other distinctions of the flesh. For "if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." (2Co 5:17; compare also ver. 16.)

*And both therefore to the time of Christ's resurrection. So that if time is taken into account here, we were both quickened and forgiven before ever we were born! The truth is, the passage teaches nothing as to the time of either.

***"Before God" I say, in contrast to any revealed position; for note the difference in Rom 3:25, between "the passing over of sins that are past through the forbearance of God," and justification now, the cross laying the righteous ground for both the one and the other. The paper here as everywhere, leaves out the full place the cross has before God.

I turn now to the way the Gospel of John is brought in to support the position of the writer to the detriment of the truth. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord Jesus as one with the Father ought to have preserved from the assumption, that our being in Him is a parallel thought with His being in the Father (p. 8). "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father." (John 14:20.) I have no manner of question that this is the full divine glory of His Person, ever true of Him as that the Father was in Him, perfectly expressed in His words and works when He was here (vers. 10, 11), the full sufficient witness of that glory. But when He had taken His place as man in the glory of God and the Holy Ghost was given, they should know it fully as they had not while He was with them. (Ver. 9.) They should know Him in the Father; and now came the added wondrous truth, "Ye in me and I in you:" in community of life and nature indeed, but not theirs or ours simply by being born of God or quickened, but the fruit of His being glorified, and the Holy Ghost come, give them thus their privileged intelligent Christian place. Thus when this position is developed in 1 John, from the same point of view of community of life and nature, we find three things, that mark it according to Paul, even in the babes. They are addressed as consciously forgiven (1Jn 2:12); they know the Father (ver. 13); and have an unction from the Holy One, the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. (Vers. 20, 27.) But here, as elsewhere through the paper, we meet the contradiction of the express statement of scripture. We are told at the foot of page 8, that "the life He communicates makes us sons of God" (the italics are the author's). Now the communication of life was nothing new in itself. It was communicated to the Old Testament saints, yet it did not make them sons of God. It needed that He should "redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal 4:1-31) "Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26); and then, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father;" thus completing the glorious position. "Wherefore," it is added, "thou art no more a servant, but a son." Again, the paper confuses being in Christ and Christ in us, with abiding in Him — John 14 in which the Lord distinctly and in terms brings in the future for their knowledge of His glory in the new place He was about to take (adding to it the statement of the new place consequently to flow to us, in both its parts in richest privilege and responsibility, connecting all with the coming of the Holy Ghost), with John 15:1-27, the then position of the disciples with Him upon earth; though the abiding belong to both positions as the essential condition of fruitfulness.*

*The paper distinguishes between identification and union — rightly, for they are distinct truths. But union is not the subject of John — never enters into it. Now for identification, of which John does speak, it was necessary that the corn of wheat should fall into the ground and die. There was none without this. "He abideth alone." Yet we are told there was nothing future in the fullest expression of this identification, "Ye in me and I in you." It was all theirs already, they had only to know it by the Spirit. (p. 9.) Nor is the verse quoted for union (1Co 6:16) truly so applied "Union applies to the Church alone." (Same paragraph.) There is nothing about the Church in the passage. It is the Spirit as the source and character and power of our connection with Christ, in contrast with "two shall be one flesh." But "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," involving union of course as the indwelling of the Spirit ever does. As to John 20:22, nothing can be built upon it in the way of doctrine. Clearly there is a figurative bearing of those three occasions, recorded in John 20:1-31, John 21:1-25, upon which Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead, besides the actual and historical; for there were many others. And the first, taken figuratively, must bring out the Pentecostal gift, as the second does the calling of the remnant, and the third the millennial day. Taken historically, when the truth is known from

other parts of the word, it helps to illustrate the difference, between the Spirit as the power of life in Christ Jesus (the last Adam breathing upon them, as God once breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, would suggest strongly this connection with life) — of life now theirs (the same life as before but) in a wholly new position in a risen Christ — and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; though one could not be without the other now — so far from the absurdity suggested as the contention of some (p. 11), that "people in fact receive the Spirit as life before they receive it as the indwelling Spirit of sonship." And this leads me to note the way the paper mixes up such crudities of thought and teaching, if they are to be met with, with the sober setting forth of what those taught in the word have gathered from it on the points in question. It is not a method that commends itself, to say the least.

Last, but by no means least in importance, we come to what Scripture connects with the giving and reception of the Spirit. John 7:39 is a cardinal passage; by which we learn, that the gift of the Holy Ghost was not connected with the communication of life before Christ came, nor with the Son quickening whom He will when on earth, though life precedes its reception in every case, but with the place He takes in glory when redemption was accomplished — "the Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified" — they that believed on Him should receive the Holy Ghost when Jesus was glorified. He comes then as the witness to that glory, and therefore of the perfection of the work on the ground of which He has been glorified. Now the knowledge of salvation is conveyed by the remission of sins, as we know from Luk 1:77. For when God speaks of remission, it is not the thing true in His heart of us before we knew it, but of forgiveness positively conferred on us. "Peter's preaching at Pentecost proclaims One whom they had crucified, raised up of God, made Lord and Christ, and giving the Holy Ghost." (p. 14.) Pricked in their hearts they ask what they must do. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38.) Now in the face of all this, we are told that "the efficacy of Christ's death is not mentioned throughout." Yet on the ground of it, the two characteristic blessings of Christianity, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost, are presented to them; nay, they are exhorted to repent and be baptised that they may enter into them. And the Holy Ghost is connected with the forgiveness, which ought to have preserved from the rash assertion that it is governmental. I should like to ask in what more powerful way the efficacy of Christ's death could be presented? As to the next case, that of Samaria (Acts 8:1-40), let me say, No one is pleading for delay. (p. 15.) Scripture puts not time, but a thing, between life and the Holy Ghost, that is, the blood of Christ. But the passage goes far to prove the falseness of the theory of the paper, that the reception of the Holy Ghost is connected with life; for when the apostle went down "as yet he was fallen upon none of them." He is given, as wondrously conferred privilege. In the first Gentile case of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48), Peter is sent to this quickened soul to tell him words whereby he and all his house shall be saved. Is there no parallel case to this now? And we see what salvation is according to scripture — not the mere communication of life, but the position into which we are consciously brought, by faith in the testimony of Christ's finished work. To this Peter bears testimony — to the infinite facts of His lowly life of doing good — His rejection and death — His being raised up by God and given place of Judge of quick and dead. And now, to give knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins he adduces the united testimony of the prophets, "That through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins." It is at this (one would have supposed) significant point of his testimony, that the Holy Ghost fell upon these prepared souls. "This is the whole statement."

Blessed be God it is, and therefore fraught with the deepest interest for our souls. We have no such treatise on the atonement as the writer seems to miss, in all the preaching of the Acts. But we have repentance and remission of sins preached through His name, founded upon the divine facts of His death and resurrection; and where faith receives the testimony, the person is sealed by the gift of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 19:1-41 we have a company of believers again, at Ephesus, who had believed through John the Baptist's testimony "on him that should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus." If not here, in Eph 1:13 Paul tells us what he brought them, "the word of truth, the glad tidings of their salvation" — that is, of a Saviour come, and of His accomplished work — "in whom having believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," of whom indeed they had not heard till then that "he is," that is, in His special place and testimony on earth.

"Faith in the Lord's Person is" not "what is emphasised" in all these places, but the testimony, upon His accomplished death and resurrection, of the remission of sins. There was the testimony to the glory of His Person by His words and works when He was upon earth and this rejected, and now, and this is the cardinal point of the testimony of the Acts (and it only shows how far even a beloved servant of the Lord may be carried by the bias of his mind, that it should be overlooked and denied), there is the testimony that "thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." It is not the "intelligent apprehension of atonement" (p. 15), that is "necessary either for the forgiveness of sins or for the reception of the Holy Ghost." But what we do learn from all scripture, from the united testimony of type, and history, and doctrine, is indisputably, that the Holy Ghost takes up His dwelling-place in the believer, on the reception of the forgiveness of sins by faith in the Holy Ghost's testimony to the death and resurrection and exaltation in glory of the Lord Jesus. For to this answers exactly, as we have seen, the place the Holy Ghost is introduced doctrinally in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom 5:5); and in beautiful type, in the cleansing of the leper, where the application of the blood of the trespass-offering comes between the water, type of the word by which we are born of God, and the oil, the type of the Holy Ghost. (Lev 14:1-57) Of course it is those who believe in Christ who are sealed, not those who do not. But the question is, Does the indwelling of the Holy Ghost follow upon faith in the Person of Christ, apart from and before the testimony of His work is believed. Scripture leaves no doubt or cloud upon my mind as to the answer. Those of Acts 19:1-41 believed and had life, before they received the glad tidings of their salvation; when they heard these, their faith in Christ receives what they had not before, that is, the seal of the indwelling Spirit. Nor will it shake the simple Christian who knows his place before God, and has the testimony of the word to the blessed effects that accompany the presence of the Holy Ghost — that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, that He is the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father, that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty — to have the case of souls before Luther's time brought up to him. (p. 4.) For he who knows the grace of God, and marks the ways of that grace with souls, knows how many there are, who are in reality in these effects of the Spirit's presence, whose doctrine forbids it to them. He holds to what scripture teaches him of these effects, and refuses the theory of this paper, that would reduce the great characteristic truth and witness of Christianity, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer, to a mere means by which he enters intelligently into what in fact he already possessed before, thus reducing His presence to a nonentity, effecting nothing actually, and alike dishonouring to the glory of Christ on high (glorified in God consequent upon God having been infinitely glorified in Him — John

13:31-32), and the Holy Ghost witness to it on earth. The "intelligent apprehension of atonement by the cross" might indeed in such times have been sought for well-nigh in vain. But it is not this, nor any question of intelligence then or now, that brings with it the divine power and blessedness of the Holy Ghost's indwelling. By the infinite and precious grace of our God, the state of the soul is not measured by its intelligence, but by its needs and God's answer to them, through the faith of His testimony in the gospel. False and defective teaching may hinder much, so that the intelligent apprehension of the place may be small — yet there, and enjoyed, and expressed in the spirit of their intercourse with God, when sometimes denied in the formal doctrine of it — and with deepening intelligence will come deepening enjoyment of all that we have been brought into. As to the danger of slipping out of known and enjoyed blessedness (p. 4) by unwatchfulness and the like, it is most real. If the Holy Ghost be so intimately bound up and identified with the christian state, what grieves Him must affect the enjoyment of all parts of our blessing. But enfeebled as the sense of it may be even to the loss of all the practical power of it, one who has been brought into the christian position does not lose it, blessed be God, any more than a deeply-failing child loses his relationship. Now this position, this relationship, based on accomplished redemption, flowing from the new state and place the Lord Jesus has entered into as Man in resurrection power and glory, and the Holy Ghost given to bring us consciously into it, is His own place as risen Man before God and the Father, and therefore, is one of assured divine favour and acceptance. The power of His resurrection entering into it involves our deliverance from the whole old status of man in the flesh, and therefore from the dominion of sin under the law — as well as the forgiveness of the sins that belonged to that status. It makes sin a far more terrible thing. But it is one thing to be on this ground with God in the soul, and estimate all failure as inconsistency with a constituted relationship, of which the Holy Ghost is the power, and another thing never to have been in the relationship; but to be, on the contrary, carnal, sold under sin, and brought into captivity to the law of sin in the members, albeit with the holy desires of the new nature and the earnest struggle to be free. These prove the life and nature of God to be there, by birth from God, as surely as with those who are in their full christian position, but that that position is not the fruit of life (though it could not be ours without it), but of the death and resurrection of Christ made good in divine power to our souls by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The Epistle of John (from which a verse is quoted in a way to weaken its full force, page 5) is the blessed counterpart of the christian position as unfolded through Paul — the complement of it. By our deliverance in power into that position, we have become entitled to disown absolutely any other life as ours, save that we have received in the Son of God, now to be displayed in us in its characteristic divine traits, in the place where it was once displayed in all its perfection in Him. I am crucified with Christ: it is no more I that live, but Christ that liveth in me. That life is free to express itself now. There is not a word of the deliverance, but we are instructed in the essential privileges and characteristics of the life as if we never possessed another. What a confirmation of the deliverance to the delivered soul, of the ground of the new creation upon which we have been brought. Power to walk as such, comes from taking the place He gives us by this Epistle, to disown all other life but His as ours. But what constant energy of faith and abiding in Him this needs! Then we shall walk as He walked. Thus the passages quoted on page 5 (1Jn 2:11; 1Jn 3:6), are as simple to faith as they are solemn in their application to our souls. If these things are not known as true in us, it is either that we have never been brought into our full christian place (the "perfect" or those "of full age" of Paul's Epistles), or else the far more serious alternative, that having been brought into it, we have gone and sinned against the known

light and love and relationships of that place — against all that Christ was, and was manifested for (1Jn 3:5) — against known deliverance from sin's power. And to this too sad possibility (such are our hearts) the only two exceptions to what is the general rule of the Epistle (recognising nothing as true of the Christian but what was so of Christ, for He is our life) apply, to sin in my own case in chapter 2:1, and in my brother's in chapter 5:16. It is sad to have even John 4:13-14, used in the same way in the same connection as the passages above, as if this last, too, does not apply in all its absoluteness to what Christ is speaking of, that is, eternal life in power by the Holy Ghost in us, rising up in communion to its source and level in God — did anyone ever brought there ever thirst again in it? But surely the Lord does not promise that we shall never thirst again, if we turn away from the source and sphere of this divine satisfaction, to some poor earthly cistern that never sufficed even for the natural man.

I have written at more length than I intended originally in a letter, but the importance and blessedness of the truths involved have led me on, though so little able to present to another the full disproof, that the word of God gives my own soul, of the position taken up by this paper. The effect of its perusal, in the light of the word, has been only to strengthen and deepen the hold of the truths, and their connection, that has been the apparent object of this paper to call in question. These are nothing less than the foundation on which Christianity, as in contrast to Judaism, rests — the truths in which a full Christianity is contained and revealed. So far am I from believing with the writer (p. 1) that no fundamental point is in contention. Those who have found it as, in the infinite grace of God, the answer to the deepest needs of our being — but not measured or limited by those needs, being the answer of divine love and power, and nothing short of the fruit of God's everlasting counsels for His own glory and joy, accomplished at such a cost — will not lightly give up the truths in which it has been made good to our souls. J. A. T.

S. Love and Obedience

Love and Obedience.

(John 14:1-31) Notes of Bible Reading with J. A. Trench.

(John 14:1-3). We can estimate but imperfectly what it was to have the Father's house presented to the disciples for the first time — for nowhere else is it spoken of. Jewish hopes looked for the manifestation of Christ on earth, but now, instead of that, it is the full revelation of the Father's house to which the Lord directs their hearts. They had believed in God without a manifestation of God; now they were to have Him as the direct object of their faith. Then He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Redemption having settled every question of our sins — and thus prepared us for the place — His presence there prepares the place for us. He is coming again to receive us to Himself, but, between His going and His coming, He has sent the Holy Ghost that in heart and spirit we may know the Father's house before we get there. The coming is dropped in the rest of the chapter which is the unfolding, all through, of the power of the Spirit.

(John 14:4-7). "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." It is as if He had said, "Ye know the Father's house." Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus immediately says, "I am the way" — the way to the Father's house, and the way to the Father. We have come to the Father, and thus to all the deepest blessedness of the Father's house. It is the Father's presence that makes the Father's house. Christ is the revealer of the Father: to receive Jesus as the Sent One of God is to have the Father revealed in the fullest sense. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee (the Father) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Is the Father's house for others besides the Church?

What John presents is only for this dispensation. The Father's house will not be revealed to saints in the Millennium. But we have entrance, by the Spirit, to where He is gone. Hence while it is no question of corporate blessing, only those who compose the Church know this blessedness now. Not that Abraham, and such, will not know the Father in the future, but they never knew it on earth.

(John 14:8-11). Philip seizes the thought of the Father, and so he says, "Show us the Father," proving how little he had grasped the glory of the Person of the Lord. In reply, the Lord says, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" His "words" and "works" were a full manifestation of the Father, in whose bosom He dwelt that life of communion, that life of relationship, into which He was then introducing us. Thus we have the path of Jesus in His words and works; then the work of redemption to set us there, and then His coming again to bring us there actually.

(John 14:12-14). The works that He had done, they would do also, and more wonderful works, from the greater nearness to the Father as Man which He was to take. A poor sinner who receives His words now is brought into greater nearness than could be while He was on earth. "If ye shall ask anything in my Name, I will do it." That is the new blessing into which we are introduced.

(John 14:15-24). Now comes the path by which we can enjoy it unhindered. Love leads into the path, and then there need be no check to the enjoyment of all the Lord leads us into. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." Then the power of it — the Comforter, the Spirit of truth shall abide with you for ever, whom the world cannot receive. The Spirit is here because the Lord is not here. "I will come to you," is a present thing, come for you is a future thing. The revelation of the Father was here, but the enjoyment of that revelation could only be in His going away. In touching words He almost reproaches them for not having discerned Him.

What are the commandments? The commandments and words are very like each other. They differ essentially from the law. All that manifested His life here is given to us to form that life in us. The commandment is the direction of the Lord in certain things; but His words are connected with a higher spiritual intelligence that leads to the obedience to the word, when an actual command might not be found. What I see true of Him is now given me. The commandments have to do with certain details, but the word expresses the whole life, all that is seen true of Him is seen now as a commandment for me. Does it need more communion to keep His word?

"If a man love Me, he will keep my word." One walking in nearness to the Lord will not wait for a command, but seeing the life of the Lord — what is in Christ — the Holy Ghost produces it in me. As the Apostle could say, "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2Co 10:1). I am formed by that life, in occupation with it. "I will come to you" is the result of the Spirit's presence — the opened eye to see Him Who has withdrawn from the world. "Because I live ye shall live also," is not merely security, but it takes in all His present service for us, that we may hang upon Him moment by moment.

"That day" is the Holy Ghost's day. Then "Ye shall know." This leads to the development of the words "I in you." The having the commandments is the proof of love. A careless child forgets the commandments, but an obedient, intelligent, child is glad to get his Father's words and treasures them in his heart.

(John 14:25-26). What a comfort to them that the Lord speaks of the One He would send from the Father, bringing back to their remembrance all that He had said to them, and would teach them, so lighting up the path of the Lord Jesus as to bring them into the intelligence of it, and this He does for us too.

(John 14:27-28). "Peace I leave with you." What a legacy! The peace in which He had ever walked down here, bringing us into association with Himself — not giving away. He was leading them into an unknown path. "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice because I go unto the Father." He had taken the subordinate place on earth as Man, but was now going back as Man to the place of nearness.

(John 14:29-31). The chapter does not close until the perfection of the path He had trodden is brought out — love and obedience. The love, the spring of obedience — doing His will instead of our own. This would lighten up the loneliest path of each one, that every act may be in obedience to that blessed One.

S. Love and Obedience.

Love and Obedience.

John 14 Notes of Bible Reading with J. A. T.

(from "An Outline of Sound Words" No. 2, p. 18)

John 14:1-3. We can estimate but imperfectly what it was to have the Father's house presented to the disciples for the first time — for nowhere else is it spoken of. Jewish hopes looked for the manifestation of Christ on earth, but now, instead of that, it is the full revelation of the Father's house to which the Lord directs their hearts. They had believed in God without a manifestation of God; now they were to have Him as the direct object of their faith. Then He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Redemption having settled every question of our sins — and thus prepared us for the place — His presence there prepares the place for us. He is coming again to receive us to Himself, but, between His going and His coming, He has sent the Holy Ghost that in heart and spirit we may know the Father's house before we get there. The coming is dropped in the rest of the chapter which is the unfolding, all through, of the power of the Spirit.

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S. Phippians 3 & 4.

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Notes of address by J. A. Trench at Hawick, Sept., 1891. In Philippians we find the normal experience of the Christian, the true fruit of the power of the Spirit. That is not presented as doctrine or theory nor as apostolic nor ministerial but as the ordinary Christian's life. The Epistle is not described as from an Apostle but from servants of Jesus Christ. Its chief characteristic is joy and that in the circumstances of daily life with Christ and heavenly glory as the goal. Paul's circumstances were very trying! Stopped in the midst of successful service, committed to prison from which he would only go free through a martyr's death; the visible results of his work largely gone to pieces, yet his heart was full of joy which he wished to communicate to others. "Finally my brethren rejoice in the Lord," who was the spring of his joy which did not depend upon the circumstances. Earlier he wrote "to me to live is Christ," as the all absorbing object! In the dark days of Nehemiah was the enunciation of the principle "the joy of the Lord is your strength." The returned remnant had started brightly, but their early energy had declined. In the present last days the principles of ruin have developed greatly, and the remnant although having a higher calling manifest worse failure. The apostle dealt with various hindrances to this joy being realised in order that we may know the resource which will cause us to triumph over every hindrance. In Php 3:1-21 he calls the Judaisers "the concision" indicating partial cutting off compared with the real circumcision which was complete cutting off from the world. The first hindrance is religious flesh, in which he had no confidence. When like Saul of Tarsus we gain a high position we are apt to be proud of it. The apostle described his credentials yet these were combined with enmity to Christ. But when the latter revealed Himself in the light above the brightness of the sun, how he was exposed! His gains became loss for Christ. He reckoned all his commendations to be simply refuse, to be dropped so that he might apprehend Christ. The Christian's place involves the renunciation of self! Divine righteousness eclipses the best righteousness of man. "That I may know Him" is an increasing matter! The longing desire of the soul was to know Christ. We begin with resting in Him as a Saviour, at peace with God, but continuing growth in the soul depends upon having Christ as the object! The power of His resurrection is the attractive power of the place where He has associated us with Him. Thus we shall know more of His path of rejection and test the fellowship of His sufferings, which is only to be known here. (David's mighty men were more intimate with him when he was a fugitive than when he was in the glory of his kingdom). The result is we are conformed to Christ's death. But the Apostle had his eye on the end of the path, viz., the resurrection from among the dead. That might be attained through a martyr's death, but he does not think of that. Such realisation entails complete deliverance from the world with its things which so often hinder the soul. The highest place in the world would offer no inducement to one who is pressing on to be conformed to the image of Christ. When the first rays of divine light showed us to ourselves and Him to us He laid hold of us to be like Him in glory. He had one consuming object on which his mind was concentrated. Energy of faith is required to pursue, not being occupied with past incidents of progress but always reaching forward and pressing towards the prize of the

calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. Now that normal Christian experience is not presented merely that it may be admired in Paul! Another tendency is curbed in Php 3:15. We are to seek out what we have reached in common with others, keeping rank and considering others. In Php 3:20, the Spirit sums up the Christian position. Our conversation or citizenship is in heaven, that should come before every other interest in life. All that forms the Christian life morally is in heaven now. We have been brought into a new circle of interests, from whence we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. How blessed to be found by the Lord at any moment that He comes pressing on in the power of the object to bear his image in the glory! Well may the apostle exhort "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Php 4:4). To most of us care is the greatest hindrance but He says be careful for nothing. That lifts us above our circumstances! It is God who says to you "Be careful for nothing but in everything (from the little trifle to the great concern) by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," 1:e. , the Christian's normal confidence is in God. The result is that the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus, 1:e., conditional on our trusting God, with what brings care. We may say that is beyond our understanding. Indeed the verse says so! We have only to confide in Him as to any element which would develop care and we shall prove the blessedness of that peace which defies description. May we realise increasingly the value of these things until we enter the scene where there will be nothing to hinder our enjoyment of heavenly things in His presence.

S. Reconciliation

Reconciliation

2Co 5:1-21.

Notes of an address by J. A. Trench, 1891. In this passage the apostle carries us on from the ways of God with the poor earthen vessel, in which He has put this treasure, to the moment when we shall have done with the earthen vessel for ever : when there will be a vessel perfectly suited to the treasure. From chapter 4. we learn that He has put the treasure in the earthen vessel, that "the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2Co 4:5; 2Co 4:7). Nothing but Christ could shine out of bodies of glory; but all the excellency of the power of God is put forth to make Him shine out of earthen vessels. In chapter 5, we come to the blessed moment when we shall have done with the earthen vessel altogether. "We know" — always the language of faith — is the divinely given certainty that characterizes the believer. The word here is really "tent," in contrast with what follows. A temporary kind of dwelling in contrast to "a building" where there is permanency, in other words, our glorified condition, that awaits us in His presence.

What is the effect upon our souls? We groan. Have we begun to know anything about that? Do we know what it is so to have our eye on the body of glory in His presence as to feel uncomfortable in these bodies? Have we thus the condition, for which God has wrought us, distinctly before our souls, so that we become less and less at home, so to speak, in these bodies? Is our eye so lit up with the vision of glory, "earnestly desiring" it? It is not the groan of suffering here; but "to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Here is the blessed light that Christianity has cast upon this subject of death. The 3rd verse comes in on account of the profession at Corinth. We are not looking for dissolution, although it brings no fear with it. The normal Christian hope is "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . 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" (1Th 4:16-17). Here it is not traced to the Lord Himself, but to the power of the life we already possess in Him, "that mortality might be swallowed up of life:" it only needs to be put forth at His coming. When the first arrow of conviction reached our souls, God had wrought us for nothing short of full conformity to His body of glory. Are you satisfied with this body of clay? "Present in the body" (N.T.) does not mean at home in it; a strange thing indeed to be at home in a body in which we are burdened. "Absent from the body . . . present with the Lord." That is the way dissolution comes in. It is one of the only four passages in the Epistles where the death of the believer is contemplated; and how sweet that is, no wonder that we can count upon death as one of our possessions

"We walk by faith not by sight" (verse 7). This is the effect of our present condition, we only enjoy these blessed heavenly things by faith, and that is so surpassingly sweet that we long to see them actually. "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of Him" (verse 9). This is the motive of all the life; but after death the judgment. All is changed for the believer, but it is a universal principle, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

Here it is applied in its Christian bearing more especially. Every single man, woman, and child will appear there. How do we get to be there? Not until the Lord has first come for us. How blessed that is; He does not send any intermediate beings; He comes to receive us to Himself. We only come to be made manifest at the judgment seat, but we are in bodies of glory like His own, we shall be perfectly like Him — no room for fear there, as, we know well, perfect love has cast out fear. We are made manifest there as the fruit of His perfect work on the cross in which Christ has so glorified God.

You may ask, why are we made manifest at the judgment seat of Christ? It is that there, for the first time, we may know His grace fully, as we cannot know it now. All our ways will come out before Him from the cradle to the glory, and more than that, all His ways with us, and then what a burst of praise, that will never die away, will come from our hearts. I cannot imagine the full joy of eternity without that. Apart from it how we should have wished, all through eternity, for a moment like that when we could go over all our past history in the light of His presence. We spoil it sometimes by bringing in others. The Lord is able to isolate us with Himself; it positively weakens it to bring in others. No, I shall be alone with Him to go over all my past life. It is needful that it should all come out there in order that His grace should have its full place in my heart at last.

Reward also comes in. Eternal glory carries no thought of reward for service, it is the fruit of the travail of His soul, that He should have us with Himself, in the eternal glory. But there is the kingdom, where there will be reward or the loss of it. Some will have all their works burnt up as rubbish, and how glad they will be that it should be so, but the solemn fact remains that they will have no reward in the kingdom; not that reward should ever be a motive for service, it would be rubbish then indeed. Christ must be the motive. The Apostle shows how this is meant to act on our souls down here, we anticipate that day, we can walk in the full light of it when divested of all fear. What a solemn incentive it becomes to holiness! The Lord give us to walk in view of that day. From the remainder of the chapter we get the divine foundation upon which all this blessed confidence upon God depends. In verse 19 we find three things: — God was in Christ; not imputing trespasses; putting in us the word of reconciliation. All rests on these three things. There never can be anything beyond this first immutable principle in one way; how needed this was as the basis of reconciliation. Satan early stole man's heart, and instilled into his mind the dark doubt against God, and all man's thoughts of God ever since have been founded on the lie of the devil, instead of the truth of God. So He showed Himself in all His grace to arrest man by the irresistible power of that grace, so that we might know and bless God. How blessed this grace comes out in such a scene as Luk 15:1-32, or John 4:1-54. "Not imputing their trespasses unto them." He came to manifest Himself in all the goodness of His own heart here. "He . . . made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Not imputing trespasses was no ground of reconciliation. It would have been like Peter when he clung to the Lord's knees crying "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man O Lord." It would have only shown us how absolutely unfit for His presence we were.

Another effect of His presence here, in the full revelation of His goodness, was that it became a signal for the wild outbreak of all that man was against God. Thus all our state came fully out. Instead of reconciliation, His presence only drew out all the irreconcilableness of the natural heart. And "having made peace through the blood of His cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself" (Col 1:20). Having begun with the centre of the enmity, reconciliation will go out to all creation, but He begins with man. Man only was opposed to God's heart and will. His full state

comes out now with all the added light of the cross upon that condition.

"If one died for all, then were all dead" (verse 14). Up to the cross God had been dealing with man as alive in the flesh : then He sent His own Son into the world, the only result being the outbreak of all the enmity of man's heart. Now God looks upon man as dead in sins; how blessed to have bowed to it, that we are absolutely dead in sins by the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And now when we give ourselves up for what we are before God, reconciliation begins to shine out before us: not to do with sins, but with the state of enmity of man's heart. God has identified Himself with our condition, "He hath made Him to be sin for us" (verse 21). All our state having come fully out has been judged in the cross of Christ. That was the end, not merely of all that I have done, but of all that I am.

We know Christ no more after the flesh (verse 16). We know Him now as risen from the dead, a new creation, having entered that place as Man. It is a wholly new creation, where all things are of God. Thus we see a Man gone up in divine righteousness before God, and all that wonderful place into which He has gone opening up before us, as the home of our hearts. No disturbance can come there between your souls and God. The word reconciliation is a difficult one to explain. We find an illustration of it in Joseph and his brethren. After enjoying the fruit of his love for fifteen years, when their father died, they said, "Joseph will peradventure hate us" (Gen 4:15). They were not reconciled. With how many is it thus now; often not known until a death-bed by one who has been enjoying the fruits of His work for years. There has been a lurking suspicion all the time, because they have never seen how God, has closed the history of the first man. What rest of heart when that is known.

There is another truth in verse 5 where we learn that we have "the earnest of the Spirit." What divine immutable foundations are these for our souls to rest upon. God come down in Christ; man reconciled, judged as to all that he was, in Christ; a Man gone up into the glory in divine righteousness, and now the earnest of the glory, the Holy Ghost, dwelling in us. In connection with this, there comes out the blessed spring of all this, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Not your love, as some think, but His. What love! And then we have the new object, that we should live no more to ourselves, but to Him. That blessed One that shines before our souls in all His excellency, all the glory of God shining in His face. We can gaze upon it with more confidence than upon the face of our nearest or dearest friend. We have the standard of what suits Him, and use diligence that "we may be accepted of Him." God grant that thus it may be with each one of us; that He, Himself, should be so before our hearts, that our life may be just seeking to please Him.

S. Rejoicing before the Lord.

Rejoicing before the Lord.

(Notes of address by J. A. Trench, Galashiels, 1916). The Pentateuch has been the constant object of attack by the higher critics and Deuteronomy has always been marked out for special criticism by them. However, it is of prime interest to observe that in the Temptation in the Wilderness, the Lord Jesus met Satan with quotations entirely from Deuteronomy. The fear inspired by the reign of Law and the trials of the wilderness was displaced by joy in Deuteronomy. No other book of Moses presents this feature. In Deu 12:1-32, after unfolding the wonderful issue of the wilderness in the successful entrance to the Promised Land, involving their rest in the inheritance given by God, twice over Moses indicated that they were to rejoice before the Lord their God. Then subsequently on five great occasions joy was to be the prime feature which would mark the relationship with the Lord in the Land, He had given them to possess, viz.: (1) when the tithes of the increase of the Land and firstlings of the flocks were presented to Him; (2) on the feast of Weeks; (3) on the feast of Tabernacles; (4) when the basket of first fruits was presented; and (5) finally on entering the Land and setting up the altar bearing the inscription of the Law. If the heart is filled with gladness there cannot be any foothold for the enemy of souls! Obviously joy springs from possession. The deliverance effected in redemption lays the basis for the process which emerges in joy.

We are brought to the culmination of blessing at the end of the first section of eleven verses in Rom 5:1-21. After the long connected statement springing from the thought of justification, we read "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom 5:11). There could not be anything beyond that, and it is based on reconciliation to God by the death of His Son. Later we find the doctrine developed that it is in consequence of man being in Christ and new creation having taken place, that the ministry of reconciliation is effectual (2Co 5:17). If it could be conceived that there should be any vacant space in the heart it will be filled by the blessed God who will get in return the joy of that heart. At first consideration the passage in Romans may appear to hinder the outburst of joy because subsequent to the rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, tribulations are introduced. We do not usually associate these with the thought of joy. Nevertheless, the Apostle said "we glory" (1:e., make our boast or rejoice) in these also because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

We cannot but be greatly affected by the sense of deliverance gained at such infinite cost, but the difference between that and the subsequent joy is well illustrated for us in the Book of Deuteronomy. The Passover was the first great gathering of the Jewish year bringing to the people's remembrance the ground of deliverance, as well as of blessing typically in the sorrow and death of Christ. Thence joy would not be appropriate, but solemn self judgment is set forth in the unleavened bread which accompanied the celebration of the Passover. The contrast with that feast is found in Deu 16:1-22 where the feast of Weeks and the feast of Tabernacles are brought

together. The former was marked by freewill offerings unto the Lord, and the latter by the abundance of the blessing in harvest and vintage. In both feasts they were to rejoice as fitting to their typical significance.

S. Rome And Modernism

Rome And Modernism

It is a fact well known to students of physical geography that the inland seas have, in common with the greater oceans abroad, their tides and currents of more or less account. And, after all, when it is considered to what these movements owe their origin, it is not surprising that, wherever we have the gathering together of waters, which God called seas, the influences producing such movements should be apparent. A great land-locked sea, the Church of Rome throughout the centuries, in many respects has appeared to be shut off from the tides and movements of human thought and mental activity, not to speak of something higher still the free circulation of divine truth. Yet in reality she cannot pretend to have been uninfluenced throughout by changing opinion. The main currents as they flowed on, have always sooner or later penetrated to her depths, or have been reproduced at least on her placid surface. However quiet the composure she may profess, however complete the stagnation to onlookers may appear, isolation from the effects of the intellectual progress around, modern history, in particular, forbids her to claim. It may be questioned, however, if in all her history the tide of contemporary thought has ever produced within her borders a movement of exactly the same character or intensity as that now appearing under the name of Modernism. The mention of the famous Galileo recalls no truly analogous movement. The Reformation was of another character entirely. The agitation in the thirteenth century again has been seized upon by Liberal Catholics as an appropriate historical allusion. It was concerning Aristotle's natural philosophy during the time of Pope Gregory 9, who at first forbade its study, and step by step thereafter came round to its sanction. The precedent may, or may not, be followed by Pope Pius X.; but there is no true parallel, for the nature and the extent of the dispute are both entirely different. Wherein this is unique may appear, if we but consider, on the one hand, not only the nature and history of Modernism in the Latin church, but also the unprecedented nature of that more widespread eruption of which this is but a local manifestation, and on the other, remember the essential character of the special zone here seen to be, equally with the rest, affected.

First, then, to consider the nature and history of the movement itself. As stated by Father Tyrrell, a prominent Modernist in our own country, who also has received the distinction of being "excommunicated" on account of his rebellious attitude, the chief points raised in the controversy may be summed up as follows:— On the one side "there are those who hold that the Roman Catholic Church, with the Papacy, the sacraments, and all its institutions and dogmas, was in its entirety the immediate creation of Christ when upon earth; that there has been no vital development, but only mechanical unpacking of what was given in a tight parcel two thousand years ago; that the scriptures were dictated by God, and are a final court of appeal, while all doctrinal guidance, etc., is mediated through the infallible Pope from God to the Church." On the other side are those, with whom he ranges himself, still loyal to the adopted church of John Henry Newman and others in a spiritual ancestry of which they are proud, "who do not believe that truth has been stagnating for centuries in theological seminaries; but has been streaming on with ever-increasing force and volume in the channels which liberty has opened to its progress." In

contrast to those "who will not allow the least truth or value to the mental and moral progress of recent centuries," theirs is a belief "in time, in growth, in vital and creative evolution." Of one point in all this we may take especial note — on the one hand are those who stand for an authoritative standard of truth, on the other those who press for liberty and free thought.

Then as to the history of the controversy. The campaign against Modernism is held to have been inaugurated by the late Pope's Encyclical of 1893. The Americanist controversy, and the condemnation of Schell's works were early stages in that campaign, also under his late Holiness. An astute ecclesiastical statesman as Leo XIII. is on all hands allowed to have been even his hand at last was forced, by the magnitude of the evil becoming apparent. But with the advent of Pius X. all appearance of hesitancy was laid aside. A different temper at once became apparent in the conduct of affairs. The trouble with France was its first-fruits politically, while in the theological field our Modernist friends early came under the notice of the Holy See. Almost immediately, an eminent writer, Abbe Loisy, regarding whose case a certain amount of action had already been taken, had his chief writings placed upon the Index. Others, less heard of, followed Houtin, Denis, Georget. The distinguished French Catholic Viollet's brochure on the Syllabus and the infallibility of the Pope, and Laberthonnière's philosophical works have since shared the same fate, as did even a novel by Fogazzaro, the Italian, characteristically a work of fiction, and which has had a phenomenal circulation. There is also Le Roy, whose statement of the Modernist position is described as masterly, besides Battifol and Tyrrell. On the part of the Vatican itself, there has been, not merely the placing upon the Index Expurgatorius the books of these individuals, but positive action to stem the tide has been taken. The Biblical Commission has given two findings — one, already noticed in this magazine, dealing with the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the other maintaining the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel, and its historical character. It is asserted that the present Pope secured these judgments, so satisfactory to believers everywhere, by a process we might describe as packing the jury, the expert members appointed by Leo XIII. being swamped by ignorant reactionaries. Be that as it may, the Modernists have considered that the Commission has been pressed into service against them. The in no wise uncertain sound which the trumpet has given forth is indeed disconcerting, not only to those in the front rank of that movement, but to such moderate critics as Dr. Barry, whose little hook, "The Tradition of Scripture," one learns with surprise, received the imprimatur of none less than the Archbishop of Westminster. Somewhat ruthless in its antagonism to all but an ultra-conservative standpoint towards the Bible, the reigning power must appear to such to be. In comparison with scholars beyond her pale, these Romanist higher critics have for the most part been contented with but a short flight into the airy realms of "speculative" theology. And even Loisy himself, who cannot be described as moderate,* has kept up the appearance of being most conciliatory towards, what our own critics do not hesitate to sneer at as, Bibliolatry. He lays it down as an axiom, and constantly emphasises that "the critical method of dealing with scripture does not mean forgetting the supernatural character of the sacred books." But regardless of, and quite ungrateful for, all such concessions, the Vatican will tolerate no half measures. In this respect at least Rome shows more real insight as to essentials than others who are deceived by similarly hollow professions. Thus if the mild tone on the one side is in contrast to much of the criticism we are accustomed to, the uncompromising stand on the other just as greatly differs from that which those who guide and control Protestant thought adopt.

{*In the light of what can be learnt of his two latest publications. "Simple Reflections on the Encyclical" and "The Synoptic Gospels," there can be no claim for Loisy being of moderate views. Judging from some of the theories advanced in the latter especially, he fully merits the title lately given him — "A new Renan.") And a similar intolerance is shown all round to so-called liberal tendencies of whatever kind. Eminent Romanist laymen, both in France and Germany, who thought to relieve the tension the one petitioning their bishops, the other appealing direct in extremely modest fashion for a reform of the Index fared but ill, being, in the rebuke administered, accused of impertinence and conspiracy respectively. In Italy such things as the literary and social movement identified with the name of Romolo Murri proved troublesome thorns in the side of the new Pope. Upon its intellectual side the danger was considered greatest no doubt, the open letter of the group of priests to Pius X. being serious enough. In the one department advocating reform of the Church's attitude towards democracy it is no less revolutionary in the other by its avowed conviction of the reality of "the revolution which has been wrought in our conception both of the nature of truth, and of the methods necessary to its establishment." This remarkable manifesto of Liberal Catholicism was no doubt a direct reply to the Papal Allocution of April, 1907. On that occasion the Pope called upon the bishops to co-operate with him in driving out those who were "rebels, who dreamed of the renewal of dogma by a return to the pure gospel apart from the authority of the church and of theology."

Then came another decree of the Holy Office, the Syllabus, of which the last twelve articles in particular were directly aimed against Modernism. Take, as a sample of the gravity of what is in dispute, Article 64 "It is an error to say that the progress of the sciences requires a change in the Christian doctrinal conceptions of God, of creation, of revelation, of the Word incarnate, and of the redemption." But the climax was reached when the Encyclical of September, 1907, appeared, which definitely pronounces Modernism to be dangerous in philosophy, faith, theology, history, criticism, and reform, and thence draws the conclusion that Modernism is the synthesis of all heresy, and must logically lead to atheism. There is no call upon us to consider the remedial measures which the final section of that deliverance enumerates, but its analysis of the Liberal Catholic position is most decidedly noteworthy. The issue is clearly between "the extrinsic conception of authority," as M. Paul Sabatier has called it, and that new conception of truth as "not communicated directly and from the outside by God to men," but as a kind of internal inspiration not to be bound by any dogmatic expression. So much for Liberal Catholicism itself, but to see it in its true perspective we must be reminded of its relation to a larger field. Recent times, as all are aware, have witnessed a new and most important departure in the theological world. Among other contributions, the nineteenth century has given us Biblical literary science, otherwise known as higher or historical criticism. And this it is which furnishes the most important item of the Modernist programme, on its intellectual side at least. Now this new "science" (!) has raised a question of intense interest and moment to believers everywhere, and to trace its workings is a matter of first importance. The claim of the literary method of studying the scriptures to be a recognised and legitimate science, though but of yesterday, is already conceded in full by not a few Protestant scholars and theologians. There are as yet but few results, as far as (what they will call) established conclusions are concerned; but of what so-called conclusions there are, much parade has been made. There are many professing Christians, however, still far from concurring in any conclusions, who yet profess to believe the methods of this science legitimate and harmless, and deprecate a firm stand as to the real inspiration of the scriptures as being either obscurant or

over-suspicious of new light. But simple believers, to whom the Bible is indeed the word of God, have all along distrusted the entire scheme, method and conclusions alike. Not only so, but they emphatically deny not only its harmlessness but also its legitimacy.

Further, its remarkable development has impressed many of them with the thought that the movement is in reality a great and grave crisis in the closing days of the church's testimony, if not indeed a most impressive precursor of the predicted apostasy. Consider how revolutionary the whole system is. In the comparatively short time it has been with us, it is no exaggeration to say, that it has succeeded in a great measure in transforming the standpoint of modern theology towards the Bible. The age-long strife between truth and error has now entered on an entirely new phase. Christendom has witnessed in the past many lapses from the faith, and departure from the truth has since early times been characteristic of the mass; but that which is now in progress is properly speaking neither lapse nor departure, but surrender of the divinely-appointed standard of truth. Doubtless surrender is not what is at present demanded; re-adjustment is all that is asked. But the re-adjustment is likely to affect, and in many cases has affected "our conception of the nature of the truth" as well as of "the methods necessary to its establishment."

1908 141 Precisely here is the point on which attention will, perhaps, very strongly be concentrated not so much the question whether the inerrancy of the Scriptures is necessary for their revelation of the truth but the very necessity of a standard at all, such as the Scriptures are thought to provide. For adherents of Biblical literary science, enamoured of their new discovery, while claiming, many of them, that it makes the Bible for them a new book, do not perchance perceive that in their chosen course they are fast drifting on to another momentous question what the truth is whether a divinely given, fixed, guaranteed "faith once for all delivered unto the saints," or a matter of flux and change, of humanly acquired discovery, requiring, as time goes on, that "re-statement of Christian doctrine" which so many today even are agitating for! The statement of the Encyclical as to "logically leading to atheism" may in this become a prediction justified by event. Without a doubt serious consideration confirms the thought that such is the shore towards which the current sets, although what we see now be no more than a loosening off from the moorings. This ought not to be dismissed as unduly pessimistic. It must not be imagined that a limited area is all that has come under the disintegrating influence of "higher criticism." Every branch of Western Christendom has been affected by it, and by what is probably the majority of representative teachers throughout Protestantism the only real alternative to it, the true and divine inspiration of the Scriptures, is no longer honestly contended for. That it should make its appearance in the Roman Catholic Church is not at all surprising; but its alarming progress in a few years within such a conservative body is remarkable, and testifies to the attractiveness and power of infidelity over those who surrender to the mere intellectualism of our times. The intolerant attitude of the Vatican towards it is not surprising either. The Roman Catholic faith stands for a conception of things with which the new spirit can have nothing in common. The one recognises authority, the other the rejection of it. The nature of the authority in question can be taken into account later, but the present point is that Rome is based upon the recognition of an authoritative standard of truth, upon dogma, to use a common phrase. A famous statement of Harnack "Dogmatic Christianity, in the strict sense of the word, is Catholic" — would be just as true were the first and last terms transposed. Newman, the convert to Rome, became such, no doubt, because dominated by the thought that external authority was absolutely essential, and assuming

that an infallible church provided it. "Dogma was the fundamental principle of my religion. I could enter into no other sort of religion." There is this in common then between Latin Christianity and true Christianity, that in each, truth is conceived to be absolute and unchangeable, capable of being presented in complete and perfect objective form. Wherein they differ is that true believers find this objective testimony presented to their faith in the divinely inspired Scriptures, which are perfect and sufficient in themselves, through the Holy Spirit's power, to reveal God's mind and will; whereas Rome teaches that in addition to the Bible the magisterium, or teaching authority of the church is needed, not only to interpret the Scriptures, assuming them to be obscure, but also to authenticate them to us, denying their authority, apart from the sanction of "the pillar and ground of the truth."

{*The shelter of the great name of Newman is sought by the Modernist and the Pope's supporter alike. But the claim of the English Modernist of the affinity of their system to Newman's development theory is well answered by Father Gerard. "There is nothing in common between logical development of dogma from a dogmatic depositum fidei which Newman upheld, and the evolution of the whole system of dogma from the mere religious sense which the Encyclical condemns."}

Rome is right then in its conception of the truth as being a definite, guaranteed objective testimony, a "depositum fidei" as it has been called; wrong, essentially wrong, in claiming for the voice of the church the share in that agency which she does. The authority it calls for allegiance to is a usurped authority. This seems to be a fundamental principle in this "Mystery, Babylon the Great" that truths are more refused than rejected, less denied than perverted. Orthodox, yet infidel she is, paradoxical as it may seem. Rome, it has often been remarked, is comparatively free from heterodoxy as to the great facts of Christianity, the Atonement, Trinity, Incarnation, etc. Yet in the case of every one of these truths their applicability to the human soul is annulled through her adulterations. So as to the truth itself, both the need of a divinely given standard, and the inspiration of the Scriptures, she holds and is ready to contend for; but to what account does she turn their admission when made? What rebuke does she bestow on her own children who forsake them? They are "rebels" who aim at the discovery of the truth "apart from the authority of the church and of theology!" And this it is necessary to be reminded of in the ensuing controversy. There is much to admire, perchance, in the conduct of a Pope, who has the courage to so expose and denounce the infidelity as to Scripture in the ranks of his own communion; and at first sight much to gratify the believer in the publication of the decisions of the Biblical commission already alluded to, and in such steps as his authorisation of a revision of the Vulgate. But, rooted in the system itself, there is infidelity of another complexion, with which such action, praiseworthy in itself, is still quite in keeping. Essentially, Rome is a system of error, and no true friend or guardian of the truth at any time. Her antagonism to it has been long and marked, and from the testimony of scripture itself will end only when she herself does. There must be no mistake. Whether the present firm attitude of the Vatican is a genuine stand for the truth as conceived by one who is faithful to what he knows of it, or the more likely reiteration of the apostate system's claim for the implicit obedience of her subjects in presence of a rival system of error, one thing is clear — that Rome at the bottom can never be anything but an enemy of God's truth. The apostasy in which Christendom ends, and to which events hasten, has ample room and accommodation for both elements — the haughty claim to be the sole and infallible depositary of the truth, and the infidelity

that denies such a thing as divinely revealed truth altogether. Incompatible as their different pretensions are, this they have in common, that they both exalt themselves against God and His infallible word. We know also that the system that now rejects and casts forth the incipient "atheism" appearing in her midst will one day be repaid in full by the same "atheism" fully developed, for "the ten horns shall hate the whore, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire" (Rev 17:16).

Critical indeed are our times. It is not so long since one remarked that "one of the worst signs of the present day, and which is observable everywhere, is that deliverance from superstition and error is not now by means of positive truth," but that "liberalism is simply destructive," and who stated his belief that "the manifest conflict of the near future would be between superstition and infidelity," that "the opposition to Popery will be infidel not protestant." In truth they pretty well divide the camp.

Happy the believer who, through the grace of God is "without the camp," and, possessed of that which neither enjoys, has the blessed assurance of possessing God's own truth in God's own word at once a direct and abiding communication. This it is alone to which the believer must stand, in the face of opposition as in the midst of declension. Both are present in that controversy to which attention has been drawn. Were it a mere wrangle over the political relations, or even the theological status of the Romish church, it might be left unnoticed. But the nature of the case makes it of serious interest to every child of God, as a striking instance of what is abroad, and as a solemn feature of the character which antagonism to the truth of God is now rapidly assuming. The truth of God we must hold fast. Theology may drift; creeds and confessions no longer suffice to hold mere profession to ancient anchorage grounds; a tide of questioning criticism may flow around, submerging shores even the most secluded from ordinary currents, its dissolving and disintegrating influence permeating every system of doctrine man has framed; and thus many, concerning the faith, make shipwreck. But, holding fast the precious word, admitting its claims, accepting its light, obeying its directions, we have abundant assurance of its reliability and unchangeableness. J.T.

S. Sonship.

Sonship.

Mat 3:1-17, Mat 4:1-11; Eph 1:1-14; Eph 6:10-13.

Notes of Address by J. A. Trench at Galashiels (2/7/1916).

It was a wonderful moment in the ways of God when John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, went out with his solemn testimony calling upon the people to repent. It was he of whom it was prophesied as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His path straight." There were those attracted by his testimony, and they went out to him and were baptised in Jordan, confessing their sins. However it must not be thought that everybody went out. In point of fact the result was very different. The religious leaders had rejected the counsel of God. He addressed the Pharisees and Sadducees as a generation of vipers, as those who had not brought forth fruits meet for repentance. It was indeed a very small remnant of the most disreputable classes in Israel to whom his testimony found access. It was the moral refuse which were moved by John the Baptist's ministry. This is a blessed mark of God's sure work in the soul; and there was no work done until they were brought down before God, confessing their sins.

Doubtless it was no small surprise to John when Jesus presented Himself for baptism. He did so to carry out God's will. He identified Himself with what was approved to be of God in Israel. What a moment it was when Jesus came up out of the water. The heavens were opened. God in His wonderful grace sees the moment for the full revelation of Himself. The testimony of God had been tending right on from Genesis that He might reveal Himself, but the full revelation had never been made until that moment. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." What a revelation — incomparable, infinite, of the Father and the Son and the Son in relation to the Father. How infinite was the grace of God found with the Lord Jesus Christ as intimated in Psa 16:1-11, which is His own peculiar Psalm. It could only be applicable to the Lord Jesus, from the very outset. His interest was in the saints, the excellent of the earth, in whom was all His delight. This was not in the state in which He found them. As set forth in the end of the third chapter, the Lord Jesus became the pattern of all that He would bring them into, and us also now by the Gospel. Among the things which come out in these Scriptures are the Father's voice declaring His beloved Son as the object of His perfect pleasure, and the Spirit of God descending and abiding upon Him. I need hardly say that the Lord Jesus was absolutely alone in the position in which we find Him. He only was declared as the Father's beloved Son, the object of favour on whom the Spirit could descend. Never could this have happened upon any other apart from blood. He had taken up the place as a man before God, but not to remain as such. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit (John 12:24). He humbled Himself so as to introduce us into His own place before His Father. The fulfilment of His Father's will was His direction right from the opening of His path to His death on the cross. In Eph. the heavens are opened to us, and so the Apostle in the opening verses can say "Blessed be the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." Could the heavens have been opened in any better way? The opening is of the richest character and in the highest place. We are identified absolutely with Him. It is no wonder then that the Apostle, before going in to the ordinary communications of the Epistle, had to relieve his heart in the way he did, which is the true character of worship. Worship is shown in the heart being full so as not to contain itself, and he goes on to say "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." I ask you to observe the standpoint God brings us to in His wonderful revelation. It is the standpoint of His own eternal counsels. To be before Him without blame in love is just as Christ was presented in Matthew's Gospel. What helps us in seeking to enter into these things is to apprehend the way in which Christ is presented to us in the Gospels. He was the complete expression of God in His own person, and this had to take place before any of us could have been actually introduced. We have everything set forth in Himself. He went down into death to carry out the eternal counsels of God. That is the standpoint of His choosing us in Him before the foundation of the world.

Into what relationships has the will of God put us? That you and I should be taken up out of the guilt and defilement made angels would never have satisfied the heart of God. He had to predestinate us unto sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. That was the position of Jesus as shown in Mat 3:1-17. There we see sonship manifested for the first time. In the everlasting counsel it was set forth that we should be introduced to sonship. There is no activity in counsel. There was none in choosing what was according to desire. He chose us in Christ. He wanted to have us before Him perfectly suited to Himself. Then the activity comes in. All this is very wonderful. God's counsel was for Himself, not merely to satisfy us with such relationship. We could never have dreamed of it. Not one of the angels could ever have called God "Father." God wanted to surround Himself with those who could cry "Abba, Father," surrounded by the children of His love. But we are in the position of sons. The distinction between sons and children is very hard to bring out in English. I am a child by relationship, I am a son by position, which is a contrast with the angels place. We are children by being begotten. It is worthy of note that in verse 6 the Spirit of God changes the keynote in the chapter "To the praise and the glory of His grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." Previously we are spoken of as in Christ. God wants us to know that we are in the same place as His Son. We might have thought that such a special place was reserved for Him only, but He has reserved nothing. In John 17:1-26. Jesus says, "O Father, glorify thou Me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." The last verse of that same chapter tells us the provision He has made for knowing the Father's name. The revelation of the Father's heart is a present thing. He loves to bring the consciousness of His love into our hearts which gives us the strength and capacity to enjoy the wonderful place we have in the Father's love. What a great thing it is to be walking in the consciousness that we are as dear to the Father as the Lord Jesus Christ. In the next verse we have redemption through His blood according to the riches of His grace. That is the way He has met us in our need. The poverty of our need required the riches of His grace. There is such a revelation in that name of the blessing contained in that wonderful revelation. He was known by a new name, not Jehovah which was the name he was known to poor failing Israel. He was now to be known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely it must be in the spirit of worship we enter into that sphere of blessing. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings. We could not be more blessed! The Spirit of God descended and abode upon Jesus. It had never

descended upon any other man in this world, without blood. Redemption having been effected through His blood, the forgiveness of sins and the tidings of salvation reached us. We have received the seal of His own delight upon us. The Father sealed the Son by the same blessed Spirit we have received, and so it is with us the moment that we receive the glad tidings, we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. The next scene opens in Mat 4:1-25, where the Lord is led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was brought into direct conflict with the power of Satan. It is wonderful to think of it, yet it is what we may expect. We have no sooner been put into the place given us by accomplished redemption than we meet the power of Satan. It is in Ephesians which gives us such a revelation of God in His fulness, that we are instructed as to meeting the powers of wickedness. We are to put on the whole armour of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, whose whole object is to cast us down from our excellency. We are thus provided with the complete armour to withstand. The Lord was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. He fasted forty days. Satan, as the subtle tempter, seizes the opportunity. It is a contrast with what happened to Adam and Eve. He hoped that in human weakness he would achieve the same success as with the first man. Man's place is to obey. Christ had previously been in the place of God, but He answered every attack with, "It is written." It is well to observe that. But there is more than the idea of direction, there is the question of living. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Word of God is to form our life. Do you study the Word of God to seek to enter into the truth, and to be ready to meet Satan, having treasured up the Word within you? It should be noted also that the devil can quote Scripture, but in doing so he left out the cardinal point in the passage to which he referred, viz., "In all thy ways." It is no part of God's will for anyone to commit suicide, and when baffled again by the Word of God "It is written," Satan changes the ground to worship. His whole aim is to displace God. He has not the power actually to give all the kingdoms of the world and the glory, but he is able to present them in such a way as to dazzle the eyes and to gain the heart. But Jesus was again proof against the tempter through using the word, "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."

S. Substance of an address on Jos_6:1-27; Jos_7:1-26; 1Ch_13:1-14; 1Ch_15:1-29.

Substance of an address on Jos 6:1-27; Jos 7:1-26; 1Ch 13:1-14; 1Ch 15:1-29.

There are two portions of scripture we may turn to in which we shall see the blessedness of obedience, and the sorrows of disobedience or neglect. Paul committed the dear ones he was about to leave (he had told them who the apostolic successors would be) to God, and the word of His grace. Oh, that we knew more of real subjection to that word subjection of heart, and mind, and will! In Jos 3:1-17. we see that when the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, that the waters which came down from above were stayed back, and rose up upon a heap, and the waters below failed. The waters of judgment were stayed back by the ark of the covenant till all the people passed over. On the resurrection side they encamp at Gilgal, where they are circumcised; natural defence given up, the flesh judged, and their whole confidence set in Him whose power had stayed back the Jordan and brought them into the land. There was a great contrast between the land they were now in and the land of Egypt, out of which they had been redeemed. In Num 11:1-35 we are told that they lusted for six things which they had fed upon in Egypt (they forgot the hard bondage) — "fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlick." Egypt's prosperity depended on the Nile, but they were in ignorance as to its source. The land of Canaan drank water of the rain of heaven, and produced seven things that were gathered without stooping — wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, oil olive, and honey (Deu 8:1-20). When they were circumcised the manna ceased; and the old corn of the land took its place — the risen Christ. In Jos 1:1-18 they were told what should be the extent of their coast — "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun." In its typical teaching, the mountain would be the world in its power, the great river the world in its prosperity, the wilderness the world in its sterility, and the great sea the world in its lawlessness. This goodly land flowing with milk and honey, is a type of the place we are brought to as given in the Epistle to the Ephesians, but there are always contrasts between type and antitype. It was said to Abram when the land was given to him, "Arise, and walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." But we have "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" to explore and possess as "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In the second of the prayers of the apostle for the saints at Ephesus, the words, "breadth, and length, and depth, and height" (Eph 3:18), are frequently applied to "the love," but I believe wrongly. Strengthened "according to the riches of his glory" (not from it), we are to apprehend (not comprehend) all this blessing, and to know the love of Christ which has made it all certain for us. The land of Canaan was given by Jehovah to Israel for an inheritance, but there were those who opposed their possession, and the Israelites were required to be warriors to fight Jehovah's battles. They had foes of flesh and blood to contend with; but we have far mightier enemies to face, for we wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenlies (Eph 6:12). We are no

match for them in ourselves, for We are weakness itself, but there is divine and adequate equipment for the warfare provided. Never is anything lacking on God's side. Has He not given us all things that pertain to life and godliness? We can always praise Him though we have always so much to deplore in ourselves. In this armour there is nothing for the back, clearly indicating there must be something wrong in ourselves if we turn our back to the foe. Our confidence must be exclusively in the Lord — strong in Him and in the power of His might. The girdle of truth — let us become acquainted with it, let us hold it tighter. It imparts strength to us when we have it tight about ourselves. The breastplate is practical righteousness; and we are called upon to have (as Paul himself had) "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." The shield that Paul would be familiar with would be the large Roman shield which covered the whole body. We must never lower it for only with it shall we be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. In ver. 10 we are called to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, which corresponds to the "according to the working of the might of His strength" of Eph 1:19 (New Trans.), which He wrought in the Christ in raising Him from among the dead. So in the type the power that stayed the Jordan back was for Israel to use in their battles with their enemies. The city of Jericho, with its high and mighty walls, they meet first. The ark goes with them, they are (in New Testament language) "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." In obedience and dependence they march silently around for seven days. On the seventh day the circuit is made seven times, and it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto all the people, Shout; for Jehovah hath given you the city; and the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up and took the city (Jos 6:1-27). They were more than conquerors, for they took the spoil for Jehovah. When obedient and dependent, who could stand before them? Their next battle was to take place at Ai, an insignificant place in human estimation as compared with Jericho; and here we have an exceedingly solemn lesson, for they went in their own strength and were defeated. They had not the presence of the Lord with them, for there was sin unjudged in their midst (unjudged sin deprives us of our breastplate of righteousness). Achan's sin affected the whole camp of Israel. They made their own plans instead of getting God's mind, and being obedient to it. They went in their own strength, instead of being dependent and strong in the Lord, with the inevitable result disaster, sorrow and dismay. Jehovah, in His mercy, discovered to them the secret cause, and gave them to know that He is holy as well as merciful and gracious and powerful. This surely is an object lesson for us.

Now in 1Ch 13:1-14 the order is reversed. For in this scripture we have a scene of sorrow and dismay succeeded by recovery to obedience, with its accompanying blessing and joy. It is quite clear that David makes more of the ark than Solomon does. Solomon makes more of the brazen altar than of the ark; but David is on a higher level, and has a deeper acquaintance with the heart of God, to whom he always turns. In the darkest hour "David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God." Fail he does, but he always recovers, being blessed with a nimbleness of faith to which God in grace responds. One thing we may well lay to heart from David's experience, viz., that declension always begins in the heart, and may rapidly follow a time of very bright testimony. His confidence in Jehovah's care when persecuted by Saul was very sweet, but how soon after do we find David saying in his heart, "I shall one day perish!" We all need that word, "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

David began wrong by consulting with "the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." These were put first, and the Lord last (1Ch 13:2). It is due to the Lord that we should put Him first and last too. It was doubtless right for David to desire to bring up the ark. But it is possible to do a right thing in a Wrong way. We read in 1Ch 13:7, "They carried the ark of God on a new cart out of the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart." All knew how the Philistines had adopted this course, and had sent the ark by a new cart. It was all very well for the Philistines, for God had given them no instructions. Let us beware of human reason. Do not let us be imitators of others because of apparent success. Let us be subject to the word of God in all things. We get on broad, dangerous, sinful ground if we get away from it. Often the question is raised, "What is the harm" of doing this or that? or, Do the Scriptures condemn? Whereas the question should be, What do the Scriptures teach? What do they enjoin? What is the Lord's will? Read 1Ch 13:8-10. How could this have occurred had they not had the new cart"? David was afraid.

What a contrast between the experience of Obed-edom and of David! Now we find David being recovered and trained. In 1 Chron. 13: 14: 9 we find him in a place of trial, but instead of consulting with his captains, he enquired of God, and got His mind and His instructions, with the result that there was a breach upon David's enemies instead of a breach upon a Levite. Then in 1Ch 13:13 we find him in a trial very similar to the previous one. But instead of falling back on his own previous experience, he again enquires of God, and again learns the blessedness of knowing God's will and doing it. God is ever ready to teach us and instruct us, to guide us with His eye; and it is to our shame when we fail to get His guidance. 1Ch 15:2 tells of David's recovery, for he had got God's mind about the ark and the right way of carrying it from God's own word. Now was God's due order (ver. 13) observed, now was the obedience of faith and love, with its attendant blessings (ver. 26). We may sometimes shun that which is not easy for us, by slipping aside from the path of obedience, but what a blessing for them to have had His help and power! It led to worship (ver. 29). That may be our portion too, but to be despised by the world, when meeting the Lord's mind, surely is no cause for regret. May we be "wise, understanding what the will of the Lord is," and be doing that will from the heart! J.A.T.

S. The Apostles' Creed — so called.

The Apostles' Creed — so called. Not long ago a writer, while reviewing a certain religious movement, made use of a striking metaphor. The religious movement in question, he remarked, especially when its relation to modern conditions was taken into account, reminded him of a phenomenon of nature occasionally observed an iceberg in mid-Atlantic. In speaking of the Church of Rome and its present troubles, as the reviewer did, he could recollect no more fitting parallel than this great grand iceberg, floating far south, far from its native arctic home, and melting away in an uncongenial climate. "The majestic frozen mass, detached from some arctic continent, not without a symmetry and beauty of its own, is, after all, but a fragment of a dead world. Ghost-like, a peril to mariners, it towers over the waves that wash its base, its peaks glitter in the sunlight, its cliffs reflect the blue of sea and sky. And all the while the process of undermining goes on; the frozen mass encounters kindlier currents; the temperature rises; a little sooner, a little later it may be, there can be but one end." To many, perhaps, it will occur that a like figure of speech might in some measure apply to the matter spoken of in the above title. Just such another iceberg, a portion, perhaps, of the same floe, that ancient document, the Apostles' Creed, may seem to be. It does not belong to our time. Antiquity is claimed for it, and the claim, whatever it is worth, may be granted so far. It has floated down the centuries to us, a relic of the past, and appears among us today in surroundings far from congenial. The kindlier currents, the temperate zone of our present-day theology, might seem as little fitting, as disastrous eventually, to the one as to the other. The whole question of creeds, articles, and confessions of faith is an interesting one. From a non-theological standpoint even, if in reality one can assume such detachment, it is so today. In that theological world where such unsettled conditions prevail at present, ideas are afloat in high quarters, and habits of thought are being engendered lower down which call attention to such documents in an altogether new way. These habits of thought spoken of beget an attitude which, at least to observers not immediately concerned, appears to be one of disloyalty to constitutional standards. The ideas abroad at all events must make it difficult for those who hold them to reconcile their retention with a reputation for orthodoxy. On the other hand, fast and far as these ideas seem in themselves likely to carry the honest and sincere, however mistaken, thinker, in many quarters, undeniably a certain measure of caution is observed in their application. And no doubt this moderation is imposed, if for one reason more than another, by the conserving influence of church standards of doctrine. That such formularies do prove a check is notorious; but they are not an insuperable barrier by any means. The modern speculative spirit, "free reverent inquiry," as it is called, is not seldom combined with not a little genius for evading unpleasant issues. The Scylla of "timid orthodoxy," and the Charybdis of pure rationalism can both be avoided by the skilful navigators at the wheel, and their ecclesiastical statesmanship or diplomacy can be depended upon to provide expedients for relieving tender consciences from any qualms as to the course being steered.

Now, when one reads and hears of the desperate shifts made by many to square their new beliefs, or hypotheses rather, with the articles under which their particular ecclesiastical bodies are

chartered legally to conduct religious business, professions also to which they themselves, as a matter of personal conviction, may rightly be held, since they have voluntarily subscribed to them, one cannot but find some justice, as well as perhaps cynical humour, in the remark that the chief thing theologians have acquired under our modern conception of the sacred liberty of religious belief appears to be a wonderful capacity for intellectual "wriggling." At the same time a more painful sentiment arises when one considers that this rationalistic movement is more than mere retrogression, more or less apologised for, from constitutional standards, more than mere surrender, piecemeal though it is, of the articles of a creed: there is evident and unabashed departure from the scripture revelation. The first, serious enough though it is, might be left to religious leaders, in touch with the modern spirit, themselves to settle, without calling for comment from ordinary Christians, who have learned their little all from Scripture, and would find theology, as one has said, a kind of Saul's armour. It may very truly be the case in fact, that, in intruding upon such a subject at all, plain people seem to presume over much. "Set them to judge who are of no account in the church," said the apostle in another connection, and it may be we are simply carrying into literal practice in another sphere his ironical injunction. Let it be so. The apparent absence of the "one wise man to decide," shall not that be our excuse?

What is painful, however, even to those who set little value by formal human confessions of faith, is that they cannot but recognise that, in general, the real ground on which creeds are being relinquished, the objectionable feature found in them is just exactly what truth they do contain. Without a doubt in all creeds there are things which fuller spiritual knowledge shows to be defective, if not erroneous. Blind veneration for antiquity puts false value upon these (for their time) wonderful manifestos of Christian belief, when it erects them into unchanging standards of faith; but the spirit which can with so little compunction, so little respect, throw them overboard as antiquated and worthless is far from praiseworthy. It is no question with us then of liberal or conservative theology, but of truth as a vital thing, of truth, as we might describe it, as the basis of faith and the sustenance of spiritual life, not to mention its general relation to men at large as the most important ingredient of the moral atmosphere. And theological systems, airtight compartments as they are, do not provide ideal conditions for either the conservation or the dissemination of the truth. Creeds are altogether suspicious things. Not that in a creed there is anything wrong in itself, if by it we mean merely the sum of that which we have learned from Scripture. Have we not all, in fact, some such creed, not necessarily explicit? And if able to state clearly the main distinctive lines of the truth we possess, not as setting limits thereby, it may be of no small help to ourselves in aiding us to organise our knowledge and rightly divide the word of truth. Nor need it be doubted that in periods of church history, as remote in character as in time from our own, in the providence of God, a creed may have provided just such a medium of confessing the truth as seems necessary, if not indispensable, to the occasion. All this may be allowed without in any degree endorsing the popular idea of its true function. The truth is neither dependent upon a creed for its definite grasp and statement, nor obliged to be so embodied ere it is fit for the purpose of being a clear test. The former especially may be, in measure, a commendable practice today, the having and holding a clear idea or record of our convictions. But the inevitable evil of forms is apt to follow here also. The very process of giving the truth a form in the faulty expression of which alone we are capable, deducts from its truth and value. As one has said also, "Supposing everything was right that was there, it is like a made tree, instead of a growing tree." Any "declaration of the things most surely believed among us," also, however

accredited by tradition, must in the last resort give way before the inspired record itself. "The faith once delivered unto the saints" should mark our boundaries, and constitute what alone we shall make ourselves answerable for. It is that also for which we are exhorted to contend. In most cases today, unfortunately, the real subject of contention is something entirely different. There is, in fact, so much confusion about this whole matter of the relation between a church and its doctrine — that one cannot very clearly see what the controversy is. In one sense no doubt the issue at stake is still a simple one, is still the same. It is the old conflict between truth and error that is being waged. But when the question comes to be what the truth is for which we are to contend; how distinguish it from error; where precisely is the standard to which appeal can be made, we are met with different conceptions of what "the faith" can mean. That the word of God gives it in finality, reveals and states it in a form, in the form, most fitting for such appeal, is apparently not thought of. Is it not the case that, in Christian apologetics, the whole field over today from the Modernist controversy in the church of Rome to the smallest Presbyterian congregation belatedly discussing Higher Criticism from the conservative side the appeal invariably is, not to the scriptures, but to some one or other of those statements of Christian doctrine which have been drawn out at various times in the past? Add to this the fact that, while from the liberal side again there is the plea for a restatement in terms suited to modern thought, there are those also who (problem though they confess it to be), in the interests of supposed theological consistency which recent developments have shown to be of some importance legally, endeavour amicably to adjust the relation between their church and a confession they believe to be lying far astern of her life and thought. Some idea may then be had of how involved and intricate a matter this Of church and creed has become. In this connection take Scottish Presbyterianism. It is well known that in the Scottish Establishment for at least the last twenty years the movement for creed relaxation and revision has been gathering force. This is not to be wondered at when the progress she has made on modern lines in the matter of doctrine is taken into account. There is certainly no more striking instance of the essentially revolutionary character of modern theological thought than in what has occurred within the last generation here, in its meeting with the strong, high Calvinism which is proverbially characteristic of the Church of Scotland. The Westminster Confession of Faith is, of course, that with which she is officially identified, each clergyman on ordination making profession of adherence to it in the words of a formula compiled for that express purpose. Now, it would seem an easy enough thing to substitute for the antiquated confession "a simple creed representing the best in theological thought as modified by modern contributions." But, as one has recently complained, under the Establishment they are "deprived of doctrinal autonomy." This want of the power of doctrinal initiative, much grieved over, has, up till now, been a serious check on the movement. "Advantage was taken of the abnormal political and ecclesiastical situation of 1905 to obtain from the State the right," not of altering the confession, but "of prescribing the formula of subscription" to it. This somewhat Jesuitical loophole, as some have thought it, is so far scarcely proving successful, and "as no alteration was thereby effected in the Act of 1690, on which the Establishment is based, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the relief supposed to be gained is only of a nominal nature." What else but nominal could tile relief be in the nature of the case? A church has reason to be dissatisfied with that body of doctrine with which nominally it is identified. What then? Transform the nominal into the actual by revising the creed its teachers profess? Verily no; but rather substitute the nominal for the actual in the terms of their subscription to it. Whatever ingenuity the scheme may have to commend it, there is probably too strong a suspicion

of careful juggling about it to give satisfactory relief to conscientious people. Apart from actual release from the doctrinal control of the State such as disestablishment would effect, it is difficult to see what can be done unless power to alter the Confession itself is secured. There is, of course, the further counsel of despair — "Would it not be better to still hold by the Confession of Faith, that if we have not uniformity of belief, we may at least have uniformity of make-believe?"

How mercenary and political the whole thing is! Little love of truth for its own sake, or His who gave it, here. Yet surely these are all but plain lessons we may read today as to the question of creeds. Truth, after all, so little dwells in them in living power that their profession is no guarantee of adherence to, or affection for, it. As an asset of permanent value in Christianity also are they not seriously discounted by the fact that since at the best their inadequacy to present the truth of God worthily is apparent, and further that, even as they are, modern religious thought finds them so cumbersome as to regard attachment to them as an incubus, they are of but little use as a barrier against encroaching error? "The faith once delivered unto the saints" beyond question gives a surer standing ground and worthier deposit.

1909 366 Coming now from the general to the particular, What can be said, what is claimed, for the Apostles' Creed as to its worth and usefulness as a statement of Christian doctrine? And first there are those who in all seriousness take its title as being a true one, and accept it as really emanating from the apostles. As might be expected, in Rome, the great stronghold of tradition, this is the characteristic view. Absurd as the claim is, for history gives no countenance to, if not absolute contradiction of, its validity, teachers of the Roman Catholic faith have been very explicit in making it. Some have gone so far as to adopt not only the account of its composition by the apostles given by Ruffinus; but also the later improvement on his improbable story — that which embellishes his fiction with a description in detail of the apostles, when assembled to compose the Creed, uttering each in succession one of its clauses, Peter offering this, John contributing that, James adding that, and so on. The general attitude, while perhaps scarcely going so far as this, has consistently been one of belief in its apostolic origin. Only of the Western Church, however, can this be said, for the Greek Church has been equally consistent in its scepticism of the tradition, and in its profession of ignorance of the early existence of such a creed. Further reference to its history is probably unnecessary, save perhaps to say that, if Calvin's hesitation in rejecting its apostolic origin is strange, Newman's description of it as the formal symbol which the apostles adopted and bequeathed to the church is not at all strange; while his assertion that "it has an evidence of its apostolic origin the same in kind with that for the scriptures," is equally without the least justification.

There are those again, who, while allowing that its true apostolic origin, in the sense of its being formally drawn up by the apostles, is untenable, regard the Creed as apostolic in the sense of its expressing clearly and succinctly the truth they taught, and of some value therefore as a bulwark of the faith. If so, it is surely unfortunate that such expression is so meagre as to be of little use for the purpose sought. Suppose that it were to be conceded for the moment that it is possible that the teaching of apostolic days, the common doctrine of the church, unformulated at first in documentary form, gradually took shape in this confession presumed to embody or give in summary whatever truth the early churches possessed. How far short it comes of primitive Christian doctrine as unfolded in the New Testament! Nay, mere inadequacy is not the only charge which may be brought against it. There is, even within such a limited field as its survey is

concerned with, even upon such subjects as it does give a pronouncement, a want of harmony with scripture which is at once apparent. Thus in the case of creation, the Creed ascribes it exclusively to the Father, while the fact is that scripture never does so. Doubtless, the latter not infrequently presents the work as being that of God, 1:e. God in the unity of His Being; but, as one has remarked, when the persons are distinguished it is never to the Father, but to the Son and to the Spirit, that creation is ascribed. Again, how little adequate it is as a barrier against error may be seen when one considers that neither of the Lord Jesus nor of the Holy Spirit is divinity categorically asserted. Arians have no hesitation in expressing themselves satisfied with it. Unitarians concur in its teachings. Either could very well accept it, and subscribe to it perhaps with less reluctance, preserving a better reputation for consistency than one who professes the fundamental doctrine of the trinity of persons in the Godhead. This, on account of its indefinite, incomplete presentation of such a fundamental truth as the true deity of Son and Spirit!

Taking no more than these two instances of its faulty, unskilful delineation of scripture doctrine, what confidence can it inspire with regard to less elementary truths? What trust as to its efficacy as a test of orthodoxy can we repose in it today, when subtle errors as to the person of Christ and the word of God are so numerous? The fact is that of the three great Creeds which have been (it is claimed) successively evolved in the church's long conflict with error — the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian this is the most unsatisfactory, the one least entitled to respect, and is of the least use either as an outpost of the faith worthy to be garrisoned, or as a storehouse of the truth dispensing sustenance for the combat.

It is said, however, by some loathe to part with this ancient "essence of Christian dogma," that at the time of its formation, those elements which later Creeds defined were not in question, and its comparative silence on the topics is thus explained. That thus today, even, it is of use, if we fill out its apparent lacunae with those things which after all were incipient in it, as they were in the primitive faith to which it was the medium of expression. If, however, the Creed is only to be of value when issued in an edition interleaved with blank pages, we may justly be incredulous of its having any real worth in itself. And when the nature of some of the voluble comments which fill them is considered, many would prefer the blank page section dissociated from the ancient text, as we should then better know where we are. Modernism in doctrine would lose quite half its force if its modernity were frankly confessed. The attempt to associate it with what is ancient and venerable is what deceives many. The Presbyterian adoption of the Apostles' Creed as a convenient summary of the Christian faith, useful as a test or confession, according to the Westminster Confession, is, whether we concur in its estimate or not, one thing; the interpretation of apostolic testimony in the light of modern knowledge may prove quite another. The one is, as stated, an adoption; the other may be an adaptation. Not to prejudice the question from the very first, however, the use here made of the Creed in the way the Westminster divines suggested, may be considered a quite legitimate, and should certainly prove a very interesting one.

"This Creed is here annexed," declared the famous Westminster assembly, "not as though it were composed by the apostles, or ought to be esteemed canonical scripture, like the ten commandments or the Lord's Prayer, but because it is a brief sum of the Christian faith, agreeable to the word of God, and anciently received in the churches of Christ." The important point in this claim for the ancient document for us is what is said as to its agreeableness to the word of God. Its efficiency as a summary of Christian truth, needless to say, depends in the first place solely upon

that. Any worth it may have in the way of defining doctrines would be quite counterbalanced by failure to comply with scripture. Equally, in any fresh elaboration of it now, what concerns us primarily is just this question of keeping in line with scripture. Taking it thus, then, as a summarising of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, subject to the consideration of its being "agreeable to the word of God," what of the first clause, "I believe in God the Father Almighty"? This lies at the very threshold of Christianity. It affirms as a matter of faith that without which no movement of spiritual life is possible. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." To bring such a primary truth as the existence of God therefore into the realm of matters which may be discussed is to descend to the very elementary. Yet as "all men have not faith," and the propagation of rationalistic theories is being so actively pursued today, due attention upon even this fundamental fact is not bestowed in vain. Excessive labouring of the point need not be desired, as much occupation controversially with the topic would be a mistake on the part of simple believers; yet seasonable witness to its truth from whatever quarter is surely matter for thankfulness. It is satisfactory to begin with too, when one finds this argument for the being or existence of God based upon ethical rather than upon rational ground. That is to say, that our true knowledge of God is, at bottom, not a matter of reason or intellectual conviction, but intuitive and spiritual. And this is so. The existence of God is not a mere deduction proved by certain facts in nature, or by the undeniable traces of His hand throughout the entire universe, moral and material alike. It is a fact in itself, of which, as natural men even, we are convinced in the innermost recesses of our hearts, apart altogether from demonstration to the mental faculties. Nature's wonders may combine to pour into man's ear their testimony to their great Originator. Man's own indelible intuitions, however, and the promptings of his conscience, bear witness of Him in the heart. Is there not something like all this in that ancient confession of Job's? "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear," that may resemble the first; "but now mine eye seeth thee," answers in measure to the latter. Supreme beyond all, however, as a more excellent way, is God known (because thereby in grace revealed) through faith in His word. Faith it is that apprehends Him, and to faith alone is He truly revealed. Not at the same time, as it is truly remarked, that ours is an unreasonable or irrational belief. Manifest or demonstrated facts are not opposed to, but confirmatory of, it. Yet in the last resort, be the sum of external evidence what it may, the great fact of the spiritual world — God is is spiritually apprehended. It is in the soul and to the soul that the sense of God is borne witness of when faith is present; and where this is not so, the mere knowledge of His existence is, to put it at its highest, worthless. There is no need in all this to slight or overlook the value of the evidence so abundantly strewn abroad, not only of His existence, but also of His goodness. God has not left Himself without bright witness to both, in the face of the clouds of unbelief which man's forsaking of Him has superinduced. Of considerations then thought to bear testimony to Him we may note in detail (a) the witness of nature, (b) what is termed the universal religious sense.

Nature's witness to its great Originator is a fact both self-evident and attested by scripture. The strictly modified use of it made in scripture, however, is perhaps less given attention to than the deductions drawn from its phenomena by religious teachers enamoured of natural science. Modern natural theology considers its borders greatly enlarged, and its horizon vastly extended, by the undeniably great progress made in recent years in all manner of scientific research. More than ever now the kingdom of nature, its vastness and its minuteness alike, is laid open to the human intelligence, and with so rich a store of wonders untold to draw upon, it might be thought

that their appeal to its testimony of the existence of a great First Cause ought to be invincible. Powerful in itself, no doubt, such witness is, whatever in its effect upon man it may prove. Our theologians, however, ought not to be too sure that the increased weight of testimony which modern discoveries give to nature will ensure deeper and more widespread conviction of God in men's hearts. Men in the past have shown a wonderful aptitude for arming themselves against unwelcome truth. And we must remember also that, if the range and power of the projectile have been increased, so also has the strength and resistance of the armour. For, proud of his phenomenal progress in all departments of knowledge, the man of the world today tends to divorce science from religion, and to leave and keep God altogether out of account in the realm of nature. No doubt the familiar ground which is gone over when we are reminded of the contemplation of nature's wonders leading us up to nature's God is correct in the abstract, and that, whether the ground taken be the inevitable connection in our mind between cause and effect (an inexorable law of thought, as it is called), or, the more fully developed argument from design of the celebrated Paley. But does it prove true, has it in the past proved true as a matter of fact? Allowing the validity of both the cosmological and the teleological arguments, as they are termed, are they sufficient, are they reinforced by all that modern natural science teaches?

1909 377 Today at any rate the proverbial "conflict between science and religion" comes in here. And it is not difficult to make out on which side men are prepared to range themselves. In any apparent issue between them there is certainly shown a tendency always to give science the benefit of the doubt. And all along there are assumptions made for a yet lispng science which are denied to the clear and mature tones of scripture's voice. How interesting to discover, for instance, that while we may have no unchallenged dogmas in religion, science may press an unproven theory upon us with all the authority of dogma, and few but are coerced or cajoled into bowing down to it!

Thus one would imagine now that to entertain the novel theory of evolution would be to consign to oblivion this great argument of design in nature. Yet here we are taught that this great discovery of the nineteenth century need not be thought to invalidate the evidence of design, for the divine purpose in view throughout the long age-lasting upward progress to nature's crowning product, man, is, if anything, the more evidenced thereby. Were it not better frankly to avow, if one could go no further, that if this truly epoch-making hypothesis be indeed confessed as a clearly established axiom of science — which is, however, even on its own ground, by no means the case — then that its account and that of scripture being so utterly at variance, the disparity between the two is evident and must be faced. Certainly, in the matter of man's origin, the difference is marked enough between nature's crowning product" and Adam created in God's image. As to which affords true evidence, not only of design, but of divine care and interest, where is the comparison? One must suppose it is all a question of the kind of God we are content to prove the existence of. If One to whom every one of us must give account of himself; One with whom we have to do; if a God whose goodness unfallen creation proclaimed, whose love has since been manifested, and whose grace is presently offered to all — a theory which delegates the production of all things, and man above all, to the progress of ages through the agency of natural selection, will be as little satisfying to us as the more ancient, and scarcely less worthy, idea of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. No; if God be the God we adore, the God whose word we believe (and what have we, even if nature's witness were increased tenfold, if we rest not there), our universe owes its being to Him,

and man infinitely more so, in a far more direct manner than evolution would teach. "He spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast." "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." But the real worth of such evidence from nature, apart altogether from such modifications of it as have been alluded to as now prevalent, its evidence undiluted, at what estimate shall we take it if what we may see of its weight with, and effect upon, men be the criterion by which we judge? Does nature lead to nature's God inevitably? certain as it is that it points there most truly. What does scripture say of its witness? The first chapter of Romans we may take in its later verses surely as giving an instance of how mankind may be affected by the testimony of creation. It is in no special sphere such as Judaism, remember, that this history of man's attitude towards the knowledge of God is traced; but out in the open, among men at large, the Gentiles. From verse 19 onwards we are shown wherein the "ungodliness" of the Gentiles, previously spoken of, consists. This ungodliness of men against which the wrath of God is revealed, what was it but simply an entire absence of the fear of God, where there was sufficient testimony existing to render such a thing inexcusable? The apostle, in reviewing this testimony, goes back to what is primary. The largest, the most general sphere is chosen first, creation, "that which may be known of God." Primitive as is its witness, creation is still full of manifestation of God. That which was "knowable" of God, from the testimony of created things, contained a voice for any listening ear, wherever or whenever found. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath 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 [divinity], so that they are without excuse." The works of God truly render eloquent testimony regarding their Author; and "that which may be known of Him," in respect of His Being and power, finds adequate expression there. His eternal power and divinity, invisible like all His attributes, apart from His disclosure of Himself, visible objects of striking character are eminently suited to proclaim. "The heavens," we read in Psa 19:1-14, "declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Above man then appeared, and around Him were strewn, wonders great and innumerable to draw and fix his attention upon that supremely wise and powerful One to whom they silently pointed. That these did point somewhere the most darkened heathen has never escaped the conviction of. To say, however, that such have merely missed, through inadvertence, the right direction in which they might have been dimly seen to point, would be to misrepresent the case. Had the indications been obscure, some such excuse might be found possible, but it is not a mistaken reading of the evidence that we must lay to man's account, but the wholesale rejection of it. The language that "day unto day uttereth" is as little ambiguous as its "pouring forth" is meagre. The knowledge that "night unto night showeth" is no esoteric doctrine, but breathes its whisper in the ears of all. "There is no speech nor language, their voice is not heard." Not in articulate fashion; yet "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their sayings to the end of the world."

Such widespread, continuous, and eloquent testimony would seem to leave little room for either ignorance or mistake. Yet what are the facts of the case? Take man in the state he now is in of ignorance and darkness as to the knowledge of God. Take, on the other hand, the witness of nature to the Creator we have spoken of as of so great power and certainty. How are we to explain the lack of conviction wrought, the apparent unfruitfulness of this line of evidence? Is it not that the hearts of men have been so desirous after some alternative signification that they have wilfully disregarded its true indication? God they will not see it points to. Anyone or anything but Him they

would willingly invest with the glory of such handiwork. They say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Yet even in face of this want of desire after God, these silent witnesses remain, to be accusers if nothing more; and the sum of their accusation here is that ungodly men are "without excuse."

And, taken in the mass, this is all the fruit the witness of nature has produced in man! There is no clearness lacking, no inherent weakness in, its testimony to a divine Creator. Rather might it seem an inference from which there was no escape. Yet the fact remains that, as the rule, man has not drawn that inference. Man being what he is, God is not in all his thoughts, however much creation seems to press Him upon his attention. Faith truly perceives creation to be His work, as Heb 11:3 declares "Through faith we understand that the worlds were formed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." But were we left with the bare fact of nature's witness, not so much after all that "God is" as that "God must be," as the basis of appeal to men, we possess but little. Besides, at best, as has been said, to prove the existence of God is to descend to the very elementary. On two occasions, noted in the Acts, the apostle Paul found it necessary to make primary truth such as this the subject of discourse. Acts 14:8-18; Acts 17:16-34 give the account of them. It is particularly interesting to us today to notice who the hearers respectively were of these similar addresses. The philosophic Athenians would no doubt consider themselves far removed from the ignorant Lystrians; but such is the debased and darkened state of the natural mind that each needed the same first lesson to be taught them. Both are, as many today need to be, "set to spell the alphabet of creation." To refer now to the second of those, great evidences to the existence of one God and Father Almighty, the "universal sense of God," as it is called something corresponding to that term we must allow does exist. Account for it as we may, no fact in this world is more prominent or undeniable than the universal prevalence of religion. Religious beliefs and practices of some sort pervade the entire human family. Our lecturer correctly enough insists on this as remarkable. No community yet discovered, as he says, no people, however remote or secluded, but has its religion. The most barbarous and ignorant, and the most civilised and intellectual among the races of mankind, however widely severed in other respects, are alike in this, that there is that in them which prompts veneration of some higher power. It may be they worship they know not what; but still they worship. "To the unknown God" even they may raise their altar, and it may be difficult to say whether it is a "what" or a "whom" they "ignorantly reverence." The fact remains they do revere.

Patent to all as this is, there are not wanting those who would fain explain it away on rationalistic grounds. Of the frankly materialistic school there are still many with us. And it is these in particular against whom is directed a somewhat elaborate disquisition on the origin and roots of human religion. If we follow here, as we must so far, we shall do so on our own lines. The most convinced materialist, then, cannot deny the fact of man's seemingly essential religiousness, however he may attempt to explain it. They confess to having a task in hand in eradicating that idea so strangely prevalent in man, which postulates supernatural agency for phenomena which in any sense are obscure. It may also be conjectured how much of a problem they find it satisfactory to account for what seems the universal impulse of men to so attribute such phenomena. The materialist, in fact, is involved in difficulty all round. His quest after the roots of religion in man's nature has hitherto been attended with scant success. The conflicting testimony from investigators in that field is notorious. From Hume to Herbert Spencer there has been nothing but diversity.

Each part of man's nature, his intellectual, his emotional, his imaginative faculties, has in turn been singled out as the sphere in which religion takes its rise. An unclassified sentiment is really all that psychological analysis can as yet pronounce the religious instinct to be. We may not be so far off after all from seeing advanced in good earnest that sarcastic paraphrase of F. W. Newman's definition which the late J. N. Darby suggested — "a phrenological bump." At present at all events the shallower species of materialists' favourite term, "superstition," does not approve itself to the more thoughtful; and, while carefully avoiding the term, all such seem unable altogether to escape some slight contamination of the theory of the innate consciousness in man of a power and personality higher than human. Thus Haeckel, while finding the crude beginnings of religion to spring "partly from the hereditary superstition of primate ancestors, partly from ancestor-worship, as well as from habits which have become traditional," concludes his formidable list with the very indefinite phrase, "and various emotional impulses." Yes, just somewhere in that latter region will be found the solution of the problem — Why is religion such a universal feature, so inseparable from man wherever found? Exploration, discovery, the progress of your ethnological study have but multiplied the instances of its occurrence, without solving the question of its origin. No solution seems possible but that which explains its unexceptional appearance and ineradicable nature, in the first place, by some inherent impulse in men, by an ingrained consciousness of a higher power.

Conjoined with this also, or a component part of the same instinct, there is the sense of moral accountability indelibly imprinted on the heart of every man. This is so plainly the case that no denial is possible. It is so realised to be part and parcel of our very nature as men to feel accountable for thoughts entertained and actions performed. We can understand no normal human being without it, and as matter of fact we find none. Man is essentially a moral creature, from the beginning was so. A consciousness of responsibility, dim it may be, or uncertain to whom it refers, pervades the mind of even the most benighted, however distorted his ideas of the unknown Supreme may be. In every human soul, too, scripture testifies, since the fruit of the forbidden tree in Eden was partaken of, the voice of conscience makes itself heard. "Knowing good and evil describes the new moral outlook of man in his fallen state, come under the power of evil now, alas! though his "conscience bearing witness" as we read in Rom 2:15 — not in regard to Jews, not in that sphere where the light of revealed-truth shone, but among "those of the nations," "the heathen." Instances of commendable ethics among the Gentiles, rare enough no doubt, were sometimes in evidence. This does not prove, however, "the law" to be "written on their hearts." It is "the work of the law" of which this is affirmed, conscience bearing corroborative witness therewith. The thoughts of accusation or extenuation that flit across such dark minds, show them capable, inherently so, of moral exercise, and evidence clearly enough the sense of moral accountability, and the witness of conscience to be, both of them, universal features. All this in its own way we must allow is testimony to the existence of God.

910 13 This widespread, universal religious sense (we can hardly term it the sense of God) which, even among the darkest heathen, crops up amidst the corrupt and desolate debris of their systems, is certainly to be regarded as something in the nature of a testimony to Him, who, while "in times past suffering all nations to walk in their own ways, nevertheless left not himself without witness" in their hearts.

We must guard, however, against certain ideas on this subject now beginning to be spread abroad. It will be no digression, either, to examine them here, as they really underlie much of the reasoning of this part of the lectures under review. These ideas are not at all of the frankly materialist school already alluded to, however akin in some respects. They emanate rather from a conception of religion as that primeval instinct in man which materialists deny; but an idea, at the same time, which distorts that fact, as well as many others, to suit a classification of religions imagined to be scientific. What is termed the science of Comparative Religion is one of those ideas of recent growth, which seem to believers of plain scriptural training to be quite as erroneous as their appearance is momentous. No doubt it is something imported from that quarter, which underlies the term "sense of God" in regular use in many quarters as a designation for the religious consciousness in heathendom. On that ground must be explained our quarrel with the phrase, which otherwise appears harmless enough. If what was meant by the "sense of God" were merely the dim consciousness of the existence of such an One in pagan hearts, all were well; but this is not at all so. A great change has come over the minds of many in regard to the relation of Christianity to other religions of the world. Whereas formerly the faiths of the world were divided simply into true and false — Judaism, where partially, and Christianity, where fully, God had revealed the truth, and Paganism, wherein (certain admirable ideas and features notwithstanding,) men grovelled in error and darkness now, a more detailed or complicated classification is attempted. A full survey of the various systems of religions, ancient and modern alike, throughout the world is being conducted on strictly modern philosophic principles, with due attention also to what psychology can teach as to their origin and phenomena. The comparison of Christianity with previously existing systems, at least with those in proximity to which Christianity first appeared, so as to suggest comparison, is no new thing. Its relation to Judaism was a question early raised, and clearly settled also, while the apostles themselves were yet on the scene. No small part of Paul's particular mission was the setting free the new religion from the bonds of Jewish legalism; while a whole epistle, Hebrews, is given up to the elaboration of the comparison between the two systems. To another category altogether, however, belong the other religions and philosophies with which primitive Christianity came in contact, whether in Greece or Rome. Inspired Christian writings are comparatively reticent as to these, although some there are no doubt who read into New Testament scriptures the reiteration of their technical terms at least. For instance, that the language of the opening verses of John's Gospel, with its use of the "Logos," is reminiscent of the Greco-Oriental speculations of the Alexandrian Philo, or that moral terms in regular use among the Stoics make frequent appearance in Paul's epistles, or again that the noteworthy resemblance between Paul and Seneca, which forms the matter of one of Lightfoot's treatises, proves parallelism in their teachings.

Answer to all this was not at all difficult. For, if, as we believe, Christianity is the sole and sufficient answer to the deepest need of the human heart, that need which even pagan idolaters could not but feel, and which their philosophers could not meet but only falteringly express; if, as one has said, "Paganism brought nothing to Christianity but aspirations frustrated, and yearnings unsatisfied," is it at all to be wondered at if God, in revealing that which alone could satisfy these yearnings, condescended to use, as far as He could, the terms in which these aspirations were expressed? As the late Editor of "Bible Treasury" has said, "The truth is that God in His grace, who knew the bewilderment of man's mind, not dissipated but deepened by philosophy, etc., either anticipated or answered these unbelieving reveries by the revelation of the truth. . . . Christ, true

God and perfect man, is the revelation of God, which sets aside the corrupt Gnostic, the self-complacent Stoic, and the dreaming Platonist. If inspiration employed their language, it was in pitiful condescension to impart the truth of God in Christ, which brings to naught their vain, self-righteous and false ideas. "* {*Bible Treasury, Vol. 5., New Series, p. 255.} At Athens, it will be remembered, "the city wholly given to idolatry," Paul saw an altar with the inscription, "To the unknown God," and forthwith made opportune use of the incident. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." In a way these Athenians are a representative class. "In all things too superstitious," "excessively reverent of divinities," yet so little satisfied with those they had, that "to tell or hear of something newer" was their characteristic occupation, learned and philosophic as they were, they may be taken as eminently representative of what religious aspirations directed by human philosophy amounted to, or could achieve, in Paganism at its best. In what measure then was the true God conceived of, or any genuine knowledge of Him reflected, in anything within the compass of their elaborate system. The only element wherein the faintest reference to Him appears was that melancholy inscription seized on by the apostle — "To the unknown God." God the Unknown, felt after, indeed, even by Athenian devotees of divinities many; God the Unknown, a sense of whose existence no worship of false deities could obliterate, no specious philosophy explain away; yea, even while under the charm of Greek eloquence at its best, "at the sound of cornet, flute and psaltery, and all kinds of music," they bowed themselves at shrine erected, or image set up, in this city surrendered to idol-worship, God the Unknown at the long last they still find it necessary to admit at least into their Pantheon. Consciousness of Him cannot be quite shut out, nor drowned in clamour of idolatrous liturgy, whether Stoic pipe or Epicurean sackbut. But how humiliating the confession. "To the unknown God." This then the final exemplification, the summing up of all that was best, most worthy, in heathen philosophers, Alexandrian, Epicurean, Stoic, Sceptic, or any other; for that was all, that vague ascription of the fag-end of their homage, "To the unknown God," which out of the ruins of their idol worship even they could construct!

Take then that strangely significant altar inscription as the symbol of anything in the way of truth or knowledge of God classical paganism ever showed. Is there much to constitute it a formidable rival of, anything to entitle its being regarded as a valuable contributor to, Christian thought and doctrine? Why, rather, what have they in common? May we not see also in Paul's use of the occasion, his reference to their abject confession, and to the obscure statement of one of "their own" poets, an apt illustration of what the Spirit of truth may have done in adopting, or adapting, the diction of their philosophy to serve His own ends in setting forth that which met their every question, and made foolish their every dream? As has been said, this answer to the suggestion of Christianity's relation to the religions of the past prompts itself readily, and proves sufficient. And, really, the assertion sometimes made today that "Christianity was at first a mere development of Judaism, and that it was by combining with elements borrowed from the religions and the philosophies of the ancient pagan world that it assumed its final form" is best answered, as it has been answered, by the statement that, "Were we to see in Christianity only a synthesis of all the anterior religions, we should have in Christ only a composite idol enshrined in the last of the pagodas." But now we have a newer study of religions, from an entirely fresh and original standpoint. Conclusions similar to those appearing in the last quotation we no doubt find accepted in many cases under this novel method as well; but they are reached from a different direction, as the subject is approached in a rather different way. That is, the principle of differentiation between Christianity and other religions is sought in another and wider sphere. The comparison of Christian

doctrine with the teachings of the older religions of which we have spoken would be regarded as only a partial application of the comparative method by adherents of the new school, and would have reserved for it the particular designation, "Comparative Theology, the remaining portions of the field of survey being the "Psychology of Religion" and the "History of Religions." Together forming a comprehensive scheme to be known as the "Science of Religions." Now under this pretentious title they profess to "seek to study religion not merely in particular aspects and ways, but in its unity and entirety, with a view to its comprehension in its essence and all essential relations. "Two things we must expect, then, from such as affect to take such philosophic views of that which is a serious enough matter for men at large their religion. 'These are, that any special claim as to Christianity must not be preferred at this early stage, it must go into the crucible with the rest, take its chance of emerging approved worthy of place, or of supreme place, in the illustrious society of the faiths of the world, when they are "unified and co-ordinated in a truly organic manner." And at the same time we must expect, from those who propose to probe so deep into the origin of this peculiar compound feeling called religion, this "process of mind," this inexhaustible field for psychological study, we must expect, let us remember, to hear much of man, his progress in ethical thought, and perception of the infinite, and very little of "the notion of a special revelation from God." The meaning and significance of this recent development may best be understood by reference to an instance of its exposition. Thus, at the great Anglican Church Congress of 1908, the report of the section which was devoted to this subject gives clear expression to the great divergence from the older ideas, the more modern conception being widely entertained. In fact, if the several contributors to the discussion were in any sense representative, it may almost be said that the Anglican Church's imprimatur is assured to the new theory, so feeble was any protest, so meagre was the statement of what Scripture gives as the truth about idolatry. In the opening deliberation of "Section B" the issue was well defined. "The Congress had to consider whether they preferred to remain on the old lines, holding that one religion was true, and all the rest false, or whether they sympathised with the efforts made in most of the Congress papers to relate other religions to that which Christians held to be specially revealed." The general attitude of this important Congress was sufficiently manifested by such things as the continual, and in general depreciatory, reference to "the old ruthless doctrine which sharply separates Christianity from other religions"; as also it was by the constant claim "that now it is generally realised that much in Christianity belongs to the common stock of religion," and that "we perceive the Spirit's work in the higher aspirations of all races."

Whereunto this will grow, or what sort of influence such conceptions of other religions are likely to exert on Christian missionary efforts and methods, may be matter of conjecture. One thing certain about them is their novelty. But the change of attitude was in fact categorically asserted on the same occasion. From an accredited account of the proceedings of the Congress which then appeared, take this "As to the attitude which the church should adopt towards the non-Christian creeds and systems with which she finds herself in contact, the time has gone by when indiscriminating repudiation is indulged in . . . and, while the last traces of this habit of mind have not yet entirely vanished, the change during recent years has been great and salutary." Then, finally, "This attitude, conciliatory and adaptative, and not the implacable hostility of the Crusader or the Cromwellian trooper, was with satisfaction recognised as the predominant note in the discussion." Such was the finding of the experts of the Pan-Anglican Congress!

Now what does Scripture teach as to the religions of the world? Perhaps the consideration of how, according to Scripture, they one and all originated and developed might prove enlightening to many, if no further, certainly at least as to the radical divergence between its account and these modern ideas on the subject. The chapter in Romans already alluded to will furnish an example of what is the invariable testimony of the word as to the origin of what it at least does not scruple to call idolatry. Rom 1:1-32, after adducing creation's testimony as "that which may be known of God," proceeds in verses 21-25 to consider man's treatment of such positive knowledge of God as he at one time undeniably possessed. "Because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen."

"Because that, knowing," or, "having known," "God." This is a distinct advance upon nature's witness, being that knowledge of God on man's part, which may be termed traditional. He was thus positively known by men at as late a date as the day of Noah if, indeed, it be not precisely to that memorable post-diluvian morning that reference is here made, when we find Noah and his family all that was left of the human race upon the earth — surrounding their altar as worshippers of the one true God. Thus far at least have we to go back the stream of history ere we come upon the happy time when it could be said that men, as a class, "knew God." In the absence of any later occasion when it was true, this may be the occasion referred to, if, as seems likely, a definite point in history is in the apostle's mind.

1910 30 On the threshold of a new world, then, only one God was known, owned, or worshipped; only one form of religious belief existed. Whence have come the others? From development of that? or through degeneration from it? Is it progress or lapse that time has brought? Many, reasoning from the undoubted progress of the race in material things, and in the intellectual sphere also, imagine a similar progress to have taken place spiritually. The illustration of man groping his way from primitive ignorance through hideous nature-worship, and polytheism, to true knowledge of God, is a common, if erroneous one. The truth is, according to this chapter, that the progress is in exactly the reverse direction. "Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." That is to say, primarily He was known, conceived of objectively, present to the mind of man as existing and almighty. And such knowledge, remark, man is credited with, not as a deduction logically and laboriously arrived at, but as an assurance he is originally furnished with. The glorifying of Him, as such, however, men soon ceased to render, the experience of His continued goodness awakening no grateful response. Practical recognition of God was thus abandoned, and that right early. The process of His dethronement from their hearts was begun, little as they knew of how soon the vacancy thus created would be re-inhabited. A scheme for man's deception the enemy had prepared of which this was, in reality, the initial step. Thereafter the knowledge and remembrance of God gradually faded. Especially so when, "becoming vain in their reasonings, their undiscerning heart became darkened."

Under professions of wisdom they made rapid progress in their path of folly, until ultimately, become fools, "they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," and, on the downgrade ever, "to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Without going further on in the chapter, the latter verses of which corroborate and strengthen this witness of man's exchange of the truth of God for falsehood, and of the veneration and service of the creature rather than of "the Creator who is blessed for ever" such is the account the word of God gives of the origin of idolatry. How incompatible with it is what is here taught under the term "sense of God." Endowed with the significance the science of comparative religion attaches to it, it is misleading and erroneous, giving entirely false value to that consciousness of God which, confessedly, is rooted in every human heart. As a witness to Him, the presence of that intuitive sense is worthless if we so corrupt it. Correctly understood, in its own way it does bear testimony concerning the fact that God is, and however feebly it may supplement other and more important forms of evidence, its quota is neither to be neglected nor perverted. The evidence to the existence of God having been pursued along these two lines, and the belief in Him affirmed in the words of the Creed shown to be quite a rational conclusion, the signatories of that document may now regard themselves as relieved from any aspersions of blind, unreasoning credulity in signing it. This is so great a matter today. Rational we must show ourselves to be, whatever else we are! Compromise we may to any extent in matters of faith and religion, if we can only keep the peace with science, and remain on good terms with carnal reasoning! In other words, that is to say that today all we learn, hold, or assert as spiritual truth we are ever to be prepared to submit to the searching, sifting analysis which prevailing materialistic rationalism today insists on its right to apply. No doubt much will have to give way, but a sufficiently flexible faith will find no difficulty in surrendering whatever is called in question, and no alarm need be felt, for a considerable residuum of unchallenged verities will always be found to emerge either untouched, or indeed enhanced in appearance from the process! Does it give no pause, no suspicion to such as reason thus that this residuum is ever a steadily decreasing one? That those who surrender whatever is cried down as irrational or unscientific constantly find science and rationalism encroaching further on their territory? So much so that treatises written "in relief of doubt" (should they not rather, in keeping with their real purpose, be entitled "in relief of faith"?) very soon are out of date from not conceding enough! There is a sad absence of backbone in our beliefs, a lack of sound hard kernel in our convictions today, else were we less susceptible to such influences. Is there not room for suspicion really that at bottom there is something essentially at fault in our whole modern attitude towards revealed truth? Not only in the case of theologians themselves, but in the far graver instance of christians generally as affected by them, would there not seem to be some element lacking, the want of which is leaving its mark over the whole field of common Christian belief and confession? Without yielding to unduly pessimistic impressions, there can be no doubt that today, alike in doctrinal expression and inward conviction, there is lack of that full assurance which accompanies true faith in God. In essaying either to state or to learn the truth we fear really to claim or expect certainty; we shrink from advancing much further than probability. When asked for "a reason for the hope that is within us," there is abundance of "meekness and fear" of a kind; but little preparation for giving a satisfactory "answer, always and to every one" who calls for our apologia. As to what can be the cause of this cold hesitancy, does it require a very skilful diagnosis of present symptoms to discern what it is? Our times, we must remember, have witnessed the spread of education, and the advance of knowledge to an extent unprecedented before. Along

with these blessings, however, it is to be feared we stand in danger now of the uprising of what can only be described as a flood of intellectual anarchy. When we recollect man's natural propensity to intellectual pride, how little it takes to puff up the carnal mind, it is not to be wondered at that the really marvellous progress presently being made in knowledge and science tends to overwhelm him with a sense of his own ability in that direction. Wherein the peril lies, however, is that in presence of this high regard for, almost worship of, intellectualism, the hold upon men of everything formerly held sacred, or valued as spiritual truth, appears to be endangered. Where everything is liable to be called in question there can be no real, no permanent certitude. And it is just this certitude in the realm of spiritual things, this sureness that cannot be gainsaid, indispensable for faith, that the spirit of the age is threatening to swamp. This again in large measure owes its origin to want of confidence on the part of christians themselves — to sheer unbelief in the written word as God's medium of communicating the truth to us. Doubtless the influence of speculative philosophy must not be forgotten — its influence on the popular conception of what the truth in itself really is, and whether from its essential nature it admits of being at any time finally standardised — this must certainly be allowed for as contributing to form the general lax attitude. But next to that, or in combination with it, the equally modern, and equally infidel science of Higher Criticism must be held accountable for the fall of temperature. For (to make but the briefest reference to this latter) there is ground for more than suspicion that the principal evil result of the methods of scripture study introduced by Higher Criticism may be anticipated not from attack in detail — the destructive criticism of the various portions of the Bible, or their piecemeal surrender resulting the evil rather is apparent in this general attitude towards Scripture induced by it. A general abatement of respect for Biblical authority (an even more serious thing than doubts as to any particular portion of it) has resulted, insomuch that what is now quite common is either uneasy distrust, or actual discredit of the Scriptures as God's full and final revelation. Truth, the truth, all profess to seek; but a common conception of the truth seems to be, not that it is identical with, or synchronises with, an unchangeable "faith once for all delivered," a divinely appointed standard, guaranteed by God Himself as its fixed and final expression; but that it is more or less a thing of flux and change, a thing still in process of development or discovery. Nay, is there not a tendency to relegate to the background altogether the very thought of a revelation from God? In any case this fact of revelation occupies now but a minor place in the scheme. In this very respect the lecture under consideration is remarkable, and in nothing more characteristic of modern thought than in its omission of all mention of God's revelation as a source of evidence to Him. In Scripture, if anywhere, should it not be recognised, we have unique testimony to God, the great standing witness to His existence, to say nothing more? All that nature and human God-consciousness, "the antecedents of revelation" someone has termed them, all that these can communicate concerning God, all that reason and conscience can make known of Him, is not to be mentioned beside that knowledge of God which His word conveys to the believer. The fact of His existence, after all, is but a small thing to have demonstrated. Scripture does so unmistakably, but how much more! God is there made known, His nature, His character as far as Infinite can reveal itself to finite, shown forth in grace. All that concerns Him in relation to us, and all that has to do with man's responsibility to Him is made the subject of its testimony, not to mention greater and larger spheres. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." So much, perhaps, might be gleaned from what "nature itself teaches"; but the further necessary conviction, "and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," with what it implies, Scripture only

could produce. We cannot go so far as to say that nature's witness to Him is but incidental and undesigned, or that it is absolutely incommunicative as to what His character is; but there is in no sense to be observed there the same full purpose of communication and revelation that is evident in Scripture. For the truth from God we will look in vain anywhere else. Taken in conjunction with that objective adumbration presented in Jesus Christ His only-begotten Son, whose declaration, "I am the truth" (John 14:6) can only be understood in the sense of objective display, and not to be severed either from the further fact that "the Spirit is the truth" (1Jn 5:6), as signifying subjective power of apprehension, the Scriptures fill a unique, and indisputably important place in the divine scheme of revelation, being the descriptive record of that which God makes known. "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). How gross a blunder then to omit this weighty consideration from the sum of Christian Evidences as epitomised in the Creed! Why should the Scripture be eliminated? Is it that the force and value of its testimony has deteriorated, is now discounted with men, in face of the questions regarding it recently raised? Is it fear of the charge of obscuratation, of Bibliolatry, that has led to its omission? Whatever the cause, it surely is something of a novelty to have the evidences to the primary fact of God's existence enumerated, and His own revelation left out.

1910 45 Judging from the tone some apologists adopt, one cannot but conclude that their conception of Christian doctrine is that it is something in the nature of a derelict from ancient seas, drifted from its mediaeval anchorage and stranded now upon an inhospitable shore. Thankful we are to be if from the wreck we can obtain some fragments of its old-fashioned freight, and to be too aggressive even in that is matter for ridicule. It may be an unfounded suspicion, but something like that spirit seems to underlie this choice, presently under consideration, of the Apostles' Creed as a statement of christian faith. A poor salvage it must be that effects the rescue of only that. As it is natural, however, to value considerably above its inherent worth anything obtained under such circumstances, the ancient relic appears particularly valuable to some today. It is doubtless this that accounts for their reading into the various clauses of the Creed much that never could be read out of it.

Thus as to its opening announcement, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," we would perhaps scarcely be prepared to credit it with the amplitude some put upon it. It affirms, we are told, belief not only in God, but in "the Father," and to this is given what is thought the value of the full christian revelation of God in relation to His people. This greater and higher conception of God as the Father, brought to man, as it is so far rightly said, by Jesus Christ and the revelation He brought, is taken as declared accepted by the signatories to the creed. This may be so in the case of those who take it as now expounded; but in its original dress it scarcely seems to wear that complexion. As commonly understood, the words "the Father Almighty" are taken simply as distinctive of the first Person in the Godhead, the Son, and the Holy Spirit following in due order. No doubt much is implicit in all of these — "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" — as also in the simple baptismal formula of Mat 28:19, from which formula, by the way, many conceive the Apostles' Creed to have originated. As stated, the term "Father" is a relative one, involving the idea of sonship. But it is surely to over-amplify the ancient confession to read into it here all that the name "Father" involves when used as designative of His relation to us, "sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Sermonising upon the term, it may certainly be legitimate to draw attention to it as expressive of His relation to men; but reading it in its place and context in the creed, it would seem rather to define the manner in which the First Person of the Godhead stands related to the Second

— "Jesus Christ His only Son."

Moreover there is a lack of precision in what is advanced as the particular truth expressed under this name of "Father" in its larger signification even. There seems to be confusion, or at all events lack of clear distinction between, two things quite separate and distinct, the natural man's relation to God, and the christian's. The term implying paternal relationship appears in scripture certainly applicable to both classes. "Adam which was [the son] of God" (Luk 3:38), instances the nature of the link in the one case; and of the God "in whom we live and move and have our being we are no doubt "the offspring," as elsewhere expressed; but the christian's relationship by faith in Christ Jesus, making it possible for him, having the Spirit of adoption, to cry "Abba Father," is a quite different and far transcending truth. This distinction may seem so evident as to make it unnecessary to be emphasised, yet here we are in presence of a marked failure to draw it, at any rate with anything like clearness. The universal fatherhood of God, as modernly conceived, was emphatically not the substance of Christ's revelation, and however true it may be that Philip's "show us the Father and it sufficeth us" voices the universally felt need of the human heart, and that Christ's answer, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is the christian revelation of God epitomised, and direct answer to that need, it is on another plane than that of nature, where this revelation is received, and this relationship enjoyed. "I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world." "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Nothing is more common than this confusion of the divine fatherhood in relation to man generally with that to believers in particular, or rather the absorption of the one into the other.

Here again is an instance of failing to give its distinctive place to what the New Testament teaches. For, leaving aside the Old Testament, what can be clearer in the New than that, consequent on the accomplished redemption it proclaims, part of the blessing it announces as the distinctive portion of believers, is their participation, theirs peculiarly, in the place and position of children and sons of God. Not only in the nature of the link itself do the two relationships differ, the one true of all who to Him as their Creator owe their being; the other a spiritual birth-tie existing in virtue of a divine operation of grace in the soul of one who is born again, born of God; but all round, as to their essential nature, the plane upon which they are realised, and the position of privilege and responsibility into which they severally introduce, the two things are wide as the poles asunder. And even when a measure of distinction is seen to be called for by what the New Testament adds, more particularly by what the Lord Jesus Himself proclaims, it is largely misconceived. As parallel in its reasoning with the lecture at this point, and slightly more explicit, take a recent attempt, in a handbook on the "Life and Teaching of Christ," to define what He teaches on the subject. Under the heading, "Subject matter of the teaching," "God the Father" is taken as title of the first item. "Every new religion," it is said, "begins in a new revelation of God, or in a new emphasis upon some hitherto half-understood aspect of the divine nature. Just as the starting-point of the religion of Israel was the new name of Yahveh given to God, so it is often claimed that the central point in the doctrine of Jesus is His conception of the fatherhood of God. There is, of course, nothing new in the idea. Jesus accepts a name for God which was already familiar; but fills it with a content and meaning of His own." What then is this new content and meaning given to the idea not in itself original? "He speaks to the disciples of My Father and yours, and teaches them to pray, Our

Father which art in heaven. This means a considerable advance upon the old conception of a Fatherhood derived from the fact of creation or generation." Doubtless! In what then does it consist? "With Jesus the term 'Fatherhood' describes even something more than a relationship," etc. The idea seems to be that Christ's teaching carries the thought of God being Father beyond anything like the genetic sense it already had, and gives it rather an ethical significance. The Fatherliness of God rather than His Fatherhood is what is insisted on. This elaboration of the idea of God's Fatherhood, remark, leaves it still on the old ground, on the same plane as formerly. It is in no sense a new relationship opened up. With Jesus the term "fatherhood" in the first place gives the essence or spirit which determines God's action and lies behind it all," either in redemption, as seen in the parable of the prodigal son, or in providence, as shown in the teaching of the Sermon on the mount. "The originality of His conception of the divine Fatherhood comes out in the stress which He lays upon the love of God. God is the Father of all men because He loves them." In the second place, "He presents us with a new conception of the natural attitude of the soul to God under the figure of the filial relationship, in which there is a fine blending of childlike trust and godly fear, especially illustrated in His teaching in regard to prayer." Finally, "It was not the least among the aims of the teaching of Jesus to bring home to men first the fact of this divine relationship, and then to show them the way to its fuller realisation." And is this all that is original in the "teaching of Jesus" on the topic of relationship with God? All that is to be learned from Him who, at the close of His ministry on earth, claimed as His peculiar prerogative, and accomplished mission, to have manifested the Father's name? Who spoke of an hour coming when anything enigmatic about His disclosures to His disciples should be a thing of the past, and He would show them plainly of the Father? And who could give, as sufficient answer to the request, "show us the Father," the declaration, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"?

How short, how very far short of an adequate presentation of the full christian revelation this mere bringing into prominence of an unoriginal idea comes! How little apprehension of a new relationship with God through being born again spiritually, a relationship founded on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, entered upon in association with the Son of God in resurrection, its basis essentially the possession of eternal life in Him, and God's sending forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, "Abba Father." This, and no mere fuller realisation of filial relationship On the plane of nature, gives "the full range and meaning and significance of sonship." The confusion no doubt arises from the fact that in the revelation Christ brought there was undoubtedly that which had to say to men at large, as well as to those chosen out of the world as the special objects and recipients of His testimony. It is truly said, "While nature's testimony and conscience's witness evidence respectively God's eternal power and divinity, and His righteous and holy character, neither of them gave the revelation of the Father. It was reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ to make Him known to sinners as a God of love." Blessedly true it is that through Christ was shown the sovereign matchless love of God to a sinful world, the true unfolding of the Father's heart towards His prodigals in the far country, if so it may be taken; but even this in no wise exhausts the fulness of that revelation of the Father concerning which it is said "the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

If it is a truly great and effective contrast that John draws in the statement, — "The law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," a contrast not less striking we may see between what we learn of that tie of relationship between God and the members of the human family,

owned still in spite of their fallen state, and what "eternal ages shall declare" of "those who, with Thy Son, shall share A son's eternal place." It was of this wonderful place and portion, to be enjoyed consequent on redemption and the coming of the Spirit, that our blessed Lord spoke continually. The fourth Gospel, in particular, gives full testimony to it. In how rich measure, in chapters 14 to 17 especially, containing His last words to His own, have we that manifesting of the Father's name to the men given Him by the Father out of the world that He speaks of in His prayer (John 17:6). "I have made known to them thy name," He said in closing, "and will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." The "declaring thy name unto my brethren," as He did most unequivocally in resurrection "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God" — was surely the primary instance at least of His going on to make the Father known.

All this is involved in "that new conception of God, which burst forth into one word, religion's ultimate, Abba, Father." It may very well be questioned, then, if the statement of the creed has accommodation for all that is wrapt up in that wondrous name of relationship, "the Father." More probably it was compiled, as it is by many recited, in much ignorance of this.

1910 61 Passing on to further clauses of the Creed, it would be tedious and serve no purpose, to comment on every item. It is sufficient to point out wherein to a simple mind modern theology appears to impose a novel reading of its teaching, or to call attention to what, in the light of scripture, seems a defective or erroneous apprehension of the truth it summarises. In passing from the first to the second clause" and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord" — unfortunately, one is not likely by any means to be free from difficulty in regard to what is taught yet. Rather, in fact, do we here, in this second declaration of belief, enter upon more controversial ground than ever. Proverbially it is so, as ancient ecclesiastical history, for instance, attests. Here have the fiercest and most oft-recurring combats of the past been waged. Throughout whole centuries this has been the field of conflict, where error after error has assailed the faith of God's elect, and in some measure of faithfulness has been met and repulsed. Today it presents somewhat the appearance of a historic battlefield, scarred with the marks of ancient combat, and strewn with the relics of a conflict long since stilled. Here and there, it may be, one of the old-time weapons may be disinterred, or some rusted fragment of broken armour, perhaps, of no more than antiquarian interest now, however much practical importance, for attack or defence, each may have had to those engaged in battle then. By even more graphic testimony, perchance, the thickly strewn relics of the slain, or other personal traces of the combatants, the field is seen to have been not always one of peaceful pasturage; but, in days long since gone, of turbulent tumult and fierce fighting. In literal fact this is ground, this that is entered upon by the statements concerning the person of Christ, where the prolonged strife of controversies not a few has not failed to leave unmistakeable traces, and marks that can never be erased.

If, in fact, there is one instance where anything at all may appear to be in the claim of theology to have fulfilled its province of construing to expert intelligence, or enforcing on popular attention, a revealed truth of Christianity, it is here. How far in such a case it may be allowed that there has been, in the controversy as to this fundamental doctrine of the Person of the Son of God, a practical bringing of it into prominence, an emphasising and elaboration of it which would not otherwise have been forthcoming, may be a question. Provided the thought generally associated with such ideas that the scriptures, if at all, supply only the undeveloped formula of such doctrines

— provided that unbelieving thought be emphatically ruled out, there may be something to be said for it in the sense of seeing here supplied, in rebuke if also in the interest of decayed spirituality and faith grown feeble, in the providence of God a means of "supplementing" revelation by practical and historical emphasis. However that may be, it is certainly undisputed fact that in the church's past it is on this truth perhaps beyond all others that steady unremitting attention has been bestowed, successive creeds amplifying definitions of it, doubtless with a view as much to express more adequately fuller conceptions, as to guard more effectively against fresh errors. So that in the whole volume of church history there is probably no point of doctrine so frequently referred to, nor so voluminously treated, as the truth concerning the second Person of the Godhead defined in the clause "and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." Nor are we to suppose that this is a field from which conflict has vanished for ever, or that very different, or less contentious, conditions prevail there now. Nay, is it not rather the case that so very much in debate just at present is the question of Christ's Person that we may fairly claim to be in presence of a fresh and most remarkable renewal of the warfare? The "Christ Question," as it has been entitled, is very much alive today. Just how many things have combined to give it such a resuscitation it may be hard to say; but there is certainly no theological question on which discussion is so common or so keen as concerning the mystery of His Person. It appears to many also that in this very reanimation of the question may lie the danger of a recrudescence of ancient maladies. The trend of thought at all events in many cases is not free from parallelism with old-time heresies. The very fact in itself of the subject engrossing so largely popular attention is significant, ominous we may say. And that this is the case is being recognised even by many presumably not directly affected. "Christology" says one, in an article to a leading secular review on "Evolution and the Church" — "Christology has become the problem of the church today, as, viewed from other standpoints, it was of the church from the fourth to the sixth century." This is certainly so, and many will be inclined to add there is more than a suspicion of the re-appearance of questions as ancient as the first century in much that is being advanced. Nor need it really occasion surprise to see threatening, as we do today, a renewal of polemical warfare around this particular doctrine. For when has theology as such, apart from simple quotation of scripture itself, been able to give a completely satisfactory and final pronouncement on it? In spite of what is claimed for creeds and confessions, what can it offer today even?

It may not be out of place to quote here a warning the above witness sounds from his presumably impartial standpoint. Remarking how quickly theories succeed each other in popular favour, and successively pass away, "systems of thought are short-lived," he says, "the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door and shall carry thee out." Really, if such evanescent theories so little comply with the requirements of truth as the quotation suggests, the fate of Ananias and Sapphira is not the worst that could overtake them. Nor is this marked failure to reach satisfactory conclusions so very difficult to explain. For one thing the matter is, one may say, inherently mysterious. It is remarkable that full in the past as has been the scrutiny it has undergone, and elaborate as today the treatment of it theologically has become, all attempted definitions, ancient and modern alike, of doctrine as to Christ's person, when they go beyond the exact language of scripture itself, very quickly throw off any restrictions it would impose, and pass into the region of mere speculation and conjecture. So much so in fact that even from theologians themselves we may occasionally have what looks like an extorted confession of how elusive and mysterious they find the matter to be. "Definite theological statements," continues the same writer,

quoting Jowett, "respecting the relation of Christ to God or man are only figures of speech. They do not really pierce the clouds. No greater calamity has ever befallen the christian church than the determination of some uncertain things which are beyond the sphere of christian knowledge." What is this but a proof of the truth of Christ's own warning word, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." If it is complained, as it has been, that by applying this wholesale to such knowledge of His person as all Christology is concerned in defining, we are condemned to a hopeless agnosticism on a subject of utmost importance, it can only be replied that in such a matter it may very well be that we may meet with are unknowable as well as the unknown. Where we are incompetent to diagnose, and revelation does not cast its light, it may be questioned if "hopeless agnosticism" is the proper term; but even so, faith can not only resign to the inevitable mystery, but discern a fitness and moral congruity also in the arrangement which retains in seclusion from man's vulgar scrutiny the holy mystery of His wonderful person. Better so than indulging in metaphysical flights on such a theme.

"No man knoweth the Son but the Father." We do well to start here. There is a warning note in our Lord's utterance it becomes us to hearken to. To pass beyond what is revealed is to enter a labyrinth where no wisdom of man can extricate us. We can understand how hopelessly men wander when they set out to explore this forbidden land, for that obscurity involves the whole matter we are informed here on the best of authority. Consequently they labour at their own charge who set out on such an expedition. Twentieth century thought no more than that of earlier days can solve the insoluble or be able to define the undefinable. So that in the strife now imminent, if not in progress, between the theorisings on this point of a New Theology, originating in nothing more stable than ever-changing conjecture, and the pronouncements of the older theology, basing themselves on creeds established and accepted for long, simple believers shall do well to repose the lightest of confidence in human thought as expressed in either; but arm themselves with, and withdraw themselves under that which can neither be superseded nor supplemented, the word of God.

Happily, in that which we are studying here, a great deal of historical theology is avoided by little or no reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. This is unusual in any exposition of the creed, for there is generally much stress laid upon this, and here, if anywhere, some elaboration of the truth would naturally be looked for. On this occasion, however, it is at once to the Son of God incarnate, the historic Jesus, to use the modern phrase, that we are directed. A great deal of what is said regarding the doctrine of the incarnation may be left aside, especially so from the fact that the attempt to show that it is not an unfamiliar idea to man, and to justify it as a credible doctrine leads to the use of the more or less technical language of philosophy. We cannot be expected to follow there; but it may be permitted to remark on the use of that rather novel principle which New Theology has given such prominence to — "the immanence of God." Trust it not; especially when applied to the incarnation. "A mere philosopheme, absolutely fatal to a gospel" is not an unfair description of it. To many under the spell of philosophic reasoning on this doctrine of divine immanence, instead of the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, "Christ Himself is," as a Roman Catholic has recently said, "resolved into a mere lay figure draped in a few attributes which have no other origin than the minds of those actuated by its baneful influence." There are those also who claim "with the help of the modern categories of immanence, evolution and personality, to construe more adequately than ancient theology, and still more adequately

than New Theology," Christological doctrine. But in what does it result? Nothing but philosophical speculation, unsupported by scripture, where it is not indeed contradicted by it. This last, of course, may be of little consequence to those who hold that "the New Testament has left to dogmatic theology the task of thinking out, and construing to intelligence, such facts in regard to Christ as the apostles simply put side by side." But to those who accept the scriptures as something less nebulous, as God's revelation, in fact, of all we can know regarding the subject, all this shows with how great distrust the reasonings of philosophy on it must be regarded.

It is somewhat difficult, and becoming increasingly so, for plain christian people today to apprehend, or even to come on to common ground of thought at all with, many teachers who make this branch of theology their province. Not only because of the above mentioned tendency to run into mere philosophic speculation, but because the subject is approached in so radically different a fashion from what they are accustomed to. This is not confined to the truth of incarnation alone, but a specially prominent instance of it is seen there. In what is under review here, after sheaving in the first place, and apparently as the prime consideration in regard to it, that the incarnation is a rational and credible doctrine, the next step to be considered is put in the form of a question — "Admitting the above, what proof have we that Jesus Christ was such incarnation of God?" "To some," we are told, "the fact that the scriptures so teach is sufficient." Amply so, a simple believer would rejoin; his only cause for dissatisfaction being that this consideration was so long in being advanced, that it was not first and foremost, given precedence over any such special plea as the reasonableness of the doctrine on philosophic grounds. To show that a doctrine was scriptural, was in line with, based upon the testimony of, the scriptures, used to be the first task of any Christian apologist. It is made now to wait till the development of proof from other lines of evidence has been completed. And not only so, whether the line taken be the parallelism of other religions in showing that the thought of a god becoming incarnate was not an unfamiliar idea, or the exposition of it in terms reminiscent rather of philosophy than of theology; but as a witness to the great truth the scripture is also subordinated in value by the assumption underlying all this, almost in fact in so many words stated, that it is not enough to be convinced that it can be established on scriptural grounds that Jesus Christ was really "God manifest in the flesh." Considerations that shall appeal to those to whom the scripture is of little account, or who reject its witness, are thought worthy of first place. No doubt there may be something in the plea, that it is at this point in the Creed where we part company with such as Jews and Mohammedans, who could very well adopt the first clause, concerning God the Father Almighty. But, since they do not accept the New Testament revelation, are we therefore to rule it out, or assign it second place in what constitutes the ground of our own faith and conviction? For surely in the recitation of a creed the object ostensibly aimed at is not primarily the gaining credence for its truths by unbelievers, but the statement or confession of one's own personal faith. In terms sufficiently distinctive, and otherwise suited to the apprehension of such, it may be sought to be given, the simplest and most decisive language being that which is adopted. But for that very reason would not what one would look for in the exposition of that creed precisely be the bringing out, in something like the order of their relative importance, the grounds of the faith we therein confess, on what, as their primary foundation, these our convictions are founded? Is it then the case that the intellectual rationality of the doctrine of the incarnation is our first reply when asked to show cause why we believe in it? We credit the fact because it is quite feasible, and not at all a preposterous idea intellectually!

1910 77 How cold and barren it all is, this being persuaded, granted even that it be fully persuaded, of the credibility, or philosophic certitude, of a truth such as this. That such a stupendous fact as God come down in love, the Word become flesh and dwelling among us, the eternal Son of God found in fashion as a man, in grace so profound, for purposes so great, and in a moral glory so beautiful, should, in a spirit that speaks of but little exercise of heart over it, be coolly observed, reasoned of, and assimilated into a system, somewhat after the manner of a scientific discovery, what does this argue in those who so discuss it? Is there not felt on the part of all who by His grace have been given to have a living interest in it, that in all this philosophising there is an entire overlooking (what seems to us a most strange overlooking) of the spiritual import and significance of the wonderful fact so discussed? And, to any who have the least consciousness of its vital concern for themselves, how momentous seems the omission! Pathetic, too, to assured believers it cannot but appear. These labouring philosophers, as, with never a lift of their headed brow to what is unclear to untutored minds, they bend over their task, how blindly they miss what we simple ones seize with alacrity! How callously they let slip, or leave out of consideration, that which alone we prize! How fatally they lose the force and value spiritually of the great and grand truth, when they attempt to equate it as a doctrine in philosophic terms! Oh, that its power, its grandeur, its sublimity would more fully penetrate our hearts!

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Is this merely the advent of a unique phenomenon upon the stage of life? a phenomenon so strange even that our whole system of philosophy must be ransacked for principles to explain it? Or is it altogether an intervention to descend to their terminology, of what, in this sense can only be called the non-phenomenal into the phenomenal world? "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Is this something esoteric to philosophers, or calling for such preliminaries as have been indulged in ere it become intelligible to us? Do we need to rove so far afield for its significance, wondrous fact as it is? Is there not a shorter and surer way to its spiritual meaning somewhere in the line of its appeal to our hearts? Ah! were we more under the power of that appeal, the whole spirit in which it is approached, should it not be vastly different? Philosophic reasoning might bulk less largely in our thought of it, occupation with it be less critical than contemplative. But would we be losers thereby? In presence of the greatness of that conception, the infinite grandeur of it morally, it needs not surely to be pressed which is the attitude of mind best becoming us. But for real knowledge of it even, this truth of the incarnation of the Son of God, what its meaning, what its implications, what its adjustment to the scheme of things the region in which it must be studied most decidedly is the moral and spiritual and not the philosophic. As always in the discerning of the truth of God, whatever the subject, mere acuteness of natural intelligence avails nothing. Spiritual truth is communicated spiritually, and it is he that is spiritual that discerneth all things. And as to this great fact, "the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," are we likely to find less true the operation of that principle?

Here, if anywhere, philosophy is at a discount, and spiritual vision is that which alone will reach tangible results. Received in faith, and contemplated spiritually, the hearings of it philosophically count for little, and are left behind as mere husk and shell. Oh! that the real kernel of it may be

ours, that the great truth in all its range and beauty, as revealed in the word, may flood our souls with adoration of Him, who claims in this respect perhaps less our knowledge than our worship, who is "God over all, blessed for ever."

We are taken a little further on somewhat similar lines, though here there is a real substratum of truth underlying, when we are asked to remember that the very thought of a personally existent God involves the thought that He must express Himself. Further that, in the words of another, "in the being of God we see there is a Trinity which lays the foundation for the possibility of the incarnation of the Son." Again, that in none other but the Son of God come in flesh can this be, for revelation is only possible where spiritual kinship exists. All, in their place, considerations not to be slighted. And only now, after such preamble, are we led up to Scripture to consider its testimony. Witness there is there, clear, full, and, above all, plain. Testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ is its express purpose, and the mystery of His person, His divinity and humanity alike, are abundantly evidenced. The order in which the Creed takes it up, first the divinity then the humanity, is that which is observed in this exposition also. "And I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." With this statement it leads off. The true and essential divinity, perhaps we had better say deity, of the Lord Jesus Christ is what is here first affirmed. And scripture makes it very apparent that nothing less is what it claims for Him. This again, as it is very cogently remarked, not as a matter of a few proof texts here and there, which ingenuity of exegesis might essay to explain away, but woven into the very texture of the word. There is, of course, no lack of categorical statements of His deity; but the truth rests broad-based on even wider foundation than these supply. As has often been remarked, there are attributes ascribed, actions and utterances recorded, and incidental allusions made throughout the entire New Testament that are almost more positive affirmations of His Godhead than the most direct statements can be. It is to this testimony en masse, rather than to particular references, that attention is drawn, so that perforce we must follow on that line. It is something to be thankful for that insistence is so firm on the fact that the New Testament does present Christ's deity as an acknowledged truth. It is becoming so common now (we are warned) to speak of the orthodox confession of Christ's essential divinity as a doctrine developed to its present proportions at a period in church history more or less advanced, and not explicitly New Testament doctrine. We are frequently told that, if at all, it was only in a very rudimentary form that an intelligible Christology was held in primitive times! The claims of the writers, more particularly the earliest writers, of the New Testament, for Christ, were not of the same exorbitant nature as those orthodoxy makes now! Divinity, in esse, was an attribute assigned by later ages to Christ, it is said! With the New Testament before us this should not be difficult to settle. But again fault must be found with the method by which it is done. As is so common, here again there is compromise. Instead of a clear firm stand being taken on what is the uniform, unvarying testimony of scripture, there is, as we shall see, an adoption in measure, a taking over in principle of the heterodox idea, and then the foisting upon scripture of this sense and meaning. This leads to the argument taking, at this juncture, a most surprising turn. We all know how development as a theory seems to have a peculiar charm for theologians today, amounting in fact almost to an obsession. In any sphere whatever it needs but to be suggested for them to see something in it. Who would suppose now that, after controverting the idea of the true faith of Christ (that estimate which postulates of His true divine nature — deity) being inconsistent with New Testament Christology, and a matter of development in times posterior to it, that then, in a modified form, the self-same idea of development should be taken over, and read into, New

Testament Christology itself? As the note sounded throughout now is far from clear, it seems due at this stage to call attention to this its uncertain sound. As a start, however, it is rightly emphasised that the great thing to get hold of is what conception of Himself, and of His relation to God, was left by Christ on the minds of His followers, His disciples, the apostles. Did He appear to them, to use two separate confessions of the same individual, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God," merely such? or, "the Christ, the Son of the living God"? Following in the wake of a recent writer on the subject, a sketch of New Testament Christology is here given. The theme is pursued along three lines of evidence the Epistles of Paul, the Synoptical Gospels, and the Gospel of John — the question being what impression the writers of each had retained of the nature and personality of Christ Jesus. In what respect do they severally manifest His admitted uniqueness to consist? On this head what is advanced is all very well, and, if left at that, might be a fair, though certainly far from a full, presentation of New Testament teaching, showing at least that the "historical valuation of Jesus" assigned in the Creed was not out of keeping with that entertained by His disciples.

But, from this point, both the writer quoted from, and our lecturer proceed now on that line of reasoning from which we have expressed dissent. Says the former, "In this harmonious account there are still not wanting clear marks of development. The Synoptists give the rudimentary form, in Paul's Epistles it is more fully developed, and in the Fourth Gospel it is complete. Then even within Paul's Epistles, and again within John's Gospel, signs of development are to be seen." "Jesus was Jesus at first. Jesus becomes more and more the Christ as we proceed. As a New Testament doctrine it is distinctly progressive." This is thought to involve no contradiction or disparagement. The explanation of this development certainly differs considerably. By the lecturer it is thought "to have something to do with the fact that the truth of Christ's divinity had to be forced upon the mind and attention of His Jewish disciples with their carnal conceptions of a Messiah," and this being only gradually accomplished, the developing Christology of the New Testament may be indicative of its progress. But by the writer referred to it is traced to "the influence of Gentile modes of thought and expression," and that idea, far from being found in any way objectionable, is held in reserve as a further consideration to explain the supposed progression in New Testament thought from the historic Jesus to the divine Christ. However explained, by both this development is affirmed, and regarded as indicating that as a primitive doctrine in the early church the truth of Christ's divinity was only progressively held, realised, and taught; that consequently, the earliest impression, or original valuation of Him was comparatively low.

Now as conducive to anything like clear thinking, a distinction is at this stage called for which seems here to be omitted. Two things which we must clearly distinguish between are the disciples of Christ simply as His earthly followers, and the same individuals, or such of them as were so used, in the capacity of New Testament writers. In regard to such a truth as His being God manifest in flesh, there is surely all the difference between the early glimmerings of faith in simple Galilean fishermen, and the truth as penned by apostles and teachers under the inspiration of the Spirit of God Himself. This last consideration by itself makes all the difference. If divinely inspired we believe these writings to be, they are whatever the human element — at once for us removed above the possibility of containing a developing Christology. What of Peter, Matthew, or John as to their several measures of conceiving how Jesus could be divine? It may be that in the time of their accompanying with Him prior to the cross, and (we must add) to Pentecost, such varying measures

were true. And that many a shadow of unbelief momentarily dimmed the full assurance of their faith in Him we can well believe, and in fact are told of. But in what they wrote of Him subsequently, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, however true it be that the characteristics of each remain in what they relate of Him, we can never imagine variety in either the nature or the quality of their testimony to what He was to His Godhead. If it were merely a question of the development, during their earthly association with Him, of His disciples' conviction of His divinity, it would be another matter. Keeping in mind the distinction between faith and knowledge one would surely allow that there was progression there. But this is an assuming that such development of conviction appears, or is reproduced, in the portion of the word of God they were used by Him to pen, and on every ground this is erroneous and false.

1910 93 Now before proceeding to consider further this modified adoption of the theory of a developing Christology, let us notice briefly whereto this notion may lead, and to what lengths it is being pushed, by theologians less moderate in its application. We are all familiar with the cry so often heard today, "Back to Christ." What does it mean on the lips of theologians? A return to the simplicity and power of the truth as it is in Jesus? Alas! far from it. Here is an article by an accredited New Theology teacher on "The Christ Question," which illustrates clearly what is being echoed so widely. "Back to Christ" is his cry too, and the way in which he interprets that ambiguous motto is instructive, to say the least. The article is throughout a plea for distinguishing between what he calls the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. This in the interest of a theory he has that the latter is something in the nature of an ideal, "an ever-growing, ever-advancing, ever-expanding ideal," quite separate and separable from the real historic Jesus of Nazareth. In claiming that it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the "Return to Jesus which is manifest in modern thought," he declares: —

"Jesus is understood today better than in any previous age. Like a fossil that has long lain embedded in the Silurian rocks, so the actual historic Jesus has been buried under mountains of Christological dogma. And perhaps the greatest service that has been rendered to religious thought within recent years has been the excavation of the real Jesus of history. To change the figure, as an artist removes the grime, the dust, the whitewash from some long lost but newly discovered portrait, until the perfect likeness looks out again, and rewards his loving patience, so the labours of the truth-loving critic have at last re-discovered the lost likeness of the Prophet of Nazareth."

Now, in itself this may look like nothing but elegant rodomontade, but our theologians will discover, if they follow on, that here is one who simply carries on their identical idea of development to its legitimate issue, only, he is much more consistent and thorough-going in his application of it. They admit the principle of development and imagine that by confining it to the New Testament they save the situation. That is to say, they allow the whitewash, but deny the grime and the dust. They do not deny the fossilising (the figure is unhappily only a too fitting one for what has transformed living truth into cold dogma, from which all life has departed) but affirm the process of stratification only during the apostolic age. Possibly the later mountains of dogma do not appear to them to bury the truth, but to uplift and manifest it. But here is one who quite boldly takes their theory of the development of Christology in the New Testament, uses it to prove that ascriptions of deity to Christ are simply accretions on the original history, and roundly charges apostles with these practices of embellishing the simple truth, and overlaying it with dogma. After all, there is nothing

like candour.

Notice how, in dealing with the New Testament evidence, the very same course is pursued as in the sketch indicated above Paul's Epistles, the Synoptical Gospels, and the Gospel of John.

"Paul," he says, "delivered Christianity from Jewish limitations, but at the same time he started the movement which took it away from its Galilean simplicity. The speculations of the Apostle concerning Christ became the starting point of theology. . . All the same it was a departure from the life and teaching of Jesus. What triumphed was not the religion of Jesus, but certain speculations about the Christ that resembled very little the Galilean Gospel."

Then as to the Synoptics. "They are not histories so much as ideals of Him which grew up in the hearts of His friends after a lifetime of loving reverence. . . They are all moulded and shaped by one great idea. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah . . . bearing evidence throughout of the influence of this atmosphere in the mythological accretions they add to the simple life of Jesus."

Finally, as to John's Gospel. "It is impossible for us to conceive of any single individual speaking as Jesus is represented as speaking in the Fourth Gospel — "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." If ye knew me ye would know my Father also. I and my Father are one." But that is just the way the Gospel writer would naturally speak of the ideal and divine Christ, who was living in his mind and heart, the eternal word who had come down from heaven, the ideal man, the indwelling image of perfect manhood." This is what it comes to at last — "the ideal man," "perfect manhood." With similar arguments our teachers expect to reinforce the doctrine of His "perfect Godhead." But it may be more than doubted if there is any such strengthening of the evidence as they look for in such a way of reasoning. There is grave risk in adopting such premises at all. Indeed this modern distinguishing of "Christ" from "Jesus" in this way, and tracing the development of what the Christ-like idea is thought to imply, is just one of those novel ideas on the subject which we have spoken of as fraught with peril.* We may recognise quite clearly where we are in the New Theology quoted from above. "Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh is not of God." Thus the teaching under notice here more particularly seems to be deficient in its lack of giving that full value to apostolic testimony which is also impressed upon us. "We are of God," says the Apostle; "he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." We are warned in this Scripture against giving ready credence to any and every thing advanced as spiritual truth. There is the activity of the spirit of error, as well as that of the Spirit of truth, to be taken account of in the sphere of religious thought, and as a means of distinguishing the one from the other we are supplied with two tests. The true confession of "Jesus Christ come in the flesh" is the one. The reception of the apostles' doctrine as of God, with all that that it implies, is the other. It certainly implies, this latter claim does, that what the apostles wrote they assuredly did under the full and unerring direction of the Spirit of God, else could not their teaching be so unequivocally associated with His name. "Hereby know we the Spirit of truth." How this can be reconciled with the thought of a slowly dawning consciousness thus late in their minds of Jesus their Master's divinity may be left to these apologists to explain. Certainly to a plain person it seems contradictory, and the teaching that affirms it derogatory in a measure both to that particular truth, and to the apostolic testimony regarding it.

{*A controversy, considerable in extent whatever its quality, has of late occupied the pages of a religio-philosophic review regarding this very theory of "Jesus" or "Christ." That, in fact, is the title given it, "Jesus or Christ?" Singularly barren of any value or interest intrinsically to believers, it is of immense importance when taken as an instance of what is being given out as Christology in many quarters, an indication of what men are prepared to answer now to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" In some instances it is no exaggeration to say that the apologies for orthodoxy are only a few degrees removed from the heterodoxy they seek to confute.}

Besides, let any ordinarily attentive reader of the New Testament say if this so-called development is really so self-evident as is affirmed. Taking as bare facts for the moment the two things the gradual compiling of the New Testament, book by book, and its references to Christ's Godhead or deity — it cannot be denied that these latter are both more numerous and fuller as time goes on; that, as a general rule, the later the book chronologically, the more ample the elaboration of Christ's relation to God. But does this of necessity imply that correspondingly primitive or developed phases of Christology were contemporaneous with these as the faith of the church? Does it not occur to any that the fuller treatment of a point may keep pace with the growing measure in which it is being denied or perverted? That is to say, that the chronological order of the books of the New Testament, as far as can be ascertained, and the fuller emphasising of the truth as to Christ's person, synchronise, go hand in hand, more by reason of the growing prevalence of anti-Christian doctrine than of anything else. There is a principle evident in the New Testament, which we are apt to give less weight to than we ought, and that is, that God in His wise providence allowed error of every shade and form to appear in the apostles' own days, while still the truth was being communicated through them. Like offences, it must needs be that heresies should come. We owe it to His wise ordering that the advent of the various germinant forms of error occurred in time for exposure and refutation from inspiration's pen, ere the canon closed. On this ground, then, we conclude that, if more frequent allusion to, or more forcible reiteration of Christ's Godhead is found in the later written portions of the New Testament, it is indicative really of another and more common form of development — that of error. Then, whatsoever the more frequent insistence on it latterly may be, the true deity of Christ is just as plain in the first as in the last of the New Testament writings, not to speak of the Old Testament, where this theory of development cannot apply. Christ, in fact, is the one great theme of scripture, and its testimony is unanimous and consistent throughout that He was nothing less than "God over all, blessed for ever." The whole idea of Christ's true and essential divinity being a conception of Him reached by His disciples only after long reflection, and entertained or expressed with any measure of clearness only as the New Testament closed, appears puerile to the last degree once we bring in faith as the medium of their apprehension of Him. The truth as to His person, we may see from many instances, was impressed upon them from the very first moment of their spiritual contact with Him, and the nature of that impression points to faith as the means of their spiritual illumination. Faith is so different from the mere intellectual "conceptions" we hear so much of; and nowhere is this more apparent than here in this matter of what the disciples may have thought as to Christ's person. When we think of it all, the close and intimate intercourse between them and Himself; their daily observation of Him, His words and His ways; above all, their acquaintance with all the claims He made for Himself, and the calm conviction they had of these claims being valid, should we not speak less of their "conceptions" and more of their "conclusions"? Truly a blessed thing is faith! So sure of its ground, so clear of uncertainty! This by reason of being grounded on divine testimony. "To them it

was given to believe on Him." When Peter confessed Him "Son of the living God," did not our Lord declare "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas." Had it been flesh and blood which revealed it unto him, we should indeed look for some such development as is spoken of; but faith, resulting from what "my Father in heaven has revealed," does not conform to such rules, or take so long to reach a conclusion. Does not our Lord Jesus Himself in His intercessory prayer (John 17:1-26) over and over again make clear that His own gathered round Him then had, whatever their failure, even ere this entertained true thought of His person and mission. "They have known," He says, "that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee." "They have known surely (of a truth)," He says again, "that I am come out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." The cardinal distinction between the world and His own is, He declares that (while "the world hath not known thee"), "these have known that thou hast sent me." Was this knowledge rudimentary? a faint idea of some indefinable greatness in their illustrious Rabbi? Was such as this all the knowledge He predicted of them? "This is life eternal," He said, and that specifically was His gift to those whom the Father had given Him, "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Mark the association of personages, if the term may be allowed. There is co-ordination of Jesus Christ and the only true God implied here, it is sometimes said. There is, and it is expressed in such a way as betokens it the characteristic Christian revelation. A late and proportionately high revelation of Jesus, forsooth! Was this, or was it not, from the first the clear testimony concerning the Lord Jesus? Was this, or was it not, the confession of those with whom he companied when on earth? On one occasion, when He enquired of them, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go?" was their reply, "thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Holy One of God." Where our divines err in this matter, it is to be feared, is in that common respect of reading into others' experience the circumstances of our own. The truth of God is to them largely a question of theology, Christology a branch of it, the true divinity of the Lord Jesus a doctrine to be gradually conceived, slowly reasoned out, and scientifically established. Consequently they imagine a like process in the early disciples and the writers of the New Testament. When shall they learn that there is such a thing in the spiritual realm as faith? such a thing as the certitude that comes from receiving divine testimony? such a thing that conviction is borne in upon the heart when God is realised as present and addressing men? Rudimentary Christology or not, was there nothing of this in those who followed the Lord when here on earth? or under the inspiration of God penned His truth for our guidance and instruction? Really now, could "God manifest in the flesh be the true character of Christ's incarnation, and men in spiritual contact with Him escape conviction of it immediate conviction of it? Nay, verily. For Jesus of Nazareth to be to them, while they had His presence, no more than Jesus of Nazareth, and the idea of His being the Christ a subsequent idealistic investiture of that historical figure with the draperies that Christological dogma spun round it, is a thing quite incredible in itself; and how much out of keeping with Scripture one need not say. Rather there do we see that Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, the Word made flesh, approved Himself such to the earliest glimmering of faith in His own, and won from them then, as He does from all true believers still, the voluntary confession, "My Lord and my God." In fine, from all that the New Testament teaches about Him, whether it be the testimony of the Synoptists (thought to be the most rudimentary Christologists, but in reality quite sufficiently establishing who and what Christ really was): or that of Paul in his epistles (reckoned to give the doctrine in a more advanced stage of its evolution — really only presenting the same truth as to basis, but distinctly

characterised, as might be expected by the witness of one to whom from heaven the Lord Jesus revealed Himself, and whose testimony consequently was of a heavenly and glorified Christ): or that of John in his Gospel (not the final form after the influence of Gentile modes of thought and expression had moulded it into symmetry, but the grand, full, four-square witness of the one whose province it particularly was in pursuance of that divine design impressed upon all the scriptures — to manifest Jesus as the only begotten Son of God) whichever of the writers be selected, from each will be found a testimony unvarying, and from all a witness uniform and complete; a record given which presents a life and teaching and character, a position and glory, and a personality and power absolutely incomprehensible on any other ground than that the One described is expressly what the creeds claims Him to be, "Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."

1910 106 From what the Creed claims for Christ as a divine person we pass on to consider what it states concerning His humanity. "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." So is expressed in the Creed the origin, nature, and circumstances of our Lord's humanity. Now again as to the exposition. It is said that when we come now to speak of our Lord's humanity we are on ground more familiar, we are in a region where the human mind is less likely to be so entirely incapable of reasoning as concerning His divinity. The subject matter is more within our scope. There is at the same time a complaint made that hitherto christian thinkers have been too reticent on this matter of Christ's humanity, and that the difficulty of the subject is largely imaginary. As an encouragement to proceed, one thing we are told in this connection that while hitherto in the creed we have moved in the region of truth open only to spiritual intelligence, now we are on altogether different and lower ground. We arrive at that which makes no call upon anything higher than ordinary historical credence, and that therefore discussion here is both legitimate and expedient. The clause just recited differs from preceding ones in this respect that whereas they appeal to faith, this is a simple historical statement.

Now it is admitted that this portion of the creed, as it is said, is history, the particular clause of it where it trenches on historical ground. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" is the distinctive mark of this special character of the clause. As has often been noted, this is the only time mark in the creed. Concerning it Pearson wrote: — "As the Son of God by His deliberate counsel was sent into the world to die in the fulness of time, so it concerns the church to know the time in which He died. Accordingly that we might be properly assured of the actions of our Saviour which He did and of His sufferings . . . in accordance with ancient methods of computation we learn that He suffered under Pontius Pilate." Now, that Jesus Christ passed across the stage of human history may be an event to be recorded in its annals as of supreme importance, and without a doubt it concerns the church, in proclaiming these facts to the world, great, marvellous, and momentous as they are, regarding Him whom it confesses as Saviour and Lord, to comply with all due requirements of evidence giving, and to set forth, in right order and sequence, supplying at the same time the date of, such great events. Yet it must surely be felt that, historical though this portion of the creed may be, it is scarcely as history that it counts. We can scarcely be said to have much evidence in Scripture that the Holy Spirit greatly concerns Himself with man's history as such — mere cosmical as distinguished from moral history, that is — and as far as Christ's place in that is concerned much more is made of it in many quarters than seems called for. The great fact historically in regard to Christ, it must be remembered, is that man, when He came to His own, received Him

not. The great outstanding fact in the world's history is that it rejected Him. This discounts considerably any historical valuation of Him they may frame now. The Holy Spirit has come "to convict the world," not of His place in its history, but, "of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Then again, to return to the Creed, historical whether this portion of it be or not, it is certainly more than history it recounts, its several items more than mere events for which it demands intellectual credence. It is surely more than the admission of these occurrences — the birth, suffering, death, etc., of Jesus Christ — as historic facts that is asked from those who subscribe to the Creed. Why let the opportunity pass of pressing upon hearers their own intimate concern in these facts, that here is no mere otiose confession of their historicity; but acceptance of them as truths from God charged with all the importance and potency that all such truths possess. Why, even in a historical work recently, which we might well expect to give no more than a secular view, on "The conflict of religions in the early Roman Empire," the writer, who is, too, more or less Unitarian, after taking the matter up on this very ground, and speaking of "what exactly it was which happened in Palestine under the Emperor Tiberius," is constrained to admit that "men are scanning that today with the sense that it concerns them personally to know, that the answer has an immediate bearing upon their interests and practice. Jesus of Nazareth," he says, "does stand in the centre of human history, but also He brings God and man into a new relation and He is the personal concern of every one of us." Ali! there are many who can assign to Christ a correct and unique historical niche who have little place for Him in their hearts. These professions of belief in His sufferings and death are surely more than academic acceptance of bare historic facts. They must be if to prove of any value spiritually. We cannot take Jesus Christ historically; the thing is impossible. Nor can this clause of the creed be so absolutely differentiated from others which make their appeal to faith. The spiritual exercise involved in the reflective study of such facts, and in the true entertainment of such beliefs, is not less intense nor real than in the case of the others professed. How then can the ground taken be in any way lower or more accessible to the natural man's apprehension? The assumption of our comparatively greater ability to understand Christ's humanity is reiterated now as a thing that is enhanced by modern equipment theologically for the task. It is affirmed, at the same time, that many still too little realise the truth and force of the "gospel of Christ's manhood." The lingering reluctance of many to admit the subject as fit matter for discussion at all is scoffed at as unreasonable timidity in presence of what we know now, and we are informed indeed that the predominant note in Christology has long been the human element in Christ's person. The real problem for many today, it is said, does not lie so much there, where modern religious thought can claim some acquaintance. That which constitutes their difficulty is to understand His essential divinity. That He who lived a veritable human life was at the same time very God. The opposite was the case, it is said, in early Christian times. It was the humanity, not the divinity, upon which emphasis came to be needed at a very early period. Their impression of His divinity became in turn so strong that they found it hard to realise His real humanity. An instance of this is found in Gnosticism, which, with its conception of the inherent evil of matter, found it necessary to maintain that Christ, whom they more or less clearly conceived of as in a sense divine, did not take unto Himself real human nature and form. So much was this the case that the menacing challenge of 1Jn 4:2-3, was, in regard to them, amply justified. "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not

Jesus Christ come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

Whether this Docetic teaching alluded to owed its origin to an overpowering conviction of Christ's divinity naturally dominating the thoughts concerning Him of those who were in so close proximation to Him who spake as never man spake, and did among men the works which none other man did — whether this be so or not, the fact remains that such false ideas were early afloat, and that it was in face of them, in an incipient form at least, that the apostle uttered the above warning. note. "Jesus Christ come in flesh" is the true confession of Him, deity and humanity both real and true; and anything else John unhesitatingly regards as of Satanic origin and character. The time of fulness of manifestation and operation for that spirit of antichrist was not yet, but still future. A premonitory instance of its activity the apostle discerned this to be. How ominous is the reflection that it was precisely concerning this matter of the humanity of Christ that these went astray. Is there not then cause for apprehension lest, on these same sunken rocks where shipwreck of the faith on such a large scale in the past has occurred, we also should strike? It is no healthy feature of our time that this over-insistence on the humanity of Christ is the predominant note. The tendency to resolve everything into it is remarked by not a few. Thus Professor Orr, for instance, in his recent "Sidelights on Christian Doctrine" — "Many tendencies are at present in operation to weaken the doctrine of the incarnation speculative and evolutionary theories, doctrines of divine immanence, a pantheistic identification of God and man, above all, the powerful bent in the spirit of the age towards a non-supernatural interpretation of the facts and truths of religion. In all directions the attempt is being made to lower the doctrine of Christ to a more or less humanitarian level."

What if this materialistically inclined "spirit of the age" should be identified with this same "spirit of antichrist" of which our passage speaks. Does it not appear like it? In view of all the subtle questions abroad on the subject also may we not in this declaration concerning the simple confession of "Jesus Christ come in the flesh" read a warning of the innate tendency of human speculation to err on the subject, particularly when the mystery of the person of Christ, of how His humanity and divinity are related, is sought to be analysed metaphysically? One thing the passage makes plain at all events, the vital importance of true doctrine as to the person of Christ, and the decidedly antichristian nature of error on that score. Compared with present-day lukewarmness there is a seeming intolerance and illiberality about such a statement as that of John just quoted, when truth as to the person of Christ is in question, which some are not slow to condemn as one of "those sudden ebullitions of the fierce invective of bigotry characteristic of the beloved disciple. The difficulty would be to imagine the apostle adopting any less uncompromising attitude towards what assailed the true faith as to the One of whose divinity he was in a sense the special witness. To prove himself a "Boanerges" there was in no wise out of season. But in fact it is no mere question of John or Paul; scripture testimony is harmonious throughout, and we shall do well both to observe its unanimity and imitate its reserve. Why after all should any presume to go beyond it? Why should we consider human thought today better fitted to investigate, or more competent to declare exactly what occurred when the second Person of the Godhead entered the ranks of humanity, when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"? In pursuance of the claim of increasing competency to dissect the human nature of Christ, this section of the Creed is gone on with. Taking the verbs of the five clauses — "conceived, born, suffered, died, and was buried" —

the lecturer speaks of them as "expressing the humanity of Jesus in terms in the compass of which every normal human life was contained." Combining the two first, "conceived" and "born," and significantly omitting all but the mere verbs, "the reality of the humanity He assumed is shown by the fact that he entered life by the ordinary channel. It was a real and not a phantom body He took when born, real human life He lived, and a real human death He died." This is not at all satisfactory even in what it states; but in what it omits it is far from dealing fairly with the truth. If even the scriptures bearing upon it merely had been quoted, there would have been so far an exposition of this part of the Creed. So much at least we might surely expect, not to say that from a Presbyterian one might even look for some such attempt to define as his "shorter catechism" gives — "Christ the Son of God became man by taking to Himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin." Instead of which we are led. to understand that Biblical criticism and other lines of study have raised difficulties which make it desirable to look for the elucidation of the truth regarding, and confirmation of the uniqueness of, Christ's humanity in other directions than what is called "the doctrine of the virgin birth." That is to say, what is related concerning His miraculous birth in Matthew and Luke's Gospels being under suspicion, grave and of substantial basis, either as to its being credible or authentic history, or as to genuineness of text, that particular line of evidence must be dropped.

Now what are the facts of the case here? The truth enunciated in that clause of the Creed, "Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," had been objected to, and ridiculed, by opponents of Christianity for long. In the welter of unbelieving scepticism prevailing over Christendom at present, however, many professing Christian teachers, having fallen under the spell of infidel reasoning all round, naturally shrink now from exposing themselves to the ridicule of those whose good opinion they have come to respect, by firmly maintaining this apparently particularly vulnerable doctrine. The objections, remark, have not themselves greatly changed, nor gained in force from any new facts elicited, from Scripture or otherwise. What has changed is only the sphere where they can be entertained, and that again is solely due to the inoculation of modern Christian doctrine with infidel ideas. Does this seem too strong? What else can be said of those who find now of so much weight arguments that in days of more robust faith never would have counted?

Proceeding then to consider this very damaging modern attack on the "doctrine of the virgin birth," let us take an example from a work entitled, significantly enough, "Jesus, Seven Questions." There is no thought of attempting to meet the questions raised, or the objections urged. Let them be seventy times seven, and they still could be added to, and remain questions. One peculiarity about them all is that while to a mind that can entertain them at all they must be insuperable, to a plain believer there is absolutely nothing in them. The only reason for quoting them at all here is to show the stuff the bug-bears of theologians are made of, and perhaps at the same time serve to supply an instance of what Prof. Orr has spoken of as to characteristic tendencies of modern thought on the subject. This attack on the doctrine of the virgin birth is opened by an attempt to account for its origin as a doctrine. The unique and transcendent place Jesus Christ occupies in history is first emphasised as "accounting primarily for the feeling that the character of both His person and His entry into the world must have been unique." Then a familiar argument that "humanity" could not in the ordinary course have produced Jesus Christ, and that therefore a miraculous birth was

necessary ere Jesus could have been in possession of the attributes He continually manifested" is met how? by arguing that "there is no accounting for the phenomenon of genius," and that "evolution does not exclude the occasional and unrepeated irruption of genius." Next, the silence of Paul, as well as of the Epistles in general, and of Mark's and John's Gospels regarding the virgin birth is mentioned as a discounting feature. Then, coming to the two passages which alone clearly teach it (Mat 1:18-25, and Luk 1:34-35), the author raises the question as to whether at all they are historical and not rather poetical and legendary. The bulk of what both these Gospels record in connection with the nativity of Jesus is then gone over, and so valued.

1910 125 Then, turning to another class of considerations — "certain passages in the Gospels themselves which are incompatible with the miraculous birth narrative" — we select one (Mark 3:21), "And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself." Concerning this the remark is made, "Could Mary have thought for one moment that her eldest Son was mentally unhinged had she known what she must have known had the birth stories reposed on fact? The supposition is impossible, and the other Synoptists accordingly suppressed this highly disconcerting episode." No doubt, after this last pronouncement our confidence in the author as a textual, no less than as a historical critic will be greatly strengthened. That at any rate is what he next proceeds to, the textual examination of the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke. It would perhaps be out of place to follow there in detail; but the conclusion he comes to must be heard.

First, then, as to Matthew: "(1) Matthew's Gospel in its opening chapters originally affirmed Jesus to be the Messiah, proving this by descent from David through Joseph, who was stated to have been his real father; (2) at a somewhat later stage the verses (1: 18-25) were inserted between ver. 17 and chap. 2: 1, which certainly link on naturally to each other; (3) and that then, this insertion having been made, 1: 16 was altered to correspond."

Then as to Luke: "The upshot is that in Luke, as to Matthew, (1) the original intention was to present Jesus as the descendant, through Joseph, of David; (2) that Luk 1:34 represents a later interpolation whose tenor runs altogether counter to the Evangelist's original conception of Joseph and Mary as the parents of Jesus (Luk 2:27; Luk 2:41); (3) and that the words "as was supposed in the description of Jesus as the son of Joseph (3: 23), were inserted with an obvious harmonising purpose." That is to say, the two birth narratives are frankly legendary, the concoctions of a later age which found a necessity of making Christ's humanity differ in origin and character from that of men in general, and minute inspection of the text reveals where they have interpolated a story to that effect!

Having now disposed of that matter to his own satisfaction, the author turns next to meet some whom he mentions as sufficiently removed from stupid orthodoxy to be worthy of his attention. He acquits them of holding what to him is the very extreme view that "there must have been something physically and materially miraculous in the fundamental structure of our Lord's manhood"; but quarrels with them for allowing that "in His inmost essence there was that which amounts to a difference between Him and the race not in degree, but in kind." He will not have even that. That would mean an "unrepeated irruption" of another sort than he is prepared to admit, and, if not pressing for the doctrine of the miraculous birth of Christ, it still makes for something, as he sees, best explained by that fact. Entirely opposite is the case he affirms. It is simply in degree,

not at all in kind, that the difference lies. "It is not that there is in His case an endowment to which all other beings are, and must be, strangers." It is not this that makes Him unique. Wherein then does it consist? "The truth of the incarnation" (we might wonder wherever within the four walls of the idea such a thing as incarnation can find room), it is said, "while quite independent of a supernatural birth, does involve a special relation between Jesus and God, and the consciousness of it on Jesus' part. This relation, not relationship at all in the usual sense, does not consist in a union of being, and personality, and essence; but in a perfect filial disposition, a closeness and intimacy of communion with God. His was a sonship or divinity, not of nature and substance, but simply of character." As contributing to this uniqueness of Jesus, which is to serve as a substitute for His miraculous birth, the doctrine of divine immanence is then brought in, "of which the incarnate Son is to be regarded as the supreme and crowning instance. God is no absentee God, but immanent in creation. All are parts of one stupendous whole, Whose body nature is and God the soul. We think it strictly legitimate to say that just as there is only one kind of light, whether candle or sun, and one kind of goodness, so there is only one kind of divinity — one divine Spirit pervading and transcending the universe, the same above all, and through all, and in all. Jesus was the highest illustration the world has seen of this divinity, this indwelling presence of God. God therefore did not come into the world when Jesus was born. He is immanent in humanity from the beginning. This is not to deny that Jesus is the Son of God; but to affirm it in a deeper and truer way, for this wider incarnation in humanity requires as its complement the special incarnation in Christ." And this pre-eminence "of degree not of kind" is to be the nature of our valuation of His supremacy, not any longer that "doctrine of an absolute supernatural person" which is "a legacy of mediaeval orthodoxy!" This is a fair sample of the use made of "speculative and evolutionary theories, doctrines of divine immanence, pantheistic identification of God and man," etc., in new interpretations of the incarnation. It gives an instance too of the critical and other objections to the virgin birth which lead our lecturer to maintain silence upon it.

If there is reserve on the question of the birth of Christ, of how He entered the ranks of humanity, there is no lack of freedom in treating of what is thought to be involved in His assumption of human nature. The one led the lecturer practically to delete from this part of the Creed all but the indefinite, the mere verbs being retained. The other leads him to expatiate on matters concerning which the creed, wisely (may we not say) is silent. The question is asked, how far did Christ, in becoming man, become subject to human limitations? in what respects were the limited and circumscribed conditions incident to humanity imposed upon Him in becoming partaker of it? A hard question, a difficult question, this is confessed to be; but still claimed as legitimately arising from consideration of the fact itself.

Now it must be confessed this is a question that readily prompts itself. It is no new one, but a problem we have all met before. Has it not suggested itself to all of us many a time — what did it mean for the Son of God to become man? — for instance, as to such of His divine attributes as omniscience? How does His possession of this consist with the growing wisdom natural to, and distinctly predicated of, His developing manhood? He was from all eternity God, all wise, all seeing. He is seen as a man growing in wisdom as in stature. How are we to understand these things? How reconcile them? On what principle are they to be explained? Are we to look for light in the consideration of what He may have surrendered in becoming man, or of what He may have assumed in the way of limitation in the sphere of His mental or intellectual equipment? Is the New

Testament presentation of Christ, can even the figure of the historical Jesus manifested in the Gospels, be left intact, if we make any such admissions? And this is but an instance, one out of many of the questions raised when Christ's coming in flesh is the subject — that the child born at Bethlehem, growing up at Nazareth, found in fashion as a man throughout, should at the same time be very God, omniscient, omnipotent, eternally God the Son! What mysteries are here! In the attempt to adjust these things, is it at all to be wondered at that questions arise, that in fact we find ourselves face to face with the apparently inexplicable? Are they insoluble then? May it not be that in large measure they will ever remain so? After all, does our belief in the wonderful truth of "God manifest in the flesh" depend upon our ability to solve all the metaphysical problems it involves? Is it not rather a case where the words of another apply with particular cogency and force, "God allows many things to remain mysteries, partly, I believe, that He may in this way test the obedience of our minds; for He requires obedience of mind from us as much as He does obedience in action." Would that we could ever carry this thought with us in all our study. There is mystery surrounding the whole question of the relation of Christ's humanity to His deity. We cannot but be impressed with it.

Well, in what we cannot understand, can we not simply acquiesce in its mysteriousness, and see in that fact a God-given test of our obedience of faith? Is it not more wise than the futile endeavours so commonly made to solve it? "wiser," in Bellett's words, "than to pretend to test by the prism of human reasoning the light where God dwells"? Questions no doubt seem inevitably to arise as soon as we begin to consider or reflect on the great fact of Christ's incarnation. We need not be philosophers to feel their force, and it is remarkable how little philosophy has effected in the way of solution of the questions perplexing us all. But when quite at the end of ourselves as far as reasoning can take us, when baffled in our best endeavours to reach anything like rational conclusions on the subject, we can still, in that subjection of the mind to God which faith teaches, acknowledge the truth of the word, "No man knoweth the Son." That is a wise attitude which gives "a holy sensitive refusal to meddle, beyond one's measure and the standard of scripture, with what must ever be beyond us." By all means, nevertheless, if difficulties can be relieved, subject to this consideration, let them be so. Wherein our dulness results from lack of attention to Scripture, more detailed exegesis, or a fuller emphasising of what their import is, can only be welcomed. But is it not a remarkable fact that all that has generally resulted from attempts to define, and theories to account for the wonderful truth has been but a deeper sinking into the morass upon which the unauthorised venture has been made? For the true nature of the venture has too often been no humble effort, in submission to the word, of meeting difficulties; but a vainglorious and pretentious essay, in the strength of merely human wisdom, of nullifying them, of reducing to commonplace intelligibility that which inherently is a great mystery. Can we take as free from this charge the school of thought represented in what is being reviewed on this occasion? Among the many theories professing to explain as to Christ on earth the coexistence of different modes of being in the one personality, there is one of modern appearance which secures a large amount of favour with theologians today, known as Kenoticism. To many of us perchance the name may be all but unintelligible. We may share also in the objection of a critic from the other side who "finds no great assistance when homely English is exchanged for ambitious Greek, and scholars speak of Kenosis, and a Kenotic theory." But the school of thought so denominated, the set of ideas set out under that title, has so dominated the theological definitions as to Christ's person of recent years that it cannot be quite passed over. We owe it to the lectures under review also that, having taken

up in each case what seem the original sources of their leading ideas, we give this very significant one also a passing consideration.

Kenoticism, as has been said, is a popular theory. This by reason probably of the way in which it seems to perplexed minds to relieve difficulties by bridging over the apparent disparity between the divinity and humanity of the incarnate Son. The great thing seems to be that, whatever else, we must endeavour to escape anything like the idea of dual personality. To this idea, it is said, many find that the mere, exclusive perusal of Scripture tends; and we need to be fortified against this false impression by some such definite constructive theory as Kenoticism supplies. Now it is remarkable, as F. W. Grant has said, how near to dual personality we must come to comply with all that Scripture presents as to Him. Yet, needless to add, it is something quite distinct and different from such a conception as the complete delineation of Him which Scripture presents. But this Kenotic theory, it is thought, more amply affords escape from trace of the idea of dual personality in Jesus Christ come in flesh. At this point, however, some definition of the theory had better be given. The late F. W. Grant has given some attention to it, and shown that this modern phase of Christology is actually more of a survival than a discovery, being closely allied to the ancient Apollinarian heresy, in large measure, indeed, a mere "rounding out of the elder doctrine to any consistency." From his pages a definition of it might well be taken; but as a Presbyterian presentation of it is at hand (from a distinctly less sympathetic standpoint than the lecturer's, however), let us take it. Prof. Orr, in his "Sidelights on Christian Doctrine," thus introduces it: "There is another way which in modern times has been attempted of removing the difficulty of the two states of Christ's Being while on earth, viz., by affirming a complete surrender of all divine functions, and even of divine consciousness by the Son, during the period of His earthly humiliation. This is the so-called Kenotic theory of the incarnation. It is based on the statement in Php 2:6-7, that the Son, existing in the form of God 'voluntarily emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.' This is taken to mean that, during His earthly life, the Son ceased to exist in the form of God, even as respects His heavenly existence. The place of the Son in the life of the Godhead was for the time suspended. The Son gave up His glory, even His self-consciousness, and consented to be born as an unconscious babe in Bethlehem. He grew into the consciousness of His Godhead, as He grew into the knowledge of His Messianic dignity. Only after His resurrection and exaltation did He resume now in our humanity — the glory He before had with the Father." A "kenosis" on the part of Christ in becoming man is, so far as the mere term goes, certainly a scriptural expression (Php 2:6-7). The word is derived from the Greek equivalent of what appears in the Authorised Version as "He made himself of no reputation," rendered in the Revised Version "emptied himself." It is very questionable if any extraordinary or subtle meaning was in the writer's mind when he used it. However, by diligent distillation a significance was extracted from it on which has been built up a complete theory of the human nature of Christ. As mere theology this may best be left to stand or fall on its merits. But when it comes to be a question of claiming the ekenose of Php 2:7, as scriptural basis of the theory, and when, reflexively, the passage is sought to be interpreted in the light of all that now attaches to the technical theological term "Kenosis," it is surely open to us to protest that this is not only an overstraining of the passage, but an illegitimate use of it. The particular design of the opening verses of Php 2:1-30 is to impress not only by precept but by example the great lesson of self-abnegating love, the moral sweetness and beauty of that spirit which can assume, for the sake of serving others, the place of lowliness and self-sacrifice. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each

esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." To lowliness of mind and esteem for others, the opposite of that factious strife of self-seeking and vainglorious self-esteem which are so natural to us all, the apostle exhorts the Philippian saints. Ethically there could be nothing more beautiful, the proverbial counsel of perfection to such as we are, it might seem, yet is it nothing more than the characteristic Christian spirit in practical display. "Lowliness of mind," it has been said, is so characteristically a Christian virtue that even as to its etymology the term is practically unknown until it appears in New Testament phraseology. At least, if not exactly not to be met with before, it is never in its full content and meaning that classical writers use it. Its real force and significance could in fact only come out after Christ had come, only after He had exhibited that which it expressed. For where or when has appeared among men a spectacle to be compared with that which the apostle goes on to describe? Wherever was lowliness like this, where such self-renunciation, where such condescension, where such a filling of the servant's place in obedience to love? Without question an example absolutely unique.

1910 141 "Have this mind in you," said the writer, "which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being (subsisting) in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." As subsisting in very form of God, eternally so we may say, we first see Him as we proceed to trace the course detailed here of Him. Equality with God then was for Him no prize to be grasped at, or possession to be tenaciously clutched, whichever of the two we understand to be here so emphatically negated. Certain it is at all events He sought not to retain this place and estate of Godhead glory; but exchanged in wonderful grace the form of God for the form of a servant, coming in the likeness of men. And this surely in itself for Him is descent of no mean degree. When one considers all that it involves, without at all following out the metaphysics, but on quite another plane, a veritable kenosis it indeed is, a very real emptying of Himself. To be found in fashion as a man, beset with all that of sorrow and suffering accrues to the estate fallen man is in, sin itself excepted, He who in heavenly glory subsisted in the very form of God, does this imply no emptying of Himself? Lord of all, and equality with God no object of aspiration to Him, His assuming in love to us the bond-servant's form, though He was Son learning obedience by the things He suffered, yea, humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, is all this not "kenosis" enough? Does it need that we amplify consideration of exactly in what respect limitations or altered conditions mentally and intellectually attached to the humanity He assumed? Is not all that, even if answerable at all, of but secondary importance, and foreign really as a matter of precise exegesis to the passage in its original setting? Pity it would indeed be if the wonderful power and pathos of its beautiful appeal were found to evaporate, the remarkable force and poignancy of its moving example to lose its potency, or the morally glorious exhibition of the grace and love of our blessed Saviour's course it contains, to melt away by such "botanising on a mother's grave." But what is it then that we are told is involved in this kenosis, this self-emptying of the Son of God? For with them it is not simply the giving up of position, privileges, and honour that constitutes this. Such renunciation of these as is involved in His becoming man, great as was the surrender by Him who, rich in glory, for our sakes became poor, the simple relinquishing of these

does not appear to exhaust the meaning of His kenosis. It is carried back beyond all this, and made to apply to a sphere of things, to the ordinary Christian, savouring more or less of the abstruse or occult. Much intricacy of thought, and ingenuity of conjecture, which could obtrude upon or emanate from no mind but that of a metaphysician, has been expended upon the subject. In the effort to construe more intelligibly to such the truth as to His person incarnate, the expression "He emptied Himself" has been much dwelt upon. In this is to be found, it is imagined, much more than any mere general statement of. His descending from glory on high to the condition of humiliation implied in His being found in fashion as a man. This kenotic process, it is affirmed, extended much further than either position or physical conditions. It took in, it is said, the much deeper sacrifice of powers and faculties. A field this is, this to which we are invited, where conjecture can find much room for play. The point of emphasis is that it was not merely in external or extraneous features that Christ's self-emptying took place, but in what may be called intrinsic ones. That is to say that in the act of becoming incarnate the Son of God so shut off or reduced in potency all that pertained to His divine nature, that in the realm of mind and intellect no less than in physical qualities, all was of the human order. Superlative in degree perhaps; but indistinguishable in kind from that of ordinary men. Thus it is sometimes said, "Of what was it that Christ divested Himself in becoming man? Of everything pertaining to His deity, essential attributes alone excepted."

God He was they confess. God He remained, but with everything proper to Godhead in abeyance, all divine prerogatives absolutely renounced, and all the conditions and limitations of real humanity assumed. A sort of temporary depotentiation of His divine nature in, by, or for its contact with the humanity He took to Himself. "Deity can," they say, "without real self-impairment lay aside what belongs to it except essential attributes, and omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, are not these, but only expressions of free relation to the world he has made." Still another way to put it is to say that "He retained the ethical attributes of God while abandoning the physical." Accordingly, within a carefully defined list of prerogatives capable of being surrendered there has been an absolute kenosis, and among the abdicated attributes are to be found such as the above-mentioned — omnipotence and omniscience, but a short step being needed also, which many, alas, do not hesitate to take, to include the holiness, or inherent sinlessness proper to God. And in such limitations, physical, mental, or moral as the case may be, it is thought there may be found not only relief from the distracting problem of the relation of the divine to the human in His person incarnate; but fresh evidence also of the genuineness of His sympathy and the reality of His humanity.

Altogether does it not seem like what may be called intellectual tight-rope walking with metaphysics for a balancing-pole. On the Godhead, the manhood, and the unity of the Person alike, or in turn, one is in danger of losing balance. Even a modernist of the Roman communion can warn that "The whole doctrine of Christ's kenosis or self-emptying can be explained in a minimising way almost fatal to doctrine, and calculated to rob the incarnation of all its helpfulness by leaving the ordinary mind with something perilously near the phantasmal Christ of the Docetans." If an unbeliever sneers at their "limited God slowly emerging from imperfection and limitation," they have nothing but their theory to blame; although pity it is that they should give occasion for his scoff at the incarnation as "an absurd localisation of the Infinite, a differentiated moment in eternity, a limitation within the conditions of a fleeting human organism, of the

omnipotent, omniscient, and perfect God." This from the very class the theory is best calculated to conciliate. Kenoticists speak of saving the divine in Jesus by not shattering His humanity through ascribing extravagances of powers and faculties to Him. It rather appears to be sacrificing the divine to accommodate those who make all of the human. And when they do venture forth on their narrow fine-spun theory, such as the above quoted, they show no hesitation in using these their concessions to push them ruthlessly from their slippery foothold. If the precipice will be encountered, the overbalancing need not surprise. Precarious at the best any theory that can be framed to explain the adjustment of the two natures in one person must be. This metaphysically-inclined conception of Christ Jesus as a sort of amalgam of a self-emptied, depotentiated divinity, and humanity raised to its highest power, inspires no more confidence than others. Of Kenoticism as a theory to account for the relation between the two natures in the one person of Christ it may quite safely be predicted that it shall only have its day. The face of things is in fact undergoing a change even now, and this fashionable theory is now beginning to be tainted and tintured with new and ever newer ideas. This is not the first attempt by any means to construe into intelligibility the question of how Christ could be God and man in one person, and to set out in rational fashion how the two natures were related. To take what are generally regarded as the most conspicuous points in the history of Christology, there was in Appollinarianism a sort of pruning away of the humanity of Christ, excluding a rational human soul, principally with the idea of maintaining intact the singleness of His personality. Nestorianism, again, brought the two natures into no more than sympathetic harmony with one another, and by holding them too far apart the person was no longer an irrefragible unity. Eutychianism, in the very opposite direction, merged the two natures into one compound, a confusion not at all counterbalanced by the singleness of personality still retained. The statement of the Council of Chalcedon propounds no theory; but merely asserts the unity of personality and duality of natures. Not so the next landmark, Lutheran doctrine, which by almost a deification of His humanity approximates to Eutychianism. After all these comes Kenoticism, with its attempt to adjust the relation between the two natures, as we have seen, by the idea of a kenosis or self-emptying on Christ's part in the sphere of His divinity, not in the relative way legitimately following from the scripture supplying the term, but in an absolute and universal fashion unsupported by it, and inconsistent with all that otherwise scripture reveals of Him. This inconsistency is abundantly evident from comparison with the Gospels, to even the most superficial study of them. Take as an instance that element of the teaching which has to say to Christ's knowledge. The theory as it applies to this is that, in becoming man, "He laid aside the loud attributes of omnipotence and omniscience, and shared in these matters the limitations of our nature. Omniscience as to His mind was no more an attribute of the Man Christ Jesus than omnipresence as to His body." "We are in the habit," it is said, "of attributing, unconsciously perhaps, the divine mind to Christ, whereas, if any one thing is clear from the Gospels, it is that His knowledge and intelligence were of the ordinary human order:" Here at last we come to a question of plain facts, capable of being verified by reference to Scripture. Having now something definite to go upon, let us examine it. And first as to what is said of what Christ has laid aside. Is it the case that omniscience, or the knowledge of things divinely, was never manifested by the Man Christ Jesus? Does the Gospel record bear this out? Was it not on the contrary over and over again made apparent that such an attribute was really His, and was really there to flash out as occasion time and again called it into exercise? It was indeed precisely one of the ways in which at times He indicated that He was God. How frequently now during His ministry

do we find simple souls, discovering themselves so fully read through by one penetrating glance of Him who discerned their inmost thoughts, impressed, in a way they could not have been by anything else, with the sense of who He really was.

One striking example of this comes to mind. In John 16:1-33 we learn that a certain statement of the Master's had occasioned no small cogitation and perplexity to His disciples. Among themselves, strictly so, they had discussed it, not as yet making Him aware of their trouble (vers. 17, 18). Yet into the privacy of their secret thoughts Christ had penetrated, manifesting thus the power of reading men's hearts, which is so clearly a divine prerogative. Knowing, in a most literal sense of the word divining, their still unexpressed difficulty, and that they were desirous to ask Him, He said unto them, "Do ye now enquire among yourselves of that I said? Explaining and amplifying His previous utterance, He so fully and correctly dealt with their unconfessed perplexity that at the close they were forced to exclaim, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." Nor was this a solitary instance of His ability to discern things as well as truths beyond the range of merely human vision. How often it is apparent that His knowledge of men, their deeds, their thoughts, their hearts, was such as we can attribute only to the divine mind. He seemed to hear men thinking, as it is sometimes said. "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did," said the woman of Samaria. "Is not this the Christ?" On how many occasions was such conviction of His deity wrought in men who came in contact with Him. Take but two, one from the beginning, the other from the close of John's Gospel. Nathaniel under the fig tree was known by Him, both as to his character and circumstances, and on hearing both described so accurately by One to whom such information could not possibly have been conveyed by the ordinary channels, he was constrained to ejaculate, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Thomas again, absent on the first occasion when, in spite of closed doors, the risen Lord appeared among His disciples, on the second occasion heard from the Saviour's lips the very words his unbelief had framed, and how was he forced to exclaim in ever-memorable words, "My Lord and my God! "

Ask such as these what opinion they would have of Christ's having laid aside His omniscience. Why, it was the discovery of this very fact, "Thou knowest all things," that so forcibly brought home to them conviction of who He really was. This it really was that, among the many ways in which His deity was often manifested, formed one of the most striking. The kind, no less than the scope, of the knowledge usually shown to be His, far from being an evidence of the extensive degree in which He had surrendered divine prerogatives, most clearly manifests His continued possession of such prerogatives in that very sphere. Knowledge such as He habitually displayed, consciousness of things others needed to have revealed, discernment of things no others could see, seem to argue in an inevitable way not the giving up, but the retention, back of all if in no other way, of full divine omniscience.

1910 156 Then, as to what is specifically alleged regarding the limitation of knowledge on Christ's part. This is to set out on what is certainly a bold undertaking. It would need, to justify it, both clear indication of its necessity for complying with the general presentation of Him in the Gospels, and verification of a very strong order when it descends to such particulars as proof texts. How little the first is true we have in measure, seen. Will the second prove any better? The Gospel testimony in its totality does not fit in with a Christ so kenoticised as to be bereft of all knowledge superhuman. Can proof of such limitation be supplied from single features of it? There are three references

given to prove that Christ's knowledge and intelligence were of the ordinary human order. Mark 6:38, "How many loaves have ye?" The question was asked, it is said, "because He did not know!" His request for information was prompted by His need of it! And that thus we see that for ordinary knowledge of ordinary things He was restricted to our ordinary channels of information! Remembering what another of the Evangelists, an eye-witness of the miracle too, has told us, "This he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do," this is really too puerile to detain us.

John 11:34. The like may be said of, "Where have ye laid him?" — "asked because He was not aware and wished to be informed of where His friend's burying-place was." That He who was conscious of the fact of His friend Lazarus' death while still in the place where He stayed two days to allow it to occur in His absence, who timed His return to suit the circumstances, and who by His declaration at the beginning of this interesting course of events — "This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" — makes it evident how clearly He had precognition of the whole sad episode and its happy sequel. That He was dependent on ordinary means of information for this detail, really what can be said of this? An indication of His limited humanity found where every single feature might seem to declare Him God all-wise and all-powerful too! Could sympathetic interest in such a detail as the place of burial not prompt the question, without making such a call on imagination as to conceive Him who knew so much ignorant of this? Of these two supposed instances of Christ's being reduced to requesting information in the sense of needing it ere He was conscious of a fact, it is hard to say which is furthest from proving that to be the case. The answer to them is so obvious, and has been so often given, that it is really incomprehensible that they should still be advanced as proving limitation of knowledge! The only real occasion of momentary difficulty presents itself in the third reference now to be alluded to (Mark 13:32). This is the great stronghold, invariably the proof text of all who assert limitation in our Lord's knowledge. Being out of His own mouth also, this apparent repudiation of any knowledge of a superior grade seems all the more forcible. As has been recently admitted, however, the fact that this is the only occasion when there is any approach to a confession of ignorance on Christ's part, and that even so it only refers to a single item not strictly cognate, leaves the contention somewhat inadequately supported. Solitary or not, however, the expression demands most careful consideration. For, on the face of it, it does occasion difficulty, this acknowledgment of ignorance, if such it be. If such indeed it be, for one of the first questions that readily prompt themselves immediately the difficulty is felt is Can this really be an absolute and unqualified disclaimer on the Lord's part of any light on the subject? Are we really to imagine Him personally and absolutely as much in the dark as, say, "men" or "angels," concerning what is spoken of? Consider for a moment how strange that would be. After all that Christ claimed to know, and professed to reveal as to the future, that just here the store of His knowledge should give out! This same prophetic discourse of the Lord's, of which the verse forms a part is, remember, His emphatic reply to the request of His disciples for a sketch of the future. No mere disquisition on things moral, clothed in the imagery of Jewish Apocalyptic literature, is this; but given as true prophecy. And after all this opening out of what that future contains, particularly as given by Matthew in its fulness, the whole course of events evidently before the mind of the speaker right down to the consummation of the age, Himself filling no small but the chief role in them, after all this we are to imagine that Christ's knowledge of the future, as of everything else, was of the same limited kind as our own, because He avows for Himself, in the capacity in which

He was then speaking, unacquaintance with the day and hour of His own return and the establishment of His kingdom! In this case, as in the others, reason from what in the passage itself is apparent as to what Christ does know, and the kenotic interpretation sought to be put upon it will not stand. Any idea of absolute limitation as to the order or nature of His intelligence is seen to be quite incompatible with both the kind and extent of the knowledge already displayed. Granted that, as their expression has it, a lacuna or blank in His eschatology here appears. What of that? Does it follow inevitably that personally and in an unqualified sense the Teacher Himself was in a state of complete ignorance regarding the detail needed to fill it out. It did not belong to the class of things He was to intimate: does it follow therefore that it was beyond the range of those things with which He was intimate?

Any degree of intimacy, it is said, any kind of knowledge beyond that which men or angels possess, Jesus emphatically disclaims, "knoweth no man, no not the angels, neither the Son!" Is that so? Are we absolutely bound to give the verse just that construction? Does it necessitate that we take the intelligence of the three several parties mentioned, all round and in its entirety, as having a common denominator, so to speak? That would indeed be a large inference. Even the isolated verse itself gives too slender a basis for it. Think of it as applied to men and angels. Is it open to us to argue that the angelic and human intelligences are of the same order, because their non-intelligence of a certain matter is here affirmed as a common feature? Why then are they so clearly distinguished? so particularised? — "no man, not the angels." Why again in the case of the latter is the negative so emphasised "no man, no, not the angels?" with the additional consideration also that the sphere of their activity (if the bearing of that on the scope of their knowledge is taken into account) so far transcends man's "no, not the angels which are in heaven"? Not much in common there really between the two orders of intelligences! It seems rather a case where, with quite a different, essentially different, denominator, in regard to a particular matter, and in a particular sense, a common numerator appears.

Only the more emphatically does that apply to "neither the Son." If the fact that here is a matter of which even angels in heaven have no cognisance is so exceptional as to need such emphasis, how carefully must he weighed the still more unprecedented "neither the Son." And if being classed with men in this proves nothing intrinsically in their case, how much less in the Son's. The ministers of prophecy in Old Testament times knew what it was to have to seek out — "searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify" in the revelation of which they were the vehicle. Are we to imagine Christ Himself in the same condition of requiring it to be revealed whereto His prophetic announcement applied? Thereafter, the sufferings and subsequent glory of the Messiah which these announced, with the resulting economy of blessing, gave occasion for desire on the angels' part to look into these things. Was the Messiah Himself in no better case than they when here in the capacity of Prophet He put Himself alongside them in disclaiming knowledge of a time-note in His eschatology? To understand the Lord's assertion, the great matter first of all seems to be not to carry it beyond the matter concerning which He used it. It applies to something special. Where are we authorised to make it general? This disavowal of official cognisance of the precise date of the prophetic crisis is, by the Kenotics, regarded as an unqualified declaration of nescience, which is to be taken as applying wholesale and all round to the whole sphere of our Lord's consciousness. We are told, "It is the ascription of a real nescience, not of an ignorance operating in one part of His personality and not in the other, nor an ignorance

simply assumed for a certain purpose while a real omniscience remained latent, nor yet the pseudo-ignorance which meant that, while He knew this thing as He knew all others, He had no commission from His Father to communicate it to others."

Now, it may be quite legitimate for some to scoff that "a god-man, possessing at one and the same time two wills and two separate kinds of knowledge, and using now this and now that as occasion arises, is at once a figment of theologians and a contradiction in terms." But, for one who receives the account of the Gospels as inspired of God, the mysterious relation of divine and human, and the presence and activity of each in the sphere of His knowledge, as of all else in Christ's person, revealed there, cannot be so curtly dismissed for the mere lack of an adequate explanation as to either the inter-operation of, or the connecting link between, the two. The fictitiousness of the theological conception is of little account. To it being a contradiction in terms, one must demur, so long, at least as long as there are no proper terms present for it to contradict. What do we know of essence, personality, or consciousness as applicable to God incarnate to make positive assertions as to Him psychologically? In our own personality even are there not depths enough unsounded? How much more in the one Personality where mystery is superimposed on mystery.

There used to be a phrase in common use in this connection in Presbyterian circles. "Communicatio proprietatum" was the rather clumsy and pedantic name for a principle which in its measure is simple and clear enough. Its usage was somewhat as follows. The term was reserved for occasions when the usage of language about Christ was such as seemed to interchange the divine and human, such as to attribute to Christ as God actions or prerogatives proper only to His human nature, and vice versa. As the Confession of Faith had it, "Christ in the work of mediation acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the Person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in scripture attributed to the Person denominated by the other nature." A scripture instance being the text, "Hereby perceive we the love [of God] because he laid down his life for us." Not that we can therefore say "God died"; but that that Person who laid down His life, and did so as man, was also God. It is easy to see how such a principle as this "communicatio proprietatum" is liable to abuse were it to be applied to actions, properties, or prerogatives of Christ where Scripture has not gone before us; but in itself it is a sounder and really much more intelligible system than this newer style of reasoning about His person makes for. Unlike the 'older principle, which might conceivably pass into over-subtlety of distinction, the characteristic feature of the modern theory is that of denying anything approaching the departmental, if so it might be called, in what Christ knew, said, or did, and resolving all assertions of His knowledge, speech, or action into absolute statements, true in the most unqualified way of the Lord Jesus in the unity of His person. We are on perilous ground here altogether; but as the quotation from Grant already alluded to has it, "The ways in which the Lord is presented to us in Scripture show how near to dual personality we have to come in any simple apprehension of its statements." With the Gospels in our hand will it be claimed that Christ Jesus, even as incarnate, had, and manifested as occasion called for it, His own intrinsic essential knowledge of things, knowledge proper to a divine person, and differing in kind as much as in degree from our knowledge which is always derivative and limited, that at the back of everything this remained intact. As Prof. Orr says, "Behind all human conditionings are still present the undiminished resources of the Godhead. Omniscience, omnipotence, all other divine attributes, are there though not drawn upon save as the Father willed them to be." Omniscience, present

though not drawn upon, quite meets the case of our verse here, "Neither the Son." The idea of absolute nescience, of an unqualified negation of knowledge cannot be entertained if He who made the statement is to remain for us true God as to His person. Become partaker of flesh and blood, He who would not draw upon His omnipotence in commanding the stones to be made bread for His sustenance as a man, would not either in this case fall back upon what in His omniscience He could not but be cognisant of; but observing in full measure the conditions proper to the humanity He has taken, "the times and seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority," are left there, and the prerogative of announcing or revealing them not usurped. In the capacity of Prophet the Son knows not officially of that day and hour.

Further, as the Son, still here in humiliation, though for the future all judgment committed unto Him, and as the God-appointed ruler in that kingdom reserved for Him till the arrival of this unrevealed day and hour, "neither the Son, but the Father" has a moral fitness and congruity all its own. For, in the working out of the divine purposes in regard to that kingdom, it is noteworthy that all is spoken of as carried into execution not by the Lord Jesus Himself; but by God the Father on His behalf. It is no question of Him asserting His disputed rights as divine; but of God the Father establishing Him in righteousness in that place of glory and honour He has so richly earned as man. To man it is, according to God's counsel, that the world to come is to be subjected. And it is as Son of man Christ is to receive the kingdom and reign. All the emphasis is upon His manhood. And, as Bellett would say, morally this is perfect too, for in that consideration there cannot but be remembrance of the humble, emptied condition He assumed in becoming man, the servant-form and servant-place He took for God's glory. Now Mark it is especially whose province it is to present the Son of God in His service, Christ as the true Servant. And in his Gospel alone, as has been often noticed, that last element in our verse, "neither the Son but the Father," is to be found. Are we not then to see in it just such an added moral touch as is suited to the presentation of Him which that Gospel was divinely designed to give, and find assistance in understanding it from that very fact? How strong and beautiful an expression of the true servant-character there is here then in this abnegation of concern as to what properly lies with the Father to make good. "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." It was more than the form of a servant Christ assumed in becoming man. The spirit and qualities proper to that position He showed forth to perfection in the humble path of dependence and obedience He trod. Fittingly from such a servant in such a path comes this disclaimer of knowledge of a matter not belonging to His sphere as such. The kingdom He is to receive in the capacity of a servant. Not by the right and title of what He was as God does He assume control, but on the ground of what He has done, and as the reward of all His toil in that unique path of obedience He trod is He invested by the Father with the administration of all things. All waits on the activity of God the Father for its establishment, and of such things even as the right hand and left hand place of honour in it Christ declares that they are not His to bestow, but are reserved for the Father's appointment. What wonder then if, of the day and hour of its advent, the One who chooses to consider Himself less Heir-apparent than Heir-appointed disavows the knowledge. "Not mine to give" in the one case said the Lord. "Not mine to know" in effect He says here. Entire moral perfection. May we not consider that the objection founded on this verse is effectually disposed of by such considerations, or, if difficulty remains, that it may yield to further study on such lines? It does, at all events, appear futile to seek light on it, or elucidation of the profound and mysterious question of how divine and human knowledge are united and were related to each other in the person of Christ in the days of His flesh, along the line of metaphysics

or psychology. How much worse to found on this verse, and in this way, a denial of their co-existence! It is quite conceivable that we may never come to know the nature of the connecting link between the divine and human in Christ's person. His own declaration, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father," would prepare us for this. Many theories have been constructed to account for the relation between the two, many attempts made to forge an intelligible link between them. It was but to be expected that from the surveillance of theologians this would not long be omitted. Where the word itself had, with its usual disregard for mere mental perplexities, confined its testimony to the bare fact of the two natures in one Person, Christ Jesus, God and man, without concerning itself with explanations of the nature of their relation, dogmatic theology, which considers itself to have been bequeathed the task of thinking out, and construing to intelligence, doctrines implicit in the New Testament, has over and over again essayed to explain such relation. It was characteristic of that working of the human mind upon divine things which we call theology to make the attempt. Yet, the ingenuity of the various conjectures notwithstanding, failure is stamped upon them all.

1910 173 But, as F. W. Grant has so well said, "We cannot fathom the Christ of God. We can realise how perfectly, divinely, on both sides He suits us, though we may be quite unable to put the two sides together. Dual personality would not suit us; but we want one who is both perfectly human and truly divine One who can sleep in the storm and rise and still the storm. Such a Saviour we have got, how good to know it — if we can see nothing besides His heart of love that unites the two together." "His heart of love uniting the two together" — a most blessed "conjunction medium" that, assuredly. If in no other way, certainly thus do we perceive them to be most truly united, as who cannot most surely testify who knows the blessed Saviour and has experience of His love. That love, which, sweetly as it suits our case, would have been in vain had He in whom it was manifested been anything less than God, no less truly depended upon Him being really and truly man that to us it might be made known. The power of the one, and the reality of the other were alike necessary, and in that love wherewith He loved us how truly both are present. By all the sweet familiarity of manhood has His approach been characterised, is it in anything less than the power of Godhead that He has drawn nigh? Can we imagine Him undertaking in love to come upon the scene of man's sin and degradation, with the purpose of effecting our ransom and redemption from these, and as He stoops to the task, laying aside those very attributes by whose agency alone that could be accomplished? All those immeasurable resources of divine power and wisdom which were eternally His, was it not just then that they were most of all indispensable if He were to be, as He is, "mighty to save"? How could it be in anything like this sense that He who was rich has impoverished Himself that we might be made rich? Would not that be, humanly speaking, to defeat His own object? Beggared Himself of all divine prerogatives to take up a task that nothing but divine power could accomplish; in a path and by a way that nothing but divine wisdom could select and devise! Nay, love is wiser than that. We may be sure His voluntary impoverishment, great as it was, did not extend to matters such as these. The grace of our Lord Jesus, the riches of His glory, and the poverty to which He descended, were in themselves infinite enough, without imagining the first to imply such a kenoticism between the second and the third as really leaves the Blessed One who came in love to redeem us, shorn of that which alone could effect the purpose of His coming. Of one thing all whom His love has reached and won may be assured — no dispossession or curtailment of the divine in His Person could the Blessed Lord have adopted which curtailed His power to deal effectively with our case; no limitation of humanity would He

have entered which limited his ability to employ the fullest resources available on our behalf. And if in no other way can we explain how divine power and wisdom could be His, while still in all respects a true and real man, we can only say we can understand Him possessing and using divine attributes because He was also divine, and because of the divine love in His heart which was no less wonderful. They may tell us that such attributes as omnipotence and omniscience, being quite incompatible with any assumption of real human nature, must have been laid aside. But "must" is a strong word, and "must have been" has often to give way before "may have been," and there are cases where our rules do not apply. For are we now to say that only what of God was compatible with human nature retained its place, and was manifest in Christ? What then of this His love which Christ came to declare? Was divine love any less incompatible than divine power or divine wisdom? Was it laid aside, or in any way depotentiated or conditioned by, or for, contact with humanity?

It may be the New Testament nowhere says that "God is omnipotence," or, "God is omniscience"; but assuredly it does say that "God is love." And if divine love was not laid aside, but revealed in its fulness and strength in the Man Christ Jesus, where can the difficulty be in believing in the presence and activity in the Blessed Saviour Himself of its attendant power and perception, the omnipotence and omniscience of Deity? Oh, how poor, how incredibly poor our perception is of the glory of His person! Was He not God, eternally the Son of God, and now upon earth "God manifest, God seen and heard, The heaven's beloved One." The image of the invisible God, the effulgence of His glory, the impress of His substance, the everlasting Word that in the beginning was, was with God, and was God, and now for us become the Word made flesh; all this and more He was, and is, and ever shall have the glory of being. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of an only begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth." And now, in closing our study of this part of the Creed, were it not infinitely better to have observed that reticence on questions as to the Person of Christ which a spirit of true reverence would inculcate, which the example of the Scriptures would itself enjoin, and which all who are spiritually-minded feel when they approach the subject, not to mention that distinct pronouncement of His own concerning "The higher mysteries of Thy fame The creature's grasp transcend, The Father only Thy blest name Of Son can comprehend "

— "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." From the Person of Christ the Creed passes to a not less important topic — His work. His work of atonement, that is to say, or what was effected by His death on the cross. Most singularly brief, however, is the consideration given to the subject in the exposition we are following. His passion and death, referred to in the clauses, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," are rightly spoken of as facts that are central and vital to all that claims the name of Christianity. How truly this is so is abundantly evidenced from the large place given to it in primitive Christian teaching. In apostolic doctrine, as we have it in the epistles of the New Testament, to go no further, the cross is by far the most prominent feature. It is a fact not unworthy of mention, and certainly not unnoticed by hostile critics either, how completely, after His death, the attention, the emphasis, of scripture came to be placed upon that death as precisely the point of moment. Whether, having regard to the measure of attention it claimed even from the very first, we can speak of anything like a transference of emphasis or not from His life and ministry, certainly the cross, the death of Christ, holds and fills a place in early Christian doctrine almost supreme. It quite surpasses at any rate anything like the proportionate

mention we should look for, if it were but an incident, granted even a striking incident, of His historical career. No, it was more than an incident. The unique and transcending place assigned to it in the apostolic scheme points to its having for them, as for soundness in the Christian faith it has still, crucial and unrivalled importance. Rapidly and early, and, we may say, undeviatingly and continuously since, Christian thought under divine guidance has come to be concentrated upon it as the foundation of its system, the fundamental item of its faith, has come to regard and esteem as the distinguishing or distinctive fact in regard to its Founder, not His life, not His miracles, not His teaching, but His death has come to glory in His cross as the feature which outstands in, the truth which characterises Christianity. And there can really be no shifting of the focus of Christianity from this point without surrendering all that upon which it rests, and all that constitutes its power, its dynamic, its meaning as a gospel for sinful men. That such things as the suffering and death of Christ are of vital importance to Christianity as a religion there are few, perhaps even among merely nominal Christians even, but are prepared to admit. For it is universally realised that the cross is an integral part of its system of doctrine. And although varied may be the measures in which the truth of it is realised, as in some sense or other the procuring cause of our redemption, the death of Him who for us men and for our salvation underwent that dread ordeal, that is accepted by all who of His saving grace have had experience. It is felt and confessed by all as that upon which absolutely everything depends. Admit the divine purpose of redemption, or even the need of it for men, for us, and it is at once seen to stand or fall with the truth of a saving work effected by the suffering and death of the Redeemer. As has been said, the consideration of the death of Christ, as to what it imports, is passed over lightly. Almost summarily dismissed in fact, rival theories of the atonement are mentioned as contending for place, and a safe line is sought to be taken by leaving all such aside, and accepting simply as a large general truth that Christ Jesus died for us. The fact is the great thing, it is said. The implications, the significance, of but lesser account. That is all very well; but it may be questioned if it will be found quite satisfactory, or possible even to draw the line at that. Real sin-burdened souls will look for some more definite evidence of the great sin question, of so much significance to them, having been dealt with therein. It is no academic question with them, and that Christ not only died for us, but that "He died for our sins according to the scriptures" will seem to betoken a relation between His death and the question of their sins that merits some more definite term than an implication. If in earnest indeed, the pardoned sinner cannot but be drawn on to consider how, by what means, in what manner, He has been cleared of His sins, and granted deliverance through the death of "the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world." When we find also, on the back of what is said as to the acceptance of the fact of Christ's death, without attachment to any theory of atonement, a quite wanton scoff at the old Calvinistic ideas on the subject, dissatisfaction deepens.

1910 188 Precisely here again we enter the interesting territory where new and old in Presbyterian theology contrast so deeply. It is just at such points, where the strong tide of high Calvinism meets the freshening flood of New Theology ideas, that one cannot but be arrested. The surge and swell of contending thought are there so marked. One whom we have before quoted from, Prof. Orr, has some discernment of the true bearing of much that is now put forth; and on such reasoning regarding the atonement as has been instanced he has remarked, "Distinction is often made between fact and theory in the doctrine of atonement; but it is evident that an element of what is called theory, 1:e. of doctrinal significance, attaches to even the simplest statements of scripture on this subject. It is not every conception of the cross that suits the full and varied representations

given of it in scripture. The New Testament will not allow us to believe that everything remains vague and undetermined in the meaning we are to attach to Christ's doing and dying for our salvation." And another, not a Presbyterian, has spoken out thus: "It is sometimes said, There are several theories of the atonement, but we have to do with the fact, and not with our understanding of it! This frame of mind is the root of all that is most feeble and ominous in the teaching in our churches today." Then against the derision of such discarded ideas as the Calvinistic one of "Christ having rendered by His blood satisfaction to divine justice in the sense of quantitative payment of a ransom," compare a remark of the same, "We cannot in any theology which is duly ethicised dispense with the word satisfaction. It was no satisfaction of a 'jus talionis' yet the sinner could only be saved by something that thus damned the sin." And still another, "There is room today for a truly forensic doctrine of the atonement. Christ has redeemed us not by a facile amnesty; but by making our sin His own in vicarious love, and hearing it in the face of the universe." A "facile amnesty" it is to be feared is the too common conception of what has resulted from the death of Christ for us, with but little concern for the solemn fact that ere sins could at all be forgiven there were questions, long-outstanding questions, between God and our souls to be settled, as regards the heinousness of them in His sight, and the guilt of them lying upon us, and that for the necessary removal of both, a real true work of atonement, propitiatory and expiatory, had to be accomplished by the vicarious suffering and death of the "Lamb of God." A most remarkable confession was made by a young minister recently. "I have been urged," he wrote, "to make the cross of Christ the heart of my teaching, but I have the vaguest possible conception of what is meant by this and similar phrases. I can understand the cross as the transcendent symbol of the Christian life; as symbolising the death of the Christian to sin, but I fail to see the relation between the actual crucifixion on Calvary and the forgiveness of sins." Consider how momentous that confession is from an accredited preacher of the gospel. And is there not serious reflection awakened as to the theological system of which such as this is the product. Here is one who has just undergone a modern theological training, and is regarded as qualified to preach and teach the truth of God. And what is the attitude assumed towards this great, vital, central doctrine of atonement. The cross, unless symbolising the death of the Christian to sin (which is not atonement, but at best a sequel to it), has no such supreme importance attaching to it as to make it in any sense central to his teaching. No relation perceived between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin! A most strange confession! On what then is such forgiveness to be based? Or is it that there is no need for such a basis? Are we to imagine forgiveness of sins by God to be so light a matter as to need no such ground for its exercise as Scripture shows the death and blood of Christ to have provided. Really, if the state of mind disclosed does not indicate just such a conception as has been spoken of, of salvation as a sort of "facile amnesty" from sin, to be prevalent theology today, what else does it? The real fact is, as Prof. Orr has pointed out, there is an ingrained aversion to the whole doctrine of an expiatory atonement in modern ideas. The principal cause, according to him, is that such presuppositions of the need and purpose of the atonement as, on the one hand, a sense of the character and holiness of God, and on the other of the gravity and guilt of sin, are totally lacking in present-day thought. A wrested mutilated doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and the influence of a perverted evolutionary theory of man's origin, are respectively to be held accountable for much of this departure from Biblical teaching on what God is, how holy, how righteous, how abhorrent of sin; on the fact also that sin is sin — no element of the world process, or necessity of human development, but a thing in itself horrible, displeasing to

God, laying the transgressor under God's just condemnation. The inability to perceive any relation between the fact of Christ's death on the cross, and the forgiveness of sins instanced above, is, alas, if all were as frank in confessing it, only too prevalent today. That, ere forgiveness of sins could be, the holy sinless Son of God had to become our Sin-Bearer, and under the whole burden of the cross endure the wrath and judgment of God "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"; that by His blood and death the requirements of God's holiness should be met, and the whole question of sin as it affects Him be so perfectly settled that it can be said, "Once in the end of the age hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world"; that henceforth in the gospel there is the divine tender of a relief from the penal consequences of sin absolute, universal, and final, as also "justification by His blood," and by God's grace "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness not only for the passing over of the sins that are past, through his forbearance, but also that now at this time he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" — all this is fast becoming quite meaningless to, or entirely misapprehended by, those who have drifted away from the truth as to the expiatory and propitiatory atonement of our Redeemer. The expression given to it in the Westminster Confession, or the Shorter Catechism, may, as theological expressions, neither of them quite reach to adequacy — "The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father, and purchased reconciliation, etc.," or, "Christ executeth the office of a Priest in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God" — but they are surely preferable by far to the hazy, colourless, presentation of it given by the expositor of the Creed. This negation of all theories of the atonement, with professed adherence to the large and general truth of Christ's death as the means, in an unspecified way, of our salvation is not reassuring in itself. When, joined to it there is ridicule, as well as repudiation, of the very expression used in the Presbyterian Confession! what can one say? No wonder it is so far back, or as far down as to the Apostles' Creed such desire to go as the norm of faith necessary to Christianity. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," is quite comprehensive enough for them.

It may certainly be the case, that all attempts in the past to interpret the doctrine, or to construe it theologically, have failed in adequacy, or erred essentially, and being found incapable of responding to broadening and deepening thought on the subject, have had to be left behind. Otherwise put, theological definitions have consistently failed to fill out the complete doctrine as Scripture gives it, however true it be that a certain side of truth was emphasised in each case. There were, for instance, the so-called Ransom Theory, which has long since been superseded, at least, in the form in which it was originally held; the Socinian view of atonement in keeping with their system, which to believers now is just as erroneous as it ever was; the Governmental Theory prevalent in pre-Reformation times, with no more permanency. And again from the Reformation onwards what is called the Substitutionary Theory has held the field, until recently, when, as we are having instanced now, it also is being repudiated. A word on the nature of that repudiation and what is to replace the rejected scheme. It is only quite recently that this latter was called in question, but it is in quite a wholesale fashion that it is being surrendered now. Readers of the theological works of last century must be familiar with the great and long-drawn-out controversy on "the extent of the atonement" waged so earnestly by adherents of Calvinistic theology,

Presbyterians (as Candlish and Cunningham) among the number. The whole basis of reasoning on both sides was, and could not be other than, this same Substitutionary theory of atonement. Whether the results of the atonement were universal, or limited to the elect, could not, it is evident, be a question, apart from the idea of Christ having assumed in that work the place of a Substitute to render satisfaction to divine justice for sinners. It is most remarkable, yet no more than a fact, that it is almost impossible to imagine that controversy in the same quarter today. The Substitutionary theory, as a theory, is being dropped as completely as the others. And what is now emerging as a successor to it? Something more satisfactory, more scriptural, something giving fuller value to those aspects of the sacrifice of which admittedly the theory was deficient? The tendency now rather is away from any thought of a sacrificial and expiatory interpretation of the death of Christ at all. Complaint is made of atonement being turned into a non-moral and superstitious transaction by the theory of Christ as our Substitute taking the place and judgment due to sinners, and the trend of theology now is to develop the doctrine on what is called its ethical side. That is to say, it is not the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus that are regarded as in themselves, or intrinsically efficacious for the covering of sin; but rather the moral qualities displayed by Christ Jesus in the descent to death, the obedience to the will of God He rendered even unto death. "The sacrifice required by God," it is said, "was not that of so much pain, or even death itself, but a moral reparation in the offering of a great and perfect obedience." The "transactional" theory of atonement, as it is called, with its insistence upon "satisfaction" in the old penal sense, is considered obsolete now. It is caricatured as some monstrous growth of fanatical puritan times, with a hard legal conception of God with His outraged righteousness, like some glorified Shylock, insisting upon and obtaining its pound of flesh. That from the suffering Saviour on the cross is wrung out a full measure of torment precisely equivalent to the desert of our sins, and that thus offended justice can now retire satiated and appeased by the blood of the victim! All this is derided as superstitious, and partaking too much of the nature of a material and non-moral transaction, to commend itself to Christian thought. It is a reversion, we are told, to the crude, semi-pagan ideas embodied in the Jewish ritual, and expressed in the sacrificial language of the Old Testament. Whereas, underlying the New Testament doctrine of atonement there is an altogether different conception of sacrifice. The express point of distinction, it is maintained, between the latter and the Old Testament ritual of sacrifice lies in this entire absence of a moral element in the sacrifices offered under the law. In regard to the sacrifice of Christ on the other hand, all the stress is laid upon the moral quality inherent in it. The thought of a purely objective expiation and external transaction is transcended, and the value and efficacy of His offering seen to lie in the holy obedience and submission to the will of God of which this was the crown and culmination. This, it is repeated, is the great truth which emerges in the New Testament as to atonement. Deeper than any mere expiation resulting or expiatory merit attaching, that in which the essence of Christ's sacrifice consists is "not in His suffering, not even His death in itself, but obedience completed in the surrender of His life to the will of God." It is explained that now, in the New Testament, if we revert to Old Testament terms at all, we must think of the sprinkling of the blood on the altar, signifying the presentation of the life to God, as the important matter, not the shedding of blood, signifying the death of the victim! It is not vicarious suffering, but representative submission that is the essential element in sacrifice! For scripture evidence we are referred to the tenth of Hebrews. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a

body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second."

Here, it is said, in this passage, we have the whole matter epitomised. This verse sets the atonement of Christ in opposition to the sacrifices of the law, and treats it as superseding them. There is the distinct repudiation of the entire conception of sacrifice as expressed in Jewish ritual. The notion therein associated with the blood shedding of the victim as something in itself of atoning virtue is absent from the New Testament conception, and the principle of vicariousness attaching to a sacrificial death emphatically ruled out. The performing of the will of God on Christ's part and His submission to it His obedience is shown to be that in which true atonement lies. The way in which the death of Christ under this theory (to complete our survey of it) becomes efficacious for us is not in the sense that it avails for us atoningly before God, as having borne our sins or as made propitiation for them. That is unnecessary, it is implied, for as Christ has revealed God's attitude, there is neither hint of, nor room for, the thought of Him needing to be propitiated, or His wrath appeased. It is on our side mainly, not on His, that the influence of Christ's death requires to be exerted. And on us accordingly all the moral influence of His perfect obedience and sinless penitence is brought to bear. By the sight of the loving Saviour in the tenderness of His compassion taking on Himself the burden of His children's [?] misdoing, and bearing on the cross the shame and misery of it in the face of the universe, we are broken down and drawn back from the far country of our sins to our unestranged Father's [?] ready welcome! Then as to the only aspect Godward they can understand it to possess, there is in that same perfect obedience and submission to death on the part of such a one as Christ Jesus, such a potency as to constitute it a complete and adequate moral reparation to God for all the sins humanity has been guilty, or is capable, of! "The impulse of divine holy love found its own level, its counterpart, its other self, in the perfect, sinless sacrifice of Jesus. That moral perfection, that moral equivalent to His perfect righteousness, which God craved and required in the creature, was realised in the Man Christ Jesus. In Jesus humanity was raised to the moral level of God. The total moral demand of God upon man was satisfied in man." From all this it may be seen what the "ethical" theory of the atonement amounts to.

1911 206 It may be recognised also that it is a theory to the production of which Scripture is called on to contribute but little. Its main concern for us being that contribution, we must again follow — remarking surely, however, how true Prof. Orr's statement would seem to be concerning the aversion of these modern theories to everything of the sacrificial and expiatory in Christ's death. It is abundantly evidenced from what we have quoted. It remains, however, that we consider briefly what is supposed to be Scripture evidence for it, and what measure of truth, if any, it makes a perverted use of. The Ransom and Substitutionary theories had both of them large elements of truth.

"The Son of man came not only to minister but "to give his life a ransom for many." And "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Nor indeed, whatever may be thought of the old Governmental Theory associated with the name of Anselm, can there be found absolutely no element of truth in this emphasising of the ethical or moral side of that atoning work of Christ, this "finding of the essence of Christ's sacrifice to consist in the yielding up of His holy will to the Father." "Sin," it is said, "has its essence in self-will, in the setting up of the

human will against God, and Christ has retracted this root sin of humanity by offering up to God, under experience of suffering and death, the well-pleasing sacrifice of a will wholly obedient and self-surrendered." Whatever we may think of the expression, or whether this idea of the retraction of the root-sin of humanity is at all a scriptural thought, we certainly learn from Rom 5:19 that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Not, of course, that Christ's work of atonement is at all the subject of Rom 5:19, at least directly. Rather is it the larger, more general, question of the contrast of Adam and Christ in their respective headships, with the results accruing respectively to those ranged under such headships from the characteristic act with which the "one man" in each case is credited. That with which Adam is to be associated is the act of disobedience which proved so disastrous to the race. That which those who are Christ's ever look back to as the ground of their being constituted righteous is His perfect obedience. Not at all in the sense of His keeping the law for us throughout His life, needless to say for when in scripture is legal righteousness ever treated as vicarious? — but in that obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross," which so amply fulfilled the will of God. It is, as one has said, the burnt-offering aspect of Christ's work, the full sweet savour of that in which God was glorified. There was undoubtedly that in the sacrifice of Christ which had to say to the will of God flagrantly disobeyed, as well as to His character and honour vilely traduced by man's sin. And, as constituting part of the God-glorifying character of what was accomplished when Christ laid down His life, His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, is not to be forgotten. And thus also as to Heb 10:1-39. That scripture is fastened on, and rightly so, as the great exposition of what is called the New Testament conception of sacrifice. Now does this differ, radically so, from what one would gather from the Old Testament on the subject? There need be no doubt as to what that latter is. Crude, semi-pagan, material, or whatever else it may be reviled as, there is undeniably a definite and consistent doctrine of sacrifice apparent throughout the Old Testament. And even the advocates of the new theory are forced to admit that the primary thought underlying the sacrificial language of ritual is just this of vicarious suffering and expiatory death. From Abel's more excellent sacrifice onward, the attention is directed always and unvaryingly to these as the essential element in the matter of atonement for sin. That is clear. What then of the claim that in the New Testament we come to something entirely different? On any right understanding of what it means for the Bible to be God's Word, inspired of Him, this of course would be an impossible idea, this divergence of teaching on the important question of sacrifice for sin. But apart from that, does what the New Testament scriptures teach contradict the older revelation?

Take this tenth of Hebrews as a case in point. That the atonement of Christ is set in contradistinction to, and is presented as superseding the sacrifices of the law is plain; but in what sense? Is it in that these gave, and could give no other than, a wholly erroneous and false idea of how God could be approached, or could remit sins, whereas Christian teaching expresses the truth entirely unknown to and never hinted at by them? Or is it not rather the case that just what gave them value, and to the writer of Hebrews justified this extended reference, was that, appointed by Jehovah as they were, these sacrifices and offerings prefigured, and should have been seen to point out, that which has been fulfilled, and reduced to reality by what Christ has done. What says the opening verse of the chapter. The law had "a shadow of good things to come," if not "the very image." That would seem to imply surely that between the two systems

there is that which calls for comparison as well as that which provokes contrast. To stand in the relation of substance and shadow there must be a resemblance, at least in outline, which would be quite incompatible with divergent ideas of such a primary matter as atonement.

Then examine the phraseology of the passage throughout. If the intention was to reject in totality the Old Testament doctrine of sacrifice, and to put aside the whole theory of vicarious suffering as worthless, we should imagine language entirely different from what the Jewish ritual had made familiar to be applied to what the death of Christ had effected. Yet what do we find? Deliberate intention to rule out the possibility of entertaining such a thought seems to be stamped on the chapter. Where could a more explicit reiteration of the very phrases familiar to one brought up under the Old Testament ritual be found? As one has said, "Instead of carefully avoiding sacrificial terms, because sacrifice is the thing repudiated, it emphatically reproduces them. Offering thou wouldest not' — yes, but this is spoken with another sacrifice, another offering, the offering of the body of Christ' full in view." Of which sacrifice it is distinctly testified also that it avails in that very expiatory sense adumbrated by the sacrifices under the law. "But this man . . . offered one sacrifice for sins." "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once."

Plainly that last, that "offering of the body of Christ once" is the point of the whole passage. "A body hast thou prepared me" certainly is brought in along with the thought of the sacrifices offered by the law being rejected; but it is not on the "body prepared" but on the "body offered" that the stress is laid and the vicariousness of atonement made to depend. While it is exactly what the trend of modern speculation threatens to obscure, this agrees perfectly with the uniform account of His death in scripture as an objective act of propitiation, in itself an efficacious ransom for sinners.

It is in light of all this also that we must hear His word, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." The question with the new theory as to the interpretation of this verse has been narrowed down as follows by one writer — "Was this, as many now teach, a performing in a life of perfect general obedience, into which obedience we enter by the submission of our wills to God, was this the substitute for the sacrifices of the law? or was it the doing of the will of God in one specific and sacrificial act — was it His body offered as upon an altar? a body broken [?] and blood poured out like wine?" Beyond a doubt our blessed Lord's obedience, His doing the will of God, comes into view in this passage, and that not merely incidentally, but of distinct purpose and as quite in the line of its reasoning. We may say that in its scheme of doctrine there are two things of central importance presented — the will of God, and the work of Christ. And it is quite clear that as surely as He to perfection performed the latter, so did He in fulness the former.

But, if we are to distinguish, on which let it be asked, are the requisite taking away of sins, the purging of the worshippers, or the perfecting of the sanctified made precisely to depend as foundation or basis? The sacrificial work of Christ most undoubtedly. "He was once offered to bear the sins of many," and "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." No doubt all is to be traced to the will of God as its origin. The source of all is there. Nor are we to reason that Christ's doing the will of God was simply His carrying that will into effect as regards our salvation. There is something far deeper than that in His, "Lo, I come to do thy will," even His personal and positive obedience thereto, wonderful beyond all as that is in itself when we remember who He was that rendered it. And again, who shall deny that this self-devotedness of the Son of God to His

will formed the great element of value, the moral quality if you will in the acceptable sacrifice He offered? Nor is this aspect neglected in the eminently typical ritual of the Old Testament. What else is it that is presented in the burning of the fat upon the altar so continually prescribed but the energy of a will devoted unto God, specially emphasised on one occasion at least as "the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah." And again, as has been said, what is it that is expressed in the burnt-offering if it be not this unreserved devotedness, and to death, His holy will entirely self-surrendered, and nothing but the will and glory of God in view as motive and end. This was par excellence "the offering of sweet savour," as it is in such devotedness of obedience unto death that God can have delight and find pleasure as that in which He has been glorified. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." And, as in Heb 10:1-39. it is a question of an offering in which He can truly find pleasure and satisfaction, that aspect of the sacrifice is emphasised in which this is prominent: With what unmingled and infinite delight, may we not say, can God contemplate that offering of the body of Christ, when we remember that there and then, in presence of the declared failure of all that was offered under the law to give Him satisfaction, His own blessed Son, in the humanity He had assumed for that express purpose, accomplished all His will, and, in self-sacrificing devotedness in the place of death itself, not only satisfied, but glorified, Him perfectly even as to sin itself.

1911 222 If, as we cannot but believe, man's sin and rebellion, the self-will that constitutes its essence, must be not only painful and highly obnoxious to Him in itself, but in its most revolting feature, to speak as a man, a reflection, a shame, a dishonour on His own great Name in the face of His own great universe, how correspondingly great must be the pleasure He derives from the perfect sinless sacrifice of His own beloved Son — come, in the humanity prepared for Him, to do His will, even unto death! And, if we cannot speak of the root-sin of humanity being herein retracted, can we not say at least that the position has been retrieved, gloriously retrieved, as regards the apparent traducing of God's character through man's becoming partaker in that great and terrible revolt of evil so maliciously planned by the enemy? For if the enemy have plans, is God without plans also? Eternal counsels are His, and quite in the track of their working, we are assured, is all that has been accomplished here. The fall of man, the rebellion of the creature, the setting up of the human will against God, how terrible a spectacle! But the perfection and obedience of Jesus Christ, tested and manifested to the extreme limit of death itself, in its expression of devotedness and self-surrender to His will affords, according to these same divine counsels, a manifestation, a display bringing glory to God in surpassing measure. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."

It is right that we should remember what the old "transactional theory" may have in some measure obscured — that the suffering and sacrifice of Christ was no mere piece of bargaining! something in the nature of a quantitative repayment! so much suffering for so much sin! nor only, as it truly was the case, that in being once offered He bare the sins of many; but that there and then was accomplished a work in and by which not only was the Son of man Himself glorified; but God also glorified in Him, and that through His perfect obedience who even of the laying down of His life did say, "This commandment have I received of my Father." And this emphatically enters into what constitutes that propitiatory character of the work which theories of the atonement so consistently ignore. But there must be no divorcing of the idea of the true expiatory nature of the Saviour's sufferings from this perfection of devotedness to God's will to make everything of intrinsic value to

consist in the self-abnegation and obedience so strikingly culminated there.

Theories of the atonement come and go. Logical and exhaustive no doubt they have each appeared to their originators. But one and all they have foundered in the past, and none have succeeded in filling out the complete scripture doctrine on the subject. Where all have failed, that remains for us clear and consistent, higher and fuller than theory or creed can reach or express. Explained to us also there, solely yet sufficiently, as never in theological statement or creed, by the revealed character of God Himself, who in His great love would have us, delivered and cleansed from sin, brought to Himself in righteousness, to be holy and without blame before Him in love.

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." Facts sure enough they are, and "necessary to everlasting salvation to believe"; but how bald, how bare the statement of them! How open to any possible construction, and therefore worthless as definition, of what the import and significance may be of that greatest, most vital of all truths the atoning work of our Redeemer! It was characteristic of the creeds to be vague and indefinite here, and indeed they are uniformly so. Sound enough in statement, as far as the statement goes as to Christ's death; but fatally omitting all mention of what that death signified and accomplished. Is it not also a little remarkable that as we advance, beginning with the Apostles' Creed, the statement becomes in the Nicene and Athanasian more and yet more meagre. "Suffered for our salvation" eventually suffices to define all that advancing formalism and ritualism cared to retain. As forgiveness of sins became clouded over with uncertainty, and justification by faith so completely dropped out, what else could the doctrine of full and perfect atonement by Christ's death be but ignored and recede into the background? Strange that modern infidelity should give indications of pursuing the same path. Christ's death, His sufferings, in some way or other availing for our salvation is as far as they can pledge themselves to go. How different from such a clear and definite statement of faith as the following: "From Scripture I learn that this Blessed One, the Lord Jesus Christ, died for all, having given Himself a ransom for all, that He has made propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world; that God being a righteous and holy God, the Son of man had to be lifted up upon the cross; that there He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him . . . that He has obeyed even unto death, and wrought a perfect work upon the cross for us; . . . that as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be constituted righteous; that we are sanctified or set apart to God by God the Father through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all." In this study of the creed, were one to mark all that disapproves itself to the faith of plain people, reared on scripture teaching, and unlearned in, or unsophisticated by the lore of the schools, there should be no end. It is after all no wonder that, as one goes on, this exposition of Christian doctrine from the Presbyterian standpoint is found to fairly bristle with points of possible contention, or of unavoidable dispute. The influx of new thought, of the critical, dissolving, disintegrating spirit characteristic of our time is revolutionising, as intelligent observers have all along predicted it would, the whole theological system of this interesting section of Christendom. As the evidence and product of this, in their modern preaching and lecturing, how much there is that is new and of foreign sound about it all! And in the instance before us, are we not being constantly arrested by the novel and strange in the interpretation given to an enunciation of doctrines on which Presbyterians in their measure used to be sound enough We have seen it on the very elementary truth concerning the being of God, as to the question of the evidences to His

existence. How the witness of nature to Him has been adulterated by the accommodation sought to be given to the hypothesis of evolution! How on the other hand the fact that among men such a thing as a universal religious sense, or God-consciousness exists has been so perverted in the interests of the so-called science of Comparative Religion as to give entirely false value to its witness! And with all this Revelation itself, as a testimony not only that God must be, but that He is, and may be known, left out of the sum of Christian evidences. While on the question of His Fatherhood, raised as a final item in connection with the first clause of the Creed, there is entire misapprehension both of the nature of the relationship, and of the plane upon which it is realised. Then, when we come to the second clause, speculation, modern philosophy, and theories of New Theology complexion have so leavened Christology that on both the deity and humanity of Christ very little that is really satisfactory can be gleaned. While again, on the contrary, it is just there, on the Person of Christ, that the malign influence of modern theology is most apparent. Nor is the great fundamental doctrine of Christ's atonement immune from the contagion of novel interpretation, the surrender of valuable elements of the truth being here very marked.

And, were one to go on, the exposition would reveal in almost each several clause as it is taken up, most remarkable departure not only from scripture truth, but from the standards of doctrine professed in Presbyterianism as well. The first is no doubt the most sorrowful feature; but the latter also to thoughtful observers is indicative of much that calls for serious reflection. "Amidst the breaking up of conventional modes of thought and the felt insufficiency of the common standards of orthodoxy, if superstition does not take the place of truth . . . there is especial danger of the mind becoming weary and indifferent in the march after what is vital, and so taking refuge in the question, What is truth? as if it allowed of no definite or sufficient answer. This state of mind, in degree, may infest the church, as well as become the prevalent folly of the world. "But know this, O doubter, that truth will never be truth to thee nor to thy soul, until it is translated into action. Truth appeals to thy conscience, to thine affections, to thy duty, with all the authority of the God of truth. At first it deals with thee about ruin or redemption. It next claims to be formative of thy motives, to be the guide of thine actions, the director of thy thoughts, the animator of thine hopes, the overseer of thy whole inner as well as thine outer life. Truth exists not for thee, if thou refuse to it thine obedience and thine heart." J.T.

S. The Character of the Commission to the Disciples in Matthew 28

The Character of the Commission to the Disciples in Matthew 28 As to the commission in Mat 28:18, etc., I think some considerations may help you as they have helped me. It was not from heaven, but from Galilee, and does not immediately connect with heaven. It was to bring the Gentiles into connection with the remnant of the Jews on earth already recognized, not to form the elect of both into one body united to Christ in glory, as through Paul's commission. The revelation of the Trinity is not essentially and distinctively Christianity: a triune God was involved in many an Old Testament scripture, even from Genesis 1, where the plural name of God is found already with a singular verb (as nowhere when the gods of the nations are in question). But the full revelation came out on the occasion of the Son of God being manifested to Israel (Mat 3:1-17, John 1:31) — that is, in His place on earth, the Father seen in Him, the Spirit not given by measure to Him, all the Fullness pleased to dwell in Him.

Christianity starts with a risen and ascended Christ at God's right hand, and the mission of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Mat 28:1-20 was from resurrection, not ascension. Paul was not sent to baptise: he accepted what he found going on, and there was no other revealed formula of baptism. God does not go back on the full revelation of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as to the name in which the remnant will take up the testimony to bring in the nations, when the assembly is gone, though it does not appear to me to involve for them the full intelligent relationships implied in the revelation as it affects us, which depends on testimony to make good to us such relationships. The testimony for the remnant is the testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy, and will not, as it would seem, bring them beyond the names by which God was known in the Old Testament, as we find reproduced in the Revelation, with Jesus the rejected, suffering, and exalted Lamb super-added. They will not have gone over all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come — broken off when they were scattered from their cities, the mission will be resumed when they are again in them — doubtless others will go out to the nations: though the formal bringing the nations into their own accepted place by baptism, as in Mat 28:1-20, only belongs, I suppose, to the future of the testimony. It did not go far beyond the manifestation of such a remnant till Jerusalem was destroyed — the work among the Gentiles being committed to Paul, who did not take Mat 28:20 for his testimony. I quite think with you that the grace side of the testimony comes in with the Father, Son, and Spirit and that judgment is more connected with the Revelation side of it — “the hour of His judgment is come” (Mat 14:7)

J.A.Trench

S.T. 1915

S. The Gospel of the Glory of Christ.

The Gospel of the Glory of Christ.

Notes of an address by J. A. Trench, 1913. In 2Co 4:4, the "glorious Gospel" does not merely express the quality of the Gospel, but it describes the source of the Gospel as the Glory of Christ in the exalted position in which He now is, and from whence the testimony issues. God has found such glory in the work of righteousness accomplished by the Lord that He has exalted Him above all heavens. In 2Co 3:1-18, the Law had promised life on the condition of doing, but to be able to do required life, and so it was necessary for the Spirit to give life and that was a contrast to the letter of the Law which could only kill or condemn. It is evident that the glory of Christ concealed under the letter of the O.T. had been in the mind of God. Now in this dispensation, the Spirit reveals Him to faith and so gives life alone in Christ. As we have seen the Law required righteousness, but the Law could not bring it, and there was no righteousness in man. Therefore the Law became a ministry of condemnation and death. On the other hand, the Gospel is a ministry of righteousness from the glory where Christ is; the righteousness of God was so perfectly adapted to His glory that it took Christ there as man from the bottom of the judgment where love had taken him on our account. "God made Him sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him" (2Co 5:21). To those who have received Christ as life and righteousness, the Holy Spirit has come as the power to enjoy the wonderful revelation. The end of 2Co 3:1-18. brings to the point of contrast between the position of the Christian and that of Israel, where we read "we all beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are transformed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit." The glory of the Lord in our face is unveiled. Moses had to put a veil on his face for Israel. The Lord does not do so for us. But there is a great difference. It was only the reflection of a partial glory in the face of Moses; but the whole glory of God streams from the face of the Lord Jesus. What would have destroyed Moses is the liberty of the Christian in the power of the Holy Spirit, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (2Co 3:17). The glory conveys the intelligence of peace made by the blood of His cross. In all the perfect character of that work we are identified with Him in life and righteousness. His love leads our hearts to be occupied with the radiant glory shining in His face. By faith, we wait for the glory of God which is the hope of righteousness. That hope becomes so real as to be the support of overflowing joy in our lives. The Apostle unfolds the contrast between the glory of the era in which Moses lived which was to be done away and the excellent glory brought in by Christ. The contrast is also between the powerlessness of the Law and the power of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, forming the Assembly as a letter commending the virtues of Christ to the attention of all. The ministry was through the Apostle by means of which the Spirit of the living God wrote Christ on the affections. The realisation of the wonderful responsible place is dependent on the response of the hearts of individuals to the ministry. The formative power is:- (1) by the object presented to our hearts, (2) by the indwelling Spirit. Viewing the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the same image by the Lord the Spirit. The Spirit dwelling in us is the power both for the objective presentation and the subjective result. The affections take the impression of the object; the glory of Christ is reflected in

the lives of those who belong to Him. Moses bore the effects of the partial glory he had witnessed. So with so much greater force should the glory in the face of Jesus result in the features of His glory and lowly life be reproduced in us. While here it will only be in measure! Perfection will only be reached when we are with Him. That will be the consequence of seeing Him as He is. Growth in His likeness will depend on our continually being occupied with Him. We shall not be occupied with the results. Moses did not know that his face shone, but Israel saw the glory in his face! So the people around us will take knowledge that we have been with Jesus. We shall then answer increasingly to the description of being the epistles of Christ known and read of all men!

S. The Kingdom in Various Aspects

The Kingdom in Various Aspects As Presented in Scripture.

J. A. Trench. THE KINGDOM In seeking to enter into the mind of God on the subject of the kingdom, or kingdoms, as revealed in His word, we are met at once with a variety of expressions that have to be considered. "The kingdom of God"; "the kingdom of heaven," with "the mysteries" of both; "the kingdom of the Son of man"; "of the Son of his love"; "the kingdom of his Father," and "of their Father" (as of the righteous); "His heavenly kingdom"; "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ": and all these in the New Testament. These cannot all refer to one and the same thing. And we have long learned by experience that every clear distinction of scripture yields blessing, as we wait upon God for His meaning in it, in the increased apprehension of His mind into which it leads. In humble dependence upon Him by His Spirit to instruct us, this brief sketch of a great subject is attempted. With the hope that it may help in the study of the word on the subjects before us an index is given at the close, of the passages referred to.

1.

"The Kingdom of Heaven" may be taken up first, as bringing out an aspect of the kingdom which is constantly found in the Gospel of Matthew, and only there. "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" is the testimony of John the Baptist, and of the Lord Jesus when John's testimony closed; also the twelve, as sent out by Him, were to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand: and thus generally it is presented in Matthew 3-12. It is the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy, but is given a character by the name "kingdom of the heavens" (as it always is in the original) that it hardly possessed in Old Testament communications, though an expression in Dan 4:26, "after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule," may have prepared the way for the use of it. It implies that the seat of the authority of the kingdom, when set up, is in the heavens; and thus the rejection of the King, and His sitting at God's right hand is indicated in the title, before that rejection comes out fully, as it does in Matthew 12 and what follows. Already there is the vein of rejection running through Matthew 5-7, commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. It brings out the principles that should characterize those who enter into the kingdom when established, and by implication the principles of the kingdom which the Lord was prepared to introduce. See the Beatitudes. The title is peculiar to Matthew, and gives the dispensational character of the kingdom; and this is so distinctly marked, that when the instruction goes deeper, and involves what is moral, rather than its form in God's dispensation, the "kingdom of God" is used, as in Mat 6:33; Mat 12:28; Mat 19:24; and Mat 21:31; Mat 21:43. The rejection of the King comes first fully before us, in the change in, the Lord's address to the twelve from Mat 10:16, and in the circumstances of Matthew 11, when the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done repented not. But in Matthew 12, when the leaders of the nation take counsel how they might destroy Him, and denounce the manifested power of the Spirit of God in Him, in casting out demons, as of Beelzebub, the prince of the demons, the Lord pronounces judgment upon the nation; and, disowning His natural relationships in Israel, He leaves the Jewish house, and goes out by the

seaside of nations in Matthew 13 to announce the outward results in the world of a new work, namely, of sowing seed to produce fruit, instead of looking for it any more in Israel; and after this preparatory parable, which is not one of the kingdom of heaven, though the seed sown is the word of it (ver. 19), we are given the wholly new form which the kingdom would take as "The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" in the six following parables. The first three of these give the external features of it, as to be established in the world by testimony, and are spoken to the multitudes generally. The last three, bringing out the hidden reality in it known to the heart of the Lord, with the interpretation of that of the wheat and tares, are communicated to the disciples privately, in the house. In that of the wheat and tares we find already a mixed state of things in the sphere of the profession. The field is the world, as the Lord distinctly states. While men slept the enemy has been at work; and there are in result the children of the wicked one, the tares, introduced among the wheat, the children of the kingdom, and so to be left till the harvest, namely, the end of the age. In the time of the harvest angel reapers, in God's providential ways, were to gather together first the tares, and to bind them in bundles ready to be burned, while the wheat is gathered away out of the field into the heavenly granary. So far the parable: in the interpretation the Lord goes further with the disciples, even to the end of the age, to which we must refer again. In the parable of the mustard seed, that which was sown the least of all seeds becomes a tree, always the symbol in scripture of the great powers of the world: while in the last of the three the kingdom of heaven is likened to leaven hid in three measures of meal, until the whole is leavened. It is the spreading of doctrine as a system through a measured mass, a property that it has as experience proves, affecting numbers besides those who are reached by it in heart and conscience. That leaven, everywhere else in Scripture, is a type of evil is significant of the Lord's estimate of such a state, in that which professes to be His kingdom in His absence.

If these parables were all, we might think that there was little to be found in it of value to the Lord. But in the last three communicated to the disciples we learn of the reality known to Him to be there. The treasure hid in the field for which the Lord with joy sold all that He had and bought the field, would be the whole company of His redeemed that are in the world. The pearl of great price is added to bring out what that special part of them that forms the assembly,* called out now in the time of His rejection, from Pentecost till He comes, is to Him. Seeking goodly pearls, when He had found one that was in His estimation of great price, He sold all that He had and bought it: "He loved the church, and gave himself for it." Lastly, if the net cast into the sea gathers of every kind, the fishermen have for their occupation putting the good into vessels; while as usual the interpretation adds fresh features, and brings us to the end of the age, when angels will be used in carrying out the judgment of God on the bad, as previously so employed, in the interpretation of the tares. Thus would the Lord furnish us with instruction as to the kingdom of heaven, without which we could hardly account for the state of things in which we find ourselves — "things new and old" (ver. 52): for if the thought of the kingdom was from of old, the form it was to take in the rejection of the King, and as now seated in the heavens, was wholly new.

*I only use the word throughout as truer to the original than "church," with all the varied meanings attached to it unknown to Scripture. But now we must inquire into the relation in which this aspect of the kingdom stands to that which is expressed by a term of much more extended scope, "The Kingdom of God." Not that it tells of a different kingdom. It is the kingdom of heaven still, but presented in its moral characteristics rather than in its dispensational form. The passages where

the change of expression takes place in Matthew will have prepared us for this. As, for instance, when the Lord says (Mat 12:28), "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come upon you," that is, the moral power of it was displayed in His Person. It could not have been so said of the kingdom of heaven: it was at hand. A passage often misunderstood helps as to the force of if. (Luk 17:20) When the Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God should come, the Lord replied: "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward observation;" namely, in such a manner as to be seen with the eyes. "For, behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (New Trans.; Rev. marg. — not surely "within" Pharisees!) Again, it is as manifested in its characteristic traits and power, in Him who was in their midst. Later on, when the kingdom had been actually established by the testimony of the Holy Ghost to Christ risen, and glorified at God's right hand, we learn from 1Co 4:20 that it "is not in word, but in power," and from the same apostle in Rom 14:17 that it "is not in meat and drink; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It flows from this deeply blessed character of the kingdom of God, that even when Christ was here, and every lovely feature of it was displayed in its perfection in His Person, it needed to be born wholly anew to see it, much more to enter into it when established. (John 3:3-5.) Only do we enter into it in reality when, by the word applied to our souls in power by the Spirit, we are made partakers of a life and nature suited to such a kingdom. That it formed part of the testimony of the Lord, as well as in the form of it given in Matthew, we know from such passages as Mark 1:14-15; Luk 4:43 : the twelve also and the seventy were sent out to proclaim that it was come nigh. It is, as at present known, the sway of God established by testimony over those reached by the testimony, subjecting us to Him; even as under the form of it, as the kingdom of heaven, it is the subjection of the soul to Christ, as at God's right hand. Hence it is said in Luk 18:17 : "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Both may be taken up in the way of mere profession, as we have seen as to much that is included in the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13. But when the difference of moral character and dispensational form is comprehended it will be seen that the latter yields itself to this aspect of a professing sphere, rather than the former. Thus only two of the parables in which the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are contained are applied to the kingdom of God, those of the mustard seed and the leaven (Luke 13; Mark 4), though Mark prefaces these by a parable, peculiar to him, of the sower who leaves the seed to itself to spring and grow up, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, till the harvest is come, when he intervenes again to put in the sickle. (Mark 4:26-29.) The time of the inauguration of the Kingdom. As to the time of the kingdom being established, we know from the Lord's words as to John the Baptist that it had not been in his time. For, although he was greater in privilege than all the prophets who had gone before him, as coming nearer to the King in Person, the least in it when actually come was greater than he. (Mat 11:7-11; Luk 7:26-28) "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every one presseth into it" (Luk 16:16), another form of the expression used as to the kingdom of heaven in Mat 11:12, where, "from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." For the testimony of it, in either aspect, was putting every one to the test. It involved the path of a Christ rejected out of the world, where self must be denied and the cross taken up, that He may be followed, and that in the teeth of the opposition of every principle of man and his world. It needed the holy energy of faith to break through every obstacle, to be wholly for Him whose claim on His own was absolute. That the time of it was not yet, while the Lord was on earth, is plain from the parable He gave when nigh to

Jerusalem (Luk 19:11), when they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear; also from that of the fig-tree and all the trees in Luk 21:29-31, "When they now shoot forth," etc., "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

Having formed such a full part of the Lord's instruction before His death, He still speaks of the things pertaining to it when risen from the dead. (Acts 1:3) And at last we find it formally inaugurated by the testimony of the Holy Ghost come down at Pentecost to Jesus, raised up of God and exalted by His right hand, made of God both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:33-36) In its dispensational character, Peter had been given the keys of it by the Lord in Matthew 16, which he uses to open it to the Jews in Acts 2 and to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Philip preached the things concerning the kingdom of God in Samaria (Acts 8:12), as Paul did at Ephesus till all they of Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:8) And he became the great exponent of its principles, not only there (Acts 20:25), but also at Rome. (Acts 28:23; Acts 28:31) Apart from him, indeed, it forms no part of the actual testimony of any given us in Acts, save that of Philip at Samaria. Not that it was not established in the most real way, but the great subject of the testimony of all as they went from province to province and from city to city was Christ, and His death, resurrection and ascension; and to this the power of the Holy Ghost gave effect in souls, subjecting them to the confession of His name, and thus the kingdom was formed and spread. Nor is it otherwise in the epistles. Besides the two passages already quoted from 1 Corinthians and Romans, not many will be found that speak of it in its present form. It was not the subject of testimony in the teaching of the apostles, any more than what is given us of their preaching; although every fresh soul brought to bow to Christ by the gospel was introduced into it, the sphere of it being thus continually extended. The believer in the most blessed way has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into it, and that as the kingdom of the Son of His love, an expression which only occurs in Colossians 1. It gives us the thought of the deep interest of the Father in that which is so directly connected with the glory of the Son whom the Father loves, and of our part in a kingdom of such precious associations, for Him and for us. Again, it is not a different kingdom, but a special character it has, enhancing the blessedness of being of it and in it. Paul, too, can speak of his fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God in the same epistle. (Col 4:11) In Rev 1:5-6, the moment He is presented as the faithful witness, looking back to what He was on earth — the first-born from the dead in resurrection, and prince of the kings of the earth in millennial glory yet to come — our hearts go out to Him who "loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us a kingdom," and also "priests unto his God and Father;" while John himself speaks out of his present conscious companionship with others, in the tribulation, and kingdom, and patience of Jesus Christ (ver. 9) — things that go together as long as it is the kingdom of Him who has been rejected out of the world. But it will not always have this character, hence his attitude of patience, reflecting that of the blessed Lord on high.

2. This leads us on naturally to the second part of our subject, The Kingdom in its future aspects, when it will be no longer a question of the mysteries of a kingdom, either of heaven or of God, established by testimony, and embracing as its sphere all who profess to receive the testimony (though in reality only those who have been born, by the testimony reaching heart and conscience in the power of the Spirit); but when it will be set up in manifested power and glory with both its heavenly and earthly parts. Of the earthly side of it the Old Testament, in the Psalms and prophets

especially, is full. The heavenly side of it was as yet unrevealed, though doubtless there were those who by faith, like Abraham who looked for the city that hath foundations, rose above earthly promise and hope to that which is heavenly. (Heb 11:16.) But a heavenly portion for His people was among "the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God: those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever," as Moses speaks. (Deu 29:29.) The things that were revealed pointed clearly to a kingdom to be set up in power upon earth, to embrace the whole world within its scope, as in Psa 22:27-28; Psalms 72; Dan 2:44; Dan 7:13-14. But the same testimony of the prophets is decisive, that judgment, world-wide in its bearing, will be necessary to clear the scene for the shining in of the glory of Christ in such a kingdom. Not by the gospel, or any such testimony of long-suffering and grace on the part of God, will Israel and the nations be reached. "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth." (Psa 9:16.) "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa 26:9) "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce wrath: for all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zep 3:8-9) But, first, we must turn to the New Testament for The heavenly part of the Kingdom.

We can well believe that it was not possible that the moral traits and power of the kingdom were perfectly manifested in Him, who alone had come down out of heaven — "even the Son of man who is in heaven" (and that while speaking to Nicodemus on earth) — without something of the heavenly side of it being expressed, and that so as to leave the impression of what was heavenly more and more upon those who had to do with Him. There was, besides, the direct teaching of the Lord. Already in "The Lord's Prayer" (so called), both in the form of it given in Matthew and that in Luke, He directs the hearts of His disciples to the Father's kingdom, "Father . . . thy kingdom come"; while on the earthly side of it, in Matthew at least, they are taught to look for the Father's will to be done as in heaven so on the earth (see R.V. Mat 6:10), in the same whole-hearted, joyful obedience. This double aspect of the kingdom in the future comes out clearly, in the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13, already alluded to. For while the parable left the tares gathered on the field in bundles to be burned, the wheat being gathered out of it into the barn (ver. 30), the interpretation (vers. 36-43) occupies us chiefly with the end of the age; when the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father, so that the kingdom divides into these two parts: the kingdom of the Father in which the righteous are displayed in heavenly glory and the kingdom of the Son of man, of which they are heirs. In that heavenly side of it, "my Father's kingdom," the Lord looks forward to the renewal of His joy with the true remnant of His people in Mat 26:29, though the parallel passage (Luk 22:16) contemplates rather the kingdom then about to be brought in in grace, as we have it now.

Again, the Mount of Transfiguration, as presented in Luk 9:29-36, must have strongly impressed the chosen witnesses, with a character of the kingdom beyond anything prophesied of it in the Old Testament. For it was not only "the Son of man coming in his kingdom" that was portrayed there, as in Matthew; nor "the kingdom of God come with power," as in Mark, both belonging to the

future. But in Luke there is another side of it. They saw the kingdom of God indeed in a very bright gleam of the coming glory of it; they saw His glory and heavenly saints who appeared in glory. But that passed — the time was not yet when it could be established. Still there was what remained; as the cloud of the excellent glory overshadowed them, and they entered into it, to hear such a voice from it saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." Jesus remained to them, revealed in a glory of His Person, deeper than all that could be manifested in the day of the glory of the kingdom — the perfect object of the Father's delight. This is the heavenly side of the kingdom, and is closely connected with the Father's house, in the abiding and eternal joy of it, though this last is apart from and above all dispensation. Thus they had the word of prophecy the more confirmed, as we know from 2Pe 1:19; if there was what went beyond the scope of prophecy in the glory of the Lord Jesus revealed there. And what we have seen of the Mount of Transfiguration is quite characteristic of Luke; as Jewish and earthly hope recedes through the rejection of Christ, though not one word of promise will fail of its ultimate accomplishment, what is heavenly and eternal comes into view. Luke 12 opens the heavens to faith, before the whole scene of man's responsibility under law and grace closes in judgment in Luke 13. The kingdom is connected with the Father's counsels in verse 32, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," even as it is "His kingdom" we are set to seek in verse 31 (reading thus, with New Trans. and R.V.); and accordingly their hearts are directed to a treasure in the heavens (ver. 33) and to the heavenly side of the Lord's coming by the "parable" (ver. 41) of verses 36 and 37, as shown by the blessed result to the watchers, "Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." For this is the rich reward of watching for Him, whether He comes in the second watch or in the third: He will bring us into the Father's house and minister to us the richest joys of it for ever — and what untold joy will be found in having Him to minister it to us, the blessed Lord finding thus the occasion to serve the objects of His love, when we might have thought the need and possibility of His service was over for ever. There is another side of the Christian's life intimately connected with true watching, namely, that of active service; to which the Lord passes on in reply to Peter, as to the application of the parable, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." That is in the day of the kingdom. Both ought to be characteristic of the Christian; but the reward of the watcher is as high above that of the doer as heaven is above the earth, which expresses the relative estimate of these things for the heart of the Lord.

Association with Christ, in both parts of His kingdom, was to be the portion of those who had continued with Him in His temptations in Luk 22:28. For I suppose that eating and drinking at His table in His kingdom (ver. 30) would be entering into His joy; while on the earthly side of it they would "sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." But it was not only when Christ was here that temptations, or what we now speak of as testing, lay on the path for those who follow Him. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), which enables us to understand how all the persecutions and tribulations the Thessalonians were enduring, in patience and faith, was a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God; that they had been counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffered (2Th 1:4-5). If the unrighteous shall not inherit it (1Co 6:9-10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5 : where it is both "the kingdom of God and of Christ"), "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (Jas 2:5.) How well we may be "exhorted and comforted and

charged" by the beloved Apostle, "as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory" (1Th 2:12) — "a kingdom that cannot be shaken," that we receive (Heb 12:28), when all things that are made, not the earth only, but also heaven will be shaken to their removal, according to His promise. In his last epistle Paul looks with confidence to the Lord to be preserved unto His heavenly kingdom (2Ti 4:18), which indeed is "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," for it will never pass away, or pass to another; into which an entrance will be ministered abundantly to those who give diligence to make their calling and election sure. (2Pe 1:10-11.)

We have thus looked at the main passages in the gospels and epistles, in which the kingdom in its heavenly part, in various connections, is brought before us. But there are others, in which it may not be specifically named, but which instruct us as to the Purpose of God in Establishing the Kingdom, and thus help to enlarge our apprehension of the all-important place it has in the ways of God. Thus it is of deepest interest to learn that it is the answer of God, according to His predeterminate counsel, to the lowly grace and humiliation in which His Son came to carry out all His will, and to the world's rejection of Him as thus humbling Himself. Psalms 2 already presents Him as exciting the rage of the nations — their kings and rulers gathered together against Jehovah, and against His Christ. But they can only "do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"; though it is to "break them with a rod of iron; and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." And the kings are warned to come to terms with Him while it is still possible.

Psalms 8 carries us further; for the Spirit's interpretation in Hebrews 2 gives us the answer to the question of the psalm, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man, that thou visitest him?" It is Christ made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour, and set over God's works. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the habitable world to come," of which the apostle speaks. (See Heb 2:6.) "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," so that to have this place of destined supremacy for man He had to become man; though not for that alone, but "that he by the grace of God should taste death for everything." By another quotation of the psalm in 1Co 15:27 we learn how absolute is the subjection of all things to Him that is spoken of in it; for the only exception is He who subjects them to Him, although we see not yet the accomplishment of this. Other psalms might be referred to, but Psalms 110 enters into the argument of the apostle in 1 Corinthians 15 : "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." His place of universal supremacy as man seems a little distinct from all hostile power being subjugated to Him, and this psalm is evidently referred to which says: "Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." This then characterises the whole time of the kingdom — God subjecting everything to Christ. Psalms 91 beautifully grounds His exaltation upon His devotedness. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." (Ver. 14.) In the Gospel of John: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." (John 3:35.) In John 5:20 et seq. it flows from the same place He has in His Father's love, that He has determined that, if the lowly place He took, and that was necessary to carry out His Father's will, exposed Him to be despised and rejected of men, all men shall "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Hence besides His

life-giving title as the Son, all judgment has been committed to Him, because He is the Son of man — the very form in which He was disowned and dishonoured. The same truth of the connection between the place He is set in, and the infinite humiliation He came into in the accomplishment of the divine will, could not be more fully stated than in Philippians 2 : the exaltation of verse 9 and following is directly founded upon it. Emptying Himself as God, humbling Himself as man to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (vers. 6-8), forms the ground of verse 9: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow," and not only of the heavens and earth, but even of the infernal regions, and "that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The Mystery. The revelation of the mystery comes in to confirm what we have seen in the fullest way, bringing out the universal headship of Christ, as nowhere in the Old Testament, save as Psalms 8 supplies a connecting link. For in Ephesians 1, when first the believer is given to know the place he has had individually in Christ in the eternal counsels of God, in complacency, sonship and acceptance — God satisfying Himself in the character of the blessing unfolded to us — He counts upon having those who will be interested in His counsels for the glory of Christ, in whom we have been so blessed; and in all wisdom and prudence He makes known to us the mystery of His will concerning Him: that in view of the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the purpose, for which the ages of time were set in motion, has been reached, He would head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. That is then the object of God in the kingdom, though it may be only seen to be fully accomplished at its close. It is the furthest reach of God's government in time, and discloses Christ as the centre and object of the eternal counsels of God in the establishment of it, and all "to the praise of his glory." (Ver. 14.) "The fulness of times" doubtless carries us on to the end of the millennial reign, which discloses Christ set at the head of everything in heaven and earth. That this revelation, of God's eternal purpose as to Christ, is intimately connected with the place of the assembly, which is the subject of the mystery in every other passage, may be seen in verse 11. For when all things are thus headed up in Christ by God, we are found to be heirs in Him of the whole inheritance of glory: the very next thought is "in whom we also have obtained an inheritance," or, for it is one word in the original, "we have been made heirs."* And before the chapter closes that which was shadowed forth in the first Adam, set at the head of everything on earth, and who was given Eve to share the position with him, is seen to be gloriously realized in the last Adam: Christ, raised from the dead and set at His own right hand in the heavenlies, above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; "and he hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Thus He, too, has His heavenly Eve, the heir and sharer with Him of the whole inheritance of glory, as His body and His bride.

*It is to be deplored that the Revisers of 1881, doubtless through failing to grasp the peculiar position of the assembly and its entire distinctness from Israel, have here missed the point of the passage and translated, "made a heritage." That Israel stood in this relationship to Jehovah is continually found in the Old Testament. Deu 4:20; Deu 9:26; Deu 9:29; Deu 32:9; 1Ki 8:51; Psa 33:12, "the people that he hath chosen for his own inheritance." So Jeremiah often. (Jer 10:16; Jer 12:7, etc.) On the contrary, we are His heirs — "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7.) See Eph 1:14 where, before the time comes for Christ to take the inheritance, redemption being put forth in power to the purchased possession and we inherit it in Him, the Spirit

who has sealed us for God, is for us the earnest of the glorious inheritance. If we were God's heritage there would be no room for the idea and fact of an earnest — the earnest would not be for us, but for God — an impossible thought. If it be supposed that verse 18, "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," involves that the saints are His inheritance, we have only to turn to Daniel 7 to see the aptness and force of the expression. When the Son of man comes to the Ancient of days (vers. 13, 14), and there was given Him dominion, etc., and He is found to be the Ancient of days Himself who comes in verse 22, the saints of the high or heavenly places take and possess the kingdom. (Vers. 18-22.) That is, He formally enters into possession by putting the saints into possession. So the purchased possession, of which we are heirs, can be beautifully characterized as the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and becomes one of the three subjects of knowledge for which the apostle prays for us: (1) His calling in what is infinitely above us according to verses 3-7; (2) the glory of the inheritance according to verses 10, 11, in what stretches out in indefinable glory (Eph 3:18) below us, and (3) the power (ver. 19) that has put us into the calling and made us heirs of the inheritance.

We see, too, how the heading up in Christ of all things has had its commencement: He has already become Head over all things to the assembly; the assembly stands to Him in that relationship as its Head, besides owning Him in the Headship over all things which belongs to Him, though we see not yet all things put under Him. But there is His own personal supremacy besides, according to 1Pe 3:22, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him," which took effect when He ascended. It is blessed to see that thus no thought of God fails of its full accomplishment: if man fails, and has failed, in every position in which God ever set him up, all will be found made good and sustained in Christ as man to God's everlasting glory. The Kingdom and the Assembly to be Distinguished.

It is very important for our souls to see that the assembly is never identified or confounded with the kingdom. In the age to come it will be associated with the king, as we have seen. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2Ti 2:12). Any connection of the assembly with the world in rule or government now would be the worst unfaithfulness to its calling, Christ being rejected. But when He takes to Himself His great power and reigns, it flows out of the assembly's nearness of relationship to Him, as united to Him as its Head, that its association with Him in His kingdom will be complete. In the measure in which the truth of the mystery has been apprehended, and the assembly known to be wholly heavenly in its origin and calling, relationships and hope — the fruit of God's eternal purpose — it will be seen how entirely distinct it is from the kingdom in its present form; though while the assembly is here, those who compose it are in the kingdom too. It must be said, while the assembly is here, because the parable of the wheat and tares has shown us the wheat gathered into the barn, while yet it remains for the Son of man to send forth His angels to gather out of His kingdom all that offends; so that the kingdom overlaps the assembly.

Another consideration flows from the revelation, through Paul, of the place of the assembly, that the kingdom in its present aspect is not so much in the forefront of the apostolic teaching. The great present work of the Spirit of God is taking out of the nations a people for the name of His Son (as Peter declared, Acts 15:14), who belong to Him, in heavenly relationship, according to the counsels of eternity. It is not a work that belongs to the history, or ages, of the world in any way, though now being carried out on earth; hence time does not count in it. The assembly belongs to that remarkable parenthesis in time that comes in between the sixty-ninth and the opening of the

seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:24). Hence The Hope of the Assembly is not the yet future kingdom; although, as we have seen, the assembly is so intimately connected with Him who is the King that every interest of His is hers, even before the day that she is called to reign with Him. The king Himself (though it is not in this relationship she belongs to Him — He is never spoken of as king of the assembly) is her hope. The kingdom is Israel's proper hope; hence the Old Testament closes with the arising of the Sun of righteousness, even as Elijah must precede the great and terrible day of the Lord. (Mal 4:2.) The New Testament closes with the bright and morning Star; if every promise for Israel and the earth is secured in Him who is the root as well as the offspring of David. But it is not such Jewish relationships that touch the affections of the Bride. The morning star belongs only to those who watch through the night, and is Christ, as we know Him in heavenly glory, and as coming for us — no sign to be looked for — before He rises as the Sun. The moment the Lord presents Himself as such the answer of her heart is immediate, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come," and we are given the whole range of her interests, because they are His, in the rest of the verse. The hope of the assembly, then, is the coming of the Lord Himself to receive her to Himself for the Father's house, before He comes to reign. It need not be sought for, at least as formally distinguished from the latter aspect of His coming, save through the apostle by whom her distinct place according to the counsels of divine love is revealed. Save that, when thus revealed, we can look back in the light of the revelation and see how fully it was before the heart of the Lord, specially in His closing intercourse with those who were to form the nucleus of the assembly; and this to satisfy His own heart, as in John 14:2-3, and John 17:24. In the Epistles to the Thessalonians, believed to be the earliest of Paul's writings, we have the revelation of the heavenly side of the Lord's coming, which when revealed is found to run through the whole warp and woof of the assembly's constitution, ingrained as it were into the Christian life; and this, by the way it is assumed and implied, even when not specifically stated, as, for instance, in 2Co 5:2; 2Co 5:4; 2Co 5:9; 1Co 11:26, 1Co 15:23; 1Co 15:51; Eph 5:27; Php 3:20; Heb 9:28; Mat 25:10; Mat 25:13; Rev 3:10, Rev 12:5, and other passages. The connection of the Assembly with the Kingdom in Hope.

There is a connection we have with the kingdom, as we are now looking at it, in the coming day of glory, which has still to be noted. It is the sphere of reward for individual saints and servants, to which their responsible path here looks forward. Thus in the teaching of the gospels, in Mat 5:10-12, the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are declared blessed in being persecuted for righteousness: reward in heaven, rather, being presented to those reproached and persecuted for Christ's sake. Reward indeed is never an adequate motive for the saint, but is set before faith — as an encouragement in being true to the Lord; and on the other hand there will be the loss of it where there is unfaithfulness — the kingdom being specially the sphere wherein cognizance will be taken of both by the Lord, and that as the result of manifestation at His judgment-seat. (See 2Co 5:10; 1Co 3:13-15, 1 Cor. 17; 4:5.) Even a cup of cold water given to one of the Lord's little ones in the name of a disciple will not be forgotten in that day. (Mat 10:42.) What a Lord we have to serve! who but He would think of recognising anything of such little account? It is when the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels that He will reward every one according to his works. (Mat 16:27; Rev 22:12.) Thus it would be "in the regeneration" (or "times of restitution of all things," as it is called in Acts 3:21), when the Son of man should sit on the throne of His glory, that those who had followed Him in His rejection should sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, if many that are first should be last, and the last first. (Mat 19:28.) Rule over

many things, which involves the kingdom, is the appointed portion of the faithful servants in Matthew 25, as well as entering into the joy of the Lord. (Compare Luk 12:42 and following.) The parable of the pounds in Luke 19 specifies authority over ten and five cities for the servants, according to the quality of their service — "faithful in a very little." The Appearing.

All this prepares us for the place, that the aspect of the Lord's coming, known as His revelation (1Co 1:1), manifestation (Col 3:4), or coming (1Th 3:13), the day of Jesus Christ (Php 1:6), and appearing in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, has, as bearing upon the responsible walk and service of the people of God. It is with a view to the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," and which in its times God shall show, that the apostle urges Timothy (1Ti 6:13-16) to faithfulness in the charge committed to him; as also in the second epistle, where it is a question of the exercise of his ministry, while yet there was an ear for the truth, he is solemnly charged to preach the word and be instant in season and out of season, and so on; as "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom." Even as the apostle, with the consciousness of having fought a good fight and kept the faith, loved the thought of it for himself, and knew that there was laid up for him, in view of that day, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge should give him, and not to him only, but unto all that love His appearing. (2 Timothy 4) To Titus, in relation to the duty of servants towards their masters, he characterises it as "that blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," for which we are set to look under divine training. Thus while our hearts rest in the hope of the Lord's coming for the assembly, in which the counsels of eternity as to her will be accomplished, our responsibilities, as individual Christians and servants of the Lord, connect with the time of manifestation before the judgment-seat of Christ, and His appearing, and kingdom. No definite link with Time for the Assembly.

Another consequence of the unique place of the assembly as belonging to heaven, though gathered out upon earth, is that there is nothing definitely to connect the moment of its completion, and translation to its own place, with that of the resumption of God's ways with His ancient people, and as preparatory to assuming the direct government of the earth, through the mediatorial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. We may judge from the analogy of God's ways in the past, that He will not long leave the earth without testimony from Him after the assembly is gone. And this gains support by the fact that the testimony of the disciples to the coming kingdom, when the Lord was upon earth, which was broken off by the Jews' rejection of it, and their consequent scattering amongst the nations, is looked at by the Lord (Mat 10:16-23) as to be resumed when Israel is found again in their cities; "For verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." That the testimony is not to be confined to them we know from Mat 24:14 : "This gospel of the kingdom" — note, not that of the grace of God or glory of Christ as we now have it — "shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come," "The everlasting gospel" of Rev 14:6 may give us the general character of this testimony "to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," and help us to distinguish it from the gospel now preached. In Matthew 25 we are brought to the issue of that testimony, which has been so universal, at least, among the nations outside Christendom, that the reception or rejection of the messengers of it, "these my brethren" (ver. 40), becomes the only point in question when the Son of man comes and sits upon the throne of His

glory, and all nations are gathered before Him. It determines the difference between the sheep who enter into the blessedness of the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world and eternal life, and the goats who are cursed and go away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For the judgment of the living being by Christ in person is as definitive and everlasting in its consequences as the judgment of the dead in Revelation 20, with which it has too often been confounded. The Last Half-week of Daniel's Seventy. In Revelation such a testimony from God may cover and include the whole of the last week of Daniel's severity. But there is nothing definitely to mark the commencement of that epoch. So careful is scripture to furnish no date that would connect the assembly with the course of things on earth, either as to the Lord's coming for it or the starting-point of the testimony which is to succeed the assembly's. It is very different with the last half of the seventieth week. The Lord gives us a very unmistakable mark by which that is determined, quoting from the prophet Dan 9:27, Dan 11:31, in Mat 24:15. It is the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. There may have been before that frightful event the beginning of sorrows (ver. 8); but "then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be." (Vers. 21, 22.) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it," as Jeremiah had testified (Jer 30:7): "it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." And so the Lord speaks of it, as it will affect the Jew in verses 14-20; also indicating that, if sharp, the tribulation would be short. "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Ver. 22.) But that it has a wider application scripture leaves us in no uncertainty. Psalms and prophets alike point to it. See for the latter Amo 5:18-20; Zep 1:14-15. But in Rev 3:10 the promise to the overcomer, while still the assembly was on earth, is conclusive. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." To be kept out of the hour of it is to be taken out of time altogether, according to the assembly's hope. See as to those who go through it, Rev 7:9-14 proving its universal character; while Rev 12:12 tells, at least, of its limited duration. It is variously computed as "time, times and half a time" (Dan 7:25, Dan 12:7; Rev 12:14); "forty-two months" (Rev 11:2, Rev 13:5); and "twelve hundred and sixty days," specially counted, as to the very days, because of what the witnesses should have to go through in Rev 11:3, and of the preservation of the woman (Israel) who brought forth the man-child who had been caught up to God and His throne from the enmity of the dragon, now directed against her and the remnant of her seed. (Rev 12:6 and following.) All indicate three years and a half, and evidently the same last half-week of Daniel's seventy. The period closes with the coming of the Lord, as Mat 24:29-30, tells us. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." This brings us to the close of the seventy weeks. See also Rev 1:7 as to the effect on the nations when the moment has actually come; very different from the delusions which, conscience being hardened by the progress of providential judgments, ever increasing in intensity, under the seals, trumpets and vials of Revelation, they had buoyed themselves up, saying, "Peace and safety," when sudden destruction was coming upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. (1Th 5:2-3.) Contrast their earlier impressions under the seals (Rev 6:16), when they said the great day of His wrath had come, though it had not, and called upon the

mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. But the effect of judgment upon the proud heart of man that will not bow before God is only to harden. (Rev 16:9-10) Providential judgment is over now. The Lord comes to execute the last stroke of judgment in person. But this is to anticipate. To turn back a little: though it would be impossible in a brief paper to bring forward all the testimonies there are as to what will characterize that fearful time, whether as to the objects of judgment, or the judgments that fall upon them. Daniel must be studied to give us the aspect of things in the East mainly, while Revelation is principally concerned with the West, though neither exclusively. The Beast and Antichrist. As to the last, there will be the Satanically revived Roman empire, in the beast, the first of Revelation 13, and given to us in more detail in Revelation 17, with seven heads and ten horns. By its heads it is identified with the various phases the Roman empire of the past has passed through, though now revived in a form in which it never existed before, with a head and ten associated kings. Of these we are told that they had received no kingdom as yet (ver. 12), so that it is in vain to look for them in any past or present distribution of the map of Europe. But besides the first beast of chapter 13, there will be another (ver. 11), with lamb-like horns, but speaking as a dragon. It is plainly Antichrist, who exercises all the power of the first beast in his presence, playing into his hands in the West, at least, by enforcing, on pain of death, the worship of the image of the beast he makes. In the East, we know from 2Th 2:4 et seq., that he sets himself up as the object of worship in the temple of God.

There we learn also that, if the mystery of lawlessness was already at work in the apostle's time, before it could be headed up in this lawless one, whose coming was after the working of Satan (ver. 9), there must be the removal of a hindering thing (ver. 6) and a hindering Person. (Ver. 7.) The first would be, doubtless, the ordered government of the world, "the powers that be that are ordained of God," and that act as a barrier to the full outbreak of the lawless will of man; the second, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the assembly. When the assembly's hope is fulfilled in the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto Him (ver. 1), the Holy Spirit will be no longer here; the restraint will be removed. "And then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming." (Ver. 8.) Thus we have Satan's two chief instruments, the Beast and the false prophet; while from Daniel 8, 11 we know that the ancient struggle between the kings holding territory north and south of Palestine will be renewed, and that land itself will become the battle-field of their contending forces, which will thus bring the last scourge of God — the most terrible that there could be — upon the land, and the nation restored in unbelief. As to the once professing assembly, all that are Christ's being taken out of it at His coming, it is spued out of His mouth (Rev 3:16) as the most nauseous evil ever manifested on earth; for the corruption of the best good must ever be the worst evil. And it becomes the fitting tool of Satan to help to build up, by its corrupt alliance with the world, that masterpiece of his, Babylon. It is the apostasy fully come. (2Th 2:3.) And there will be the dark, judicial blinding of God, where the light of testimony from Him had been so long maintained. Now, instead of sending the truth, "God shall send men strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Besides this, there will be the awful display of direct Satanic power: his place found no more in heaven (where, note, it is still), "the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels with him . . . having great wrath, because he knoweth that

he hath but a short time." (Rev 12:8-9; Rev 12:12.) As the result, in Rev 16:13-14, we find unclean spirits issuing from the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (a Satanic trinity of evil) spirits of demons working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

Such are some of the elements of the scene with which the Lord will have to deal when He comes from heaven. For if the forces of the world under Satan are thus arrayed against Him, the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, as we see in the next chapter, Rev 17:14 : "And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful, the heavenly saints." The details are given more fully in Rev 19:11-21. For He comes to establish His kingdom like David by conquest and judgment,* before He reigns as Solomon in peace. The multitude of the nations gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army that came with Him from heaven, perish by the sword of Him whose name is called the Word of God — come as such to make good the nature of God by judgment upon all who would not have the full revelation of it in grace — and who treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." While Satan who led them was cast bound into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive them no more, till the 1,000 years of the kingdom should be fulfilled.

*And to this character of the exercise of His power belong several passages in the psalms that, mainly by an alternative rendering in the margin rejected by the text, have been used to give a distorted conception of the kingdom when established in peace. I refer to Psa 18:44 (2Sa 22:45): Psa 66:3; and Psa 81:15. (See for the Heb. Deu 33:29, "found liars," with marg. "subdued.") The verse that follows in Psalms 18 helps to bring out the force of the expression: it is really as in New Trans., "strangers come cringing unto me." The Hebrew, I quote from Delitzsch, to deny, lie, dissemble, is said here, as frequently, of the enforced submission, which the vanquished show, to the victor. It in no way characterizes the reign of the Lord Jesus.

We may not be able to put together all the passages that, in the Old Testament, foretold such a confederacy of the nations; nor to identify them, and their overthrow, with the later prophecy of Revelation 19. Jerusalem would appear to be the objective in those referred to. And when the Lord was about to resume relations with His ancient people, and Jerusalem would come necessarily into prominence, it is quite enough to account for the assemblage of the nations against it, under Satan's blinding influence. See Psalms 83, Psa 118:10 et seq.; Isa 17:12-14; Joe 3:11-16, compared with ver. 2; also such passages as that referred to already in Zep 3:8; Mic 4:11; Zec 14:2 et seq. (comp. Zec 12:2-9), which show, the design of God in thus gathering the nations, and His direct intervention in their destruction. The ways of God with the nation in connection with these events will have resulted in a remnant of them turning to Him in true repentance, made willing in the day of His power (Psalms 110), as they were not in that of His grace, while the apostate part will be cut off in judgment. Zec 13:8-9 tells us of them; and of the third part left, who will be brought through the fire and refined as silver and tried as gold, whom the Lord will own as the nation, saying, "It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Also Zec 12:10-14 tells of their repentance and its source, when they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced,

and mourn and be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

If there is one last assault of the nations under the Assyrian, the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 (and of other prophecies, ver. 17) and Ezekiel 39, it will be after the Lord has come to Zion and Jerusalem; and by His presence and power manifested on their behalf it comes to its end. (Mic 5:5.) Warrior judgment when "in righteousness he doth judge and make war" is over, if it may be so distinguished from the sessional judgment which takes place when the day, so long before appointed, has come in the which God "will judge the habitable world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Then the Son of man shall come in His glory and sit upon the throne of His glory, and the living nations of the world shall be gathered before Him to receive their judgment; which depends, as we have seen, upon the character of their treatment of the brethren of the king, sent out to them with the warning that the hour of His judgment is come, and that results in those who are counted to have received Him in receiving them, entering into the blessedness of the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, the rest being sent away to the lake of fire. (Mat 25:31-46.) The Heavenly Sources of the Blessedness of the Kingdom.

We may now be prepared to contemplate the blessedness of such a kingdom, in so far as God has been pleased to reveal it to us, only first looking at it in the heavenly sources of the glory and power of it. The time has come when He to whom all power is given in heaven and earth (Mat 28:18), who has so long been set down with His Father in His throne, is to take His place on His own throne. (Rev 3:21.) Nothing could help us better to enter into the effect of the point thus reached in the ways of God than the scene opened to John anticipatively in heaven in Revelation 4, 5, when the Lamb has established His title to the inheritance of all things upon which He was about to enter. The Spirit leads on our hearts to the full result in an universe of blessing, before we are given the judgments that were necessary to clear the way for it, as from chapter 6 on. The central object of the whole scene of glory is the "Lamb as slain, in the midst of the throne, and of the living creatures, and in the midst of the elders." His taking the roll out of the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne was the signal for the outburst of the new song of those who formed the nearest circle round the throne: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed* to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign over the earth." Myriads of angels in outer circles take up the glad refrain, celebrating His power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; though they cannot sing the song of redemption, nor indeed are ever said to sing in Scripture. And then we have every creature, in heaven, and on the earth, and even beneath the earth's crust, as well as such as are in the sea, in their ordered place and blessing, and celebrating the praises of Him who sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb by whom all was brought in. The attributes of the throne, of which the living creatures are representative, add their Amen, while the elders fall down and worship — their privileged place throughout the book.

*For so it must read, omitting "us" and substituting "them" and "they" for "us" and "we" in verse 10. It is not of themselves they are thinking as the subjects of redemption, absorbed as they are with the glory of Him who wrought it: and this is true worship.

It is to be noted, too, the place that from this out the elders have in connection with the living creatures: the elders are the representatives of all who are Christ's, not only the assembly, but the saints of Old Testament times as well, seen in Revelation 4 enthroned around the throne of God, with kingly crowns and priestly robes: the living creatures are symbolic of the attributes of the throne in government. These have been administered by angels hitherto, in the unseen providential government of the world. Hence angels do not appear in chapter 4: they are at their work. But "unto angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come," of which the apostle speaks in Hebrews 1, 2. This was reserved for Christ and the heavenly saints associated with Him. Thus the moment the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, is seen, as a slain Lamb, in the midst of the throne, with His undisputed title to all declared, the elders are moved up into association with the living creatures, a place they ever after keep in the book, and angels take their place in outer circles. Christ will henceforth administer the kingdom by the saints; not unseen, as angels had been, but in glorified bodies, everywhere radiating the glory of Christ who is displayed in them, as they carry out the government of His throne. For in that day the Lord "will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." (2Th 1:10) According to His own wonderful words about us to the Father in John 17, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." We shall be displayed in the glory of Christ to the astonished world, and do not wait till then to know how dear we are to the Father, for we have heard Him say it, and verse 26 makes full provision for our enjoyment of it now as a present reality. Again, in Colossians 3, if Christ is our life, and we are now hid with Him in God, the moment He is manifested we shall be manifested with Him in glory. Of this manifestation with Him in glory the remarkable appendix to Revelation, which comes in after the eternal state, but before the book closes, from Rev 21:9 to Rev 22:5, gives us in symbolic representation the wonderful details. John is shown the bride, the Lamb's wife, as the holy city Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and thus to shed the light of that glory on the earthly Jerusalem, and the nations generally, who will walk in the light of it. There is no temple in it, a clear difference between it and the earthly Jerusalem; the whole city is a sanctuary. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, thus making it the heavenly metropolis of the kingdom, which the kings and nations own by bringing their glory and honour to (not "into") it. While the assembly preserves its character of grace; for the leaves of the Tree of Life in the midst of it were for the healing of the nations.

How direct is the association of the assembly with the kingdom when it becomes the Lord's. The power and rule over the nations vested in Him according to Psalms 2 He confers on the overcomers in Rev 2:26-27. And in Rev 3:21 they are even given to sit with Him in His throne, "even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." In Revelation 20 we learn that all who are of the first resurrection shall be priests of God and of Christ, and reign with Him a thousand years, which gives us the first full intimation of its destined duration: in the Old Testament this had been only expressed in general terms, as measured by the continuance of the heavenly bodies, the sun and moon, as Psa 89:36-37; Psa 72:5; Psa 72:7; Psa 72:17. But there are other passages still that are needed to help us in our apprehension of this great subject. Peace was to characterize the long-expected kingdom according to the abundant testimony of the prophets. The fulfilment of it had been presented to the nation in a Saviour, Christ the Lord, born to them in the city of David; as the heavenly host proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on

earth, good pleasure in men." (Luk 2:11-14.) But He whose coming might have brought in peace was rejected, and the proffered peace taken from the earth (Luk 12:51) can only be celebrated as to be established in heaven (Luk 19:38). The fact was, that He, in whom all the fulness was pleased to dwell, had to lay the only possible ground for peace in such a world by the blood of His cross, and so, by Himself, reconcile all things to Himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven. (Col 1:19-22.) We know that the reconciliation has begun with the leaders of the revolt — with us who, alone of all His creatures, were alienated from Him in heart, mind and will: "You, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death" — sweetest fruit for us of the wonderful work of redemption, with all its satisfaction for God. But the moment was come when the reconciliation should be extended to all things, even as He had tasted death for everything. Long had the whole creation groaned and travailed in pain, subjected to this as its lot by the fall of him who had been set at the head of it; but it was "in hope that the creation itself should be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." (Rom 8:19-22.) "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." This is the point to which we have been brought according to the wonderful purpose of God. "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isa 40:5), and we shall be manifested with Him in that glory. It is the occasion of that celebration in heaven recorded for us in Revelation 11 when "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." (Vers. 15-17.)

Now we may turn to contemplate the earthly scene of the kingdom thus established, as the Old Testament presents it to us, in a few passages. And first as to the Inhabitants of the renewed earth, the subjects of the kingdom. The first place must be given to the 144,000 of Rev 14:1-5, who had gone through the awful time of the ascendancy of the Beasts of Revelation 13 : they had endured to the end, not only to be saved into the blessing of the kingdom, but to be specially associated with the Lamb on Mount Zion and have His Father's name written on their foreheads. Redeemed from among men, the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb, they come nearest to the portion of the heavenly saints; they sing the song of heaven though on earth, and not of course in glorified bodies as they of heaven. Those of the true remnant of His people who had been slain for their faithful testimony, whether in the beginning of sorrows (Rev 6:9-11) or later on under the severer testing of the last sore troubles, having lost their lives after the assembly was gone and before the kingdom was established in power, get the yet better portion of the heavenly saints, and are found in Rev 20:4 — both companies of them (see R.V.) — as of the first resurrection, kept open, as it were, to include them; and instead of being subjects of the kingdom they, as well as the saints that came with Him from heaven, "lived" (because they had been raised from the dead to do so) "and reigned with Christ." (Vers. 5, 6.) In glorified bodies, alike with all who are of that resurrection, they will never have their localised habitation on earth again, but will be available for Christ in the administration of His kingdom, as we have seen. But to return to the inhabitants of the earth: besides those of Revelation 14 there will be the elect remnant, not merely of Judah and Benjamin who had gone through the tribulation, but of the ten tribes who had never had the responsibility of the rejection of Christ, and will be dealt with separately (see Eze 20:30-44) —

144,000 of all the tribes of Israel who are sealed as the servants of God in their foreheads. (Rev 7:1-8.) "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another," as the Lord says in Mat 24:31. These will form the nation, brought into the enjoyment of the promises made to their fathers, in the land, now to be possessed in the full extent of it, under the new covenant — the characteristic blessings of which are the law written in their hearts, their sins and iniquities remembered no more, and the Spirit poured out upon them. They are blessings with which we are familiar in God's infinite grace; for though not under covenant, and having a far richer portion according to God's everlasting counsels in Christ, all the blessings of the new covenant are ministered unto us by the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3)

Then again, Revelation 7 tells us of a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Doubtless they are the fruit of the testimony, that was to be sent out to the nations outside Christendom, after the assembly was gone: the sheep of Matthew 25, who enter into the blessing of the kingdom as prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Here we learn something of what the blessing is. They have their place "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple (compare Isa 66:21): and he that sitteth on the throne shall tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

It is well to have the whole description before us; for coming nearer to the realisation of the kingdom-blessings, as we might expect, it concentrates the light of them more fully perhaps than any one passage of the Old Testament, full and rich as its testimony is as to the world-wide prosperity and peace to be enjoyed under the sceptre of the Lord Jesus Christ. Three things go far to secure this: the manifested glory and power of the throne of the Lord; the Spirit poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2); and the absence of Satan, bound in the bottomless pit. Thus although children are born to the saints that inhabit the earth, all else having been cut off by judgment, and inherit the flesh from their parents in its unchanged evil, there is nothing to act upon the flesh to draw out its evil. Or if, in exceptional cases, there is an outbreak of the will of the flesh, the sceptre of righteousness, that characterises the throne of the Lord, secures its suppression by instant judgment. The sinner being a hundred years old is devoted to judgment, though in the prevailing length of life, dying at that age, he will be accounted a child. (Isa 65:20.) Moreover, there will be a standing witness of the consequences of transgression for the warning of others: "They shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." (Isa 66:24.)

There will be no death otherwise in the millennium. "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." (Isa 25:7-8.) Those who have died in the Lord — in what past multitudes by grace! — have ceased as a characteristic class; hence their blessedness as a whole is declared, when the number of them is complete, in Rev 14:13 : "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in

the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."*

*This would be special and needed consolation at the moment contemplated in the passage, when those who were dying in the Lord, cut off for their faithful testimony, did so after all that were Christ's had been raised at His coming, and before the kingdom was set up, to which they had borne testimony. It might have seemed that they had lost everything, though, as we have seen, it is their gain, in being raised to form part of the heavenly company who reign with Christ. (Rev 20:4.) Government in man's hands. But now we must take up a link with the past ways of God, if only to bring out the contrast. Government had been first entrusted to man in Noah, but his fall was immediate and complete through failing to govern himself. There had been the government of the throne of God in Israel, but preferring to be like the nations, God had given them a king after His own heart, in whose seed the kingdom should be established for ever; though meanwhile the trial of royalty in man became a complete failure, in his responsible descendants; and the throne of the world was committed to the Gentiles in Nebuchadnezzar, with apostasy as the result, and the development of its bestial character; and thus the times of the Gentiles began to run their course.

Now at last the government was to be upon the shoulder of a Son, counted to Israel indeed, but "whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isaiah 9) "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David." (Luk 1:32.) Although, as we have seen, when He takes the throne He does so by a wider title, even of universal sovereignty as Son of man — "His name made excellent in all the earth." (Psalms 8) "Fairer than the children of men," "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy throne. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Psalms 45) Nor are we left in uncertainty as to who these "fellows" are that are so wonderfully associated with Him in the day of His glory: "we are become fellows of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." (Heb 3:14 uses the same word as in Heb 1:9 — quoted from the psalm.) A multitude of passages in the Old Testament set forth the effect of such a government on earth as had never been known, or, but for them, conceived by the heart of man. It may be helpful to put together a few of them under different heads. First, as descriptive of the King and the character of His reign; then of the special place Jerusalem and the nation of Israel have in the kingdom; and lastly, the way the whole earth is brought into the blessing. The King.

We have already looked at Psalms 2, Psalms 8, Psalms 45.

Psalms 72 gives the character of the rule established: "he shall judge thy people with righteousness" — it is the great prevailing characteristic of the kingdom everywhere — "and thy poor with judgment." The subordinate authorities from the highest to the lowest, too, are in their perfect place — "the mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth: in his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace." The character of the rule He sets before Himself when He receives the kingdom is found in Psalms 101. Isaiah 9 has been referred to. In Isaiah 11 we find the Spirit in seven-fold perfection for government resting upon the

Rod out of the stem of Jesse, making Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge, with the result of peace between animals that naturally would prey on each other, "and a little child shall lead them." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." In Isaiah 32, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judgment," with results set forth in verses 2-5, and then, with the Spirit brought in as "poured upon us from on high," in verses 15-17, the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, etc.: "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." In Isa 42:1-4 He is "my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him," and the result — "he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . . and the isles shall wait for his law." See also the connection of Isa 61:1-2 (quoted by the Lord in Luk 4:18-19) in the earthly blessing resulting in the land, when "the day of vengeance of our God" is fulfilled, closing with the remarkable testimony of verse 11. See also Jer 23:5-6. The place of the Nation in the Kingdom. As to the place the nation, with Jerusalem and Zion, will have in the kingdom, only a few passages out of so many that there are can be referred to. Deu 15:6 will not fail of its accomplishment in the supremacy of Israel among the nations, though long deferred through their failure on the ground of responsibility. Then "the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath." "He shall subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet." (Psa 47:3. See also Isa 60:12-14.) But this will be brought about by the resources of God's sovereign grace, connected with the establishment of royalty in God's king in Zion, when under law and even priesthood they had utterly broken down. See Psalms 78 for the record of their failure, and the place that Judah and Mount Zion and David have at the close as the new ground of the blessing of the people, also Psa 132:13 et seq. This is ever the significance of Zion in Scripture. God sets His king there. (Psalms 2) The salvation of Israel is looked for to come out of it (Psalms 14); and Isaiah 66 celebrates the accomplishment of it. In the psalms that follow the introduction of the king in Psalms 45 (as, for instance, (Psa 48:2), Zion is the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great king. (See also vers. 8, 11, 12.) Again, out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. (Psa 50:2.) "In that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. . . . The Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." (Isa 24:21, etc.) "There shall the mountain of the Lord's house be established, and out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa 2:2-3; Mic 4:1-3; Zep 3:14-20.)

Morally it will be as new heavens and a new earth, when the Lord creates Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." (Isa 65:17-19 and following.) All that love and mourn for her are called to rejoice with her, and be delighted in the abundance of her glory, in Isaiah 66. (Compare Jer 32:39-42; Jer 33:7-16.) No language can exceed in beauty the consequent effects set forth in Isaiah 60-62, when it can be said, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," following upon Isa 59:20, when the Redeemer comes to Zion and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob. "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." (Isa 60:21.) The blessing of the nation will rest upon the new covenant, to be

made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. But it will not be according to the covenant made with their fathers, when the law was imposed on the flesh that was contrary to it. It will be put in their inward parts and written in their hearts: there will be no more need of teaching every man his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord, "for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:31-34.) The subjective change wrought in them, when gathered out of the countries wherein they had been scattered and brought into their land, is further expressed in Eze 11:19-20 : "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes," etc.; while Eze 36:25-27 adds the Spirit put within them as the power to enable them to do so: and see the following verses, for the blessed work of repentance and establishment resulting — they shall remember their own evil ways and shall loathe themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and abominations. And thus morally cleansed, their waste cities should be built and inhabited, and the land that was desolate become as the garden of Eden. Nor shall they be two nations, for in chapter 37:22 the Lord says: "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." (See Eze 34:23-31.) One blessed consequence is, that the guilty wanderings of the people are over for ever, and this according to the covenant of the Lord with them. (Isa 59:21. See also Eze 14:11; Eze 39:7; Eze 39:29.) The Millennial Blessing world-wide.

It is not easy to divide between the blessing of Israel and their land, and the world-wide aspect of it, they are so closely connected. For, as we learn from Rom 11:12, "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 fulness?" "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the whole earth with fruit." (Isa 27:6.) Compare the call of grace (Isa 45:22), "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," with the answer to it, and the way of its accomplishment in Isa 49:6 : "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Also Isa 52:9-10)

Thus, if as we have seen (Isaiah 2) the house of God will be there, it will be the centre of the world's worship. So Isa 66:23, "from one new moon to another . . . shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." It is the house of prayer for all nations. (Isa 56:7; see Psa 22:27, Psa 48:9-10 and Psa 86:9.) And this will be enforced by judgment. (Zec 14:16-21.) "At that time" Jeremiah witnesses "they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord," no more to walk after the imaginations of their evil heart. (Jer 3:17.) Psalms 96-100 celebrate the universality and glory of the kingdom, following on the moral restoration of Israel in Psalms 95; also Psalms 145 and the closing hallelujah psalms: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." But other testimonies abound. As long ago as Num 14:21 we find Jehovah pledges Himself — "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." (See Hab 2:14; Isa 40:5.) "Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (Psa 72:19) closes "the prayers of David the Son of Jesse," for what more could he ask for? But now we must pass on from the fulness of testimony, to what the world will be when the kingdom of it becomes the Lord's, and everything is subdued to Him — the

whole created universe owning His rightful sway — to see what scripture tells us of its close. The close of the Kingdom.

It would be a mistake to build anything upon the types, apart from the doctrine of the word. But in the light of what we learn from scripture of what takes place on earth at the close, it is surely significant that, in Numbers 29, where from verse 12 we have the offerings on the occasion of the feast of tabernacles, which were to be the expression of joy and worship on earth when every word of promise had been fulfilled and blessing spread everywhere, there are marks of decline. Beginning with an outburst of joy that was almost perfect on the first day — thirteen bullocks (besides the two rams and fourteen lambs that remained the same throughout) — there was a steady decline in man's appreciation of the blessing during the ordinary seven days of the duration of the feast; for the bullocks dropped down by one each day to seven on the seventh day, God securing this testimony of its completeness on His part to the end. The eighth day would give what was apart from the earthly blessing, leading into what was heavenly and eternal.

What then does the word testify as to what is before the world, after the enjoyment in undisturbed peace of ten centuries of blessing under the sceptre of the Lord Jesus? It would be a terrible surprise if we had not learned what the heart of the flesh is towards God in the cross.

First, as to the action of God, whose voice at Sinai had shaken the earth but now we learn from Heb 12:26-27 that "He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this yet once more signifieth the removal of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" — that would be the heavenly side of the kingdom which we have received. (Ver. 28.) How unaccountable it seems, without further testimony as to the causes of it, that this is what is before the earth and the heavens connected with it,* after it had been the scene of the magnificent display of the glory of God, made good and maintained throughout the kingdom by the Son of man, everything in heaven and earth having been subjected to Him.

*It may be noted also, because it has been a difficulty to some, that heaven is used in at least three ways. There is the atmospheric heaven that is necessary to life on the earth: thus, "the heavens and the earth" go to make up one complete sphere of existence. (See Gen 1:1; Gen 2:1; Gen 2:4; 2Pe 3:5, etc. These are shaken and removed, as in Hebrews 12 : "kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment," etc. (2Pe 3:7; 2Pe 3:12); and give place to new heavens and a new earth (ver. 13), such as we see in Rev 21:1-8. They are not two distinct spheres but one, in which God dwells with the redeemed for ever. But there is besides the heaven of God's throne, and government of the earth. Here the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan among them. (Job 1:6.) Here, in the heavenlies at least, as contrasted with the earthly scene of which the heavens are a component part, is the sphere of the assembly's conflict with the wiles of Satan, with "spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies." (Ephesians 6) Here he is the accuser of the brethren night and day before God; whence he will be cast out into the earth, and his angels with him. (Rev 12:9) It is for this reason perhaps — of Satan's defiling presence, or because of its connection by government with earth and man, that "the heavenly things themselves" need to be purified with better sacrifices than of bulls and goats. And lastly there is the heaven of God's presence: "the third heaven" it may be supposed to which Paul was caught up — "paradise" — and heard unspeakable words which could not be expressed in human

language. (2Co 12:2.) But Peter goes further (2 Peter 3), for he reminds us that, if the world is wilfully ignorant (because it has been plainly revealed) of the appalling interruption of the ordered course of nature in the past by the word of God, when the world that then was being overflowed with water perished, worse is in store for it: "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." And more (ver. 10) he develops that in that day "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And he shows the practical bearing of all this upon the walk of Christians now. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting the day of God"; and again he insists on the tremendous reality of the cataclysm, "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Thus we learn that, if never again by water, the solemn dealing of God by fire is analogous to the flood God brought in upon the world of the ungodly. It is "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." But prophecy is more specific still as to the character of the ungodliness that leads to the closing up of all God's earthly ways of government, including the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, by a judgment of fire from heaven. See Revelation 20 : "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog" — symbolic names given them from the last up-rising of the nations against God (Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39) at the commencement of the millennium. But there never had been before anything to compare with this gathering of the nations to battle, whether judged of in the magnitude of their forces — "the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" — or in the light of the blessing enjoyed for so long, under the manifested glory of Christ, from which they have revolted, to range themselves under Satan's banner the moment he appears.

It is the last expression of what had been fully proved long before in the cross, of what the heart of man is in its irreconcilable enmity against God: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about," Those with whom the kingdom had begun had been kept faithful throughout its course, a mere handful now as compared with the teeming millions of their descendants, in a thousand years when no wars had decimated (Psa 46:9; Isa 2:4), or sickness or death had been known amongst them, save where transgression had brought it upon them. Grace is not inherited: though there had been no test throughout the long course of the kingdom to bring out the unregenerate condition of the mass. Now it was come, in Satan's presence once more; and the saints and "the beloved city," which for so long had been the place of the throne, and the sanctuary, and the centre of light and blessing flowing out to the earth's utmost bounds, are the objective of the hostile array of the whole earth; till "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where his former instruments "the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." The last Enemy that shall be destroyed. The next scene, opened to us in the prophecy, is the momentous one of the last act of the Lord Jesus in judgment; for all judgment is committed unto Him. It is that of the great white throne. From His face that sat on it "the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." This is as we have seen from Paul in Hebrews, and Peter. They are removed by the voice that shakes not the earth only but also heaven: "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The

time scene is over: the dead are raised in God's eternity. Death was the last enemy to be subjected to Christ by God, and in being subjected is destroyed. (1Co 15:25-26.) Death and hades deliver up the dead that seemed to be most firmly held within their grasp, namely, those that died in their sins, from Adam till the end of time. Then cometh the end, "when he delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father." (1Co 15:24-28.) There had been no domain of man or Satan that had not felt the power of Him who subjected all to Christ. The declared purpose of God in the kingdom had been accomplished. "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet"; and all things had been so completely subjected, that the only exception was God Himself who had subjected them to Him. And now the astonishing revelation is made to us, that He who had reigned as man, till none were left to dispute His title, delivers up the kingdom to God, the Father; and the Son also Himself becomes subject unto Him that put all things under Him. He gives up His reigning place as man, to take His own place of predilection — blessed, adorable Lord — as Son subject to the Father, "that God may be all in all."

Then will be produced the full result of the work of the cross. The new creation, where no trail of the serpent or trace of sin ever came, will be founded on the perfection of that work and be the manifestation of it for ever. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." "Now once in the consummation of the ages hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." All the value of that work was needed to remove a single sin from our guilty souls, and, blessed be God, was effectual to remove all our sins, and us who had sinned as well, for God and for faith: here God founds a new heaven and new earth upon it, where sin can never come. The Eternal State.

It unfolds to John in Rev 21:1-7 : "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea" — no part not brought into order and blessing. The divine name, being the way God reveals Himself, gives its character to every dispensation; and thus is of the deepest moment for our souls, as we know well from the name of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which is contained the sum of all possible and infinite blessedness, now forming Christianity. In Revelation hitherto it has been God and the Lamb: this is the way God is known in the millennium. But when the dispensations of time are over, and the whole sphere wherein the ways of God in government unfolded themselves is passed away for ever, in a new heaven and new earth it is God. God Himself is the fulness of the eternal joy. And He rests in a sphere perfectly suited to His own heart — God is all in all. No distinctions that came in by sin in time are found. There are neither Jew nor Gentile nor nations. The assembly is there, both as "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride" — not for display now, as in the millennium, but — "adorned for her husband," for His eye and heart alone. It is the assembly's relation to Christ, according to eternal counsels of God for His glory and joy. So also is it found in its relation to God as His dwelling place. A great voice out of heaven calls attention to the tabernacle of God with men. (Ver. 3.) For He reverts to His own original thought of a tabernacle, so wonderfully realised when "the word became flesh and tabernacled amongst us." "And he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." But what a chord this reference to an only too familiar past touches in our hearts! These things were the governmental consequence in time

of sin, when Adam and Eve had to be driven forth from Eden, and sorrow be the prevailing characteristic of the condition of each. Long since, God Himself, in Christ, in unfathomable grace, had followed them into the sorrow, stooping down to be characteristically the "Man of sorrows," to take part in them, as never had been the lot of man or woman before. As God, on the threshold of a new creation, He now wipes away all tears from their eyes, and removes the source of them. He that sat upon the throne, the eternal throne of God surely, for He is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," can survey a scene so perfectly suited to Himself, and say, "Behold, I make all things new." And John is directed to write the true and faithful words that tell us "It is done." He who knew what thirst was once, where nothing could satisfy, has been brought where the fountain of the water of life flows freely in eternal refreshment.

One more link with time of unutterable sweetness declares "these things" to be the inheritance of the overcomer. The conflicts of the past are over for ever now, recalling humbling failure and defeat on our part; but His only remembrance of them is the final overcoming, fruit of His grace and power. "And I will be his God, and he shall be my son," in all the intimacy of an individual relationship enjoyed by all. And then there is the solemn and decisive pronouncement of the last verse (8), of the fixed, unalterable condition of those who were only raised from the dead, when time was over, to find their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. This last passage referred to, Rev 21:1-8, does not properly enter into the scope of the kingdom, save as it is viewed as the power of God in contrast to man's evil, a power that will never cease. It is the eternal state. If the kingdom was the result of the ways of God in government in time, the eternal state is the fruit of the perfection of His nature. There is a sense in which Christ reigns for ever, and so the saints; but it is not a human mediatorial kingdom any longer. That, Christ, having held as man for the purpose of all authority and power being subjected to Him, gives up to the Father, that all may be God's exclusively. But God, who is all in all, is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, so that in no sense has the kingdom come to an end, or passed to another. Only that the thought of a kingdom, in its proper sense, assumes subjects to be reigned over; and this is not what is presented to us in Rev 21:1-8. The reign of righteousness is needed no longer. God dwells with men for ever, and righteousness has found its familiar home there; it is the new heavens and new earth that we have been taught to look for in such wonderful grace, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2Pe 3:13.) But I close, painfully conscious of how defective and cursory is such a presentation of so large a subject; yet in hope that by God's grace the attempt to gather from scripture how these things are set before us may be as interesting and helpful to others as it has been to the writer. J. A. T.

S. The Knowledge of Christ.

The Knowledge of Christ. A Letter written by the late J. A. Trench.

Every now and then the truth prevails to draw out of the varied evils of the sects, in face of trial, those who finding refreshment in Christ begin to prize Him now not for what He gives alone but for what He is in Himself. And it is far better and brighter to be attracted out by the excellency of the knowledge of Christ to Himself, than merely to be driven out as many now by consciences become restless by the discovery of evil, for in this last case there is nothing to sustain us when out, or to lead one on and guide in the intricate path. Have you ever observed the order in 1Pe 2:1-25? How quickly the new born babes are drawn on from the first taste of the graciousness of the Lord displayed in all His conferred blessing to their occupations with Himself according to the twofold order of the priesthood. In verse 5 we have, after the character of Aaron, a sacrificing "holy priesthood," only not now offering up sacrifices for sins, but spiritual songs of praise (Heb 13:15) to God and acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ. With boldness by the blood they have found their way into the holiest of all without a cloud upon the brightness of God's presence, there to feed with God upon the fat and excellency of the work of Christ, not only in its results for them, but of best and brightest glory for God. Praise to God — worship — is the necessary outflow of hearts surcharged with Christ in such communion with God.

Entering with God into His rest and delight in the work of Christ, they are in a fair way to learn about His Person — Himself; and the next verse gives us this. He is "precious" to God, and as our hearts awake to this He becomes therefore "the preciousness" (as the word is) to us, or the sum and substance of all that is precious to us: as Paul who, when he began to learn and know Christ, was willing to suffer the loss of all things for such a One, nay has done so, and looks back on what he has lost to heap shame and contempt upon all. But all this is learnt in the presence of God and in communion — the spring of that worship the Father seeks — and belongs to the "holy priesthood" in this first aspect of it.

Now we come to the second — our "Royal priesthood" and the character and exercise of it. This is priesthood after the character of Melchizedek — as the other was after the character of Aaron, and both are found in Hebrews as you well know, with all that is typical in them applied to Christ, as here to us. And I daresay you have learned to distinguish that while Christ is Priest after the order of Melchizedek, yet that the time for His exercise of His priesthood as such is not yet, but is Aaronic in character, as in Heb 9:1-28; Heb 10:1-39, and Lev 9:22-23 will be the exercise of the Melchizedekian priesthood when as King-Priest He comes out to bless the people — in their place without, waiting for Him: — and the glory is displayed: so in Zec 6:13 : only of course both types fail as all types must when we turn to the reality, and comparisons become contrasts. We go in with our Aaron there to commune with God about the perfection of the offering, which is far beyond knowing that our sins are borne away by the scapegoat, as the people outside will when He comes out. But then it will be to display the glory of the Most High God possessor of heaven and earth, in Himself victorious over all the kings, and Heir of all the promises — see Gen 14:1-24 and Heb

7:1-2. So much then for the order and character of the Royal priesthood: it is one of display before the world, and it is the glory of Christ that is displayed: but how in any sense can this apply to us now? Oh how precious is verse 9 of our chapter; having learnt Christ in the communion of the sanctuary with God, we are now to go out and display Him in our walk and testimony in the world — showing forth the virtues (margin) of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. What occupations with God! and Christ the source and centre and power of all. I hope my sketch has not been too scanty to lead you into my train, if it is new to you; it has been very sweet to me.

John has been very much before us as well this last month, — one thing I would like to give you, that is the difference in the aspect of the Spirit's indwelling as given in John 4:1-54 and John 7:1-53, and it is not without connection with our gleanings from Peter. In John 3:1-36 we get light shining in the testimony of Christ that discloses nature to be such in its best and most religious condition that a Nicodemus must be born again to see or enter into the kingdom of God — but if the light thus discloses man's condition, it reveals the heart of God to man in that very condition (ver. 16). For Jesus if He knew all men, and more, what is in man (John 2:24-25) — knows God (John 3:12-13). As Son of Man before Nicodemus' eyes, He is in heaven, God, and everywhere. But look, if man is to be brought out of his old condition by new birth into a wholly new one — it cannot be by slurring over that old condition, nor by anything short of its judgment — hence the force of "must" in verse 14 and "so" — the Son of Man must not only be lifted up as the serpent — now the serpent was the brazen effigy of what was working death among the people — and ah! behold Him Who knew no sin made that cursed thing sin, that by its judgment under the hand of God upon Him, "whosoever, etc." But the cross was not only the judgment of sin on the Son of Man, but in verse 16 it was the revelation of the heart of God in the Person and work of the Son of God; and does not this go infinitely beyond the mere judgment of sin? Oh! what depths of love are here disclosed in that word "so" And this is all the subject matter of the Word, which by the operation of the Spirit on the natural man is the instrumentality of the new birth in which — born of the life of God and made partaker of the nature of Him of Whom I am begotten I am "clean every whit" in the sight of God (hence the use of the symbolic "water," including as it does not only the instrument but the effect).

Nicodemus ought to have known much of this from the prophets. But now in ch. 4 we get a wholly new thing — a divine gift by Jesus, ("I will give") living water to form a well within, ever springing up into everlasting life — so that there shall be not more thirst. This is the Holy Ghost given to dwell in the regenerate one, to be the power and energy of life in communion with God its source and end. Here then is a source of joy apart from and independent of all circumstances — of joy the deepest and eternal, and a source that never fails though at times the joy may be clouded over here below; it is the knowledge of all that eternal life is that we have got, made known to us by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, Who is at the same time the power of communion in it, with God its source and level. Could there be any joy beyond this in heaven itself? Now the Holy Ghost is given to be the power of it below, and the spring of it all is thus in every individual believer. In the latter part of John 4:1-54 God receives the overflow in the grateful worship of those whose life being in the Son know Him as Father, and have fellowship with Him in the consciousness of this relationship. In John 7:1-53 the Holy Ghost is given consequent upon the Man Jesus being glorified at God's right hand, and our union with Him there, and He is given as the witness of all the glory of Jesus' place

there — of sin purged away there-fore, righteously accomplished, and peace made — of all the glory of Him Who is there and of all that He is heir to: and all this the Holy Ghost reveals to us as those who share in it all by virtue of union with Him — not as using us as channels merely, unintelligent of all that was passing through to others, as in Old Testament times (1Pe 1:1-25), but as giving us the consciousness that all is our own in Him — and in this lies the force of "out of his belly" shall flow — a well known symbol of the heart and affections and deepest emotions. So then thus filled by the Spirit's sweet revelations to us of Jesus in the glory — streams are now gushing out from us and through us to the dry and thirsty ground around. In the desert a rock with its stream followed Israel for their blessing, and that rock was Christ — but here is Christ — revealed in our souls by the Holy Ghost's power that out of the fulness of our joy, even in the desert, flows blessing to the desert, or wherever there is a thirsty heart in it. And now put all together, and do not these two in John give us most blessedly the power of all that we had in Peter? God the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer the power of communion with God and of testimony to the world. And in John 7:1-53 this is the very thing that Jesus substitutes for us for the millennial joy of which the feast of tabernacles was the shadow. A well of living water springs In worship up to God: A river outward flowing brings To men the living word.

S. The Knowledge of Christ.

The Knowledge of Christ. A Letter Written By The Late J.A.T.

(from "An Outline of Sound Words" No. 24, p. 14)

Every now and then the truth prevails to draw out of the varied evils of the sects, in face of trial, those who finding refreshment in Christ begin to prize Him now not for what He gives alone but for what He is in Himself. And it is far better and brighter to be attracted out by the excellency of the knowledge of Christ to Himself, than merely to be driven out as many now by consciences become restless by the discovery of evil, for in this last case there is nothing to sustain us when out, or to lead one on and guide in the intricate path. Have you ever observed the order in 1 Peter 2? How quickly the new born babes are drawn on from the first taste of the graciousness of the Lord displayed in all His conferred blessing to their occupations with Himself according to the twofold order of the priesthood. In verse 5 we have, after the character of Aaron, a sacrificing "holy priesthood," only not now offering up sacrifices for sins, but spiritual songs of praise (Heb 13:15) to God and acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ. With boldness by the blood they have found their way into the holiest of all, without a cloud upon the brightness of God's presence, there to feed with God upon the fat and excellency of the work of Christ, not only in its results for them, but of best and brightest glory for God. Praise to God — worship — is the necessary outflow of hearts surcharged with Christ in such communion with God.

Entering with God into His rest and delight in the work of Christ, they are in a fair way to learn about His Person — Himself; and the next verse gives us this. He is "precious" to God, and as our hearts awake to this He becomes therefore "the preciousness" (as the word is) to us, or the sum and substance of all that is precious to us: as Paul who, when he began to learn and know Christ, was willing to suffer the loss of all things for such a One, nay has done so, and looks back on what he has lost to heap shame and contempt upon all. But all this is learnt in the presence of God and in communion — the spring of that worship the Father seeks — and belongs to the "holy priesthood" in this first aspect of it.

Now we come to the second — our "Royal priesthood" and the character and exercise of it. This is priesthood after the character of Melchizedek — as the other was after the character of Aaron, and both are found in Hebrews as you well know, with all that is typical in them applied to Christ, as here to us. And I daresay you have learned to distinguish that while Christ is Priest after the order of Melchizedek, yet that the time for His exercise of His priesthood as such is not yet, but is Aaronic in character, as in Hebrews 9 and Hebrews 10, and Lev 9:22-23 will be the exercise of the Melchizedekian priesthood when as King-Priest He comes out to bless the people — in their place without, waiting for Him: — and the glory is displayed: so in Zec 6:13 : only of course both types fail as all types must when we turn to the reality, and comparisons become contrasts. We go in with our Aaron there to commune with God about the perfection of the offering, which is far beyond knowing that our sins are borne away by the scapegoat, as the people outside will when He comes out. But then it will be to display the glory of the Most High God possessor of heaven and earth, in

Himself victorious over all the kings, and Heir of all the promises — see Genesis 14 and Heb 7:1-2. So much then for the order; and character of the Royal priesthood; it is one of display before the world, and it is the glory of Christ that is displayed: but how in any sense can this apply to us now? Oh how precious is verse 9 of our chapter; having learnt Christ in the communion of the sanctuary with God, we are now to go out and display Him in our walk and testimony in the world — showing forth the virtues (margin) of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. What occupations with God! and Christ the source and centre and power of all. I hope my sketch has not been too scanty to lead you into my train, if it is new to you; it has been very sweet to me.

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God's right hand, and our union with Him there, and He is given as the witness of all the glory of Jesus' place there — of sin purged away therefore, righteously accomplished, and peace made — of all the glory of Him Who is there and of all that He is heir to: and all this the Holy Ghost reveals to us as those who share in it all by virtue of union with Him — not as using us as channels merely, unintelligent of all that was passing through to others, as in Old Testament times (1 Peter 1), but as giving us the consciousness that all is our own in Him — and in this lies the force of "out of his belly" shall flow — a well known symbol of the heart and affections and deepest emotions. So then thus filled by the Spirit's sweet revelations to us of Jesus in the glory — streams are now gushing out from us and through us to the dry and thirsty ground around. In the desert a rock with its stream followed Israel for their blessing, and that rock was Christ — but here is Christ — revealed in our souls by the Holy Ghost's power that out of the fulness of our joy, even in the desert, flows blessing to the desert, or wherever there is a thirsty heart in it. And now put all together, and do not these two in John give us most blessedly the power of all that we had in Peter? God the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer the power of communion with God and of testimony to the world. And in John 7 this is the very thing that Jesus substitutes for us for the millennial joy of which the feast of tabernacles was the shadow. A well of living water springs In worship up to God: A river outward flowing brings To men the living word.

S. The Lamb in the Midst of the Throne

The Lamb in the Midst of the Throne

ONE is almost afraid to say anything about such a scene as this, lest one should detract from its glory, and hinder our own joy in contemplating it. My one thought about it this morning is that which forms our link with the scene, Beloved. It is nothing less than He who is the central object of it all, the one around whom we are gathered. In reading chap. 4, you cannot fail to feel, that in all the glory of it-wonderful as it is-there is a lack, something wanting to fix the heart. John finds in it no home object; but this lack is more than filled up in chap. 5:, when we get for the first time the center of all these circles of glory. "In the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and of the elders, stood a lamb." They said to John' " behold the lion," and he looked, and beheld a lamb 1 yes, and a "Lamb as slain." John recognizes in Him, the very One he had known, and loved on earth. His first sight of Him in heaven, is in the same character, too, as that which had first attracted him away from all else, to follow. Jesus on earth.

It was at the testimony of the Baptist, " Behold the Lamb of God," that his two disciples dropped off from him, and followed Jesus. Peter we know was one of them, and I have no doubt the nameless one was John himself, for he avoids mentioning himself in writing the gospel. Jesus hears the question, Master, where dwellest thou '1 and replied " Come and see." They came and saw -where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day. Precious union with the heart of God, that found all its delight in that lowly One on earth. And now John sees this same Lamb in heaven, as slain. That linked him with the scene, and us, too, beloved.

It is true we have in these chapters our own place, and I need hardly say we are not there yet; but, the Lamb in the midst of it all, is the sum and substance of all our blessing. He has redeemed us by His blood. All in heaven fall down before Him, and worship; but we lead the song. We are able to say, as angels cannot, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and halt redeemed as to God by thy blood."

Here around His table we have the same object before us; the same occupation, worship. In John 3:35-36, we find how this brings us into communion with the Father. " The Father loveth the Son." All His delight is in the Son; and in this we have common thoughts with Him, for He has become the object of our delight too. All the Father's counsels are for Him. When once He is put forth, everything is decided in reference to Him. This is the connection of ver. 36, "He that believeth," Sic. Those who honor the Son by believing on Him, the Father will bless; those who do not, the wrath of God abides on them. Thus we see He was the Father's object upon earth, as in Rev 5:1-14, we find He is in heaven.

John 12:1-50, gives us a new center of attraction; yet the same Jesus. " I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is the cross.; there He was lifted up between the earth and heaven; to be the center to which everything that is of God on earth must flow. But further, He is exalted to the Father's right hand. It is there that we know Him, Heb 2:6-9 (read), made a little

lower than the angels; now crowned with glory and honor. The day is coming, when all things shall be put in subjection under Him. int "we see not yet all things put under him; but (as we gaze into the open heaven) we see Jesus."

Eph 1:1-23 connects us with Him there. He is head over all things to His church, which is His body. When He ascended, the Holy Ghost came down to earth; was it that the object of the Father's interest was changed? Had the Holy Ghost come down to take the place of Christ on earth, or to be a new center for our hearts? Oh, no, beloved The Holy Spirit is here to associate us with them there, and to lead up our hearts unto constant occupation with Him to unfold all His perfections to us, that we may love Him better and count Him to be the alone worthy one in heaven or earth of our adoration.

Now we are prepared for such a word as Heb 13:13, ",Let us go forth unto him, without the camp." The camp was the earthly system of religion, once ordained by God, but now set aside; we are to go forth to Him, and that will necessarily lead us outside all that is recognized amono6 men as religion-all accredited systems. For as truly as He is the center and gathering point in heaven, so truly is He the only divine center and gathering point on earth; and to follow Him must take us outside all that is owned by men.

2Th 2:1-17 is, deeply interesting from this point of view. "We beseech by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him." Impossible that He should come, and we not be gathered to Him! His place always decides ours. If He is " outside the camp," we MUST go forth unto Him. If He comes, we MUST be gathered to Him. When He moves, we move. When He moves from the throne on which He sits, to the air, we move from the earth to the air -our new gathering point, where He is coming to take us back with Him to the Father's house. Think what the Father's house will be! The home of such a heart as Christ's! where all His divine affections flow out, and are fully answered. That is where He is going to take us to, where He is at home! Oh, beloved, truly our blessing and joy will be full then.

It is the same people who are now gathered round the Lamb on earth-their object the same-their occupation the. same. The difference is, that then the worship will be unrestrained, unhindered by the flesh; in the full energy of the Spirit of God. Now we have so often to mourn over failure-to grieve that our hearts are so slow to lay hold of what is before us. Then, blessed be God, there will be no failure to mourn over-nothing to turn us aside from absorbing occupation with Christ.

J. A. T.

S. The Lordship of Christ.

The Lordship of Christ.

Notes of an Address at the Believers' Meetings, Dublin, January 5th, 1865 by J. A. Trench.

CBA6103(2). The Word of God to which I will refer you, beloved friends, is in 1Co 12:3. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." May God write upon our hearts, at the close of these blessed meetings, the solemn words, that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." But you say, "we constantly say that Jesus is the Lord; why we are always talking about 'the Lord Jesus Christ.'" That is just what I want to call your attention to. We do not enter into the solemn truth we are uttering, when we say "our Lord Jesus." By His Word to us tonight, God would bid us pause, and ask ourselves if we fully understand all their significance. Oh, if there is one child of the living God here, that has been able to say "the LORD Jesus," as He would have that word said, it has only been by the direct teaching of the Holy Ghost. The flesh rebels against His Lordship over us. We have hearts that are not willingly subject to His authority. We are fonder of choosing our own path, than of walking in the one He has marked out for us. Are we not disobedient children? But God would remind us that Jesus is our Lord. And it we are able duly to confess that He is, then it is not of the natural heart, but by the Holy Ghost, and by Him alone.

Let me read a passage from the Acts of the Apostles, that will enable us to understand the import God attaches to the name "Lord." In Acts 2:36, Peter preaches to the men of Israel, that "God has raised up" Jesus of Nazareth, whom "ye took, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; and" (according to Psalms 110, "Jehovah hath said unto my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool,") "hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." Here, then, this name is given Him in special reference to Israel's subjection to Him; but we read in Psalms 8, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet," and though "we see not yet all things put under Him," (according to the Word of God, in Heb 2:8) — "but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Yea, "hath God highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:9-11). Thus, then, this name belongs of right to Jesus, as raised from the dead by God, to the place of power and authority — an authority which must yet be owned by all. For this, His undisputed Lordship, the time has not fully come: but the time has come for the Church's subjection to Him as its Head. Hence we have a special application of Psalms 8 to our own time, by the Holy Ghost, in Eph 1:22. "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all." In fact, Jesus waits to enter upon His universal sway, until His Church shall be associated with Himself in it. Meanwhile each one of us, who have been "quickened" from our death in sins, and

"raised up together with Him," have been also baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body (1Co 12:13), of which Christ is the Head and constituted Lord. So, we find ourselves, beloved, in the blessed and solemnly responsible place of subjection to Him. He is the Lord of His Church's heart, as the first-fruits of his universal sway. Oh, that each one of us, as members of that body, may be enabled by the Holy Ghost to say that He is Lord, and to give Him His rightful place in our hearts and consciences! Therefore, we see that He is not "our Lord" merely as our Saviour; it is not simply a title for Jesus, as we say in the world, "lord so and so," marking special rank and distinction, but this title is His because of the relationship, in which He stands in resurrection to us, as Head of His body, the Church. And the Holy Ghost would keep us in mind, by every use of it, that we are responsible to obey Him. Yes, beloved, to obey the precious One, who has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us one with Himself, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" — in all that He is. Oh, I am persuaded, that in the comfort and peace and blessing of our salvation, we think too little of the unreserved obedience which now becomes due to our Lord Jesus! The better to enter into our Lord's mind, about this, our confession of His name, and the responsibility that attaches to it, let me remind you of those words of His, in Mat 7:21; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father." Often to take the name "Lord" upon our lips is nothing, but to yield ourselves in everything to be subject to His will, as revealed in His Word, this is indeed to acknowledge that He is Lord. Do we not then begin to see more clearly, why "no one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost"? By that name, we are bound in responsibility to keep His commandments. I would not use that word, as if it were bondage to obey Jesus — God forbid. Far be it from us to think so! Bondage to obey Jesus! No, no, He has revealed Himself to us as our precious Saviour, our peace, our joy, our hope, our heaven, our all, that He may win our hearts for Himself. He does not want the cold service of the apprentice or the slave. He wants the loving heart-service of His chosen friends; and so he says expressly — "Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends." Then as His friends He comes to us and makes known to us His counsels, His will; and now His own word to us is, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And here, beloved, shall we not say, that our self-willed hearts need the warning of Luk 12:47, as well as the previous exhortation, "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes"? There was a time in the history of Israel, recorded for us in Jdg 17:6, when "there was no king, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This is what the flesh would like — the self-willed flesh that is still present with each of us: Yes, we need to be on our guard, lest the natural man should rise up in revolt within us, against the authority and Lordship of Jesus, as Head of His Body, and we should be found, each one acting as seemed best to himself, instead of giving Jesus His rightful sovereignty in our hearts. Then should we let the Word act as a sharp two-edged sword, in judgment, to cut at the root of the slightest insubordination, in thought, or ways, to Him. I speak as one who has proved in some little measure the desperate insubjection and self-will of my own heart. All I say is for myself, as well as you, beloved. What I desire is — is it not what we all desire? — that henceforward Jesus shall be our Lord, not in name only, but in deed. Oh, for an eye single to Him, a heart so occupied with Him, to the exclusion of all others, that not by effort or constraint, but spontaneously, our question at every step may be — What will Jesus have me to do? Then could we be found each one following his own inclination, or guided by the world's "needs be," or walking in a brother's path, be he ever such a "good man," liable to be crooked and perverse as our own? — and not rather, so

that we might say with one of old "The Lord before whom I walk," and, "He that judgeth me is the Lord."

Here I am met with the cry, "Be all this as it may, let us at least love one another, we cannot see eye to eye in all things; let us give each other all freedom of action, and be found, it may be, ranged under distinct banners, walking in separated paths; but let us love — love — love!" There is no heart that is subject to the Lordship and commandments of Jesus, that does not own, after all that Jesus has said about it, our blessed responsibility, to "love one another;" and we have had many precious words of exhortation on this mutual duty, during our meeting. Still we must not forget that the paths of love and obedience are not distinct, but identical. "And this is love," said one who lived very near the heart of Jesus, speaking by the Holy Ghost, "that we walk after His commandments" (2Jn 1:6). Love may be met with in paths of disobedience; but this is not the holy love, which has its spring in God, and to which Jesus commands His people. Jesus Himself is the first object of all true love — the centre of that love, that takes into the circle of its affections all who are His; so that the closer our hearts are drawn to His, the closer they will be drawn to one another. But do not let us forget that a scrupulous obedience to the Word He has given us, as the all-sufficient, unerring guide for our path while He is absent, is the way He has appointed us, to prove that our hearts are His in more than name. Entire consecration to Jesus is the most precious bond that can unite hearts in this wilderness; and, certainly, in proportion as we are attracted to Him as our one object in life, His people, once separated, will become united in their path.

Hence it is, beloved, that the bond of unity between the Churches of the Saints, scattered over the earth, is found to be, according to the Holy Ghost, in 1Co 1:2, the acknowledged Lordship of Jesus. "Unto the Church of God at Corinth," He says, "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our LORD, both theirs and ours." Mark the emphatic place given to His title, meant as it is, to awake the Church throughout the earth, and specially at that time, the assembly at Corinth, to its responsibility of obedience to its Head and Lord. And the responsibility is later enforced, in every little matter of detail, by the solemn words of 1Co 14:37 : "If any man think himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." To meet the condition of the Church at Corinth, in which already "the leaven" was working, which has now well-nigh leavened the whole lump, the Holy Ghost will sound again and again in their ears, with a frequency that has only its parallel in 2 Timothy, the name of "the Lord;" so that, at each mention of it, their conscience may be stirred up to the path of obedience, to the holy and separate walk that becomes the Church of God. Thus provision was made for a unity of path throughout the scattered Churches, by their common obedience to the one Lord — a unity such as even the world might recognize, and be forced to "believe," as Jesus said, "that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). But from this glorious place of testimony for God in the world, the Church, once "a city set upon a hill," has fallen. Already, in 2 Timothy, the general apostacy and departure of the Church from Christ had set in; and instruction is given us, for our individual path of faithfulness in the midst of it. Here again the Lordship of Jesus is pressed upon our consciences by that often-repeated title, needful to correct the constant tendency of our hearts to stray from the straight path of following Jesus. A word from the Lord is enough for a mind subject to Him: and "this is love, that we walk after His commandments." Divine love and obedience are principles of action linked hand in hand. God's truth will never, never, be sacrificed to love, in the heart that truly loves. In the path of faithfulness to Christ Jesus the Lord, hearts will

be drawn closest together; and though there be but two or three found that have courage for it, the precious promise is as good for us today, as when first it fell from His lips — "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." If He is there, what more do we need for blessing? Beloved, we have prayed much that the glory of God may be increasingly the object of our lives; let us remember how He has bound it up with our confession of Jesus as the Lord, (Php 2:11), and cry to Him for more obedient hearts. The Epistle of Jude is a solemn one, as bearing upon these last days. It opens with an exhortation "that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints " — needful, in consequence of principles already at work in men's minds, whose tendency was to subvert everything. These principles are found by v. 4 to be twofold — the grace of our God is turned into every kind of ungodly license, and the only Master and Lord is denied. Men, finding that salvation was through the grace of God, would begin to assert their liberty to act in everything as they thought best, and hence to turn Jesus out of His place in their hearts as Master and Lord (for both words are found in the Greek original*). Insubjection to lawful authority, this was the principle at work, described again in v. 8 as lordship† despised. And, oh! beloved, are not the seeds of it found in each heart? It begins to manifest itself in the disobedience to parental authority of the child's earliest years, and betrays its presence still in the desperate waywardness, and self-will, and rebellion of our hearts, even as the Lord's children. Oh! as we look back over the past for a moment, is it not a fearful retrospect of self-pleasing insubjection to the only Lord? And do we not still find ourselves ever disputing within, the paramount authority of our Lord Jesus? Shall we not then cry to Him for "the casting down of every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and that every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"? Never was there a day, I am persuaded, in which more humble watchfulness in this matter was needful for the Church of God. We live in an atmosphere "of despising dominion;" and one of the most popular papers of the day has its very popularity in that it holds up all who are in power to contempt, "speaking evil of dignities." How solemn the example of respect for authority given us in the Epistle before us, when it is said — "Michael the Archangel, in contending with the devil, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Even "the prince of this world," "the ruler of the darkness of this world," "the prince of the power of the air," is to be owned in the region of his brief authority — a very important guide, I may say in passing, to the Church of God, as to its connexion with worldly power in the present age. And shall we be unsubject to Jesus our Lord? Oh, for grace to enable us to give Him no longer that name without the submission of heart in all things to His obedience, which is alone to own His Lordship.

* despotes and kurios. † kuriotes.

Here let me say, that while we set a guard upon our unsubject minds, we need to watch against a very insidious form of insubjection to the Lord, to which we are often tempted; it is as real as open rebellion against Him, but not so patent, and therefore, if possible, more dangerous for our souls. That is, to own and be subject to authority which is not the Lord's, which is in truth to say, that Jesus is not the Lord. If it be required of us to be subject to authority, we must ask if it come from Jesus, for to own authority which is not from Him as its source, is really to disown His. The question, then, is not whether our hearts are subject to any lordship, but whether Jesus is the Lord, to whom they alone are subject. "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Bear with me, beloved, in all that I have said, if it be according to the

Word of the Lord, as to the responsibility connected with the name, that by the Holy Ghost we are taught to ascribe to Jesus. And now a promise or two from Himself, and I have done. In John 15:9, He has left us this precious word: "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love." He gives us, as the only measure of the love wherewith He loves us, the Father's love for Himself, His well-beloved Son. Well may we say, "it passeth knowledge." And His is an unchanging love — "the same yesterday" — when first He set His heart upon us, dead in our sins — "today, and for ever." Our apprehension of it may change, but His love never can. Yet He wants that it should not be so with us. He desires that we should walk in the full enjoyment of it all our way in the wilderness — "Continue ye in My love;" and so He says, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." Oh, beloved, what an incentive to obedience is here for us — the unclouded enjoyment of His love! Does His face seem hidden at times? Ah! it is not that He has changed, but there has been some departure of heart from Him on our part, some unfaithfulness. His will has lost its proper place in our terribly self-willed minds, and for the time we have been found in disobedience. Yes, it is in proportion as we walk in subjection to Him, that we enjoy that love, and disobedience mars it all. The other passage is in John 14. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Observe the difference between having His commandments and keeping them — everybody with a New Testament, to be had for two pence, has the commandments of the Lord — but how have we kept them? He would speak to the heart of his disciples, troubled by the thought that their loved One was leaving them, and bid them prove their love, not so much by the tears of regret at His departure, as by practical obedience to His commandments while He was away — "he it is that loveth Me." Then the promise, "and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." And so, beloved, obedience to the Lord will lead into a wealthy place; Jesus will be with us in special manifestation of His love and presence, if few besides are found there. It will be a rough path, because of the fearful insubjection of our hearts: it will be a path of trial, because of the world, in the midst of which it lies. "I have chosen you out of the world; therefore, the world hateth you." You may be tempest-tossed, but there is a pillow in the storm for you, on the bosom of Jesus: lonely, shall I say? no, for the promise is, "I will manifest Myself unto him," and His presence is fulness of joy. The heart cannot be desolate, with Jesus for company, if it has learnt anything of His preciousness. Shall we hesitate one moment longer to yield up all in obedience to Him, though it be to tear from our heart the most cherished interests? At last, shall we surrender and be His alone? "Yes," you say, "if I only knew certainly what His will is." Then hear Him speak again, "If a man love Me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Mark His little words, His slightest wish; thus shall we know His will. "Nonessential" will then be an unknown word; it will be essential with us to find out His will in everything; and when we know it, to yield Him the joyful and implicit obedience of our hearts, if we have been taught by the Holy Ghost to say, that Jesus is the Lord. And what a promise! If all desert you, if you stand alone in a household, determined at all cost to follow the Lord; if you become a stranger to your dearest friends; if every cord that bound to earth is severed; "We will come unto him and make our abode with him." Oh, what fulness of blessing, verily "His paths drop fatness." And now, beloved, we are about to separate, to return to our several spheres of service, while we still wait for Jesus, oh, may it be to enter into the deep, and solemn, and heart-judging significance of the name Lord Jesus! And every time we take it upon our lips, may it be to remember Him, to whom the subjection of every thought is due! That I am Thine, my Lord

and God, Sprinkled and ransomed by Thy blood!

Repeat that word once more With such an energy and light, That this world's flattery nor spite To shake me never may have power. From various cares my heart retires, Though deep and boundless its desires —

I'm now to please but One;

He before whom the elders bow — With Him is all my business now, And with the souls that are His own.

Indeed, if Jesus ne'er was slain, Or aught can make His ransom vain, That now it heals no more —

If His heart's tenderness is fled, If of a Church He is not Head, Nor Lord of all, as heretofore —

Then (so refer, my state to Him) Unwarranted I must esteem, And wretched, all I do.

Ah! my heart throbs, and seizes fast The covenant that will ever last:

It knows — it knows these things are true.

No, my dear Lord, in following Thee, And not in dark uncertainty, This foot obedient moves.

'Tis with a Brother and a King, Who many to His yoke will bring, Who ever lives, and ever loves.

Let me my weary mind recline On that Eternal Love of Thine, And human thoughts forget;

Childlike, attend what Thou wilt say, Go forth, and do it while 'tis day—

Yet never leave my sweet retreat.

Thus all the sequel is well weighed, I cast myself upon Thine aid — A sea where none can sink.

Yea, in that sphere I stand, poor worm, Where Thou wilt for Thy name perform Beyond whate'er I ask or think.

S. The Love of Christ.

The Love of Christ.

Notes of an address by J. A. Trench at Galashiels, 1916. The depths of the love of Christ set forth in John 12:24, are wonderful. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The heart is thrilled when one thinks that the Lord Jesus in figure fell into the ground and died in order to bring forth such profusion of fruit. He became man and died on the Cross in order that He might be able to associate us with Himself for ever. That association was according to the eternal purpose of God. He introduces us to that communion of divine joy which subsisted in the past eternity between the Father and the Son. That is opened out to our enraptured gaze in Pro 8:1-36. There we hear Wisdom's voice speaking about the Father and the Son sufficing for each other in an unbroken continuity. They rejoiced mutually in each other, sharing each other's thoughts. Before the foundation of the world, the Lord Jesus typified by Wisdom delighted in the sons of men. How blessed it is to have such intimation as to the direction in which Their hearts were going even then. That we should be taken up and ushered into such scenes of delight surpasses all human comprehension! But it is important to see that we could not be taken into such association with Him in any other way than by His becoming man and dying. That He gave Himself for us is a statement of scripture which enhances the magnitude of the gift and the love behind the gift. The Father and the Son were in perfect harmony in the action of giving! God so loved the world that He gave His Son sets forth a wider thought of the matter; but when the gift is viewed relative to His own then it is said that the gift originated in the heart of the Father and the Son. The Son took the initial step in perfect obedience to the Father's will and He was found in the body specially prepared for Him to give further effect to the same will. In the perfection of that path on earth He was alone. The more we contemplate Him in that perfect path of obedience the more we shall follow in dependent appreciation of Him. In John 16:32 we read that His own would be scattered and He would be left alone, and yet essentially not so, because His Father would be with Him! Notwithstanding that, next day He had to fathom infinitely deeper depths of isolation on the Cross in the forsaking by His God. That explained the meaning of His anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, as He foresaw what was necessarily entailed in meeting God as the victim, the Lamb of God's providing in the complete and lasting solution of the question of man's sin against God. We cannot conceive what it meant to Him to be totally abandoned by God! In rebuking the overzealous Peter who sought to deliver his Master, He said "The cup that my Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). In every step of His pathway, His love shone forth, witnessed by such statements as the following: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you" (John 15:9). That love continues unchanged in the exalted position in which He now is. He is the same yesterday, today and for ever! Shortly He will descend into the air to take us up to the place He has won for us in resurrection. That place is beyond the reach of distress, difficulties and death! Meanwhile, the contemplation of that unchanging love should have a practical effect on our lives and service. The passage in John 12:24, is followed by, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." In these words we are invited to follow in the path which His

footsteps have traced out for us in an unmistakable way. Then our service will partake of the character of that path. The power to make it our own lies in the extent to which our hearts have been absorbed by the significance of the little word "Me" twice repeated in one short sentence. The great criterion of our service in the ultimate assessment of the One who never makes a mistake will not be its amount nor apparent success before the eyes of our fellowmen but in the measure in which Christ has been the object thereof.

S. The Path of Faith in a Day of Ruin.

The Path of Faith in a Day of Ruin.

(Notes of an address by J. A. Trench, 1890). In the beginning of Ephesians we have the wonderful place which is ours as in Christ before God the Father in unclouded perfection, and the counsels of God according to His glory. Then, besides our individual place, God carries us on to these corporate relationships which we have with Christ as Head of the body, and with God as a dwelling place for Him. The connection of the opening of Eph 4:1-32 is with the end of Eph 2:15. There we read (1) "to make in himself of twain, one new man." What a wonderful thing it is to think that we have been taken out of what we were, dead in trespasses and sins and that we are quickened together with Christ, and made one new man. Then there are:- (2) the one body (5: 16). We are all united together and to Christ. (3) "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (5: 18). (4) we are builded together for an habitation of God" (5: 22). This is the wonderful position into which we have been brought. Eph 3:1-21, gives us, in a parenthesis, Paul's part in this blessed work, presenting him as the chosen vessel of the revelation to us of the mystery, and closing with that beautiful prayer, which is not so much a question of knowledge as in the prayer of Eph 1:1-23, but communion with Himself, that Christ, the object of the Father's heart, might be our object too. Now from the basis of this unfolding of our position, the apostle beseeches us to "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Already in the earliest and brightest expression of the truth in the assembly at Ephesus, we find there was the need of this spirit of lowliness and meekness as the only one in which to walk worthily, using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit. Then immediately, lest our thoughts of it should be limited in any way, we find three circles of unity: (1) one body, one Spirit, and one hope, where all is real; (2) one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 1:e., profession, where all may not be real; (3) "One God and Father of all," 1:e., the whole family, taking in the universe. The principles of God cannot change with the dispensation, they are given to us to form our path, and know no change, though we change alas! Everything is pressing that it is the last time, and to walk according to the vocation wherewith we are called, instructions are given to faith, for the change of things brought in by our failure, This we find in 2Ti 2:1-26, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." The principles of God know no change, but He knoweth them that are His. "And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" the unity of the Spirit can only be recognised in accordance with Christ's principles. Then the illustration of the great house is applied. The first essential step of the path is separation from what is evil. Then the loins must be girded. Take care lest the enemy get in and mock you in the path of separation, but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. There are the three steps; (1) separation from evil; (2) the loins girded; (3) seeking out those who are similarly separated. Every step of the path is ordered by God Himself. There remains another unchanging principle, Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them," 1:e., the smallest company that could be found not meeting in man's will (in independency), but gathered to the divinely given centre, in the wonderful character of association with Him. How

blessed to be reminded of these principles; let them challenge our hearts as to whether we are really seeking to carry out the unity of the Holy Ghost (Mat 18:20)!

Turning to Malachi we find an illustration of the fruits of His grace produced by the power of these things in the hearts of His people. We cannot imagine a darker day; profound indifference to everything of God marked the mass. The Lord had restored a remnant from the captivity, but all soon became clouded over by failure, and the restored remnant was profoundly indifferent, e.g., the priests that despised His Name, "Wherein have we despised thy Name?" The Lord said, "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar," and they said, "Wherein have we polluted thee?" (Mal 1:6-7). Of the table of the Lord they said, "What a weariness is it" (Mal 1:12-13). Mal 3:7, brings to the point when the Lord said, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you," and they said, "Wherein shall we return?" What indifference! So much for the dark side. Now turn to 5: 16 and 17. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name." How sweet in that day of general indifference that there shone out of it a bright light for God. There were hearts knit together, who loved to meet, to speak of Him. He listened, and kept a book of remembrance for those who even thought on His name. We have the immense cheer for our hearts, that in the darkest days He will have a remnant whom He marks as His own — His seal is set upon them!

Four hundred years later, we still find a few cleaving to Him — Zacharias, Mary, Simeon, and Anna (Luk 1:11). In spite of her great age, Anna departed not from the temple, the centre of God's interest upon earth. As long as He owned it, she owned it (Luk 2:36-37). As one last instance refer to Luk 21:14. The poor widow cast in all the living she had for the maintenance of God's house (still recognised, so near the close). The Lord owns her devotedness, although in the next breath the Lord warns His disciples that not one stone should be left upon another. Up to the last there were some cleaving to His principles. In Rev 2:1-29; Rev 3:1-22, we have the history of the church in responsibility. At the close of it we can look back and see all the main features of the church's history stamped on the prophetic page. Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea are found together at the end. In the Epistle to Philadelphia, the Lord gives us what answers to His own heart in the midst of the ruin. He presents Himself in His own blessed character as the holy and the true, because that is what He would have in His people. He is looking for what is genuine! Then "He that has the key of David" sets before us an open door. Who will occupy the door He has opened? This depends upon condition. "Thou hast a little strength:" He is not looking for any great display of power, which would attract the notice of the world. "Thou hast kept my word;" He is looking for complete subjection to His Word, as the condition that answers to His heart. It is a day of subtle working of the enemy. We are called to uncompromising fidelity. Oh, that we may seek to answer to this revelation of what suits Him. Then He goes on, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience." His whole heart is set upon having us where He is. He is patiently waiting for that moment; thus it is the word of His patience. Then He puts His seal on what His grace has produced, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." It is deeply solemn that it does not secure that the one who has been in that path, will be preserved in it to the end, but it does assure us that some will be in it to the end. Some may be unfaithful, and have to be set aside! "I come quickly"; here He addresses those who are awake in their affections, so it is, "I come quickly," to sustain fidelity in the testing, "Hold that fast which thou hast." In 5: 12, how often that little word

"my" comes in; it is the association with Him of the heart, which faithfulness leads us into, right on to the heavenly glory. The last phase of things in Laodicea does not displace what has gone before. The very character of its judgment flows from the fact that it comes after the awakening of the hearts of His people. There is the indifference as in Malachi, and the Lord spues it out of His mouth, 1:e., judgment long forewarned. But how encouraging to know that what His grace has produced in the past, He can produce in the present too. The Lord grant that we may be found in that path, keeping His word.

S. The Perfect Servant

The Perfect Servant An address on John 13:1-38.

I am thinking of our Lord Jesus as the perfect Servant, and I would like to read some verses in John 13:1-7. Doubtless the Lord refers here to the wonderful place His disciples would be brought into when the Holy Ghost was given. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all truth"; and the Lord told them also the Holy Ghost would bring all things to their remembrance. People often use the 7th verse as referring to a time yet to come when we shall know as we are known, but the reference is not to the future, but to the present, though of course future when the words were uttered.

John 13:7-17. It is a blessed thing to realise we are the Lord's very own, the objects of a love that never gives up its objects. So we sing: —

"The love divine that made us Thine Will keep us Thine for ever." But the love of the Lord Jesus is a special love to His own, quite different from the love of God to the world. The love of the Lord Jesus to His own is thus peculiar, and it will be well to see what the Holy Spirit says of His own. In John 17:1-26 the Lord is unbosoming Himself to the Father, and we are put in the position of listening to what was in the heart of the Lord Jesus. Speaking of them, and of all saints, He says, "Thine they were and thou gavest them me." Oh, how dear they must be as the gift of the Father to the Lord Jesus! The same gift received by two people may be in our estimation quite different according as we estimate the giver. But the gift of the Father! How His love is set on us!

Further, we are His own by purchase and redemption — "bought with a price." We are His own righteously. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." He endured the wrath and the suffering that you and I might become His for ever.

Again, there is another very special way in which we are His own. On the day of Pentecost the Lord Jesus sent down the Holy Ghost, and thus formed the one body. "After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." What does sealing mean? It is God marking us as His own. The gift of the Father, the purchase of Christ's blood, the sealed of the Spirit — His own in a threefold way. And when sealed, we are baptised into one body, and he that is joined to the Lord now glorified, is one spirit. He is the perfect Saviour of His very own. There is no failure on His part, nor in the work of the Holy Spirit. Who can frustrate the purpose of God? "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." As the perfect Saviour, He died to save us, as in 1Co 15:1-58, "Christ died for our sins." Oh, how precious! What glorious results accrue! Besides, we have now what was not made known in Old Testament times. We have "received," according to 1 Peter, "the salvation of our souls." And all because of His death. But He who died for us was raised again, Crowned, "exalted a Prince and a Saviour." He is a Saviour now; He lives to save us. Will He fail? No! He is able to save right on to the end, through snares and difficulties; the world, the flesh, and the devil may consult to cast us down, but He lives to save us (Rom 5:10).

Further, He is coming — to save us. We shall see Him. "We look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation" the consummation of all that now by faith we are called to realize in our walk down here from day to day. He is a perfect Saviour! He is going to have us in the glory with Him for ever! What glad worshipping hearts should now be ours! But then, what is principally before my mind is the Lord as the perfect Servant. Psa 40:1-17 takes us back to the eternity behind us. Not many O.T. scriptures do this. This one does. He speaks in eternity, that is, before time began. Heb 10:1-39 takes up the words and explains them for us. The highest point of the Psalms is very frequently found at the commencement, and so here — the Lord Jesus raised out of death. He does all the work, but we are joined with Him in the new song. "Mine ears hast thou digged (ver. 6, margin). Would that we could speak better of this all-glorious Person! The Son of God became the Son of man. He had always commanded before, there was no claim on His obedience. If He took the place of a servant, He did it voluntarily. The Spirit of God is so jealous of the person of the Lord Jesus that nothing is more sedulously guarded.

If He takes the place of a servant, you get, in juxtaposition, His divine glory also. In John 13:1-38. you get in symbolic language what Php 2:1-30. plainly declares. He "who thought it not robbery to be equal with God," who "made himself of no reputation," is presented by the Evangelist as "laying aside His garments" — not indeed His deity, but His glory — He humbled Himself. And in wondrous, wondrous grace took the place of a servant — He "took a towel, and girded himself."

Truth of the same significance is brought out in Isa 50:4-5. But to go back to Psa 40:1-17, "Ears thou hast digged for me" — from which we learn that as man born into the world there was thus His preparedness for doing the will of God.

Man at creation was "very good," innocent, capable of falling. He had no "free will" as men speak. He was capable of being disobedient, but not "free" to be so. All mankind since have been born in sin — humanity fallen. But in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ there is the contrast. He is the Holy One. "That holy thing that shall be born" (Luk 2:8). The demons knew and acknowledged Him as the "Holy One of God," and the Lord Jesus spoke of Himself thus, in His going down to death, in Psa 16:1-11, "Thou wilt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption." He is the only One who lived here on earth in spotless perfection. He never had to retract a single word, or retrace a single step, during those thirty years. After this, at His baptism, we have the Father's appreciation of that perfect life spent in private; and again at the end of His ministry, on the mountain when He was transfigured, "This is my beloved Son."

Here the Lord is seen in the glory — His rightful place; the place due to Him. Yet unless He go into death, He abideth alone. He comes down, and His path leads to the cross. God has saved us to be a joy to His Son for ever. In John 17:1-26. He says, "The glory that thou gavest me, I have given them."

Here is the Holy One perfect in dependence. From His birth prepared His Father's business to do. Then in Psa 40:9, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation." Where is the great congregation found? When the males of Israel appeared before Jehovah three times a year. So also the Lord appeared, for it became Him to fulfil all righteousness, and He gave out what the Father gave to Him "And he said, Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth." This is how He was treated in "the great congregation."

It does delight my heart to think of a Man tried as we are — sin excepted. Paul says, "I know nothing against myself" (1Co 4:4). He knew of no unfaithfulness in his stewardship. He was willing to endure all things for the elect's sake. Still his judgment was not perfect, and he could say it was a small thing to be judged by man's day. Ver. 10, "I have not hid thy rig hteousness," etc. No, blessed perfect Servant! His were acts of perfect obedience. Oh, that our hearts may be more bowed in worship as we contemplate Him!

Isa 50:2-5. The path of the blessed Lord was one of uninterrupted communion with His Father. Here we get divine glory brought out in marvellous juxtaposition with sufferings.

"I clothe the heavens," etc. (Isa 50:3) — a divine person speaking. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned," etc. (Isa 50:4). Marvellous! The Lord a learner! He learned obedience by the things He suffered. He has a tender heart towards those who are His suffering members here. How did He get "the tongue of the learned? We are apt to become weary because of the way; but oh! we little think of the wonderful interest the Lord has in His suffering members. "That ye sin not" is the standard of a Christian. One may say, "I cannot help it." Yet the standard is "that ye sin not." And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. What then? When we confess, does He then in death take up our cause? No, "we have an Advocate" (Paraclete) on high — the Righteous One and we have the Comforter (Paraclete) below within us. That is John 13:1-38 again. We are passing through a defiling scene. But here in Isa 50:4, the Lord, the perfect Servant, is here on earth. Oh, how blessed to think of the Lord as the One of whom, above all others, it could be said, "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psa 17:4).

Isa 50:5. "I was not rebellious," etc. — in contrast to all others, who have gone astray, and are self pleasers, so unlike the Lord who did the will of Him that sent Him.

Isa 50:6. "I gave my back to the smiters" — solemn word! In the history of the world there are three instances where the devil is allowed to act without restraint. The first was when the Lord put Himself in their hands — "This is your hour and the power of darkness." The next time will be when the devil, cast out of heaven, leads the armies of Christendom against Christ. Then again, after the millennium, the last great storm. And then! — never another! For heaven and earth will have passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth have taken their place, and righteousness dwells eternally.

There are three things we look for "that blessed hope," "the appearing of the great God and our Saviour," and "a new heaven and a new earth."

It is like walking along, when we see a mountain peak, and another, and yet another; but we do not see the valleys between. There is a valley of a shorter period of time of which the "seven years" of Daniel, etc., form a part, between the first two peaks, and another of a much longer period, i.e. of a thousand years, between the last two.

"I gave my back to the smiters." They could not touch Him till He permitted them. He was going to have the joy of carrying out the perfect will of God; to say, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." In this chapter we have had the opened ear, following the digged ear; now we have the bored ear in Exo 21:1-36.

Six days are man's working time; so six years of labour are followed by the Sabbath year. Here we have the perfect period of service, and the Holy Spirit had before Him the perfect Servant.

Ah, but let us see what love does! Wonderful love to come here, to go on here; but, oh! what have we in Exo 21:3-5? "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." Does it not remind us of Eph 5:1-33, "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it"? Oh, that every one could say:

"Lord, we own with hearts adoring, Thou hast loved us unto blood:

Glory, glory, everlasting, Be to Thee, Thou Lamb of God!"

Why not "go out free"? Love delights to serve, and where true love is, it will serve. Now He says, "He shall serve him for ever" (ver. 6). How that blessed One will be the servant for ever! That links us up where we began in John 13:1-38.

Nourishing and cherishing now His church, in perfect loving service, He desires to have us in uninterrupted communion with Himself; and if it is interrupted He is ready to restore us. But He is our Example. We should love one another as He hath loved us. Love one another in Christ; see each other in Christ, and love as He loved us. That love will manifest itself as He said to Peter, "Feed my lambs"; "Shepherd my sheep." That is the way to show love — to be marked by unselfishness, and intense desire to serve those He loves so well. May that love constrain us!

It is an easy thing to knock down and wound a man, and it is a good thing to be faithful; but we want to help one another. There is a good deal of correspondence between the Lord here, and our own days. "If any man serve me let him follow me." J.A.T.

S. The Reality of Christ's Manhood.

The Reality of Christ's Manhood. A letter from J. A. Trench.

Dear ___, The dear Doctor has passed on to me an interesting question that has been before you as to the connection of Heb 2:13, first clause. I do not think it has been always maintained in the use made of the whole passage. The great point of Heb 2:1-18 is the reality of the humanity of the Lord Jesus, as in Hebrews of the divine glory of the One who has taken His place on the right hand of the majesty on high, having made purification for sins. That He should become Man was necessary from their own Scriptures in order that He should take the place of universal supremacy, according to Psa 8:1-9. But then, for far deeper reasons connected with the glory of God. First, it became God that He should take His place as Leader of our Salvation through the atoning sufferings of the Cross (Heb 2:10). Secondly, that He might grapple with the enemy in the last stronghold of his power, and set free those who were held by the fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). Thirdly, to make propitiation for our sins: and fourthly, to be a High Priest perfectly suited to our need (Heb 2:17-18). But you will have observed the care that the Spirit of God takes, while proving the necessity of the incarnation, to preclude any identification, that might be supposed necessarily consequential, with the race. In Heb 2:11 it is the Sanctifier and the sanctified ones that are all of one — of one set, as set forth in the reality of His place as Man, risen from the dead. It is the children given Him with whom He partakes of flesh and blood (Heb 2:14). It is the seed of Abraham of whom He takes hold, as made like to His brethren, in Heb 2:16-17.

Then taking up verses 11-13 more particularly, their setting gives their wonderful force. It was only as Man He could have "brethren," associated with Himself in assembly for praise; though it must be in resurrection: for if the corn of wheat had not fallen into the ground He had been alone as Man, for ever. But further proof that He was Man to do so. Isa 8:17 (quoted from the LXX) gives His perfect dependence as Man, "I will put my trust in Him," which leads to the last quotation from the same chapter, "I and the children which God hath given me" Isa 8:18; to be displayed with Him in glory, involving again His Manhood — essential as it is whether for His brethren of the Assembly, or His children of Israel.

Morally, what light is cast upon the path by which He is conducting the sons of God to glory, as we look again at the three quotations of Heb 2:12-13. He opens with our song of redemption — better than Exo 15:1-27 — the Lord Himself in the midst to lead us in it: His dependence the pattern for us for the whole way; till the end when His own come out displayed in His glory. May it be yours and mine to know a little more of such a path of triumph under such a Leader.

S. The Reward of the Inheritance

“The Reward of the Inheritance”

Question — What is meant by “the reward of the inheritance”? — (Col 3:24) When it is known that the word for “reward” is not the ordinary one so rendered, but occurs only here in the New Testament (though not infrequently in the LXX. i.e. Greek translation of the Old), and that it signifies recompense with the underlying thought of compensation, it will be felt how beautifully suited it is to the way that grace would light up the otherwise unenviable condition of the Christian bond-slave, as from verse 22.

Bound to his master according to the flesh for life, his obedience in all things was to be with singleness of heart fearing the Lord, a hearty service even as it would be accepted as done to the Lord. The rich compensation of his servile lot in this world would be found in the inheritance he should receive from the Lord, in marked antithesis to any ordinary portion of a slave, as may be seen from the contrasts of Gal 4:1-7, Rom 8:15-17.

J.A. Trench

S.T. 1914

S. The Substance of a Letter on Some Present Difficulties.

The Substance of a Letter on Some Present Difficulties.

J. A. Trench. Not Published. The fact that a letter to me, from a brother abroad, is being extensively circulated, leads me to present in this way the substance of my reply to him; and I take the opportunity of adding what may seem needed in this use of it, and of noticing some points not raised by his letter, but much dwelt upon by others.

Beloved Brother, — Your letter is of deep concern to me as fresh proof of how much misapprehension, as to the meaning of the few sentences of Mr. R.'s which have been published, has to do with the trouble we are in. For I dismiss for the moment what sisters were reported to you to have said, and what E.C. has written;* to notice the first point in Mr. R.'s own letters (printed by P.A.H.) that you refer to. Of these, you say — "They show a dangerous, radical departure from the truth," quoting Mons. L. — that it is "worse than that of F.W.G." I have looked at the passages objected to, and see nothing, however obscurely expressed, that is not cardinal truth as to the Christian position. Nothing, I may say, has astonished me more, in all this sorrowful contention, than that you should call in question that "there is no such thing as responsibility in Christ" (when the context shows what Mr. R. means); and that "the true calling, relationship, and blessings of the Christian belong to the scene and sphere where Christ is" — that is, of course, to heaven — "wholly disconnected from human life down here." I feel I cannot do better than put these distinctions of truth in the words of another to whom we all owe so much: the italics are mine.

{*Which, I am thankful to say, he has condemned and withdrawn, as far as one who had nothing to do with the circulating of it could be said to withdraw it, having put in print the expression of his sorrow for having written it.}

"Jordan represents death, but death looked at rather as the end of human life. . . . The passage of the Red Sea was also death. . . . It was complete redemption, the death and resurrection of Christ in its proper and intrinsic value. But in this aspect it is a complete and finished work, and brings us to God. Not a history of what one may go through in actually arriving at the result. See Exo 15:13; Exo 15:17; Exo 19:4, etc. It was then that the people entered upon their pilgrimage in the wilderness. The wilderness journey after Sinai supposes this Christian position taken, but individual reality tested: to this all the 'ifs' of the New Testament apply; that is, to the Christian on the road to the promised land, but with a certain promise of being kept to the end if faith is there. . . . There is no 'if' as to redemption, nor as to our present place in Christ when once we are sealed. Redemption, complete salvation, . . . introduces the Christian into this pilgrimage. With God he only passes through the world as a dry and thirsty land where no water is; still this pilgrimage is but the life down here, although it is the life of the redeemed. But as we have seen there is the heavenly life which goes on at the same time with the wilderness journey. I do not mean at the same instant, but during the same period of our natural life on the earth. It is one thing to pass through this world faithfully or unfaithfully in our daily circumstances under the influence of a better hope; it is another thing to be waging a spiritual warfare as men already dead and risen, as being

absolutely not of the world. Both these things are true of the Christian life." (Synopsis on Joshua 3.)

Here then we have the main elements of what has been objected to as Mr. R. expresses it: namely, first our present place in Christ, fruit of God's counsels and work, what is true of us in Christ looked at in its own proper character as a new creation, all things of God, where there is no "if," no question of testing, "no such thing as responsibility;" and this distinguished from our path down here in the circumstances of human life, where, to our deep profit and blessing, the exercises, siftings, and humbling in God's government have fully their place. Then we have what is really involved in this, "the mystic Cluffite division of the life of the Christian," as you call it, but which I believe to be the clear and indisputable division of the Scriptures, of the deepest moment for our souls; namely, that of the heavenly life, and the life of pilgrimage down here. There is no part of Mr. D.'s teaching that he seemed to take more delight in developing, in every possible form, in the later years of his ministry. In the Synopsis, in the same connexion from which I have been quoting, he goes on to say, "In both Phil. and Col. the heavenly life is spoken of as a present thing; but there is entire separation, even down here, between the pilgrimage and the heavenly life itself, though the latter has a powerful influence on the character of our pilgrim life." And this distinction led him on, not to divide the person of Christ, as you say others have been led on by it, but to do that which seems to be the only foundation of the charge — namely, to distinguish in the same way between these two parts of His life. Thus he says, "His life in connection with men, although the ever perfect expression of the effect of His life of heavenly communion and of the divine nature was evidently distinct from it." He states that the influence of the heavenly and divine life "was perfect and entire in His case. . . . The joy of the heavenly life entirely set aside all the motives of the lower life, and leading to the sufferings of His earthly life, produced a life of perfect patience before God. . . . The fact that He was this life, and that for His living it, He had not to die in His death, as we have, to an evil nature, makes it more difficult to realize in His case; but obedience, and He learned what it was, suffering, patience, all referred to His place here; compassion, grace as to His disciples, and all the traits of His life, though divine, and such that He could say, 'The Son of Man who is in heaven' — all were the development of the heavenly and divine life here."

I do not quote more of the passage because it is in the Synopsis, and may be had of Broom & Rouse, in a separate form, entitled:

"The sphere of heavenly life," consisting largely of new matter, inserted by Mr. D. in his latest revision of it. But the connexion between the life, as manifested here, and the objects it pursues, is deeply affecting when illustrated, as he opens it out, in the blessed Lord "Himself that life and its manifestation down here in pilgrimage" — referring to Heb 12:2. The conviction is more and more forced upon me, that some of our brethren, through not seeing this distinction between the heavenly life, and the life of pilgrimage in connexion with men, in which it is developed, and this in Christ, as well as in the Christian, have totally misapprehended what has been said, and have gone so far as to charge brethren with heterodoxy and blasphemy, who are as far from it as themselves.*

{*As for instance, in a letter of W. J. L., which I have seen since writing the above, abounding with denunciation of this type, he says, "The life of the blessed Lord is divided into two parts . . . then the Christian's is treated in a similiar way; the upper part being heavenly and eternal in Christ, to

which Mr. R. says no responsibility attaches, the lower his pilgrim life, in which he is responsible. This was openly taught last month in Bristol." We have only to refer to the passage from which I have quoted (and to more that will follow), to see that Mr. D. regards the life of the blessed Lord, as so divided, and that of the Christian too.) For myself, beloved brother, you must bear with me, if I say, that I think to bring forward such a charge without substantiation, is a very great wrong, not only to the brother accused, but to the saints in general, because of the subtle character of the questions raised among them in the attempt to prove the charges (of which the pamphlets that have been issued are the witness), and because of the nature of the truths themselves concerned. With foot unshod one could only safely tread such ground, feeling at every step no one knows the Son, but the Father. Here the rash irreverent mind will be betrayed at once. The attempt to trace out the line, in Christ, between the heavenly life, and the lower in connexion with men in which it ever found its perfect expression when He was here, was ground upon which any of us were bound to err. But it has nothing to do with speculations on the union of the Deity and humanity; it need not involve dividing His Person, nor any heresy at root. On the other hand, to deny that there are these two distinct parts of the life of Christ and of the Christian, only betrays the way our superficial minds can slur over the most blessed things presented in the Word. The painful comments, in the pamphlet you referred me to, upon the letter, now condemned by its writer, show how easy it is on such a subject for one who undertakes to correct another, to fall into error himself, even more deeply affecting the inscrutable glory of His Person. But I dare not discuss the point lest I should do the same myself, and have no thought of characterizing its author as he does his brother. But to return to the main question raised by your letter because of its importance. "Thus also," says Mr. D. as with Christ, so "with the Christian; there is nothing in common between these two spheres of life; and besides nature has no part whatever in that above: in that below there are things which belong to nature and to the world (not in the bad sense of the word "world," but considered as creation); nothing of this enters into the life of Canaan." Later he says — "This way (Jordan) was alike unknown to both [i.e., man, whether innocent or sinful], as was also the heavenly life that follows. This life, in its own effects and the exercises here spoken of, is altogether beyond Jordan. The scenes of spiritual conflict do not belong to man in his life below; though, as we have seen, the realisation of the heavenly things we are brought into acts on the character of our faith down here. . . . No wilderness experience, be it ever so faithful, has anything directly to do with it." Again, I read (for everything we have most certainly learned seems now to be called in question to prove R. wrong, at any rate) — "The wilderness is the character the world takes when we have been redeemed, and where the flesh in us is actually sifted. But death and our entrance into heavenly places, judge the whole nature in which we live in this world;" and "the life of a risen man is not of this world — it has no connection with it. He who possesses this life may pass through the world, and do many things that others do — he eats, works, suffers; but as to his life, and his objects, he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." So much for the division of the life of the Christian and of Christ, as Mr. D. brings it out in the Synopsis on Joshua; the last edition giving far greater development on this very point than the former ones. But I turn elsewhere. In different papers in "Notes and Comments," he enters specifically into the whole question of our place in Christ, with all that is inseparably connected with it of calling, relationship, and blessing, into which no question of responsibility ever did or could enter, distinguishing this position in every point of view from the tested and responsible path of the Christian here. I open vol. 2, p. 200, and there read:

"I am started in my responsible course in this world on the blessed ground of redemption, to reckon myself dead to sin, alive to God, and to yield myself to God as alive from the dead; and a blessed privilege it is to pass through this world, free by redemption, to live to God, and to serve in such a world as this. In the Red Sea we have deliverance, the salvation of God connected with the judgment of evil, dealing with men in either case as belonging to this world; but Jordan is a passing out of the whole condition of responsible man in the world, godly or ungodly. . . . In a word, Jordan is death as ceasing to belong to this world at all, and entering into heavenly places, as belonging to them, with an ascended Christ. The Red Sea is death as redemption and deliverance, leading us to live to God in this world, and 'if' remains. The Red Sea is deliverance into a responsible life in this world, though if life be there we shall reach the goal; Jordan is dying to it and entering into Canaan as united to Christ". P. 209, "Romans says, those who are in Christ (Rom 8:1), but it puts us experimentally in the wilderness." At p. 210 "The gift of eternal life and the sealing of the Spirit, lead me into the consciousness of being in Christ, united to Himself now as sitting in heavenly places, and soon to be with Him bearing His image: here there is full present assurance of faith, and assurance of being in Christ — an eternal thing in which we are, and have eternal life, eternal redemption, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. De facto we are down here, with a given faith and hope, to pursue our journey towards the thing hoped for — in the wilderness on the footing of redemption, in the wilderness on the footing of responsibility to 'by any means attain,' but having to persevere with promises that faith confides in, power that keeps through faith for the inheritance kept for us, but having to get across," etc.

I call special attention to this last passage, because of W. J. L's. account of what was taught at Bristol. (See the preceding footnote). No fair mind but will admit, that it is precisely what Mr. D. teaches here. For he (as in all this line of truth) divides the Christian's life, and connects eternal life with the position in Christ, a heavenly and eternal thing in which we are; and distinguishes this from our de facto position, down here in pilgrimage, to which responsibility attaches. This passage may also help to the understanding of the expression which has been so much misunderstood, but which Mr. D. also uses in exactly the same connexion, I refer to "mixed condition."

There is in the same volume, "The Red Sea and Jordan," and in Vol. 1, "The Wilderness," all to the same purpose, and which are most helpful on the difference between the heavenly life, and our life of pilgrimage in which it is developed here, by the comparison instituted in great development between the aspects of the Christian position as presented in the Epistles. There are interesting letters too, of those published, where the same ground of the truth is taken. He speaks there of "confounding the responsible man with the redeemed man," and lest we should after all suppose with P. A. H's. extraordinary reasoning,* that there can be no responsibility save of the first man carrying with it condemnation, or as in Christ — Mr. D. adds, "Redemption is always absolute and perfect; the responsible man, whether past Jordan or not, tested . . . The wilderness is an usual but not necessary part of God's ways — what the world becomes to those who are redeemed, or stand on that ground, and individually tested if they get to the end, viewed not as in heavenly places, but through redemption on a journey there; for Scripture does so consider us."

{*"The responsibility of the first man is set aside wholly at the Cross, gone in Christ's grave. Mr. R. would resuscitate this, and put the believer back again under it, and thus again under wrath and condemnation. According to him, the believer is abstractedly in Christ; really under condemnation and wrath, in sin, and responsible as there," (p. 22). This might pass for complete

misapprehension of the character of responsibility Mr. R is looking at, but for where he quotes (page 13) Mr. R. "It (i.e. Romans) is the life of responsibility here, though carried out in divine power," adding, "The statement one would not object to." Is this resuscitating the first man? Or could a life carried out in divine power be under condemnation and wrath?}

P.A.H.'s comments on this point are only another sample of the misapprehension, and I fear I must add misrepresentation, that have done so much to disturb the minds of the saints. Putting the Christian by redemption into his responsible, tested path of the wilderness, to be dependent on infallible faithfulness, and power to carry him to the end, is only (for him) to put him back under wrath and condemnation. Not that I doubt for a moment that he or any other Christian, instructed in the Word, would own that there is such responsibility into which redemption introduces us, totally distinct from our place in Christ; and that to connect the latter with the former would be fatal error. But, what then must be felt of the spirit that condemns, as not only destructive of the Christian position, but a denial of the finished work of Christ, etc., etc. — that which, however imperfectly expressed, must, when understood, be admitted to be the truth, and of the last possible importance to the soul as alone giving it stability before God.

It is no part of my object to defend Mr. R., or the almost total absence, in the letters made public, of guarding statements of truth by other parts of the truth equally important; but when called upon to judge what he says, in the letters you quote, as a "dangerous and radical departure from the truth," I must confess I see nothing but the truth, though put out in such a way as to be liable to the grave misconception of his meaning, that such a comment implies.

Thus far the substance of my letter. I may here add that, since writing it, I opened casually the "Christian Friend," (vol. 7, p. 228,) and in notes of an address by Mr. D., I find the main distinction brought out very simply: — "If I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ, there is no one there to pluck me out of His hand; but if I am walking down here, it all depends on my dependence on the faithfulness of God . . . All the 'ifs' in the New Testament come in for the journey; it would be blasphemous to use an 'if' as to salvation" — or, in other words, to connect responsibility with in Christ. "It would be calling in question Christ's work. For the journey, it is a different kind of assurance; it is just as sure, for God has spoken — shall He not do it? But it is not yet accomplished. Hebrews is full of 'ifs;' for we are looked at there, not as in Christ, but as poor feeble things, walking on the earth, and Christ a Priest on high; therefore, all conditions were looked at as finally fatal, if not kept. There are no 'ifs' in Ephesians, because we are looked at there as sitting in heavenly places in Christ. In Colossians it is a hope laid up in heaven. Phil. always takes up salvation as something to come; it looks at justification as a future thing."

There is another point of which much has been made, W. J. L. going so far as to say, in a letter sent me, that it is the root of all that he calls the heresy. I refer to the manifestation of eternal life in Christ to the world. Now, it is no question with any one of a manifestation in the world, putting all under responsibility to receive Him. — John 1:1-11; John 3:19; John 5:31-40; John 15:22-25. But to press that He was manifested to it is just to overstep the mark of Scripture. Here, again those who have harassed the saints for months by their charges of false doctrine are found to be opposing themselves to precious distinctions of the Word, long since brought out to us. As to this question of manifestation to the world, it would seem impossible for Mr. D. to speak more strongly than he has done, affirming that the glory of the Son has never "been assumed in manifestation at

all," and that in this very fact lies the distinctive contrast between His second coming and the first. I quote from Vol. 2 of "Notes and Comments," "For though He came truly in the flesh, He was — not so known save spiritually — none could come to Him, as so come in the flesh, save the Father which had sent Him drew them. John 6:63. Accordingly He spake and was known in testimony — He was known as the Word by His words; they had the power in which He appeared, to draw to Himself then; "he that heareth my words," etc. It was only spiritually He was known, though He was manifested in the flesh, it was only in the word that He spake that He was received. . . . In a word, as it was hearing the word, and keeping the word which was the sowing of the Son of Man, so it was not manifestation to men, but veiled, and manifested to be the Person (though men ought to have known Him), only to those whose eyes were opened by His word to see Him through the Father's grace. This is argued in John 6, and its principles opened out in John 8 . . . So those, amongst whom Jesus was in the flesh, did in moral fact only see the Son as we see Him now, i.e., the moral character of the perception was the same. . . . His first coming was in witness, though it was indeed the Son; His second coming is in Person, when every eye shall see Him, and the glory of Him who was hidden be known." On the whole question, as all that has come out and been controverted passes before me, I see nothing beyond what might have been profitably discussed in brotherly confidence among those who study the Word. In this way, when in teaching, the balance of the truth — ever so important but difficult to maintain, for our minds are generally one-sided — seemed to be endangered, it might have been adjusted. What was actually accomplished thus gave hope as to what was yet wanting. "Pretending to accuracy," as Mr. D. has said, "destroys reverence and leads to infidelity;" but, referring to one whom he feared through confidence in his studies, had run into this, he adds significantly, "the worst of consequences would be brethren following him into it even to oppose . . . what I dread is any number of brethren committing all to what many may be incapable of entering into." Apart from all question of Mr. R. and his views, we are face to face with the effect of what was thus deprecated; and it seems to me to be largely due to the deplorable character the controversy has assumed. It is deeply humbling to us that the occasion was found in the defective way things were presented. But, however this may be, the most serious feature of the present movement (next to the scattering of the handful of saints that had been cleaving to the Lord in the unity of His body) is the spirit of opposition that has been excited against a part of the truth that has ever been the most difficult to maintain — because of the demand it makes upon the believer as to man, and the world he once belonged to, and the unceasing hostility of the enemy — even that which gives Christianity its distinctively heavenly character. Only in the growth of the soul spiritually does this side of God's blessed revelation of Himself to us come to be appreciated, as it ministers to and forms this growth. What full development then it needs, in caring for the Lord's beloved people; what careful maintenance of the foundations of the truth of the Christian position, the common platform of the faith of God's elect, when we would bring out, not our entering in, but the deepest and most blessed character of what we enter into. This was lacking, and gave the opportunity, that the enemy only too well knows how to seize against the truth. The Lord, in His mercy, look upon the many now stumbled, and in danger of being ranged in opposition to truth that otherwise might have become theirs, in the normal growth of the soul under God's gracious culture. He alone is our refuge and resource in humbling ourselves under His mighty hand. The charges that the Person of Christ has been assailed, if true, would rightly stir the truest and deepest sensibilities of the saints. Many, incapable of entering for themselves into what is in question, will believe that being so freely made they must

be true. If true, absolute separation from any who would defend them, was the only course to be pursued, in faithfulness to Him. Nothing could be worse than that jealousy for the glory of His Person should be weakened. That rash expressions have been used is admitted in the withdrawal of them, but these, though deeply to be deplored, are not attributable to Mr. R. But when satisfied that there has been no false system, no false doctrine at root, and the conviction is forced upon one that those who have made the charges, have put themselves into the solemn position of false accusers of their brethren, what a state is disclosed; how humbling to us all. The Lord give us, in His great mercy, to take it truly to heart, bowed low in sorrow and shame before Him; while we rest, as in His grace we can, upon the sure accomplishment of His purposes through it all, for His own glory, and the blessing of His people. J. A. T Copies of this Paper may be obtained from W. K., 17 Arthur Square, Belfast.

S. The Two Prayers in Ephesians.

The Two Prayers in Ephesians.

Notes of address by J. A. Trench, Harrington, 1914. The prayer in Eph 1:15-23, is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is viewed as man, yet the object of all God's thoughts. While the prayer in Eph 3:14-21, is to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because He is viewed as Son. The first prayer dwells on three great themes:(1) The hope of His calling. (2) The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (3) The greatness of the power that has put us in the calling. To apprehend these the eyes of our heart must be enlightened. The heart of the Apostle overflowed in ascribing blessing to the One who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, etc., 1:e., worship. Observe it is His calling, the calling of God, not our calling. The hope of His calling is not specially the Lord's coming, but the realisation in the eternal glory of all that God has called us to in Christ as the fruit of His purpose. Even as the calling causes us to look towards heaven, the inheritance directs attention to the earth and it is in the saints. Originally, His inheritance was in Israel. We are not the inheritance, but heirs of God. We have obtained an inheritance in Christ. These thoughts should not be confused with each other. They are all quite distinct. Two great parts of this prayer are (a) That the Ephesians might know the place, (b) that they should know the power that brought them there. That power is exceeding great and finds its measure in Christ's resurrection from the dead. All around was in death. They were dead in trespasses and sins, amidst which God worked to effect His eternal purpose and at the same time to reveal Himself therein. The authorities sealed the tomb and set a guard determined that Christ would never interfere with mankind again, but He was raised from the dead by the glory of God the Father. That same power is in evidence in quickening us together with Him, and has raised us up together and made us to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. The first part of Ch. 1. reveals our individual place in Christ before God the Father in eternity; while the second part shows our corporate relation to Christ as His body relative to the work of God to accomplish His eternal purpose. In the third chapter, the Apostle sets forth his double ministry of the gospel and of the mystery, to make all men see what is the administration thereof. (In the A.V. the word is translated "Fellowship," which is a very blessed part of the administration, but the more comprehensive word is more appropriate as descriptive of the promotion of the truth as to the body of Christ on earth). That mystery relates to the present time. It will not be needed in heaven. It is intended that the conduct of the Christian here should be profoundly affected thereby. The angels, the mighty powers in heaven, see in the Church what they had not seen in creation, nor in subsequent manifestations of God in judgment and providence, grace and mercy There is shown a new departure in the ways of God that the Gentile should be co-heirs and co-partakers of His promise in Christ in the Gospel. Its ill-assorted components (Jew and Gentile) nevertheless form one body, consisting of all who belong to Christ, united to Him in glory. The prayer is not that we may know our place in Christ as in Ch. 1, but that the truth may be freshly dwelling in our hearts in the fellowship of the Christ. There are resources in the riches of His glory, 1:e., the power by which we may be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man. It is the Father's Spirit that brings about that

the One who dwells in the Father's bosom may dwell in the Christians' hearts by faith! The first prayer was relative to our being in Christ, the second prayer with His being in us. He is the centre of eternal purpose; that centre is brought into our hearts by the Spirit. Development proceeds in that love revealed to us in the purpose of God. The love of Christ will lead the saints to apprehend the breadth, length, etc., of the boundless sphere of glory, (that cannot really be defined); and then to know that love itself which surpasses knowledge, which would seem to be a confusion of terms, but is quite in order. The first prayer is objective, since the power is operating externally; in the second prayer the power is operating in us internally, and is thus subjective in its bearing. It is very fitting that the prayer should conclude with such a wonderful doxology.

S. The Two-Fold Ministry.

The Two-Fold Ministry.

Notes of address by J. A. Trench, 1914. The work of the Spirit at Pentecost in forming the body of Christ is first revealed at Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus. From the teaching of the Apostle we see what the assembly, composed of all who are united to Christ in glory by the Spirit dwelling in them, is to the heart of God. "In other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." From the beginning of the world it was hid in God; creation is the sphere in which it is to be brought out (Eph 3:1-21.). There was a double ministry of the Apostle: (1) to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, his Gospel; (2) to make all see the fellowship of the mystery or administration, that has a larger meaning than fellowship. It is the practical arrangement and process of carrying out. To the intent that now to the exalted intelligences of the heavens might be known in the Assembly the manifold or all-various wisdom of God. His wonderful works in creation had displayed His eternal power and Godhead, but the Assembly was His masterpiece in which all the resources of His wisdom were displayed in forming out of heterogeneous races and conflicting nationalities (even Jew and Gentile) one body, who would recognise each other and walk as fellow members of the body of Christ. How infinite the grace that has brought to us that which had so great a place in the eternal thought and counsel of God.

Ch. 5. reveals the place it has in the heart of Christ. The truth of the Assembly being His Body did not bring out sufficiently how His affections were engaged in it. Hence when the Apostle touched the nearest and dearest of natural relationships, viz., husband and wife, the Spirit leads him to unfold about the love of Christ to the Assembly. He not only gave His life for her, shedding His blood, but gave Himself in the inscrutable glory of His person: 1:e., the love of formed relationship. He loved her as He found her (not sanctified nor glorified) with all the devotion that led Him to give Himself. He is now sanctifying and forming it like Himself that there may be nothing to hinder the enjoyment of His love by the revelation and ministry of all He is to her. Cleansing is going along with this and is necessary because of the flesh in us. We have to pass through with a view to His presenting her to Himself as all that His heart can delight in and that we may answer practically to what we are as chosen in Christ individually before the foundation of the world, holy and without blame before Him in love. But even yet we have not learned all the Assembly is to Christ. It is His own body as Eve was to Adam, in God's original incident of marriage. It is Himself, as Paul had learned in the first words to him from the glory of Christ and thus it is that His body can be presented as His wife. In loving His wife He loves Himself and in detail, tender nourishing and cherishing is wanted in that love of His to the Assembly. The mystery is great, but Paul is speaking to us concerning Christ and the Assembly. Rev 19:1-21. gives us the celebration of the greatest joy in heaven, 1:e., the result of the presentation, when the espousals can be celebrated in heavenly glory and His wife comes out having passed the judgment seat arrayed in all that which had been the fruit of His grace in her. Rev 21:1-27; Rev 22:1-21 gives her display in the glory of Christ in the coming Kingdom. But 21:2, shifts the scene to eternity; no longer is her glory displayed to others, but she is for Himself, as a bride still in the freshness of His affections after a

thousand years of display to a wondering universe. That will be the answer to our hearts of the wealth of divine love lavished upon us. Well may Eph 4:1-32 commence with walking worthy of such a calling!

S. The righteousness of God"

The righteousness of God" In a recent notice of "Mr. William Kelly as a Theologian," which also claims to present "a summary account" of Darbyism "in the form it assumed under the hand of Mr. Kelly, who was unquestionably its most learned, systematic, and lucid representative," the following occurs under the head of "Justification":

"Closely linked in Mr. Kelly's mind with this doctrine of justification is his explanation of the phrase, the righteousness of God. This is not God's gift of righteousness, nor anything in the same order of ideas. Neither is it God's attribute of righteousness. It is God's personal righteousness in the act of justifying the ungodly. This sense, which seems to be required in Rom 3:25-26, Mr. Kelly assigns to the expression throughout St. Paul's argument."

Now the analysis just quoted from cannot, as to this section at any rate, on Soteriology, be said to be an unskilful one. Particularly clear is the confession of the baselessness of the charge of antinomianism so often laid against "the Brethren's" doctrine of justification. And so in measure as to their definition of the term "righteousness of God." It is not theirs only, no doubt. The same, or a similar interpretation, had been given before, but had fallen into disfavour in presence of that which made it to be, in the words of the reviewer, "God's gift of righteousness." But there is in his second negative — "Neither is it God's attribute of righteousness" — an implication, if taken absolutely, to which some will demur. Mr. Kelly may perhaps seldom have, in so many words, used the term "God's attribute of righteousness"; but it is questionable if he or Mr. Darby, of whom he is here said to be the interpreter, would, either of them, have been satisfied with the definition from which it was thus peremptorily ruled out. In W.K.'s "Notes on Romans," for instance, on Rom 1:17, "the righteousness of God," *dikaioisune theou* is given as signifying a "habit or quality of righteousness," and (translated "God's righteousness") is said to be a similar phrase to "God's power" just before, and "God's wrath" just after.

Again, in his tract "The Righteousness of God: What is it?" quoting from the late Bishop of Ossory, where the latter admits that "the righteousness (justice) of God regarded as a divine attribute" is the "easier and therefore better" interpretation of Rom 3:25-26, W.K. accepts the concession as true "as far as it goes."

Then, as to Mr. Darby. In a reply to the Record, dealing with Rom 3:25-26, we have (in "A Letter on the Righteousness of God"), "I say, then, in this capital passage it is a character or attribute of God, which is made good by the blood of Christ — in respect of sinners, so as to favour them." Again, in a Letter (on "The Pauline Doctrine of the Righteousness of Faith") reviewing the Christian Examiner — "First, as to the term, 'righteousness of God,' I should not call it properly an attribute of God, in the common sense of the word attribute. The word is generally used for what is essential to His being and nature, as power; whereas righteousness is a relative term. But the righteousness of God . . . means a quality in the character of God, . . . that which characterises Himself, . . . and is a far wider term than His being the Author of it." The true statement of the matter would probably have been given had the writer qualified it by saying that the righteousness

of God in Rom 3:25-26, is not merely God's so-called attribute of righteousness; but the brightest and fullest manifestation of that quality in His action of justifying the ungodly. Accompanied by the extract from the article "Righteousness of God," which he quotes, he would then, I think, have better expressed the teaching he seeks to present as Mr. Kelly's.

It is interesting to notice that the generally accepted signification of this important phrase is being called in question in quarters far removed from Mr. Kelly's school. It has had the field to itself for long. As remarked by the late Editor of Bible Treasury in a very early number (1857) — "It is a singular fact that, while God used Rom 1:17 to Luther's conversion, and we may say to the Reformation, neither he nor his companions, or their followers, ever apprehended the full truth conveyed by this blessed expression — 'righteousness of God.' Hence it is habitually mistranslated in Luther's German Bible, where dikaiosune theou is rendered the righteousness which is available before God." . . . "It is a humiliating circumstance that the professed comments on scripture" (up to our day) "are so barren as to this grave and deeply interesting theme." In 1890, however, to trace its recent history so far as related by one who himself feels the insufficiency of the former interpretation, something in the nature of a new departure was made. In the "Romans" volume of "Pulpit Commentary," a view of its essential meaning differing from the current one was propounded. This view was subsequently adopted by Rev. Dr. Robertson, Principal of Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham, in a paper to the Thinker (November, 1893). More recently Prof. Sanday and Mr. Headlam in the "International Critical Commentary" allude to these two protests "quite recently raised against what had seemed for some time past to be almost an accepted exegetical tradition." To quote the first mentioned on Rom 1:17. "It is usual to interpret this as meaning man's imputed, or forensic, righteousness, which is from God theou being understood as the genitive of origin. The phrase in itself suggests rather the sense in which it is continually used in the Old Testament, as denoting God's own eternal righteousness. "Again," It cannot be denied that the word dikaiosune is used in a secondary sense to express, not absolute righteousness such as God's; but the state of acceptance, or acquittal, into which, through his faith, the believer enters. But we contend that it never has this sense when, without a preposition intervening, it is followed by theou, and also that God's own righteousness is never lost sight of as the source from which such acceptance or acquittal flows." To sum up in the words of Mr. Kelly himself, "There is nothing to hinder our understanding dikaiosune theou in its usual sense of an attribute or quality of God. . . . The definition of Luther, Calvin, Beza, Reiche, De Wette, etc., is unsatisfactory, as Luther's version, which is a paraphrase of it, is erroneous. . . . Of course it is not divine righteousness abstractly (which is perhaps the unconscious difficulty of most who approach the subject), but God just in virtue of the Saviour's work. How does He estimate it, how act on it, for the believer? The infusion of divine righteousness has no just sense, or appears to confound justification with life; whilst the idea that it means mercy is a poor evasion which weakens the grand truth that not His love only but His justice justifies the believer." J.T.

S. They that Feared the Lord.

They that Feared the Lord.

Eph 4:1-7, 2Ti 2:19-22; Rev 3:7-14.

Notes of an address by J. A. Trench, Edinburgh, 1891.

(from "An Outline of Sound Words" No. 6, p. 15)

It is of deep importance for our souls that we should be in the intelligence of what God is doing. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. That surely involves the intelligence of His mind. Twice, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle is arrested to betake, himself to prayer; first, for intelligence to show us the path, and secondly for power to take the path; and this preparatory to the exhortations of the three last chapters. Do we know, indeed, that our path is set in the light of the glory of God. Our failing walk does not alter it. We find two things that are traceable all through God's Word, His unchangeable principles, and His grace that always keeps a feeble remnant true to Himself to the end of a dispensation.

First, as to His principles; in Eph 4:1-7, we find the path set before us; lowliness and meekness are to characterise it. Was there ever a day that such a spirit was more called for? If at the beginning, when all was at its brightest, there was the greatest need for this, how much more now. "Endeavouring" (verse 3) has not the sense here that it has acquired; it does not convey the thought of the possibility of failure, but is more "using diligence" — throwing, all our energies into seeking to realise that wonderful unity formed with all those that are Christ's. Are we really walking in the sense of being united by the Holy Ghost to a risen Man in glory, even our risen Saviour? Are we living in the fresh sense of this, so as to have the consciousness of the relationship through Christ with all those belonging to Him? It is one thing to assent to the truth, and another thing to realise it in our own souls.

But, it may be said, it is difficult to act upon the truth; things are changed since this Epistle was written. Yes, but the principles of God do not change; we are not left to modify Scripture to suit the changed state of things. All the elements of failure were already at work in the Apostle's times. They have received a terrible development since, but we have the Word of God still to guide.

Blessed be God, no ruin has touched His principles. Look at the verses in the Second chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy. There we read, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Blessed word, He knoweth them that are His. You and I may not be able to pick them out — this is His responsibility, I say it reverently; but then comes our responsibility in the verses that follow. These verses apply to the state of a ruined church. First a man is to purge himself from vessels to dishonour; a very full word in the original, implying separating himself. The second step in the path is, "Flee also youthful lusts." Watch your own heart lest the enemy get in and mock the so-called path of separation. Then, thirdly, we are to

seek out those that are similarly separated. Here, again, we are met by another of God's unchanging principles. From Matthew 11 - Matthew 19, the Lord was educating and training His disciples for the path in which He was about to leave them. He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mat 18:20). There the church was to be found, and it abides in a day of ruin, although not in view of it. It was the richest resource of God from the beginning, and it remains to the end.

I want now to look at another thing — the ways of God in His grace in keeping a few cleaving to His Name in the end of the dispensation. Look at Ezra 3. A day of ruin, but a day of God's grace that opens the way for those who had been in captivity to return to Jerusalem. A very broken company, indeed, but they were there in faith, and set up the altar of the God of Israel, with the most scrupulous adherence to the Word of God, no innovations, no altering to suit altered circumstances. Then, in Nehemiah, when the people wept, they were told, "The joy of the lord is your strength" (Neh 8:9-10). What a moment for that principle to be first enunciated in Scripture! The Lord comes in to encourage faith, though sad days were before that remnant during the lapse of centuries.

We have nothing to look forward to but the Lord. We must remember, in referring to these types, that we have nothing to reconstruct, the Holy Ghost having formed the unity of the body of Christ at Pentecost, maintains it in that unity ever since, even if there was but one on earth walking according to it.

Now I refer to the Book of Malachi when there existed a deplorable state of things, for while the Lord can say to Israel, "I have loved you," they reply, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" and everything that the Lord says is met in the same way, with scoffing. Yet we find a remnant in the midst of this appalling state of things. There were those who, in the face of everything, "feared the Lord" and "spake often one to another" (Mal 3:16). The fear of the Lord became a bond to those that loved Him in the midst of the darkest conceivable state of things. It was so sweet to the Lord that He kept a book of remembrance, even when they did not say anything, but only "thought upon His name." The Lord says, they shall be my peculiar treasure.

Again, in Luke 2, after the lapse of centuries we still find the remnant. Look at Anna, in Luk 2:36-38, what cleaving to the Lord was there, even in her great age! Her heart was in the centre of God's interests on earth; and so we find the grace of the Lord still preserving a remnant, for bad as was the state of things in Malachi it was worse here. Pass on to Luk 21:1-5, [and] we see a beloved woman, in all her desolation, adhering to the centre of God's interests on earth, even at the last moments of the dispensation, for in the next verse we find that the days were coming when not one stone would be left upon another. Here was faith, lovely faith, adhering to God's unchangeable principles to the end.

Now comes the earnest question for us. Is there anything to answer to this in Christendom? This is where the Address to Philadelphia, in Revelation 3, comes in prophetically. As we come near to the close we find the Lord indicating what suits Him in the last state of things on earth. He presents Himself, not now in His official glory, but in His own essential nature, "The holy" and "The true." There are two words used for "true;" it is not here, he that speaks the truth, but He that is true, genuine. Holiness must be the first thing, and then genuineness, reality, unfeigned reality. He uses His power to open the door, and we have the assurance that this open door will continue to the

end. Then we have the character of those who are to occupy the open door, "Thou . . . hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name." They are not characterised by strength, but by keeping His word. Oh, for obedience that having got a word from the Lord acts upon it. Those that do so will find an open door before them. In the presence of the ruin of these last days, nothing but uncompromising obedience will do. Adhering to the unchanged principles of His word to the end, holding fast the precious revelation of Christ in a day when the enemy with all his power will seek to get it from us. He gives us His attitude, and His path, and He looks for the reflection of that attitude. He says "I come quickly." It is not "Behold" here. He is only addressing Himself to those who are awake. He adds, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Then the Lord addresses the overcomer — the one true and faithful to this position upon whom He puts His seal, as with the remnant in Malachi 3. We cannot fail to observe in this verse (Mal 3:12) the constant repetition of the little word "My," the sweet association with Him. There can be no addition to that "Hold that fast," and there will be the richest reward in the glory. I feel that the question is unsolved as to who the persons are. Once in the path does not ensure our being there always, even as the remnant lapse back. It does not need centuries for us to do so. What need of girding up of the loins. Out of the brightest state for Christ we may fail, but He will raise up others to the end. He will find what answers to Him until He comes. May we not be satisfied with anything short of this.

S. Two addresses on Eph_1:3-14.

Two addresses on Eph 1:3-14.

Perhaps there is hardly any portion of the word more familiar to us than what we have here, and therefore it may not be that we have what we do not know already; but I want to press upon us what the grace of God has done for us, and our consequent responsibility. We are here, not to please ourselves, but Him Who is worthy. It is the deep sense of grace that enables us to please Him. I don't say alone, for we have the Spirit of God to enable us to carry it out; so we cannot excuse ourselves, and say we cannot carry out God's purpose for us. It is He "Who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure"; so it shuts the mouth at once of all excuses.

Here we find the apostle breaking out in the blessings of ver. 3. Now I think you cannot have a wider charter than this. Is your idea of a spiritual blessing on a level with your temporal mercies? You would think it a great thing if God had said, "blessed us with" every earthly comfort! That was true of Israel. I do not make out that we are better, but I do make out that I am immensely more favoured than the people of old — so are you — not that we are better than was Israel. Has not God a right to do what He will with His own people and His own resources? What of the parable of the labourers. "Friend, I do thee no wrong!" "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" Because you hear of some others not working so long you begin to grumble! What are men's rights? Is has been said, Nothing but men's wrongs. We are here to maintain God's rights. Our blessing is very varied: "every spiritual blessing." I am sure we none of us believe it as we should. Excuse my saying so, but do we not feel it is too vast? Yet let God be true. This is what He reveals to us — "EVERY spiritual blessing." If that lays hold of you, you will say, "Well, I am Thine for ever!" We are free, not to please ourselves, but free to serve like His slaves, His bondmen, but a bondage of freedom, of love. Do I want to do anything that is not pleasing to Him? Would you grieve your best earthly friend? How much less this Friend who sticketh closer than a brother. No, we are here to please Him. Is it too much? Can we not say that whether present or absent we are "ambitious" to be well pleasing to him? He has come out according to the wealth of His own grace. I do not say you are in the enjoyment of every blessing, but they are yours. There are the diamonds on the table, flowers, books, pictures, etc., and I say, "It is all yours." You do not take all up together; you pick them up one at a time. How much of this presentation of God's grace has your heart laid hold of? We are weak things; yes, I know it; but this is "in heavenly places" — Canaan. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I have given you"; but you must put you foot on it if you are to enjoy it, your must appropriate it. Caleb acted on it. I would like Hebron — a strong city.' He goes forward and takes it. He had had to go through the wilderness forty years through the fault of his brethren. We do suffer for the faults of our brethren, and are members one of another. It was no fault of Caleb — no. Well, he too must have felt the pressure of things, but he says, I am as strong this day as when I 'started.' The Lord knows how to sustain His people, and the heart that is true to Him. We have the hand of Omnipotence to fall back on. We are not able to bear the force of it, but He knows how to deal gently. He delights to bless.

You never asked Him to bless you with every spiritual blessing. Had I a will in my being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world? No, I wasn't born. But does He not see the end from the beginning? And before the worlds were founded we were chosen in the purpose of God — those in the mind of God predestinated to be companions of the Lord Jesus, redeemed by His precious blood. What difficulties presented themselves! The children of Israel were brought through the wilderness, but those who came out of Egypt perished. Have you ever found God to fail? Can't you trust Him? 'I can trust Him for my soul,' you say. Nay, trust Him for everything! Do you realize that your hands are full — that you cannot be richer than you are? He does not give everything now, for we could not stand it. In the day that is coming He will give us all things. But this is now. Would you have it apart from Christ? This is in Him (ver. 4). We must be according to God. He is holy; He is light. We must be suited to God's presence. "Before Him in" — fear? No, "in love." We can hardly say we are "blameless" or "holy" in the full sense of this verse, for this is the consummation of God's purpose; but we are "holy brethren," and we are to pursue holiness — to lay hold of it. "Everyone that hath this hope on Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." There is the constant work of the Spirit of God in our souls, conforming us in spirit now to Him.

Ver 5. "Sonship" is a grand word. "Adoption" might give a false thought. While it is a good word in itself, we do not always take in its breadth. If we adopt a child, we may cast off that child. We may go out of the family, and lay hold of some waif, and adopt it; but it is not born into the family: there is no link of nature. But if I am born into the family I am a child, and you cannot deny the relationship. You may cut out of a will, but you cannot annul the relationship. St. John always speaks of "children." But this is "sonship." Not only am I brought into sonship, but born into the family. But sonship gives character and position. "He is my son." So we have been brought into sonship, and we are waiting for the manifestation of it. It is not now displayed; we are called to suffer and groan, waiting for that day when every blade of grass will display the glory of Him that made it. Jerusalem will be the joy of the whole earth, the holy city. It was so called at the crucifixion. But what a day when that comes, and it is the joy of all the earth! That is because of "Jehovah-shammah"; Jehovah is there. It is sad to see how the name of God is being deleted from the world. In all their thoughts He is not! Oh, the fools! Now it says, "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (ver. 6). He is going to show that — not the praise of the glory of my belief, my trust, but of His grace. All "in Him," or "in whom," all Christ — the object in this chapter.

Ver. 7. It is a peculiar verse. "We have obtained an inheritance." Jacob was the lot of Jehovah's inheritance, but we are not His inheritance, — we are the sharers with Him in it. What wonderful grace! When He takes His inheritance we are with Him, His heavenly bride. Who form this bride? The Jews of old? No. We are to reign with Christ: they are to be reigned over. And we are sealed for it. It is made true and sure by the Spirit. I pass over the central truth of this chapter, redemption (ver 7). The grand thing now is to know not only that one is saved, though that is a grand thing, but the knowledge of His will — "having made known to us the mystery of His will" (ver. 9). It is not enough that He has redeemed me, but He opens His heart to me, and says, I want you to see what I purpose.' The will is opened before me — hidden as it has been from before the world's foundation. That will has to do with everything connected with my position down here. Take worship. How would He have me worship? We get it in chap. 3. and there I get the real want of my soul. Here it is the "good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself" — to do His will. Am I doing

it? Is it bondage if it is the response of love? "The perfect law of liberty." He has given the Spirit, and says "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption." It is a stimulus to know His eye is on us in our little corner. He looks down into your heart and mine, and says, Are you true to me? Are you seeking to walk after the purpose of that will now you know it? We are going to be manifested in the likeness of Christ: oh, don't let the world have a place in your heart — the world that crucified the Lord of Glory. We are called to wait for the Son from heaven Who delivered us from the wrath to come. R.

Just a few thoughts in connection I would like to put before you. Grace has a wonderful place in Ephesians. It has in all the word of God, but in some places is more conspicuous than others; so here. When we think where this Epistle came from, how we see that all things serve His might! The dear apostle, taken from active service, and kept in prison two years and subsequently, at Rome — but what a loss to us if it had not been? And God over-ruled it thus for His glory! Taken aside while God made known to Him His will; and so we get the precious Epistles to the Hebrews, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians. We can take them up full of comfort and blessing.

We are told in ch. 2: 5 "By grace ye are saved." It is blessed to turn to the unmerited favour of God to us, but before chap. 1: 7 it might not appear as if there was any sin 'connected with us; then we get redemption. To be holy and without blame before Him in love was absolutely true of Christ as a man down here below, and we have the same nature. There is nothing said about faults or failures, but we are taken back to eternity and God's eternal plans. Then in ver. 7 we find we are sinners, and need a Saviour. Great as God's glory is as Creator, He has greater glory as Redeemer. And the great thing is not that we should be sure we are going to heaven, great as that is, but greater still is it that God has put His hand on us, poor hell-deserving sinners as we are, and picked is up to give eternal joy to the heart of His beloved Son. That is worth having existence for! "To Him be glory in the assembly throughout all ages!" You and I form part of that assembly by His grace. He is going to get glory through it throughout all ages, world without end.

We found redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ, by blood and by power. Here it is through His blood. It is true we are all bought, and we are all redeemed. The difference ought to be a big joy to us. All the world is purchased — the unconverted as well as the saved. "Denying the Lord that bought them" we read. By being purchased, we change masters; every believer is purchased, and every sinner too. In redemption I change my status. Every believer is redeemed. Our liberty is to do His will, to serve God and to serve our brethren. The riches of His grace are found in this we have redemption. Is there anything higher? Yes, chap. 2. takes us on to the future. In ver. 7 — the "exceeding riches of His grace" He will show, not for us to see, but for others to see in us. That's His purpose. Is there anything higher than that? Yes, blessed be His Name! something higher still. If it had been said, "Taken us into favour in Christ," it would be wonderful, but it is not put so, but in the beloved." There was One here of Whom the Father could say at His baptism, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; then on the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." If God says in Him is found all His delight, we believe it, don't we? Nothing counts but Christ. That thought has been a great blessing to me. God wants to let us know what is the very glory of Christ. He has accepted us in the Beloved, in Him in Whom is all His delight. You can never reach a higher point than that.

We are not adopted "children." Children is a question of birth. A new born babe in the family of God, we see it at once in John 1:12. "As many as received him to them gave he power to become children of God." You cannot make a mistake in this. John in his Gospel and Epistles reserves the word Son for One only, and that is the One Who occupies the bosom of the Father. The only exception is in Rev 21:1-27. "Which were born not of blood," — not natural descent, "nor of the will of the flesh" — no; of God by His own will; "nor of the will of man" — what can he do? "but of God," in the sovereignty of His love. That is how we occupy the place of children (1Pe 1:2-3; 1Pe 2:2); this is eternal, and can never be set aside. But with regard to "sonship." Angels are sons, but never children. Angels are witnesses that God can make a glorious creature and keep him from falling; and they are learning now in us God's various wisdom — not seeing it in the wonder of creation, but in you and me. But in the millennium they will learn that however blessed a creature may be, unless kept he is bound to fall. Sonship tells of privilege, of position. "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." That is a privilege the saints of old could not know. But our brother wanted to put the truth so that we live more to His glory, and I apprehend that the better knowledge we have of His love will help us and draw out our hearts to Him. We want to see it more, to rejoice in the worthiness of that blessed One. That is what we want, to rejoice more in Him. And I thought of 1Sa 17:1-58 — a heart acknowledging the worthiness of another. It is David — the beloved, and it often helps us to remember its sweet meaning — "the beloved one." When Jesus is called David it is as the Beloved. And we know Him who emptied Himself and became obedient unto death, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him (Php 2:1-30). Oh, that blessed scripture! How it tells God's estimate of the only absolutely perfect One! Every created intelligence shall bow the knee to that blessed One.

"In whom we have obtained an inheritance." What is the inheritance? Everything in heaven and earth. He is the appointed Heir of all things — the whole universe. You and I are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. It is too vast; we cannot take it in. It all belonged to Him before He became man, but He has got it now as Man that you and I may share it with Him. Oh, what do we not owe Him! But I was thinking of that scene in the valley of Elah, and I think we would all agree that it is God bringing before us Calvary — the great victory there showed forth by what took place there. The great champion a type of Satan, and David of Christ. The challenge is given, and no one can take it up. Yet there was One, the despised One, who was not called when Samuel came to anoint him, but they could not sit down till the Beloved came. The despised, misunderstood one — and there was One more misunderstood than anyone. But David goes out with his sling and stone; and Gen 3:1-24 tells of a Deliverer — but a suffering One. I don't want to go into all the details, but David slung the stone and it struck Goliath in the forehead and he was prostrate. What a change in the feelings of the trembling host! There was no sword in David's hand, but I read in Heb 2:1-18 "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death." So as the power of death was the devil's own sword, so it was the giant's own sword in the hand of the Beloved that cut off the giant's head, and they were made more than conquerors; they had the spoil — the result of the victory — and David the praise! Then afterwards I see David before Saul with the head in his hand; so typically I see Christ in resurrection (Col 2:15). Well, there was one singled out who had seen all this (1Sa 18:1) a heart won! There was more than one victory won that day the heart of the king's son was won — "knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul." I am sure that is a voice to us, not recorded for nothing. God intends us to learn by that. Ah, we want to

be better acquainted with the cross of our blessed Saviour — "Gazing with adoring eye, On Thy dying agony." We don't want to limit it to the Lord's day morning, but every day let us feed on Him, Christ our Passover.

It is not only simply stated, but there were the results of that love. Jonathan stripped himself. It is very lovely to see. It was not a perfect love — David's love was greater, but we won't speak of his failures. The Holy Spirit records these details here, and in the light of the cross we listen to the truth, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." I appeal to each one, Is there anything we ought to keep back from Him? It is all right to sing "the dearest object of my love" etc. — but there is so much — time, talents, wealth, everything. I am His bondman now. May God give us grace to surrender all to Himself. He is worthy. Amen. J. A. T.

S. Waiting and Watching

Waiting and Watching The Holy Spirit, while faithfully recording the failures of the returned remnant from the Babylonish captivity, directs our attention again and again to some lovely features which had been produced in them by the grace of God. Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, and Nehemiah had all been used of God to minister blessing and encouragement to the remnant; many evils were removed, and the authority of the word of the Lord was acknowledged and obeyed. The Lord undertook for them; not with the same manifest interference and terrible majesty, and judgments, as when the nation was delivered from Egyptian bondage; yet quite as certainly in His over-ruling providential care. But here, as in everything else intrusted to man, there ensues failure and declension, till, within the space of fifty years from Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem, the condition of the remnant had become truly deplorable, as disclosed by the prophet Malachi.

Surely, to the eye of faith there is a present-day parallel to this; to the Lord's dishonour, and our shame. May grace save us from being blind to it; but rather keep us sensible of it, leading us to walk humbly and prayerfully and watchfully. One thing, however, is always certain that God never leaves Himself without witness; so the same prophet is used to point out a small remnant of the remnant who in their day of distressful circumstances met the mind of the Lord. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Then follow promises of blessing for those who feared, and served the Lord, and terrible judgments announced for the wicked. The declension had been rapid, and the then existing testimony had the appearance of an expiring spark; then the curtain dropped, for the book of Malachi closed the prophetic testimony of the Old Testament. This is succeeded by four centuries of silence; but while Jehovah was silent the cultivated intellect of man was allowed to shine with its mightiest achievements. During that time the unrivalled philosophers, orators, statesmen, sculptors and warriors of Greece flourished, but instead of bringing about a deliverance for the human race, it has been said that this gifted race was eaten up of its own corruptions. Thus God in His wisdom demonstrated that man by wisdom knew not God. In the New Testament we find that the time had arrived for God to break the silence. We read in the Epistle to the Galatians that when the fulness of time was come God sent forth His Son.

Jehovah had announced the glad tidings in the garden of Eden, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. He had said to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"; yea, all the scriptures were pointing forward to the advent of a great deliverer. All heaven we know was interested in that momentous event. It was there the glory of the eternal Son was known; there He was the object of worship for all the heavenly intelligencies. "By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things subsist." But He was about to empty Himself, to lay aside His glory — not His Deity — and to take a servant's form. Oh, mighty stoop! oh,

wondrous incarnation! Do we wonder that the mind of heaven was reflected on the earth? that highly favoured ones, just a few, were in God's secret?

Such was the case. When the curtain is lifted what a testimony do we get of Jehovah's faithfulness and grace! The spark of testimony had not expired, the light was not extinguished. No, no, that was God's concern, and He had kept it alive for His own glory. Gabriel was sent to the temple to tell Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth should bear a son, who was to be named John. He would be great in the sight of the Lord, and would be filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth. Further, he would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. This was the great forerunner of Jehovah's Christ. Subsequently, Mary too was visited by Gabriel at Nazareth, who told her that she should bring forth a son whose name should be called Jesus. And in answer to her difficulty the angel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Here let us notice the character of the remnant that God had reserved to Himself. Zacharias and Elizabeth, obedient ones, walking in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless; Simeon, just and devout, who was in the current of God's thoughts, and who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen Jehovah's Christ. There was also praying Anna, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day. There were Joseph and Mary, simple and devout, controlled by the mind of heaven. There was nothing of human greatness in any of these, nothing to attract the attention of the world; but oh! how highly favoured of God.

Now we are waiting for the second advent; we are looking for that blessed hope. The Lord Himself said, "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 ye may be also." His coming for us is doubtless all of grace; and every saint, all who are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, will be taken then. The presentation in glory will be of the bride complete. The thought of the faithful only being taken and the worldly saints who failed to watch being left to go through the tribulation, is quite foreign to the teaching of God's word. But there will be, doubt less, great differences in the actual state of God's saints at the Lord's coming; and it is our privilege to gather up from the New Testament scriptures just what will meet the Lord's mind as to our state. There are some helpful words in Luk 12:1-59, where the Lord Jesus says, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luk 12:33-38).

Now turn to John 21:1-25, where, as has been said by another, we have things presented designedly mysterious. Peter and John are representative men. Peter, to whom the Lord intrusted

His sheep of the circumcision, has a very prominent place in the early chapters of the Acts — days of power and wonders and signs; but the Lord had said to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." He thus sealed his testimony with his blood to the glory of God. Those days of power terminated; but John represents that which will exist up to the Lord's coming. So we read (ver. 20), "Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following, which also leaned on his breast at supper and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Is not this intended to convey the thought that what is seen in John and mentioned in this connection will exist till the Lord comes? John is seen following Jesus — the One who has left us an example that we should follow His steps. "He that says he abides in him ought, even as he walked, himself also [so] to walk." He is the disciple whom Jesus loved. It was a real joy to his heart that Jesus loved him, and his appreciation was expressed in calling himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He leaned on the Lord's breast at supper, which tells of sweet and blessed intimacy; and the more reverently intimate we are with the Lord, the more intimate He will be with us. May we cultivate it. John was in the secret of the Lord as to the betrayer; and how manifestly this comes out in his Epistles. May we, too, in this day of many antichrists, keep close to the Lord, and be in His secret as to the evil around in its true character. And may we also, in response to the Lord's "Surely I come quickly," be able, with the deepest affection and desire, to add with John our "Amen; come, Lord Jesus." J. A. T.

S. Why Persecutest Thou Me.

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What meant that "Me"? It meant that the persecuted saints were every one of them united to Christ in glory by the Spirit who dwelt in them: they were members of His Body, that which He accounts to be Himself, even as He had become their life. There had been nothing like this before. The assembly had been formed into this relationship at Pentecost, but this was the first intimation of it: the whole truth of it was involved in the words that fell so strangely from heaven upon the ears of Saul. It was, in principle, the Mystery, which was ever after to characterise his ministry; even as the Lord had further to say to him, "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" (Acts 26:12-16).

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s. Son_2:4.

Song of Solomon 2:4.

Notes of an Address John Alfred Trench.

(Dublin Tract Repository)

Beloved Friends — I wish to give you a Motto, and I trust, if you come to see anything of the truth that it contains, you will take it as a word to be next and dearest to your heart for the coming year. It is —

"His banner over me was love."

You will find the words in Song of Solomon 2:4. I know no more precious portion of God's Word than the whole passage from which they are taken: —

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." (Song of Solomon 2:1.) The rose in its beauty, the lily in all its hidden perfectness — it is Jesus; and the moment He is presented to the souls of those who know him, their affections are drawn out towards him by the thought of all that He has been and is to them. This Jesus — little known or thought of by the world, is our shelter from the heat of trial, and the food of our souls, in the dearth and famine of all else that can satisfy in our desert journey of life.

"I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Solomon 2:3.)

But, my friends, is it so with you? Do you know anything of Jesus? I do not ask you by what name you call yourself, nor what doctrine you hold about Jesus; but I ask you earnestly, and must press my question, Do you know Christ for yourself? Do you know him personally? Have you received Christ in your heart as the One whom you love above all others? Do you know him in your life as a power separating from the world and from sin?

It is sad to listen to the vague and heartless way in which many who have not peace with God, but yet who acknowledge the claims of Christ, speak of him in general terms. They speak of our Saviour, who died for all the world, and think thus to avoid all individual dealing with God. How different is the warm appropriation of Christ by Mary, as she says, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!" How she speaks as if He belonged to her and none else in the world beside. "My Lord and my God," cries Thomas, as the light of a risen Saviour burst in upon His soul. None knew better than Paul about Christ; but far — far more blessed, He could say, "I know whom I have believed." My brother, my sister, be warned of a religion without Jesus. Be warned of a form without power — an unreal, empty shadow; if you don't know Jesus now as "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother," you will find yourself alone when all other friends have failed — alone at the bar of God — alone in the bottomless abyss of hell; — in the crowd indeed — but in the crowd of those upon whom the awful solitariness of the soul without

God has burst with tremendous reality! But if, on the contrary, the truths about Jesus have brought us to Jesus, how blessed to know the place that He has given us before God!

Many of the Lord's dear people fail of the "fulness of joy" which is our privilege, and which it is His will we should have abidingly, (John 17:13,) because they do not see this truth. Jesus has died for us. He has borne our sins, and borne them away for ever. He "loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." But this is not the whole truth. There is more to be told and to be enjoyed — far more than all this, wonderful as it is! This, indeed, He has done for us; but He has done more. He has brought us into the family of the Father. He has made us the children of God. He has given us the place of Sonship. This is the place He has given us —

"He brought me to the banqueting-house; and His banner over me was love." (Song of Solomon 2:4.) The blood has not only availed to wash away my sins, so that God can say, "I will remember them no more;" but it has rent the veil that separated the people of old from the Holiest of Holies, and has brought me in with my High Priest, Jesus, even into the most holy presence of God. Nor am I there unclothed; for by faith in that blood, I have been brought in as Jesus Himself, and stand there "the righteousness of God in him." (2Co 5:21.) Enveloped in that spotless robe, I take my place as no unwelcome guest at the banqueting table of love. The arms of love, from which nothing can ever separate me, enclose me in their embrace. The kiss of reconciliation and peace is upon my brow; and the blood gives me my title to it all.

Oh, beloved! if as a poor sinner you have really cast the eye of faith, though it be with a feeble glance, to Jesus, this look of faith — this renunciation of self and trust in Jesus — gives you this place before God, whether you know it or not. In Christ you have your meetness for it all. Your place in the presence of God does not depend upon any merit of your own. It does not depend on your walk down here, or upon your realization of all this blessedness, but it depends upon the value and efficacy of the blood of Jesus. May God give you to see it and enjoy it.

But, beloved, has the perfectness of my place before God given me immunity from trial, difficulty, or temptation down here? No, no. Each heart answers, No. My path down here may be one of trial. Each, one knows the character of the trial to which He has been exposed, and each knows the uncertainty of all that is to come. The coming year may be one of sickness. Health may fail; friends may fail; the happy Christmas circle now complete, may have many a gap in its ranks before another Christmas comes round. Besides all this, there are things hard to be borne — the reproach of Christ, the opposition of those dear to us who know not the Lord; the want of sympathy of those who are the Lord's, from whom we might have looked for the right hand of fellowship.

But, beloved, it is not with the path and with its roughnesses, that I want to occupy your minds. No; but I would have you think of the banner that floats above your heads. Up! weeping eyes that are turned in upon self, or fixed upon the path, or strained, amid tears, into the future, where all looks dark and gloomy — look up, and listen to the words — the precious words —

"His banner over me is love."

Thy trials and difficulties are from the hand of a Father, who deals with thee in love, as with His child. He is drawing thee nearer to Himself. Thou must nestle all the closer to the side of Jesus. There perplexity, or coldness, or the withering blast of disappointed hope, has no power; or if it blows at all, it serves but to float over thee the banner of love. "But the future?" you say. Well, the

future — trust it to the Father. Bring Him all your care, "for He careth for you;" and leave it with Him. Have things turned out otherwise than you had looked or hoped for? Still, "His banner over you is love." And it is your place and mine to bow our heads in meek submission to the Father's will. This was Jesus' yoke, and it is ours; "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Let us take His yoke upon us, and His word is pledged to it — we shall find rest unto our souls. "His banner over me is love." What a thought to rest upon! What a pillow on which to sleep or die! But there are those who say, our Motto might be otherwise rendered. They say, the word "Banner" ought to be rendered "Standard." Be it so, we will follow them in the change, and see if it is not still a Motto for us. And now, we are taken from the gentler scenes of rest in a Father's house to the sterner activities of the camp, the battle-field, and the fight. The "Standard" at once summons me to the thought, and very presence, of the enemy. Need we stop to inquire — who and what He is? Nay, we are in the fight already. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are opposed to us in formidable array. Our conflict is with "principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world — wicked spirits in the heavenlies." We were once found on the side of those that are now opposed to us. We walked according to their course, and according to their prince. (Eph 2:2.) But we are deserters from them: therefore the fight is all the fiercer. We have been quickened, raised with Jesus, and seated in the heavenlies — brought into the banqueting house; and they ever seek "to cast us down from our excellency," and make us walk in the flesh. Oh, which of us has not felt the power of the enemy? But how blessed, to look up now and again, nay ever, from the scene of strife and conflict, to repose in the thought that the Standard over us is love!

God, in His great love wherewith He hath loved us, has given us to fight under that standard, and not all the powers of the enemy can prevail against us. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Our standard is one of victory. There is not one blot on the unsullied fame of that standard. Far and wide it has been carried over the earth, and everywhere it has prevailed. We fight, then, in no uncertain cause, for the Lord has triumphed, and in Him the victory is secured to us. Look up, faint-hearted one, and see the names of the victories that love has now inscribed upon thy standard, and once more gird thy sword upon thy thigh: rally closer round the standard — for it is when we wander from it, we fall. Oftentimes we go forth in the impetuosity of self-confidence, and fall; but round that standard all is victory — "victory through the blood of the Lamb!" But then again, as the standard is borne in the fight, it suffers. I have seen one, that had never known defeat through a century of war, hanging in shreds by its pole. Oh! beloved, as we gaze upon our standard of love, we see it bathed in blood; it is pierced with the spear and the nails; it has been in the deadliest conflict, when none of us were there to fight around it. Ah, you see it — the standard is love, and that, God's love manifested in the Cross of Jesus.

Jesus is our standard; and all this He has borne for us. He has fought for us alone. He has, in death, triumphed over death and hell. He has bruised the head of the serpent that had the power of death. He that has led captivity captive, has gone up on high; He is our standard of victory. Well may we take courage, for even in death we can cry, "O death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." But there is another, and a third sense, in which, I think, we may use our Motto with effect. We speak of a standard of right and wrong; and I conceive the meaning is not altogether unassociated with that which we have been just considering. As the regiment follows its standard, never hesitating to follow where it leads, the standard becomes its guide, its rule: so we take the word in the sense of

a rule of life, and then, how blessed to read, "His standard over me is love!"

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus, what has been your rule of life until today? Have you been setting before yourself some human model — even the dearest servant of God that you can find? If so, I say you have been lowering God's standard. Worse again — have you been making your own experience your rule? "I walked up to such a mark last year — I will make it a higher one next year." Or has it been your highest thought that you are under a system that consists of rules of right and wrong — of "do this, and don't do the other"? Then, no wonder you look so unhappy, and do so little. Look for a little moment at God's standard as set before us in the light of the truth which we are considering. And now we have both parts of our verse brought into connection. Love has brought me into the banqueting house; and now this, my place before God, is to be the rule of my walk down here. In other words, my standing is my standard. How influential, then, does all this truth become, if we could only live in the full realization of it! What is the place which God has given me? He has brought me into His own presence — made me one with Christ. Now what conduct on my part will be suitable to this position? Am I risen with Christ? Then why set my affections on things below? Is my home in heaven? Then let me walk as a pilgrim and a stranger here. Is my citizenship in heaven? Oh, then, let every word, every act, be consistent with such a dignity. Were these blessed truths made by the Holy Spirit part and parcel of ourselves, how should we be enabled, as it were, to look down from heaven to earth, and judge of things as God judges! But this thought goes higher still: Christ is my standing before God. I am accepted in him. Then I should walk as Christ Himself. Would Christ be found in such a scene of gaiety or revelry? Then surely will not I. Would He give way to such a thought? Neither can I. Would such a word be His? Then let me not utter it. Oh! how such a rule transcends all miserable questionings as to whether there is any positive command against one thing, or any harm in another. Love is a thousand times more influential than law. When the love of Christ fills the soul, there is an end to all these wretched, cold calculations of selfishness which would bargain for yielding as little to the Lord as could be withheld with an easy conscience. Oh! how different is the boundlessness of the obedience of love, that, if it had a thousand hearts, would regard them all as too little for Jesus, and that finds its supreme delight in seeking to please him in all things! But do you say, what a high standard is this! How can I ever attain to it? Ah! beloved, here God meets us, humbled under a sense of our shortcoming and imperfection. He has given us a High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. In all our need and weakness and difficulties, as we journey along the wilderness path to our Father's house and home, we have the precious sympathy of Jesus. He has faced the full brunt of the storm. He, having been tempted Himself as the Son of Man, clothed with our nature, can succour us when we are tempted; and we have not only His sympathy, but His help. I may sympathize with you in a little; yet however I may yearn to do it, I cannot help to bear your load of care. But Jesus has not only a perfectness of sympathy, but He is all-powerful to help. Let us, therefore, beloved, "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find grace to help in time of need." And now, in conclusion, let us, above all things, set Jesus before us. Let us keep looking unto Him as one whose banner over us is love — as our standard round which to rally in every hour of conflict, and as our rule by which to order all our ways. Following in His footsteps, lean upon His arm. Be assured of His sympathy — His help; and keep looking for the moment, when, according to His promise, He will appear to take us to Himself. May the language of our hearts be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus! come quickly!" May the Lord be with you! The Lord bless you!

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