

THINGS NEW AND OLD VOLUME 1

by C.H. Mackintosh

A collection of articles and writings by C.H. Mackintosh from Things New and Old Volume 1, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

75 Chapters

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Things New and Old Volume 1

The Activities of Christ on Behalf of His People

He gave Himself for their sins. Gal. 1:4.

He quickens them by His voice. John 5:25.

He seals them with His Spirit. Eph. 1:13.

He feeds them with his flesh and blood. John 6:56, 57,

He cleanses them by His word. John 13:5. Eph. 5:26.

He maintains them by His intercession. Rom. 8:34. Heb. 7:25. 1 John 2:1.

He takes them individually to Himself. Acts 7:59. Phil. 1:23.

He watches over their ashes. John 6:39, 40.

He will raise them by His power. John 6:39, 40. 1 Cor. 15:52. 1 Thess. 4:16

He will come to meet them in the air. 1 Thess. 4:17.

He will conform them to His image. Phil. 3:21. 1 John 3:2.

He will associate them with Himself, in His everlasting kingdom. John 14:3 John 17:24.

Thus the activities of Christ on behalf of His people, take in, in their range, the past, the present, and the future. They stretch, like a golden line, from everlasting to everlasting. Well may it be said, "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord."

"Happy they who trust in Jesus,

Sweet their portion is and sure."

Address to the Reader

In presenting to the reader the first number of our periodical, we feel called upon to state our reasons for entering upon such a service, and also the objects which we hope, by the grace of God, to effect.

We do not deem any apology necessary for adding another to the numerous publications already extant, having for their object the circulation of pure truth. We want them all, and thousands more, if we could get them. We cannot have too many agencies for the furtherance of that which is good, and the suppression of that which is evil.

For, first of all, it is a lamentable fact that the enemy of souls has wrought, far more diligently, at the printing press, than the servants of the living God. Numerous as are the books, the pamphlets, the tracts, and the periodicals in which the words of eternal truth shine, for the instruction and comfort of souls, yet are they outnumbered, to an appalling amount, by publications of an infidel, immoral, and irreligious tendency.

2. We believe that the art of printing was designed, by a gracious Providence, as a powerful engine for the diffusion of scriptural knowledge; but we cannot shut our eyes to the startling fact that the enemy is making diligent use of that very art, for the purpose of corrupting, in all directions, the springs of thought and feeling. He is publishing, in the cheapest and most attractive form, gross evil, soul-destroying error, and perverted truth. And, we may safely say, if positive error has slain its thousands, perverted truth has slain its tens of thousands.

3. Now, we are fully assured that, notwithstanding all the enemy's efforts, the Lord is gathering out His own—that He is accomplishing His purposes, and hastening His everlasting kingdom. But should this be a reason for slackness, coldness, and indifference, on the part of the servants of Christ? The very reverse; yea, the assurance thereof is the basis of "steadfast" and "unmovable" service. It is because we know, on divine authority, that "our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," that therefore we work. Thank God for such a solid foundation! It would be sad, indeed, if what our God has graciously given as a soul-stirring encouragement to work should be used as a plea for inactivity—if the assurance of reaching God's end were to be a reason for neglecting God's means. This would be a grievous use to make of the goodness and faithfulness of God.

4. But, further, we undertake this service because we feel bound to serve and testify, while the time for service and testimony lasts. The day is rapidly approaching, in the which we shall not be called upon to render such fruits. When we get into the Master's presence, we shall admire and worship; but, now, in "the little while," in the night of His absence, it is our holy and happy privilege to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.) We are responsible to let the light shine forth, in every possible way—to circulate the truth of God, by all means, by word of mouth, by "paper and ink" in public and private, "in the morning and in the evening," "in season and out of season;" we should "sow beside all waters," In a word, whether we consider the importance of divine truth, the value of immortal souls, or the fearful progress of error and evil, we are

imperatively called upon to be up and doing, in the name of the Lord, under the guidance of His word, and by the grace of His Spirit.

Such, then, beloved reader, are our reasons for issuing this monthly paper. We are anxious, so far as in us lies, to lend a helping hand in the good work. We desire to spread the glad tidings, to feed the lambs and sheep of the flock of Christ, to move in the current of His thoughts and sympathies, and to promote the glory of His holy name. We believe there cannot be too many heralds of the gospel of the grace of God—too many hands stretched forth to scatter the good seed of the kingdom, or to feed the beloved Church of God. Alas! that there should be so few. May the Lord raise up and send forth gifted and holy laborers into His vineyard!

2. And, now, one word as to the objects which we hope to effect.

1. We hope to furnish the poor of the flock with a penny serial, containing plain papers, designed for their special use.

2. We hope to be enabled to set forth the fundamental truths of the gospel - the free grace of God—the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ—the power and value of His advocacy and priesthood—the attractions and dignity of His Person, and the hope of His coming glory.

3. Moreover, we hope to furnish, from time to time, as the Lord may enable us, brief and simple expositions of various portions of the word of God, adapted for such persons as are not in a position to devote much time to the study of scripture. The aim of such expositions shall be “to stir up the pure mind”—to draw out the affections after Christ—to establish the heart and conscience in foundation truth—to deepen the soul’s experience of divine things—to elevate the tone of life and character—and to enlarge the spiritual vision.

4. Finally, we cherish the hope of being enabled to send forth, every month, a Magazine, in which THE NAME OF JESUS shall be the great, prominent object. He is, in very truth, the living center of “things new and old.” He it is who says, “Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” (Pro. 8:22, 23.) And He it is who, as the Incarnate One, was emphatically the “new thing in the earth.” He is worthy of all honor. So worthy is He, that the book or the tract which has not for its direct object the glory of His most excellent name is not worth the printing. Every tongue should speak His worth. Every pen should portray His character. Every page of every book should be fragrant with the graces of His adorable Person. There is no name like the name of Jesus.

Such, then, are the objects which we have in view, in the publication of “Things New and Old;” and we earnestly desire that when these objects cease to sway the minds of all connected with this Magazine its existence may terminate. If God does not want it, neither do we. And if it be not for the furtherance of His glory and the good of His Church at large, we would not desire to have ought to do with it. We can truly say to our readers, “We seek not yours, but you.” If our pages should be used of God to bring any souls to find settled peace in the blood of the cross, or to stir up any hearts to a more intense devotedness to Christ, or a greater longing for His glorious advent, we shall count ourselves amply—oh! how amply—rewarded.

May the Lord grant His rich blessing upon this publication! May He be graciously pleased to use it for the advancement of His cause in the earth, and for the permanent profit of souls! Amen.—Ed.

Affliction's Lessons

My dear Sister,—

I thank you and dear M—much, for having thought of sending me the account of the accident of your dear babe. It is indeed a sore trial to see one who is a part of ourselves thus taken off at one blow, and unexpectedly. Still, what a difference, to have the Lord's love to look to, and to believe one's babe, as I surely do, the object of it. It is a consolation which changes everything, because everything is changed. The knowledge of the love of God, which is come into this place of death, has brightened with the blesseddest rays all its darkness; and the darkness even only serves to show what a comfort it is to have such light. There is nothing in the heart but light—nothing can make darkness when we have it. It is a world of sorrow; and the longer we know it, and the nearer even we walk to the Lord, the better we shall know it to be such. I do not mean that none of our sorrows are chastenings: we know that they often are such to His most beloved ones, as we see in Job. By all, save Christ, there is all grace to be learned by them; and even He entered into the sorrows of others, as arising from their faults and foolishness; for His sympathies were perfect, and, blessed be God, are.

He suffered for righteousness, and He suffered for sin; but besides this, He entered, as taking, by grace, a place among the godly remnant in Israel, into all which that remnant would feel as seeing the state of Israel (of which they were actually part) under the chastening hand of God for sin. All this He felt as none else could feel. His sympathy is as perfect now, though no longer passing through the sorrows by which He gained the experience of it. Besides, it is only in the part which has to be broken and corrected that we suffer; a touched affection, when Christ is with us in the grief, is of infinite sweetness, though the sweetness of sorrow. It is only when the will mixes itself up with the sorrow that there is any bitterness in it, or a pain in which Christ is not. But then this is all useful and what we need. The Lord takes your dear babe to heaven; (certainly he has no loss) what is the rest of God's dealings in it with us—with one's heart? He who has made a mother's feelings knows what they are—knows what He has wounded, and knows why—has a purpose of love in it. There is a mass of things in the sincerest of us of which we are not aware, which are not brought into subjection to God, which work and show themselves unsuspected. God breaks in upon us; how many things He shows—how many cords He cuts at one blow! A whole system of affections is touched: we feel that death has its place and part in them. I never saw a family the same thing after the first death that it was before. There was a breach in the circle. What belonged to the whole body of affections and life of this world was touched, was found to be—mortal; it was struck in its very nature. The course of life went on; the wave had closed over that which had been cast into it; but death, and the affections which belong to this world, had been found to meet. But all this is well; for death is come in. Besides, we live in these things; our will lives in them; and when the will is broken, so far as it is so, it is broken for everything. We learn more to lean on what never breaks—not to lose our affections, but to have them more in connection with Christ, less with this will of our own nature; for nature must now die as well as sin. But, then, Christ never makes a breach, except to come in and connect the soul and heart more with Himself; and it is

worth all the sorrow that ever was, and more, to learn the least atom more of His love and of Himself; and there is nothing like that, like Him; and it lasts.

But, besides, there is a useful work by it in our own hearts; and so more capacity to know, and enjoy, and learn communion with Him; more capacity to delight in, and understand God; to know, and to know the value of, what He delights in; more moral capacity to delight in what is excellent. We little know what high and blessed things we are called to. Oh, that the saints knew it better! To be with and have common joy and communion with God!

Some have much of it down here. It is opened out to them. But all that is of nature and will can have no part in this; and often the saints, though not directly dishonoring the Lord, are living in nature. Then the Lord deals with them, “turns man from his purpose, and hides pride from man.”

Oh, what a profitable thing it is to have that hidden from us! And how completely it is when God deals with us and brings us into His presence, whatever means He may employ, for He knows the springs of our hearts and how to touch them. But, oh, what grace is this daily, constant care! “He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous.” What a God to have to do with! and all in love.’ And when the storm is all passed, the brightness for which He is preparing us will shine out unclouded, and it will be Himself—Him we have known in all this tender care. Yet in the brightness of His glory, the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb will be its light. We shall be with the Son, with Jesus, enjoying as and with Him the brightness and divine favor which shine out on Him. And, oh! how blessed the love, Jesus’ love, that has brought us there forever with Him, in virtue of it, and now in the full blessed enjoyment of it with Himself.

I do earnestly pray that this sorrow may be blessed to you and to all your dear children, that they may see how near death is, but the Lord still nearer. Assure dear M—how truly I sympathize with him. A father’s sorrow, though of another character, is not less deep than a mother’s. You must expect that, as time passes on, the present feeling of loss will diminish, and, in a certain sense, pass away, too. Not that the affectionate remembrance of your poor little babe will be at all gone; but its character will be changed, and your living children and daily occupations will make it less absorbing. This is natural, and in one sense right. Living duties have their place, which cannot be rightly yielded to absorbing affections. What I would earnestly recommend to you is, to profit of the moments when the impression and present effect of it is strong; to place yourself before God, and reap all the fruit of His dispensations and tender grace. It is a time when He searches and manifests His love to the heart at the same time. May you grow much by this, surely to a mother’s heart, painful occurrence. Ever faithfully yours in Christ.

And Have I Nothing to Do?

The title of this paper was the significant and repeated exclamation of a poor dying woman. And were it not for the benefit of others, there would be no good reason for publishing it. But her case is not a rare one. Go where we may, we shall find many in the same condition. And the simple story of God's ways in grace with her soul may be made a blessing to many. The Lord, in His abundant mercy, grant that it may!

Self-deception is a fearful thing, and not uncommon. Surely we should ever seek to deliver precious souls from it, by plain, and faithful dealing, in dependence on God.

The subject of this narrative had reached her seventieth year. She was now very near her journey's end, but still ignorant of the way of salvation.

After a few general inquiries, and learning a little as to the real state of her soul, I asked her plainly, in something like the following words, "Have you any hope of recovering from this illness?"

"Oh no, sir! I am an old woman, and I have been a hard-working woman all my life. I can never be better in this world."

"Are you thinking much about the next as you lie there?"

"Oh yes, sir; that is just what I am doing. I pray nearly all night and all day."

"I am glad to hear that. But, tell me, what do you chiefly pray for?"

"I pray to the Almighty, that He would pardon my sins. I know I have a great many."

"Are you very anxious to know whether they are all forgiven or not?"

"Indeed I am, sir. I have nothing else now to think about, but to pray to the Almighty that He would pardon me."

"And do you believe He will?"

"Oh yes I am sure a great many of my sins have been pardoned, since I began to pray; but I know they are not all pardoned yet; and I keep praying to Him."

"Well, it is surely a right thing for us poor creatures to pray to God, who only can help us. But it would be quite wrong to make a Saviour of our prayers. Christ is the only Saviour from sin. You must have a great many to pray about. The sins of seventy long years! What a number you must have committed in that time! And remember, you will have to speak to God about every one of them, unless another does it for you. Now, tell me this, Do you really expect that your own prayers will satisfy God, for having neglected Him, and sinned against Him seventy years?"

"Oh no, sir! I know the Saviour died for our sins, and we have the promise, that if we ask we shall receive. But we must ask."

“Just so; that is so far true. But how long do you think you will have to pray yet, before they are all forgiven? Do not the Scriptures positively teach us, that if we are depending on the death of Christ for pardon, and not on our own prayers, we are forgiven already? When God forgives a sinner, He does it all at once. Not by halves, surely! Whenever we trust, by faith, in the death of Jesus, we are fully and freely forgiven, whether we know it or not. God does everything perfectly.”

The poor woman was sadly in the dark on this important point, but most attentive to what was said, and deeply interested, although not in great trouble about her soul.

After reading to her some passages from the Scriptures, her mind was evidently turned to the word of God, and became fixed on it. Especially on such portions as Acts 13:28-39, where the apostle is proving that the death and resurrection of Christ is the only ground of pardon, and that God only forgives those who truly believe on His Son.

“AND HAVE I NOTHING TO DO?” she exclaimed, in the most earnest manner.

“No, dear woman, nothing to do; only to believe. The blessed Jesus has done it all. He has done all the work of our salvation. He did everything that God demanded, and now, God asks nothing from us, only to believe and rejoice in the perfect, finished work of His beloved Son. The word of God expressly says, that it is through faith in the Lord Jesus we are pardoned, and not through our own prayers or doings of any sort. ‘Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And, by Him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.’ Here, you see, the apostle stands up, in the midst of a congregation of Jews, at Antioch, and proclaims a full and free pardon to all, without exception. Now, all in that assembly, who believed the glad tidings, were immediately forgiven and justified. And they knew that they were so, by the plain word of God; therefore they could take the comfort of it at once.

“Now, mark this, the apostle does not say one word about doing; he only speaks about believing. All who believed what he preached about ‘Jesus and the resurrection,’ were, the same moment, forgiven, justified, and eternally saved. And now, if you believe the same good news, and trust only in the risen and glorified Jesus, you will be completely forgiven and saved all at once. Just where you are; and you will not require to wait till tomorrow. It will be true just now. God declares Himself to “be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Rom. 3:26.

The simplicity of the gospel evidently stumbled her for the moment; and again she exclaimed, with wonder and amazement, “And have I nothing to do?”

“The apostle says, ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE FORGIVEN AND JUSTIFIED, and that is enough. We must not say anything different from the apostle. These are God’s own words by the lips of His servant. Oh, then, think no more about your prayers or doings, as a means of pardon. Believe God’s word - praise Him for His mercy, and pray that you may be kept “looking unto Jesus.” Place all your confidence in Him, and in the work which He accomplished for poor, helpless sinners on the cross. His blood alone cleanseth from all sin. The very instant you believe you are washed in the blood of Jesus, clothed in the righteousness of God and fitted for heaven. The heavy load of your seventy years’ transgression will be entirely removed, and you will find relief and rest to your weary heart in Him.”

Before leaving, I could bless God for the state of her mind. She was now deeply exercised. Her conscience appeared to be in the light of God's word. As I turned round to say a parting word, with my hand on the handle of the door, she once more repeated, with deep emotion, "And have I nothing to do?"

These were the last words I heard her utter. A few days after this she fell asleep in Jesus, giving evidence to those who visited her, that she was not now counting on her prayers for acceptance before God, but on the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour of the chief of sinners, whose precious blood cleanseth us from ALL sin. 1 John 1:7.

"Must I be nothing?

Must I nothing do?

Nothing, my child.

Christ hath done all for you:

You cannot buy,

The price is all too high:

Freely I give—

Only "believe and live."

I will be nothing still,

That Christ alone my heaven of heavens may fill.

Yet set me, Lord, a little glowing gem

Upon His diadem;

To shed my tiny ray

Among the splendors of His crowning day;

Though unperceived, I still should like to shine,

A tribute glory on that brow divine."

Atonement and Pardon As Taught by the Word

B. Will you allow me to ask you a question? Do you believe that when the sinner's heart is truly turned to Christ, all his sins, past, present, and to come, are pardoned?

A. Well, that is a very important question; I should not like to say that they are, or that they are not. So much depends on the way you look at the subject. It would require some explanation. My difficulty is with the expression "and to come," when you speak of pardon.

B. Oh! I thought that was what you believed! I know some who not only hold it, but are always speaking about it. It seems to me a dangerous doctrine; but a very comforting one, if true.

A. Perhaps you do not exactly understand what they mean. I firmly believe that my sins were all atoned for on the cross; then, of course, they were all to come; but when you speak of "pardon" you speak of something which takes place now, in connection with myself, and with my state before God.

B. Then you do not hold that our sins are all pardoned, past, present, and to come, when we first believe in Jesus.

A. I certainly should not use this language, and that for the following reasons. My first difficulty is with the word "pardoned." As I said before, I am perfectly sure that the sins of every believer were atoned for, and put away forever, on the cross, by the precious blood of Jesus. But to speak of pardoning an offense before it is committed, appears to me to be incorrect. Forgiveness of sin, according to Scripture, is connected with the confession of it. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) I quite understand what is meant, and one would not seek to make a man an offender for a word. Still we should consider what we say. Then, secondly, we read nothing in Scripture, so far as I can recollect, of "sins to come," as regards a believer. Their possibility is supposed, and God's gracious provision for them declared. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." But this is immediately preceded by the statement, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (1 John 2:1.) Believers are exhorted to reckon themselves "dead indeed unto sin;" and we are told, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." (1 John 3:9.)

B. But you do not mean to say, surely, that believers have no sin?

A. Far from it. Every intelligent believer will say, "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." But both the sin of my flesh, and the many sins of my life, were all atoned for, and put away on the cross. They were all judged there by God Himself, the Judge of all; so that no question as to my sins can ever again be raised. God made the demand, Christ answered it, and the whole system of sin, in which I stood, was canceled forever "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8) "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10) The believer is perfect IN Christ now, he will be perfect WITH Him by and by.

B. Yes, quite so: it is very easy quoting texts. But when shall we be “sanctified?” If I were sure that I am among the sanctified ones, I should be happy.

A. If you are among the believing ones, you are among the sanctified ones. We are sanctified by faith in Jesus.

B. I never understood that. We think sanctification a matter of great attainment, which can only be reached by constant watchfulness, prayer, and self-denial. There is nothing said about faith in the passage.

A. No; the apostle’s theme in this chapter is worship and the perfectness of the worshippers in the presence of God, through the perfect sacrifice of Christ. But we have it distinctly stated in other places. (See Acts 26) Here the Apostle is giving an account of his conversion and mission. Jesus sends him to the Gentiles, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith, that is in me.” The moment the poor, dark, degraded Gentile had faith in Jesus, he was turned from darkness to light, from Satan unto God. His sins were forgiven, and his inheritance was on high. This is sanctification—viz., being separated from evil, and set apart for God.

B. But sanctification is not an act, surely: it is a work. Justification is an act, but sanctification is progressive. It means growing in holiness.

A. Well, I have no wish to weaken that meaning of the word. There ought to be progressive holiness in every believer. But you must first separate the stone from the quarry before you can prepare it for its destined place in the building. The great principle of sanctification, or being set apart for God, ought to be applied daily to our thoughts, affections, and to all our practical ways. As the Apostle prays, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The one is the result of the other. You must be separated from the world, and set apart for God, before you can grow up in practical conformity to Him. In the passage before us, (Acts 26:18,) the word clearly means an act—something done by God, and which only He could do. In what condition does the gospel find the Gentiles? The slaves of sin and Satan. And what did it do for them that believed? It separated them from their own sad condition, and set them apart for God, through the operations of His Holy Spirit. They were sanctified by faith in Jesus.

But in 1 Cor. 6:11, the apostle states, in the most distinct and positive way, that sanctification is as much an act of God as justification. “And such were some of you;” (see ver. 9, 10,) “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Nothing can be plainer than this. Here, you will observe, that sanctification is as directly, and absolutely, an act of God, as either washing or justification. If cleansing be an act, so is sanctification. If justification be an act, so is sanctification. Oh! what comfort this gives to the mind that can simply receive it. “Some” of these Corinthians had been sunk in the deepest mire of sin, but the moment they believed the gospel, they were, by the immediate act of God Himself, washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Of course, they had much to learn, break off, and the like. But God’s work was perfect. He never does

things by halves.

B. Well, certainly, I never saw things in that light before. I feel as if God were opening my eyes. I have never been in the habit of examining and comparing scripture in that way. I have believed certain doctrines drawn from scripture; this is taking God's word as it is. I confess, that I have never before seen so many blessed consequences flowing from faith. I could sit now ever so long.

A. The Lord be praised! The Bible being God's own book, we ought to try and get at His meaning in it. But now one word, before we part, about pardon. You have seen that the sins of every believer were put "away" by the one perfect sacrifice of Christ. "But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:26.) This, He assuredly accomplished. "When he had by himself thus "purged our sins," he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) Such was the completeness and such the efficacy of the work He accomplished, for all who, through grace, believe in Him. But it is when we believe in Him that we personally become partakers of the results of that work. Until we believe, we are "children of wrath, even as others." But the moment Christ is really received by us, we participate in all the value of His sacrifice. FULL AND ABSOLUTE FORGIVENESS is one blessed effect of this work: but it is not the whole, as we have already seen. Through its wondrous efficacy, every believer is also a justified person and a sanctified person God regards the believer as having died with Christ to the sins which once were chargeable upon him; and now, as alive in and with Christ. The truth is, we are one with Him, we have everything in Jesus! "All fullness dwells in him." O reckon on what you have in Him, and not on what you feel in yourself: and keep close to the word—keep "looking unto Jesus." He Himself is the portion of our souls. We possess His life, stand in His righteousness, enjoy His love, and wait for His glory.

What in thy love possess I not?

My star by night, my sun by day,

My spring of life when parched with drought,

My wine to cheer, my bread to stay,

My strength, my shield, my safe abode,

My robe before the throne of God.

Balm for a Troubled Soul

(Read Psalm 103)

This beautiful psalm takes in a very wide range of truth. It comprehends the past, the present, and the future. It celebrates Jehovah's redemption, in the past; Jehovah's tender care, in the present; and Jehovah's kingdom, of the future.

1. The first great point, with the soul, is to be fully established in the knowledge of redemption with its results. Till this is understood and enjoyed, there can be nothing right. There will always be doubt and difficulty, anxiety, and hesitation. We must know where an accomplished redemption has set us, ere we can know or enjoy anything. It is when we have found rest in what God hath wrought for us, that we can say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Worship is the fruit of a known and an enjoyed redemption. It is only as "clothed in garments of salvation," that we can tread Jehovah's courts with praise and thanksgiving.

Thus, in this lovely and well-known psalm, we have great fullness of expression, in reference to the vital subject of redemption. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." It is not "some" or "many of thine iniquities." This would never do. If so much as the very smallest iniquity, in thought, word, or act, were left unforgiven, we should be just as badly off, just as far from God, just as unfit for heaven, just as exposed to hell, as though the whole weight of our sins were yet upon us. Let the reader ponder this deeply. It does not say, "who forgiveth thine iniquities previous to conversion." There is no such notion as this in Scripture. When God forgives, He forgives like Himself. The source, the channel, the power, and the standard of forgiveness, are all divine. When God cancels a man's sins, He does so according to the measure in which Christ bore those sins. Now, Christ not only bore some or many of the believer's sins, He bore them "all," and, therefore, God forgives "all" God's forgiveness stretches to the length of Christ's atonement; and Christ's atonement stretches to the length of every one of the believer's sins, past, present, and future. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1)

There is, in many minds, a great want of clearness and soundness on this point. The doctrine of the cross is not understood, even in its bearing on the question of forgiveness. It is not sufficiently seen, that the believer is introduced, by the cross, from a condition of absolute ruin and guilt, into a condition of absolute forgiveness and justification. This is done by the cross. It is not by the cross and a process of some kind or another. It is by the cross alone. Christ, having died under the full weight of His people's transgressions, was laid in the grave, and thus got to the end of all that pertained to their natural condition and all its liabilities, for no one can have any claim upon a dead man. When He lay in the tomb, there was not a single claim of justice, law, sin, death, conscience, angel, man, or devil, unanswered. He had discharged all, and that, too, as the Representative of all who believe in His name. He died in their stead, and was buried; and there was the end of everything human, everything natural, everything earthly. What then? "The God of peace" then appeared on the scene, and in that special character "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,

that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.” (Heb. 13:20.) It was due to the One who lay in you silent tomb, that God should come and raise Him up, inasmuch as there was no one in heaven, on earth, or in hell, who had a single claim upon Him. Why, then, should He be left there? Why should the tomb be allowed to detain a Person, who had gloriously discharged every liability, met every claim, and silenced every objector? “It was not possible that he should be holden of it.” (Acts 2:24.)

Hence, therefore, God “raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,” and, in so doing, He raised up all true believers also, “having forgiven them all trespasses.” (Col. 2:13.) It does not say, “some of their trespasses,” “many of their trespasses,” or “their trespasses previous to conversion.” Oh, no! the Holy Ghost could only speak according to the measure of the love of God, and according to the value of the blood of Christ. He could not speak according to our meager thoughts, feeble apprehensions, and shallow experiences. He fixes His eye upon a risen Christ, and sees in Him the measure and the proof of the believer’s full and everlasting justification. If a single sin had been unatoned for, the grave would have held fast our Surety. But, blessed be God, all was done, and I see the proof of this on the throne of God, for when Christ had “by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high,” (Heb. 1:3,) and He is now the perfect definition of the believer. The soul that simply and heartily believes on the name of the Son of God, is in Christ, accepted in Him, and one with Him, so that it is a grand mistake to talk of some of our sins being forgiven, or of our being forgiven up to a certain time, or for a certain period. All who speak thus have yet to learn the true ground and character of divine forgiveness. They know not the gospel—they know not the peace-giving power of the blood. They have yet to learn the force and real meaning of the words “who forgiveth all thine iniquities.”

The believer is just forgiven according to the perfectness of Christ’s atoning work. If you want to know the extent of a believer’s forgiveness, you have only to inquire the extent of Christ’s sacrifice, for, as is the one so is the other. There cannot be a shade of difference. If any of a believer’s sins are unforgiven, then some of Christ’s work remains undone. But He said, “it is finished,” and therefore all the believer’s sins are forgiven. This is a resting place for an awakened conscience, a balm for a troubled soul, peace for an anxious heart. “He forgiveth all thine iniquities.” And again, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” He has put our sins as far away as the death of Christ could put them; and He has brought us as high as a risen Christ could bring us.

2. All being thus settled, as regards “our iniquities,” and “our transgressions,” we are brought into a position in which we can enjoy the tender love and care of God as a Father. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” Though standing in all the glorious results of accomplished redemption, we are, in ourselves, poor, feeble creatures, needing the constant care and tender mercy of One who has a father’s heart, and this we have in all its perfectness. True, the title of “Father” was not revealed when this psalm was penned. It was reserved for the special ministry of “the Son” to “declare the Father.” Still the father’s heart was the touching model. “Like as a father pitieth his children.” It is the Christian’s privilege to feed upon the tender love and sympathy of a Father’s heart; to walk in the light of a Father’s countenance; to be guided by the expression of a Father’s eye; to lean on the strength of a Father’s arm. We often forget this. We not only fail to see where the blood of Christ has put our sins, but also where that blood has brought our souls. We

are brought to God. We have not to wait till we die to get to God. We are brought to Him now; and therefore we ought to walk with Him, lean on Him, joy in Him, look to Him continually.

If God has a Father's heart, then, surely, His children ought to know that; and, if they know it, they should be delighting in the changeless love of that heart, instead of being occupied with the dark depths of their own. If I am brought to God, it is that I may be done with myself and walk on with Him. It is no sign of true holiness or true humility to be dwelling on one's badness, to be writing hard things or uttering hard speeches against oneself. The really holy, humble man is he who is not thinking about himself at all, but who is enjoying God. A man is not in sound health who is continually talking about his pains, aches, and infirmities. The best way to show that I am in good health is to get on with my work, and never allude to myself, good or bad. "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." Of what use is it to be occupied with that which is "as grass," or "as a flower of the field?" "How much better to delight ourselves in the "mercy of the Lord," which, like a golden chain, stretches "from everlasting to everlasting!" Precious thought! You may travel back into the unfathomed depths of eternity, and there you find "the mercy of Jehovah;" and you may travel onward into the countless ages of eternity yet to come, and there you find "the mercy of Jehovah." Nothing was before it, and nothing can be after it. It is infinite. The current of mercy, deep and wide, flows down from the bosom of God, and thirsty souls may drink thereat and be eternally satisfied.

III. Having thus glanced at Jehovah's redeeming mercy, and Jehovah's tender care, the picture would be incomplete, did we not dwell, for a moment, on Jehovah's coming kingdom. "Jehovah hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." For this we wait, in the soul-sustaining assurance that "the time is short." (1 Cor. 7) "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." (Rom. 13) "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10) "The king's son shall reign, as Jehovah hath said." (2 Chron. 23) The One who was nailed to the cross shall, ere long, take His place on the throne, as Lord of all creation. The One who wore the crown of thorns shall, ere long, appear with a diadem of glory. The One whose right hand bore the reed which impious mockery placed therein, shall, ere long, wield the royal scepter, to the glory of God, and the joy of all created intelligences. For this a groaning creation waits—for this the Church of God waits. We "wait for his Son from heaven." (1 Thess. 1:10.) Having found peace, through the blood of His cross, and enjoying, day by day, His tender care and gracious provision, there is just one thing we want—we want to "see him as he is," for then we shall be like Him. We want to gaze on "that countenance transcendent—that life-creating sun." This will fill the cup—all the ingredients will then be in—perfect redemption—gracious providence—cloudless and everlasting glory! "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" A waiting Church, a groaning world, and Israel's scattered tribes—all call aloud for thee. May it please thee speedily to accomplish the number of thine elect and hasten thy kingdom.

Nothing, Save the Blood

Nothing, save the blood of the Lamb, will shut out the destroying angel. He enters, with the sword of judgment, every house that is not sprinkled with the blood. Nothing else will meet the holy and righteous demands of Heaven. Nothing else will meet the deep and varied necessities of the sinner. Nothing else will meet the accusations of the enemy, and turn aside the accuser. They, and they only, are safe, who are under the shelter of the priceless value—the eternal efficacy—and the redeeming power of the blood of the slain Lamb. “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Eph. 1:7.

Christian Position: What Is It?

The apostle himself, in the following passage, answers, most fully and distinctly, the above question. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1, 2.) This is true “Christian Position”—the full standing of the believer, as such, in the presence of God. Being justified—having peace—standing in divine favor—rejoicing in hope of glory; this is the present condition of all who “believe in him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Full justification is their true state, as a necessary consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ.

It was for us that Jesus died. “Who was delivered for our offenses.” He came down from heaven in perfect love to us, and took our position as sinners, Himself absolutely sinless. “He was numbered with the transgressors,” that He might associate us with Himself, in all the blessed results of His glorious work. For us also He lives again. “And was raised again for our justification.” Having borne our sins, and the judgment they deserved, on the cross, God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory above the heavens. A risen Christ is the eternal witness of our complete and everlasting justification before God, we being there in Him.

We may, for a time, lose the sweet sense of this, in communion, but we can never lose our justification. “Whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. 8:30.) Justification and glorification are inseparably joined together by God Himself. The believer is linked and bound to eternal glory, through his connection by faith with a glorified Christ. Until the Christian has learned to distinguish between communion and justification, he cannot have settled peace. There is no such thing as being justified today, and condemned tomorrow. But I may be in happy communion today, and, practically, out of it tomorrow. There are no degrees in justification, but there are degrees in communion. If I am unwatchful, or indulging in a spirit of unbelief or worldliness, I cannot possibly be enjoying happy communion with my heavenly Father. God is light, and God is holy. He cannot look upon sin. He cannot be associated with evil; He must judge it. If, therefore, I am neglecting self-judgment—neglecting to judge my heart and my ways, communion must be interrupted. But the question of justification is not, in the least, affected by all this. It flows from another source, even the love of God; it rests on another ground, even the work of Christ. “It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?” Then follow four divine reasons for this state of justification and security.

1. It is Christ that died.
2. Yea rather, that is risen again.
3. Who is even at the right hand of God.
4. Who also maketh intercession for us.

On these four pillars the Christian's position securely rests. They are entirely of God. There is nothing of man's work here. "GOD FOR US" is inscribed on each of them. They partake of the stability of Himself. He has done all, there is "no condemnation" and "No separation."

"No condemnation!"—O my soul,

'Tis God that speaks the word,

Perfect in comeliness art thou,

Through Christ, the risen Lord.

"No condemnation!—precious word!

Consider it, my soul;

Thy sins were all on Jesus laid;

His stripes have made thee whole."

The first effect of this new and blessed position is "peace with God," into whose presence we have been brought by the risen Jesus. "By whom also we have access by faith." Our sins having been all blotted out by the shedding of His precious blood, we have perfect peace in His Holy presence. The finished work of Christ is the only ground of peace; there is no other.

By virtue of the same blessed work, we are brought into a new relationship with God, we stand in grace—in the full enjoyment of His favor. There is nothing between us. We are near, even as Christ is near. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13.) So that, even now, we can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." All that was against us was imputed to Christ, and He made "an end of sins." "Grace and glory characterize our blessed and wondrous standing before God. The cross, the grave, sin, Satan, and "this present evil world," are all past. They are all behind the Christian; he is on heaven's side of the cross, on resurrection-ground, and in possession of resurrection-life, at this present time. Nothing but the bright beams of the glory of God gilds the future. Not a single cloud dims the prospect. All is REST, PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

In the mind of God, the believer was delivered from his original standing as a sinner by the cross of Christ; there, he came to his end, as a member of the fallen and ruined family of Adam. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." (See Rom. 6:1-11.) When Christ died, the believer—all believers—died in Him, He being their Representative and Surety, before God, on the cross. They died and rose again in Him. The expression, "body of sin" means our corrupt nature, and all that was connected with it—the entire condition of the "old man." The whole thing was "destroyed" by the death of Christ, and blotted out forever, from before the face of God.

But while this is true, and a most blessed truth it is, we must also remember, that the standing of the sinner is not actually changed until he believes in Jesus. The great work of expiation was indeed accomplished on the cross; but there is no change, no new life in the soul, until he believes, through the quickening operation of the Spirit, the truth of God about the Person and work of Christ. When he thus believes, his position is changed, he stands before God, vitally

connected with Him who died for us and rose again. He gets the same position as Christ Himself. "As he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17.) His standing is completely and eternally changed. "But ye are not in the flesh," says the apostle, "but in the Spirit." That means, their standing was no longer in the flesh, or in nature, but in the Spirit. We can only know, realize, and enter into this wondrous truth, in the power of the Spirit of God. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are IN CHRIST JESUS." (Rom. 8:1, 9.) To be "in Christ Jesus," is to be where He is, and as He is, There can be no condemnation to Christ: therefore, there can be no condemnation to the Christian. He is the measure of our nearness to God, the definition of our blessedness in His presence, and of our relationship to Him.

From the time that the sinner believes on Christ, He has this truly blessed place with Him. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:4 -6.) Such is the fellowship which God Himself hath given to us in His beloved Son! in His "rich mercy" and "great love." Forever adored be His blessed name! In His estimation, we are sitting together in Him, in the heavenlies. We have fellowship with Christ, as the risen Man in glory. We have fellowship with Him, in His life, in resurrection, in His righteousness before God, in His full acceptance in His sight, in His complete and final victory over every enemy, and in His blessed hope of coming glory.

The effect of the knowledge of this truth is a rich blessing to the soul. It gives holy, happy liberty before God, on many important points. If I know that my divine place is in the immediate presence of God, that my home is there and nowhere else, I must know that my sins are all put away. Nothing is more certain than that I cannot be there with my sins. If I am there, my sins are all gone. And we have already seen, that the believer is there, as the fruit of the work of Christ.

The God of love and power entered the dark domain of death, where Jesus lay for our sins, and quickened His beloved Son, and His beloved people together, and raised them up together, and made them sit together in heavenly places. God has done it all, in the greatness of His love, on the ground of the perfectness of the work of Christ for us; He says He has done it, and that is enough.

We will only add, further, that nothing is more fitted to "deliver us from this present evil world," than the knowledge of our connection with a heavenly Christ. The occupation of the soul with Him, will surely lead to heavenly-mindedness, and separation in heart from the world. Paul had seen Christ in glory, and, no doubt, was fully occupied in heart with Him when he said, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13, 14.)

May we thus be kept, dear reader, with our hearts dead to the world, and truly alive to the claims of our heavenly Lord Jesus. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:1-4.)

All that we were—our sins, our guilt,

Our death, was all our own:

All that we are we owe to thee,
Thou God of grace alone.
Thy mercy found us in our sins,
And gave us to believe;
Then, in believing, peace we found;
And in thy Christ we live.
All that we are, as saints, on earth,
All that we hope to be,
When Jesus comes and glory dawns,—
We owe it all to thee.

Clear Views

Christian reader, beware of being satisfied with “clear views.” It is, no doubt, most needful to “hold fast the form of sound words;” but then, a form of sound words, without realized companionship with Christ, will leave the heart as cold as an icicle. We must remember that, in nature, the clearest nights are often the coldest. Thus it is with professing Christians. A sound creed in the head, without Christ in the heart, is a poor, cold, dead, worthless, soul-deceiving thing.

The true way of obtaining clear views of the gospel, is to look “in the face of Jesus Christ.” The true way to attain a knowledge of sound doctrine, is to feel, by the touch of faith, the very pulsations of the heart of Jesus. One reason why so many Christians lack abiding peace is that they make peace their object, instead of cultivating a closer walk with God. It is impossible to be in the presence of God and not have peace, because perfect love makes everyone within its range, feel perfectly at home. This is one of the precious effects of love.

“Clear views” may leave the heart barren and void. We want to enjoy the companionship of One in whom we can fully confide. The heart needs to be refreshed by the dew of true sympathy. We need to be sharpened by “the countenance of a man.” Where can we find all these, but in Jesus? Every other heart but His will disappoint us at times.

“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!”

Beloved reader, let me exhort you to seek a closer, deeper, more personal walk with God. It is your privilege to enjoy this. Jesus died, “the just for the unjust,” not merely to give us “clear views,” nor yet to bring us into a good place, but “to bring us to God.” We are brought to God now. We are brought to him in heart, in conscience, in understanding, in order that we may enjoy Him, according to the mode in which He has revealed Himself. And how are we to enjoy Him? By the word. If we attempt to think of God, apart from Christ; or to think of Christ, apart from the Word; or to think of the Word, apart from the Holy Ghost, all is mist, confusion, or cold speculation; whereas a single line or clause of Scripture will bring God into the soul, with unspeakable sweetness and power.

This makes all very simple. We have received a new nature and have been brought into a new position. But this is not all. We have been brought to a Person. This is what we want. This is what the heart can understand. The human heart would rather have a cottage with companionship, than a palace in solitude.

O God! we see thee in the Lamb,

To be our hope, our joy, our rest;

The glories that compose thy name
Standing engaged to make us blest.
Thou great and good! Thou just and wise!
Hail! as our Father and our God
For we are thine by sacred ties,
Thy sons and daughters, bought with blood.

The Cleft of the Rock

Build your nest upon no tree here, for you see God hath sold the forest to death; and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee and mount up, and build upon the rock, and dwell in the holes of the rock..... There is less sand in your glass now than there was yesternight; this span length of ever-changing time will soon be ended; but the greater is the mercy of God, the more years you get to advise upon what terms and upon what conditions you east your soul into the huge gulf of never-ending eternity.” —Rutherford's Letters.

Clinging to the Risen One

“Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” Col. 3:1. All His sufferings are now past; in calm unclouded peace He sits at God’s right hand. We are apt to mistake peace of circumstances for the peace of God, but whatever changes here, there is no change in Jesus; and our place is with Him, “risen with Christ.”

O let thy faith repose

In Jesu’s love divine;

The heart that all our sorrows knows,

Is feeling now for thine.

Tell to His listening ear

The anxious thoughts that rise;

He’s moved by every falling tear—

He echoes all thy sighs.

Purer than aught below

The heart that bled for thee;

Not like the mingled love we show,

His perfect sympathy.

Well may’st thou then confide

Each interest to His care,

Since He has power and skill to guide

His loved ones everywhere.

If slow to understand,

When clouds thy pathway dim,

The way is still in Jesu’s hand,

The end is safe with Him.

See where He sits on high

In calm unclouded peace;

Dwell there beneath His gracious eye

And every fear shall cease.

So holy is His love—

So wise are all His ways—

That did we always dwell above,

Our hearts would only praise.

Comfort for a Bereaved Heart

It is sweet to see the Lord's hand in all His ways of tender, faithful love towards us. He only loves. Judgment is passed. Love alone remains for the dear children of His grace. There is nothing penal in the dispensations of a Father's hand. He chastens us; but if He does, it is only "that we may be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. 12:10.) And, blessed be His name, if the chastening leaves a deep furrow, in the bereaved heart, it is but a channel through which the love of our heavenly Father's heart may flow.

This love may be manifested in various ways. Sometimes He gives us a sight and a sense of the wretchedness and loathsomeness of our own nature, so that we cannot bear to look at ourselves; and then we are glad to turn to the blessed Lord and gaze on what we are in Him, who is in the Father's presence for us. Such experience had David, Peter, Paul, and many others.

But sometimes His tender heart will seek to bring about the same blessed results by sore bereavement. He breaks one cord of the heart after another, until He comes to the last, and that, too, must go; for He will have us wholly to Himself. His love can endure no rivals.

However, though the relationship be broken on earth, the affections are formed anew in resurrection, in connection with Christ, our heavenly center, where they can never more be interrupted. They are reset, re-strung, re-established, forever, in purest, brightest glory. God must have us entirely to Himself. He cannot afford to let the affections of His children go out after another. But oh! sweet thought the cord which He has snapped on earth, He has joined in heaven, in resurrection life and glory. It is but the more closely, permanently, and gloriously joined, never, no never more, to be undone. Sooner or later, every one of our heart-strings must be broken, with all that pertains to self and the world, and be re-strung for a glorious immortality.

All this is divinely true, now, in the blessed Jesus. He is done with everything that could have kept us from God. He came, in perfect grace and love, into the state we were in by sin. Himself absolutely sinless, He passed through it all for us. "For in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:18.) And now He would have us, in reference to these things, to be as He is—to enter into His joy. He is now at home in the presence of God, leaving sin, nature, the world, and all such, behind. And He is now saying to us, "See what I have done, as you and for you. Enter into the reality, and taste the sweetness of it all. All things are yours. Lift up your eyes, and behold the fields of glory; reach hither your hand, and pluck the clusters from the vine of God. Let God be your joy, your resource, your object, as He is mine."

There is no rest, no resource, but in the living God—no happiness but in Him.

"Who sought it else,

Sought mellow grapes beneath the icy pole;

Sought blooming roses on the cheek of death;

Sought substance in a world of fleeting shade.”

The Cross and the Throne

My dear young Brother, Any question you are led to ask, on such subjects as “the cross and the throne,” will give me unfeigned pleasure to answer, so far as I am enabled. And if we are truly subject to the Word of God, and simply depending on the teaching of His Spirit, we shall assuredly be instructed. “He shall glorify me,” says Jesus, “for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” Thus, light will flow in. “The entrance of thy words giveth light.” (John 16:14; Psalm 119:130.) This is a point of much practical value in the study of the Word. I mean the state of our own souls. The disciple’s place is at the feet of Jesus. Simplicity, humility, dependence, should characterize him.

Much precious truth may be read, or listened to, with little profit if our own hearts are not in a proper state to receive it. The husbandman prepares the ground before he casts the seed.

To profit by the study of the Word, the soul must be in the presence of God, and in a spirit of child-like dependence on Him. It is to be feared that many go to the Bible merely to find passages, in order to support their own views or break down those of others. By so doing, an acquaintance with the Word may be attained, but a knowledge of it never can.

There is a wonderful difference between familiarity with the letter of Scripture, and a knowledge of its true and spiritual meaning. The former may be acquired by the human intellect, but the latter can only be learned at the Master’s feet.

When I sit down and open my Bible, I should distinctly realize the presence of the Lord and the authority of His Word; and acknowledge Him as the only source of blessing. This will give true subjection of heart to the holy Scriptures, and check the natural tendency of our own minds to reason and speculate thereon. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11.)

But this is away from our subject, and yet not away, for it is always important to see that the first step we take in any matter should be a right one.

Your question, dear brother, as to “the cross and the throne” presents a wide and an all-important theme, especially that of the cross. It has many aspects, both Godward and man ward. It has a bright and blessed aspect to the believer, but a dark and gloomy one to the unbeliever. And there God was perfectly revealed in all the moral glory of His character.

But, at present, I will confine myself, chiefly, to what was in my own mind when I used the expression, “To see Christ on the cross for us, and Christ on the throne for us, is perfect peace to the conscience, and eternal rest to the heart.” My thought was of Him as our representative on the cross and of His place on the throne as the triumphant proof of the completeness of His work, as such. The one proves the other; but I will first show you the type.

On the great day of Atonement in Israel, (see Lev. 16) Aaron, the high priest, laid his hands on the head of the scape-goat, and there confessed the sins of the whole congregation. Now, in this part

of the service, he acted more as the representative of the people than as their priest. Doubtless he was their priest, and acted as such all through the work of that most interesting day. But in this special act, he stood before the Lord as the representative of the congregation. “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit person into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.” (Verses 21, 22.)

In this deeply significant action, Aaron stands before us as a most expressive type of Christ, on the cross, as the representative of His people: of all who, in every land, and in every age, believe in His name. But mark the striking contrast, notwithstanding the resemblance.

Aaron, as the representative of the congregation, confesses the sins of all Israel, over the head of the live goat. Typically, their sins are transferred to the head of the goat. The blessed Lord Jesus, as the apostle tells us, “offered himself without spot to God.” It was an entirely voluntary act. “And the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all.” These iniquities He confessed as His own. “Mine iniquities,” He says, “have taken hold upon me.” He was both the REPRESENTATIVE and the VICTIM. He takes our sins upon Himself, and in perfect love to us, becomes our sin-bearer. Himself, the holy, spotless, sinless Lamb; He is made sin for us.

This is grace, my child, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is boundless! An ocean without a shore! Listen to His own mournful and pathetic language at this moment, “Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up. They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.” (Comp. Isa. 53; Psalm 40) Thus, He became on the cross, our sin-bearer, and made Himself responsible to God for all our liabilities. The precious blood of that cross was a perfect answer to all the demands of Heaven—and a perfect atonement for the whole condition and character of the sinner. By the shedding of His own blood He put away forever ALL our sins.

“Jesus put all my sins away

When bruised to make me whole;

Who shall accuse or who condemn

My blameless, ransomed soul?”

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn, that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. He reached the throne through suffering. He is perfect there,—on the throne—in glory. Of course, you are bearing in mind, that I now speak of Him as the sinner’s substitute, for He ever was, in Himself, intrinsically perfect. We are contrasting the throne with the cross, as set forth in the first chapter of this epistle, which speaks of Him as God, and in the second, which treats of Him as man.

Seeing then, that Christ is on the throne, where are my sins? They are not on Him now. Oh, No! No! They were all put away on the cross, and buried in the grave of everlasting forgetfulness. Not one of them will ever be found. They have even gone from the very recollection of God: “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. 10:17.) And faith’s judgment always agrees with God’s.

But suppose, for a moment, that they are not all put away. What then? Where would they be? They could only be on the head of Jesus still. Because He was my sin-bearer. This, you will see at a glance, is utterly impossible, and altogether out of the question. The believer is not his own sin-bearer. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33.) It is not, observe, who shall prove them guilty? But who shall lay anything to their charge?

The cross answers every charge, not the believer. One glance, my child, at Jesus on the throne in glory, is rest to the heart forever. Faith's triumphant answer to every accuser is, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." (Heb. 2:9.)

Now, you will here see two things of immense value.

1. That the believer is not his own sin-bearer. Christ is the sin-bearer, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.)
2. That by blood shedding they were all put away. And "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22.)

It is not said, observe, without sprinkling of blood is no remission, but without shedding of blood: this is all-important. The victim's blood can only be shed ONCE. Oh, how conclusive this passage is as to WHEN our sins were, put away. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." With the Jew, it was a sin and a sacrifice,—a sin and a sacrifice continually, simply because he never had a perfect sacrifice. But we are perfected forever, "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE." (Heb. 10:10, 14.)

You may sometimes hear Christians speaking about "coming afresh to the blood of sprinkling," and "that we daily need a fresh application of the blood to put away our daily sins." Now, although they mean a right thing, they express it in a wrong way. The blood of Jesus can never lose its efficacy. If a second application were necessary, that would prove that the first had lost its value. True, Scripture speaks of various uses and applications of the blood, such as cleansing the leper, consecrating the priests, "and almost all things are by the law purged with blood;" but when the apostle speaks of REMISSION, he uses the word SHEDDING: "and without shedding of blood is no remission." There must be suffering and death to put away sin; but the soul that has been ONCE washed in that precious blood is clean every whit, clean forever. Its efficacy is eternal. But the soul needs to have this precious truth constantly applied by the Holy Spirit, and that is called "the washing of water by the word." There is a needful daily application of water. The brazen laver in Exod. 30, and the basin and towel in John 13 clearly teach us this. As Jesus says to Peter, "he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

Thus are we cleansed from the defilements of the way, and have our hearts assured that all our sins were forever put away by the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross. There He bore our sins. There the victim's blood was shed. There a full, a perfect, and eternal atonement was made. And the moment I see Him on the THRONE, my conscience is at perfect rest as to sin, and my heart finds perfect joy in Himself. For I know He has brought me into the same position as Himself. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Pet. 3:18.)

With these eternally precious truths, simple faith will have no difficulty, as may be seen in the following sweet testimony:

A neighbor stepped in to see Miss—only a few hours before she fell asleep in Jesus. And when asked, how she felt this morning?

“I am going,” she faintly replied.

“I trust,” said the neighbor, “you have a good hope.”

“O, no!” she distinctly answered, “I am not hoping—I am certain. MY SALVATION WAS FINISHED ON THE CROSS. I am going to Jesus—He is my hope.”

Oh! my dear young brother, this is testimony—the testimony of simple faith, from one who was so weak, that she could hardly speak.

May we ever live in the enjoyment of this blessed truth, and be its faithful witnesses, until the Saviour come.

So prays, yours, most affectionately,

THE CROSS.

Behold, behold the Lamb of God,

On the cross!

For us He shed His precious blood

On the cross.

Oh! hear that strange expiring cry—

“Eli lama sabachthani.”

Draw near and see the Saviour die

On the cross.

See, see His arms extended wide

On the cross;

Behold His bleeding hands and side

On the cross.

The sun withholds his rays of light,

The heavens are clothed in shades of night,

While Jesus wins the glorious fight

On the cross.

Come, sinners, see Him lifted up

On the cross.

He drinks for us the bitter cup

On the cross.

The rocks do rend, the mountains quake,

The earth doth to its center shake,

While Jesus doth atonement make

On the cross.

And now the mighty deed is done

On the cross.

The battle's fought, the victory won

On the cross.

To heaven He turns His languid eyes,

"Tis finished," now the Conqueror cries,

Then bows His sacred head, and dies

On the cross.

Where'er I go I'll tell the story

Of the cross;

In nothing else my soul shall glory,

Save the cross,

Yes, this my constant theme shall be,

Through time, and in eternity,

That Jesus conquered death for me

On the cross.

A Divine Remedy for Human Sorrow

The resurrection of Jesus is God's remedy for all the ills of this wilderness scene. (See Mark 16) The disciples were in great trouble and sorrow of heart at this time. "And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept:" (Ver. 10.) They had been bereaved of their blessed Lord and Master. To them, the whole scene around was a wilderness indeed. Jesus was absent, and the fairest spot in the wide universe is but a desert to the heart that loves Him, if He is not there. He alone gives beauty to the scene, and fragrance to the atmosphere. His presence makes the wilderness "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. 23:4.) Hence the blessedness and sweetness of our hope is, that, "in a little while," we shall be with Himself. This is the desire of His own heart of perfect love. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," (John 17:24.)

But to return to the Divine remedy for present ills. A RISEN JESUS, according to the mind of God, and in the language of scripture, meets all the need of,

1. The burdened, and sorrowing heart, (v. 3, 4.)
2. The troubled, terrified, affrighted spirit. (5, 6.)
3. The amazed and perplexed mind. (v. 8.)
4. The bereaved, mourning, weeping affections, (v. 10.)

Then again, Jesus risen is power in service: power to preach the gospel—cast out devils—tread on serpents—heal the sick. Finally, we see the risen, victorious, ascended Christ, seated at the right hand of God, still maintaining the character of the workman. "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (16-20.)

Encouragement for One in Trying Circumstances

Read Job 3; Jer. 20:14-18; Matt. 11:25-30, in connection.

The Spirit of God in the above scriptures has furnished us with a very striking and edifying contrast.

“Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.” He sighed for rest, but sought it amid the shades of death, and in the darkness of the tomb. Dismal rest!

In the prophet Jeremiah we see the same thing. Both these beloved and honored saints of God, when overwhelmed by outward pressure, lost for a moment that well-balanced condition of soul which genuine faith ever imparts.

Now, the blessed Master stands before us in Matt. 11 in glorious contrast. That chapter records a number of circumstances which seemed entirely against Him. Herod’s prison would seem to have shaken the Baptist’s confidence. The men of that generation had refused the double testimony of righteousness and grace, in the ministry of John and of Christ Himself. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum had remained impenitent in view of His “mighty works.” What, then? Did the Master take up the language of His servants Job and Jeremiah? By no means. His perfect will was perfectly blended with that of His Father; and hence, “At that time (when all seemed against Him) Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father... for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Here it was that Jesus found His rest. And here it is that He invites “all who labor and are heavy laden,” to “find rest.” He does not point us to the grave as our resting place; but He graciously stoops down and invites us to share His yoke with Him—to drink into His “meek and lowly” spirit—to bear about a mortified will—to meet the darkest dispensations, and the most trying circumstances, with a “thank God,” and an “even so.” This is divine “rest.” It is rest in life, and not in death—rest in Christ, and not in the grave.

Reader, do you ever find yourself disposed to wish for the grave, as a relief from pressure? If so, look at the above scriptures. Think of them, pray over them, and seek to find your rest where Jesus found His, in having no will of your own.

We often think that a change of circumstances would make us happy. We imagine, if this trial were removed, and that deficiency made up, we should be all right. Let us remember, when tempted to think thus, that what we want is not a change of circumstances, but victory over self. May the good Lord ever give us this victory, and then we shall enjoy peace.

Encouragement in Difficulties

Numb. 13:26; 14:9.

“And they told him and said, We came into the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great, &c.....If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us,” &c. Numb. 13:27; 14:8. The Lord does not conceal from us the difficulties which are in the way, but rather bids us count the cost. Our eyes, on the one hand, are prone to light on the difficulties, and forget the blessings; or, on the other, to see only the blessings, and be blind to the difficulties; but God would have us see both. The spies were to tell of both; had they not done so, they would not have declared the truth. They were to tell of the giants and the walled cities, as well as of the fruits, the milk, and the honey. They carried a cluster of grapes, so great that two bore it between them (a magnificent exhibition of blessing and of plenty); but it was not received as a counterpoise; it did not relieve the spirit of the people from the arduousness of taking possession of the country. They are in distress and dismay; there is no doubt of all they would have to pass through in taking possession; and in one sense, it is right that they should be alive to it; right, so far as to be aware of the danger; but there their unbelief came in, and there was their sin.

Two men stilled the people; some discouraged them, but two were enough to establish the truth. They were well able to go up. But why? What communication should have strengthened their hearts? What will strengthen our hearts, and give us confidence, that we may feel we are able to get practical possession of our land? All blessings are laid up for us in heavenly places; but how are we to overcome the strong and walled cities? Caleb says, “If the Lord delight in us,” &c.

That is the whole question; not whether the land is good or bad, but whether the Lord delights in them or not. Beloved reader, that is merely the legal form. “If” is conditional, and does not apply to us. The truth is that the Lord does delight in us. It is this that our souls must dwell on, for how much do our blessings and our deliverances depend on this. I may say that I do not know what he delights in me for; but so might Caleb have said. There was power in his word, “If the Lord delight in us but how much greater in what we have to say, ‘The Lord has proved to us that He does delight in us.’” In Psalm 16, which treats of resurrection, referring to Christ, who has gone up on high for us, we read of the saints, “In whom is all my delight.” Should not this drop as honey and the honeycomb into our souls—that the Lord Jesus, the Holy One of God, takes pleasure in us? And why? For three reasons:

1st. Because we are His own.

2ndly. Because of the abundance of His service towards us, and the great cost at which He has gained us.

3rdly. Because with us alone He has sympathy. Let us divide these reasons, that we may see more clearly the grounds of His delight in us.

1. We are His own. (Read Eph. 5:29-32.) Why should He not love His own? "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it." "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

2. It cost Him so much to gain us. He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. His heart was set upon the Church, as the pearl of great price, for which He sold all that He had, in order to possess it. The more we expend on any object the more we love it. There is not a parent who does not love that child most who most demands his care. And so Christ, having already possessed Himself of us by His continual service for us in the heavens, exercises (if I may so say) His own love to us, and wins ours to Him. "He that is forgiven much, the same loveth much." The more that a soul feels the Lord dealing with it, even though that dealing be in discipline, the more assured may that soul be that He delights in it. Where I expend much, the more averse am I to see the object of my expenditure go to ruin.

Cannot our souls rejoice in the consciousness of this? It is a wonderful thing, but so it is.

In 2 Sam. 15:25, 26 there occurs a remarkable instance of how the soul grasps this idea when under severe discipline, because that is the time, above all others, when nature would say, "Now He does not delight in me." The sword is falling on David in the most painful way; he is stripped of everything that belonged to his mighty state; he is going forth to bear the judgment and retribution for an open evil. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." His restoration entirely depends on the Lord's favor. His words are, "If he say, I have no delight in thee." His whole future rested on the question whether or not God delighted in him; and so afterward, when recounting the mercies of the Lord, (2 Sam. 22:20,) David could say, "He delivered me because he delighted in me." And if this could sustain David's heart, how much more should it ours, to whom the truth is delivered in such a different way: for with us the Lord's favor is on no conditional ground, but one of firm assurance - His dealings with us being all the result of His delight in us. The Queen of Sheba says to Solomon, "The Lord delighted in thee." (2 Chron. 9:8.) That was giving him glory.

If your soul is traveling in a dark and lonely path of discipline, what is to bear you up?" "The Lord delighteth in thee." If it be to inherit the glory, yea, all that the heart can wish for, it is because the Lord delighteth in thee. It was the Lord's own joy in the matter. He is "rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." His mercy is the result of his love, not the cause of it.

3. There are none else but such as we are, with whom He can have sympathy. Where else can He find it? In this world? No. With angels? No. What does an angel know about the exercises of Job, or of the Psalms, or the Canticles? what about the path of Christ? The voice of the sufferer down here, in this sin-stained world, touches a chord in the heart of Christ which none other can; because He knew what it was to travel in such. "Ye shall leave me alone," expressed His bitterest sorrow from man. Where would all our doubts and fears be if we realized that He has no other delight here below?

Heb. 10 practically embodies the truth which Caleb taught; there we see our Great High Priest, not only announcing the fact that He delights in me, but following it up, standing in the heavens for me; bearing the difficulties of those who are laboring to take possession of the same spot.

"Hold fast your profession not because of what is there, but because the Son of God is there. He cannot come down to labor again here; but He can and does lift up the saint, and deliver him from

the difficulties with which he is beset. Caleb said, "He will surely bring us in;" and far more assuredly may we say so, in spite of all the discouragements. There is nothing that can really establish the heart like this. "The Lord delights in me." What confidence! What calmness it gives! It was the steady lamp that illumined David's gloomy path, and the ground of his song of praise when he was delivered from his enemies. So then, while traveling on to the realization of our possessions, we can say, "Go on, for He will surely bring us in." He will teach us the folly of our corrupt hearts, but, at the same time, will sustain them through the trouble with the assurance that He delights in us.

It is this that He gives as the true counterpoise to trouble, not the blessings which He permits us by the way, which people so often speak of as the balance for their trials. No, that will not do; we must learn not only that "He will surely bring us in," but that He will do it because He delights in us. May the Lord teach us more practically to know His grace and His love through a deeper intimacy with His heart.

The Faith of Rahab

A report reached Jericho—all heard it; but Rahab believed the report. (Read Josh. 2 and Heb. 11:31.) She mixed it with faith. She had no more evidence of its truth than other people, yet she believed. There is power in God's word. It should be believed, because it is His word. There is no one who does not act on the belief of man's word. If we were sitting in a railway carriage, and an official came to the door and cried out, "this carriage is not going on; you had better change," we should all, instantly, jump out. No one would think of saying, "he did not address me; I shall sit here until he speaks directly to myself." Thus is it with the report of the gospel. It tells us the carriage of self-righteousness, of ordinances, ceremonies, or prayers, does not go on to heaven. It tells us to change into the carriage of God's righteousness, which is by faith of Jesus Christ.

Rahab believed and was saved. The fruit of her faith is seen in her hiding the two men. Her house became the only safe spot in all the doomed city. There was perfect security for all in that house, under the shelter of "the scarlet line." All within that house were as safe as if they were already in the midst of Israel's victorious hosts, although the house was "on the wall"—the very thing that was first to come down. Rahab occupied herself in seeking to get as many as she could under the shelter of the "true token." People might say, "how can you promise me security? How can a scarlet line save a man? Would not a white flag do better? Ought we not to send a message to Israel to say we will become tributary?" No; come in! come in! There is safety here, and nowhere else. All beneath the scarlet line are as safe as God can make them. If anyone were outside the door of that house, no power could save him. But all within were perfectly safe. They were not hoping to be safe, or praying to be saved. They were not half or almost saved. They were saved. "Our life for yours" had settled all; and the "true token" gave perfect peace to the heart.

Faith Triumphant Over the Power of the Enemy

The entire sphere of divine action, as connected with redemption, lies beyond the limits of death's domain. When Satan has exhausted his power, then God begins to show Himself. The grave is the limit of Satan's activity; but there it is that Divine activity begins. This is a glorious truth. Satan has the power of death; but God is the God of the living; and He gives life beyond the reach and power of death—a life which Satan cannot touch. The heart finds sweet relief in such a truth as this, in the midst of a scene where death reigns. Faith can stand and look on at Satan putting forth the plenitude of his power. It can stay itself upon God's mighty instrumentality of resurrection. It can take its stand at the grave which has just closed over a beloved object, and drink in, from the lips of Him who is "the resurrection and the life," the elevating assurance of a glorious immortality. It knows that God is stronger than Satan, and it can, therefore, quietly wait for the full manifestation of that superior strength, and, in thus waiting, find its victory and its settled peace. We have a noble example of this power of faith in the opening verses of our chapter.

"And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child she hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." (Exod. 2:1-4.) Here we have a scene of touching interest, in whatever way we contemplate it. In point of fact, it was simply faith triumphing over the influences of nature and death, and leaving room for the God of resurrection to act in his own proper sphere and character. True, the enemy's power is apparent, in the circumstance that the child had to be placed in such a position—a position of death, in principle. And, moreover, a sword was piercing through the mother's heart, in thus beholding her precious offspring laid, as it were, in death. Satan might act, and nature might weep; but the Quickener of the dead was behind the dark cloud, and faith beheld Him there, gilding heaven's side of that cloud with His bright and life-giving beams. "By faith Moses when he was born was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Heb. 11:23.

Thus this honored daughter of Levi teaches us a holy lesson. Her "ark of bulrushes, daubed with slime and pitch," declares her confidence in the truth that there was a something which could keep out the waters of death, in the case of this "proper child," as well as in the case of Noah, "the preacher of righteousness." Are we to suppose for a moment, that this ark was the invention of mere nature? Was it nature's forethought that devised it, or nature's ingenuity that constructed it? Was the babe placed in the ark at the suggestion of a mother's heart, cherishing the fond but visionary hope of thereby saving her treasure from the ruthless hand of death? Were we to reply to the above inquiries in the affirmative, we should, I believe, lose the beautiful teaching of this entire scene. How could we ever suppose that the "ark" was devised by one who saw no other portion or destiny for her child but death by drowning? Impossible. We can only look upon that significant structure, as faith's draft handed in at the treasury of the God of resurrection. It was

devised by the hand of faith, as a vessel of mercy, to carry “a proper child” safely over death’s dark waters, into the place assigned him by the immutable purpose of the living God. When we behold this daughter of Levi bending over that “ark of bulrushes,” which her faith had constructed, and depositing therein her babe, we see her “walking in the steps of that faith of her father Abraham,” which he had when “he rose up from before his dead,” and purchased the cave of Machpelah from the sons of Heth. (Gen. 23) We do not recognize in her the energy of mere nature, hanging over the object of its affections, about to fall into the iron grasp of the king of terrors. No; but we trace in her the energy of a faith which enables her to stand, as a conqueror, at the margin of death’s cold flood, and behold the chosen servant of Jehovah in safety at the other side.

Yes, my reader, faith can take those bold and lofty flights into regions far removed from this land of death and widespread desolation. Its eagle gaze can pierce the gloomy clouds which gather around the tomb, and behold the God of resurrection displaying the results of His everlasting counsels, in the midst of a sphere which no arrow of death can reach. It can take its stand upon the top of the rock of ages, and listen in holy triumph, while the surges of death are lashing its base.—Notes on Exodus.

Faith's Warrant

"Borrow not a few."—2 Kings 4:3. These words were uttered, by the prophet Elisha, in the ear of a distressed widow who had come to him with her tale of sorrow. And, assuredly, the words of God's prophet did but express the grace of the prophet's God. He knew well on whose behalf he was speaking—on whose grace he was counting—on whose treasury he was drawing. He did not say, "Take care you do not borrow too many." He knew this was impossible. Faith never yet overdrew its account in God's bank. It has "unsearchable riches" to its credit there. Faith never yet brought an empty vessel to God that He had not oil to fill. In the case of this widow, the oil only ceased to flow when there was no longer an empty vessel to receive it. The source was exhaustless; it was faith's promise to keep the channel open. It is the business of faith to "open the mouth wide." God's part is to "fill it." We cannot expect too largely from God.

Dear Christian reader, let the remembrance of these things have the happy effect of encouraging your heart, in the life of faith. Think of these precious words, "Borrow not a few." They come to you direct from your Father's heart of tender love. He wants you to draw largely upon His infinite resources. You cannot possibly expect too much from the hand and heart of Jesus.

Is your heart disturbed by the sense—the painful and humiliating sense—of indwelling sin? "Go, borrow thee vessels, even empty vessels," in which to receive the rich supplies of grace that flow from a crucified and risen Christ—your Surety—your Advocate—your great High Priest. And bear in mind those divinely-liberal words, "Borrow not a few." Jesus has borne all your sin upon the cross, and put it away forever. The eye of God can never see your sins again. He has cast them all behind His back. He has actually reaped a harvest of glory by putting them away. Divine grace has reaped a richer harvest in the midst of a world of sinners, than ever it could have reaped amidst the host of unfallen angels. "Go," therefore, "borrow vessels—empty vessels—not a few."

Again, is your poor heart bowed down beneath the weight of sorrow? Has the cold grasp of death seized upon the darling object of your affections? Has a serious blank been made in your heart and your home—a blank which no earthly object can fill up? Then, remember, the heart of Jesus is overflowing with tender sympathy. He has felt your sorrow. He counts your sighs, and puts your tears into His bottle. If He were here, He would not chide your grief. He would sit down beside you and mingle His tears with yours. But you say, "He is not here." True, but He is at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. A perfect human heart beats on the throne of God, and you can count with certainty on the sympathy of that heart. "Go," then, bereaved and sorrowing one, "borrow thee vessels, even empty vessels," in which to receive the abundant consolations which flow from the heart of Christ, whose encouraging word to you is, "Borrow not a few."

It may be, however, that the reader is neither troubled about the question of sin, nor yet bowed down under the weight of sorrow. His heart is established in grace; and the beloved circle in which his affections have been wont to play, remains unbroken. But, then, family or commercial cares press upon his spirit. His children are not going on as he would like, or his business prospects are gloomy. If such be my reader's position, he, too, can learn a sweet and seasonable lesson from

Elisha's words. He can go forth and borrow his empty vessels, for there is "oil" enough for him, even "the oil of gladness" for his burdened spirit. To such an one, the word is, "Cast thy burden on the Lord." He will surely sustain. "Cast all thy care on him, knowing that he careth for thee." "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Do not carry the burden for another hour. Cast it directly, cast it entirely, upon the One who is as able as He is willing, and as willing as He is able, to sustain it. In a word, "Go, borrow thee vessels, empty vessels," into which the copious streams of divine peace may flow for your perplexed and anxious spirit. And, remember the gracious charge, "borrow not a few."

But these lines may, perhaps, meet the eye of someone whose case has not, as yet, been exactly met. His exercise does not spring from a troubled conscience, a bereaved heart, or a spirit perplexed about domestic or commercial affairs. The fact is, the entire scene around has repulsed and disappointed him. And, yet, not so much the world, for no true Christian would think of expecting aught from it. But, in the very midst of his Christian friends, all his hopes have been blighted. He had looked at those Christians from a distance, and they seemed to present the appearance of all that was lovely and attractive—so separated—so heavenly—so loving. Yet, alas! on coming amongst them, he did not realize his fondly cherished hope, and his heart, once big with expectation, is now furrowed by sore disappointment. This is no uncommon case. There is many a furrowed heart within the precincts of the Church of God. But, blessed be God, the heart's deep furrows are but so many "vessels, empty vessels," in which to receive the streams of comfort and solace emanating from "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever," and the heart that has many furrows is ready furnished with "vessels not a few." God will surely fill those vessels; and then one comes back, to be a channel of blessing in the scene which had disappointed him.

In a word, then, whatever be the state or condition of the soul—whether it be a question of sin or sorrow, difficulty or disappointment, the message from God is one and the same. "Go, borrow thee vessels"—and, mark, it is "empty vessels"—vessels not a few." What magnificent grace shines in the words "empty" and "not a few!" Our vessels must be empty. God will not pour into a vessel half-filled with creature-supplies. In every case, the vessel must be absolutely empty; for only then, is it fully manifest that the "oil" has come directly from God Himself. The word "empty" shuts out the creature. The words "not a few" leave room for God to come in.

Beloved reader, these are simple truths; but, simple as they are, they stand connected with the grand essential element of the divine life in the soul. Would that they were more deeply engraven on our hearts, by the eternal pen of God the Holy Ghost!

Fine Twined Linen

Exod. 26

The fine twined linen, as expressive of Christ's spotless manhood, opens a most blessed spring of thought to the spiritual mind. When the angel had announced to Mary the tidings of the Saviour's birth, she said unto him, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man." This was not the expression of unbelief, but of utter incompetency to understand the wondrous mystery of "God manifest in the flesh." But mark the angelic reply: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:34, 35.) Mary, no doubt, imagined that this birth was to be according to the principles of ordinary generation. Hence her inquiry. But the angel corrects her mistake. Divine power was about to form in the virgin's womb A REAL MAN—One whose nature was divinely pure, utterly incapable of taint. He was "in the likeness of sinful flesh," without sin in the flesh. He partook of real flesh and blood, without a shadow of the evil thereto attaching. Comp. Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Heb. 4:15.

This is a cardinal truth, which cannot be too accurately held, or too jealously guarded. The incarnation of the Son of God—His mysterious entrance into pure and spotless flesh, formed by the power of the Highest in the virgin's womb—is the foundation of the great mystery of godliness, of which the top stone is a glorified God-man in heaven—the Head, Representative, and glorious Model of the redeemed Church of God. (1 Tim. 3:16.) The purity of His manhood fully met the claims of God; the reality thereof met the necessities of man. He was a spotless, real man, in whom God could perfectly delight, and on whom man might confidently lean.

I need not remind the enlightened reader that all this, if taken apart from death and resurrection, is quite unavailable to us. But incarnation was the first layer of the glorious superstructure: and the curtain of "fine twined linen" prefigures the spotless purity of "the man, Christ Jesus." We have seen the method and character of His conception; and, as we pass along the current of His life here below, we see instance after instance of the same purity. He was forty days in the wilderness, tempted of the devil; but there was no response in His pure nature to the tempter's foul suggestions. He could touch the leper and receive no taint. He could pass unscathed through the most polluted atmosphere. He was like a sunbeam emanating from the fountain of light, which can pass undefiled through the most polluted medium. His humanity was as incapable of receiving, as it was of communicating, any evil. He could say, "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Psalm 16) This was in reference to His humanity, which, as being perfectly pure, was capable of being a sin-bearer. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) It is not, to the tree, as some would falsely teach us; but "on the tree."

According to the doctrine of some, the blessed Lord Jesus was a sin-bearer all His life. If He carried our sins up to the tree, He must have had them on Him before He went thither, and the question is, when did He begin to bear them? Let my reader remember, it was on the cross, and nowhere else, that Christ was our sin-bearer. He never had aught to say to sin before that terrible

hour; and, blessed be God, He can never have aught to say to it again.

“Notes on Exodus.”

Four Points of Knowledge

(Read Deut. 8:1-9.) In these verses we have four valuable points of knowledge connected with our walk through the wilderness: namely, 1. the knowledge of ourselves; 2. the knowledge of God; 3. the knowledge of our relationship; and, 4. the knowledge of our hope.

1. And, first, as to the knowledge of self, we read, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart." Here is a wondrous point of knowledge. Who can utter it?

Who can penetrate the depths of a human heart? Who can tell its windings and labyrinths? The details of a wilderness life tend to bring out a vast deal of the evil that is in us. At our first starting upon our Christian career, we are apt to be so occupied with the present joy of deliverance that we know but very little of the real character of nature. It is as we get on, from stage to stage of our desert course, that we become acquainted with self.

2. But, then, we are not to suppose that, as we grow in self-knowledge, our joy must decline. Quite the opposite. This would be to make our joy depend upon ignorance of self, whereas it really depends upon the knowledge of God. In point of fact, as the believer advances in the knowledge of himself, his joy becomes deeper and more solid, inasmuch as he is led more thoroughly out of, and away from, himself, to find his sole object in Christ. He learns that nature's total ruin is not merely a true doctrine of the Christian faith, but a deep reality in his own experience. He also learns that divine grace is a reality, that salvation is a reality—a deep, personal reality; that sin is a reality; the cross, a reality; the advocacy of Christ, a reality. In a word, he learns the depth, the fullness, the power, the application of God's gracious resources. "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger," not that you might be driven to despair, but that He might "feed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee to know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."

Touching and beautiful appeal! "Forty years" of uninterrupted evidence of what was in the heart of God toward His redeemed people. "Six hundred thousand footmen" clothed, fed, kept and cared for, during "forty years," in "a vast howling wilderness!" What a noble and soul-satisfying display of the fullness of divine resources! How is it possible that, with the history of Israel's desert wanderings lying open before us, we could ever harbor a single doubt or fear? Oh! that our hearts may be more completely emptied of self, for this is true humility; and more completely filled with Christ, for this is true happiness and true holiness. "For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing." (Deut. 2:7.)

3. All that we have been dwelling upon flows out of another thing, and that is, the relationship in which we stand. "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee" This accounts for all. The hunger and the food; the thirst and the

water; the trackless desert and the guiding pillar; the toil and the refreshment; the sickness and the healing—all tell of the same thing, a Father's hand, a Father's heart. It is well to remember this, "lest we be weary and faint in our minds." (Heb. 12) An earthly father will have to take down the rod of discipline, as well as to imprint the kiss of affection—to administer the rebuke as well as express his approval; to chasten as well as minister supplies. Thus it is with our heavenly Father. All His dealings flow out of that marvelous relationship in which He stands towards us. He is a "Holy Father." All is summed up in this. Our Father is the "Holy One;" and "the Holy One" is our Father. To walk with, lean on, and imitate Him "as dear children," must secure everything in the way of genuine happiness, real strength, and true holiness. When we walk with Him, we are happy; when we lean on Him, we are strong; and when we imitate Him, we are practically holy and gracious.

4. Finally, in the midst of all the exercises, the trials, the conflicts, and even the mercies and privileges of the wilderness, we must keep the eye steadily fixed on that four points of knowledge which lies before us. The joys of the kingdom are to fill our hearts, and to give vigor and buoyancy to our steps, as we pass across the desert. The green fields and vine-clad hills of the heavenly Canaan, the pearly gates and golden streets of the New Jerusalem are to fill the vision of our souls. We are called to cherish the hope of glory - a hope which will never make ashamed. When the sand of the desert tries us, let the thought of Canaan cheer us. Let us dwell upon the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." (1 Pet. 1:4.) "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." Bright and blessed prospect! May we dwell upon it, and upon Him who will be the eternal source of all its brightness and blessedness!

"To Canaan's sacred bound

We haste with songs of joy,

Where peace and liberty are found,

And sweets that never cloy;

Hallelujah!

We are on our way to God!"

"How sweet the prospect is!

It cheers the pilgrim's breast;

We're journeying through the wilderness,

But soon we'll gain our rest.

Hallelujah!

We are on our way to God."

God's Mercy Is Man's Resource

Read Psalm 5

"I ADMIT that I am a sinner, I know that I have sinned; but I cannot understand what you mean by saying that I am a lost sinner—a ruined sinner. I am not lost! I am not ruined! as you say."

"Well, I know that you are not finally lost, or you would not be here. Bless God for that mercy. But if you are not lost, you can have nothing to do with the Saviour; for He has come to 'seek and to save that which was lost.' And if you are not dead in sin, what do you want with Christ? He is the eternal life of God to dead souls. You can have nothing to say to Him whatever, until you have learned that you are a poor, lost sinner, 'dead in trespasses and sins.' 'He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.....He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.'" John 3.

"Quite so; but we are not to take these words literally."

Such was the language of one who thought he had examined the subject carefully, and had come to a right conclusion. But, alas! how often are man's conclusions at utter variance with the word of God, even on the most vital subjects.

He was quite sincere, I have no doubt; but more is wanted than sincerity. He did not understand the scriptural meaning of the expression, "lost," as applied to his own condition. And many, doubtless, are in precisely the same state of mind, though they may not be aware of it, or express it so boldly.

This foundation truth is plainly taught all through the Scriptures, from Adam downwards. The first announcement of it was made in the garden of Eden, when the Lord said, "Adam.....where art thou?" Man was now lost, and God, in grace, was seeking him.

But in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we have the summing up of the whole of the evidence, by the Spirit of truth, as to man's real condition and character, and solemn judgment is given thereon. "There is none righteous; no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God.....there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; "that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God."

Hence the gospel addresses man as a lost sinner, and only as such. It speaks of divine love going out to seek the LOST sheep—searching for the LOST piece of silver, and embracing, with an affection that knows no change, the LOST prodigal son. And oh, wondrous truth! none but once-lost children ever know, or ever taste, the sweetness of this unchanging love. It is only on the neck of the lost one found that the Father falls—embraces and kisses his son. The elder brother

was a stranger to all this kind of affection, joy, and gladness, and it is the only sort that will ever break our hearts.

In the Psalm at the head of this paper, these truths are blessedly brought out, namely, that man is wholly ruined in himself; but in the mercy of God he has an unfailing resource.

Three things are here stated as to man. 1. He is “foolish.” 2. A “worker of iniquity.” 3. “Deceitful.” Take the first only for the present. “The foolish shall not stand in thy sight.” Oh! who could say, in the searching light of this word, “I am not lost! I am not ruined?” Who can say they have never been foolish? “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.” And, “The thought of foolishness is sin.” (Pro. 22:15; 24:9.) Oh! where is the son or daughter of Adam who is not condemned by this scripture? “The thought of foolishness is sin.” Well may we say with the Psalmist, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” Psalm 143:2.

When, as a divinely-convicted sinner, I read such words as these, I may well ask, “How am I to come near to God, who cannot look upon sin? The answer is as clear and simple as the gospel can make it. “As for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy.” (Ver. 7.) Here is the answer. It speaks of mercy, the mercy of God; and that is infinite. Through grace, I turn to Him in the name of Jesus. Now I see that, ruined as I am in myself, GOD IS FOR ME. It is not in the multitude of my good works, good feelings, or sincere endeavors. No; it is only “in the multitude of thy mercy. This is lost man’s only hope. He can only enter by the door of mercy; and that door, blessed be God, stands wide open, night and day, for the chief of sinners. Divine mercy has laid the foundation of his approach to God in the Person and work of Jesus; and has come down to all his need as a helpless sinner.

Nor is this all. There is far more. “Lead me, O Lord, in THY righteousness, because of mine enemies.” (Ver. 8.) No righteousness of our own would do, either in the presence of God, or in the presence of enemies. But God, in infinite mercy, has not only come down to the depths of my ruin, and met all my need there; but He has raised me up out of it all, and set me in the condition of divine and everlasting righteousness in His own presence. So that every enemy is silenced and silenced forever. Christ is my righteousness. Having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He has gone up to the Father as the righteous One—“Jesus Christ the righteous.” This is a deeply blessed truth. The righteousness in which the believer stands before God is Christ Himself. He is “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Who of God is made unto us.....righteousness.” “And we are made the righteousness of God in Him,” God must have righteousness. No sinner ever stood, or can stand, in His holy presence, except in His righteousness. This righteousness is revealed to faith in the gospel. The law required righteousness, the gospel provides it. It is now made known— manifested. Those who have faith in Jesus have the righteousness of God. “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.” Rom. 3:21, 26.

This settles every question, removes every fear, and shuts the mouth of every enemy. Christ has answered to God for all that we are, and all that we have done as sinners; and as our risen, living Head, He is in the presence of God for us, and we are there, always there, in Him. My foolishness cannot stand in God’s presence, but His righteousness can. “And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

But there is more than even this. Being the subject of divine mercy, which has come down to such a depth, and being clothed in divine righteousness, which brings me up to such a height, I have got to walk down here amid the thorns and briers of the wilderness.

What do I want for this? "Make THY way straight before my face." (Ver. 8.) This makes all plain. There is no doubt, no darkness, no uncertainty, in God's way. Oh! for a single eye, a body full of light, and a straight path.

Is there, can there be, anything more for the once-lost soul that has been brought to the "Father of mercies" through faith in Jesus? O yes, blessed be His name, there is. He accompanies the child of mercy with the joy, favor, blessing, and protection of His presence, all his journey through. "But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield." Ver. 11, 12.

Such are mercy's boundless stores for every poor bankrupt sinner who believes in Jesus, and rests in Him alone.

He feeds on the riches of divine mercy.

He is clothed in divine righteousness.

He walks in divinely made paths.

He is refreshed and strengthened with divine joy.

He basks in the sunshine of divine blessing.

He reposes behind the shield of divine favor.

And now, may I ask, does my reader possess and enjoy this wealthy portion? It is all open to faith. The unsearchable riches of Christ are thrown open to the believer. If, then, you have faith in Him, "all things are yours." This is the pilgrim's portion now —his wilderness fare; very different, you will say, from perishing with hunger in a foreign land. Yes, these are his journeying mercies. And oh, sweet hope! "A little while" and the desert will be crossed, the Jordan passed; and then his place and portion will be "present with the Lord;" cloudless glory, full victory, and everlasting peace. "COME, LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY."

"As debtors to mercy alone,

Of heavenly mercy we sing;

Nor fear, with His righteousness on.

Our persons and offerings to bring.

The wrath of a sin-hating God

With us can have nothing to do;

Our Saviour's obedience and blood

Hide all our transgressions from view."

God's Word and Man's Evidences

A. Good afternoon, Mr.—. You have been very unwell, I hear.

B. Yes, indeed, I am laid aside for the present.

A. Well, these things do not happen to us by chance, do they?

B. O, no, there is an overruling hand in all these things, I am sure.

A. And He knows best when we need discipline. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." But it is comforting to know, that the stroke is measured by a Father's hand. No father likes his child to be chastised by a stranger. Hence we read, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord....For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12.)

B. Yes, I can understand all that. It is all very beautiful; but the great thing is to know that we are His children.

A. Truly, Mr.—, but every believer in Jesus is a child of God. And you would not, surely, rob yourself of the consolation given to the children, by doubting that you are one of His.

B. Well, I must say, that I am one of those who have never got above doubts and fears, at times. I have had my seasons when I thought that I was a child of God, but, at other times, I have thought that I had no just ground to conclude that I really was one of His.

A. Of course, if you go by your own thought, you can never be sure. So long as you keep looking at self, you will believe the one day and doubt the next; we are so changeable; but if you go by the word of God, you will always believe, and never doubt. God's word never changes. And that is the only thing to go by. The word of the Lord is "forever settled" in heaven. If you trust to that word you will be as "settled" as it is. But if you are guided by your own thoughts, you will be as changeable as they are.

B. Yes, I can hear all that, but if I am a child of God, I ought to have thoughts and feelings answering to that, and if I have not those experiences, what right have I to conclude that I am His child? There is a superficial way of speaking about these things by some, now-a-days, that I cannot go with at all. They talk about full assurance, and perfect peace, and yet I do not see that they are much better than their neighbors. I like evidences.

A. So do I, Mr.—. I admit that nothing can be more flimsy, more detestable to an upright mind than to hear high-sounding professions and witness low practice. But, for the present, we will confine ourselves to the word. It will never contradict itself. But do the Scriptures ever appeal to us by saying, "Art thou a child of God? "Do they not rather put the question as to faith in Christ? Such as, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Now, if you can answer truly, "Lord, I believe," the question, "are you a child of God?" will never be asked. Simply because the Scriptures affirm, that all who have faith are the children of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." "For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (1 John 5:1; Gal. 3:26.) Surely

nothing can be plainer than these texts. If I am a believer in Christ, I am born of God. I am possessed of eternal life. I am a partaker of the divine nature. A child has the same nature as its father. The connection between parent and child, is not one of mere opinions, or doctrines, or the like; but of life. And surely the connection between God and His children, is a vital one. They are His children in the power of an endless life. Once a child, always a child. We may not always be as subject, or as obedient as we ought to be, but we are children still. And having the two natures, being born again, you must expect a variety of experience. Sometimes the old is uppermost, and sometimes the new. We do not always mortify the old, and live in the power of the new nature as we ought. Still, we must not judge of our state before God by the workings of our own old corrupt nature. Thousands have been brought into bondage by so doing. The flesh is always contrary to the Spirit.

B. But may not God hide His face from His children, and leave them in clouds and darkness, to try them and prove them? We read of Abraham being under “an horror of great darkness.” How do you account for that?

A. That had nothing whatever to do with the question of Abraham’s own salvation. It was typical of the afflictions through which his seed was to pass in Egypt, as the very next verse shows. And it is in that very chapter, the fifteenth of Genesis, where it is said, “and he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

You see how dangerous it is to be led away by the mere sound of words without examining their meaning and application. If you read the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters, you will see how truly, at this very time, Abraham was walking with God in power. It is quite true, that his seed was to pass through Egypt’s furnace; but all God’s people have more or less of that. But you will see, in the same place, that along with the “smoking furnace” there is the “burning lamp.” The bright shining lamp of God’s salvation, to cheer, comfort, and sustain His dear people when in the furnace, that they may glorify Him even in the fire. How could we glorify Him in the day of affliction, and say, “thy will be done,” if we had not the joy of His salvation, and the full assurance of His unchanging love?

B. Well, what do you make of Job? I am sure he passed through great darkness, and conflicts in his soul. At least, I have always understood so. Would you not allow that in his case?

A. Indeed I would not, in the sense you understand it. I admit that Job passed through deep exercise of heart, when God was working in his soul, and teaching him what he really was in His holy presence. And that is what we all need so much, Mr.—. But he was not exercised as to whether he was a child of God or not. The history of Job affords no sanction whatever to the doubting and fearing state that you are in. Indeed, the very opposite, for we see God’s tender love and care for His dear child all through. And then there is that sweet word at the end, “The Lord accepted the person of Job” (see margin). If He could not accept his works, He could and did accept his person, forever blessed be His name! Job abounded in good works, but his heart had never been thoroughly sifted in the presence of God. And there is nothing more common in the present day. There is a great deal more working than sifting going on. If you read the twenty-ninth and forty-second chapters, you will see what Job was before, and after these exercises. In the former, he speaks about the “candle of the Lord shining on his head.” In the latter, it shines into his heart, and that made all the difference. His failing was self-righteousness, and it appears to have

been very deeply and firmly rooted in his heart, as it was very troublesome to get out. And so it is with us all, I am sure. But what a mercy to have it out. How gracious of the Lord to take the trouble.

B. Well, you and I do not agree on these matters at all. I cannot see them in that light. Of course, I know, that all who really are God's people are safe, but the thing is to be sure that we are His. I have never, myself, got beyond a hope; you seem to be sure. I know, that I do not always feel and act as I ought to do. Far from it. I have often too good reasons to doubt that I am one of His. It has always been so with me. And my idea is, that it has always been so with the best of men. I have known many myself; and look at David, and many others. Why, even our Lord Himself experienced the hiding of His Father's countenance....

A. Oh!—Come!- Mr.—. That is going a little too far, surely! I have never heard the Lord's cry of sorrow quoted in that way before. But so far you are right, in this instance —He was forsaken of God. But did His faith fail? Oh, no! blessed be His name. His faith, which was always perfect, never appeared more perfect than at this moment. He held fast His confidence in God, even when drinking the bitter cup, and when the ineffable beams of the divine complacency were, for the time, withdrawn. But why was the blessed Jesus forsaken? Just that we might never be forsaken. In the greatness of His love, He took the place of the forsaken one, and consequently experienced that which was due to us. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) So that a true knowledge of the cross, in place of giving any countenance to such a system, would wither up, root and branch, all the doubts and fears in Christendom, excepting in cases where they proceed from natural infirmity, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10) If I believe that, how could I ever doubt? That is, if I have faith in Christ's work. But if your faith rests on your feelings, in place of Christ, no wonder that you doubt, and this is really the grand point after all. In place of faith in Christ, who is always in the presence of God for us, as our righteousness, it is faith in your own state of mind. That is not Christ. We are the righteousness of God in him and perfected forever" And God Himself says, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Is there a point, in the condition or history of the believer, which the sacrifice of Christ has not reached, and answered for to God? Not one!

B. I know that I have nothing to trust in but Christ. I know that very well. Nothing but His precious blood puts away sin. And I do hope that my trust is in Him alone. I have reason to believe that the Lord called me many years ago—as far back as the year eighteen hundred and nine. In this very neighborhood, He met me in His grace, and, I trust, turned me to Himself. He wrought a great change in me then. I can remember it very well, and I have been trying to follow Him ever since. But.....

A. Well, Mr.—! you do surprise me! why, that is forty-nine years ago! And have you been doubting and fearing all that time?

B. Yes, I have, all that time. Sometimes very happy, at other times just the opposite; but I desire, through His help, to hold on to the end.

A. What a miserable system of theology yours must be! Certainly, your religion has not done much for you. I certainly should not like to belong to your school. Why, it is not faith in Christ at all. It is faith in a certain state of mind. I do not say you have not faith in Christ. I believe you have. But

what a state of things! Forty-nine years a doubting Christian, and about the half of that time a preacher! Oh! if you were done with self, and occupied with Christ, you would find yourself in a new world altogether. Your system teaches faith in feeling, in place of Christ. Were it simply faith in Christ, you would judge of your state by Him. Faith answers every question by referring to Christ. For example, if the question of righteousness is raised, faith answers, "The Lord is my righteousness." If of life, "Christ is my life." If of acceptance, "I am accepted in the Beloved"—and so on. Christ is faith's standard, because He is God's. Faith knows, that nothing short of Christ will meet the mind of God, therefore, faith has done with self, and is occupied with Christ.

B. Well, after all, the whole thing appears to be this, "you are certain that you are saved, and I am hoping to be saved;" and the scriptures speak about being "saved by hope." Thank you for calling to see me.

A. True, Mr.—. But that does not mean, that we are saved by "hoping to be saved;" but that "WE ARE SAVED," and hoping for glory, which is still future, as the whole context clearly shows. (See Rom. 8:16-25.) Good afternoon, I trust you will soon be better. The Lord give you peace. He will be better to you than all your fears.

On Christ, salvation rests secure;

This Rock of Ages must endure,

Nor can that faith be overthrown,

"Which rests upon the "Living Stone."

"If you want to be miserable, look within.

If you want to be distracted, look abound.

If you want to be happy, look up."

The Gold Wire

Exod. 39:3.

“And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work.”

In “the fine twined linen” we have a type of the spotless manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in the “gold wire” we have an equally striking and beautiful type of His Godhead. The Spirit of God delights in presenting the Person and work of Christ. Every type, every figure, every ordinance of the Mosaic ritual, is fragrant with the odor of His precious name. It matters not how insignificant, apparently, the circumstance may be, if only it expresses something of Christ, it is unspeakably valuable in the judgment of the Holy Ghost.

“The blue, the purple, the scarlet, and fine twined linen” exhibit the varied features of Christ’s perfect humanity; but the manner in which the gold wire was mingled with these materials, in making Aaron’s priestly garments, is worthy of special attention. The wire of gold was cunningly wrought into all the others, so as to be inseparably connected with, and yet perfectly distinct from, them.

The application of all this to the Lord Jesus is full of interest. In varied scenes throughout the gospel narrative, we can easily discern this rare and beauteous union of manhood and Godhead; and, at the same time, their mysterious distinctness.

Look, for example, at Christ on the sea of Galilee. In the midst of the storm, “he was asleep on a pillow” precious exhibition of His perfect manhood! But, in a moment, He rises from the attitude of real humanity, into all the dignity and majesty of Godhead, and, as the supreme Governor of the universe, He hushes the storm and calms the sea. There is no effort—no haste—no girding of Himself up for an occasion. With perfect ease, He rises from the condition of positive humanity into the sphere of essential Deity. The repose of the former is not more natural than the activity of the latter. He is as perfectly at home in the one as in the other.

Again, see Him in the case of the collectors of tribute, at the close of Matt. 17. As the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, He lays His hand upon the treasures of the ocean, and says, “They are all mine;” and having declared that “the sea is his and he made it.” He turns round, and, in the exhibition of perfect humanity, He links Himself with His poor servant by those touching words, “that take, and give unto them for me and thee.” Gracious words! Peculiarly gracious when taken in connection with the miracle so entirely expressive of the Godhead of the One who was thus linking Himself, in infinite condescension, with a poor feeble worm.

Once more, see Him at the grave of Lazarus. (John 11) He groans and weeps, and those groans and tears issue from the profound depths of a perfect manhood—from that perfect human heart which felt, as no other heart could feel, what it was to stand in the midst of a scene in which sin had produced such terrible fruits. But, then, as the Resurrection and the Life, as the One who held

in His omnipotent grasp “the keys of hell and death.” He cries, “Lazarus, come forth;” and death and the grave, responsive to His authoritative voice, throw open their massy doors and let go their captive.

My reader’s mind will easily recur to other scenes in the gospels, illustrative of the beautiful combination of the wire of gold with “the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and fine twined linen;” that is to say, the union of the Godhead with the manhood, in the mysterious Person of the Son of God. There is nothing new in the thought. It has often been noticed by those who have studied, with any amount of care, the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

It is, however, always edifying to have the blessed Lord Jesus introduced to our thoughts as “very God and very man.” The Holy Ghost has, with “cunning workmanship,” wrought the two together, and presented them to the renewed mind of the believer, to be enjoyed and admired.

May we have hearts to appreciate such teaching. Nothing can keep up the tone and freshness of the spiritual life save abiding communion with the Person of Christ. Outward forms of religion, ordinances, ceremonies, creeds, doctrines, meetings, in a word, the entire machinery of systematic religiousness, may leave the soul dull, barren, and lifeless; but when the soul is filled with Christ, there is freshness and power.

May the reader taste the deep blessedness of having the blood of Jesus sprinkled on his conscience, the name of Jesus engraved on his heart, and the coming of Jesus as the one object before his soul’s vision. “Notes on Exodus.”

The Great Supper

Luke 14

The whole of this chapter is significant in no ordinary manner, I believe. The Lord visits man's world, and it does not suit Him—and then He shows that his world does not suit man.

The two feasts in this chapter are samples of the two worlds. That in the Pharisee's house is man's world. Guests are there after the fashion of the world, and the host is there after the same fashion. Pride marks the one, and selfishness the other—and such a world the Son of God can only rebuke. It does not suit Him. The feast in the parable, on the other hand, is Christ's world. It has been furnished entirely by Himself. It is just what God makes it. But this will not do for man—and all the guests that are seen at it are therefore brought in or compelled—otherwise the table would have been empty.

Thus, man's world does not suit the Lord, the Lord's world does not suit man. The pride and selfishness which are here will not do for Christ. And here let me say, what a blessing it is, what eternal blessing is involved in it, that our world did not suit the Lord. What would have become of us sinners, had this been possible? Could pride suit Him who, though in the form of God, took on Him the form of a servant? Could selfishness suit Him who, when He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich? Our very salvation is involved in the fact, thus incidentally witnessed at the feast in the Pharisee's house, that man's world did not suit Jesus.

And, on the other hand, His kingdom is lightly esteemed by the heart of man—as this chapter goes on to show us.

The Lord, I believe, had the heart of man in His thoughts, when He framed this parable. He meant to expose it, by showing that, but for sovereign grace, none would ever be in the kingdom. This "certain man" prepares his "supper" and then, he sends out his "servant" to tell the "hidden" ones, that "all was ready."

This is the invitation to man, that he may come and enjoy a portion of God's providing in a coming scene of glory. But man has no heart for the invitation. He is occupied with other delights of his own providing, "the piece of ground," or "the yoke of oxen," or "the wife." These are more to man than all that God can give him.

The heart is thus exposed. But it is not slandered, if I may so speak; for the parable does not go beyond man's history of himself. Man has been exposing himself in the very way in which this parable exposes him, all through his history, from the beginning to the end of it. In earliest days, a mess of pottage was more to man than the birthright—in latest days, at the very time, I may say, when the Lord was speaking this parable, a herd of swine was more to man than the healing virtue of the Son of God—and after that, thirty pieces of silver could purchase the heart of man from the company and the friendship of Jesus. And thus the parable does not go beyond the history. Nay,

rather, the parable gives but a chastened and delicate disclosure of that which had already exposed itself in grosser forms.

But, this being so, man having no desire for God's good things, for the promised provision of the coming kingdom, the Lord in power must provide guests, as in grace He has provided the feast; for He cannot sit at it alone. "Some must enter therein." (Heb. 4) It would be no feast without guests—but divine grace will have it to be a feast.

Accordingly, the servant is sent forth again and again to "bring in" and to "compel." Bidding has been found ineffective. There must be compelling, or the house would be empty. And accordingly, the compulsion is used, and then there are guests. But this is the surpassing grace of God. He has found the heart of man utterly indifferent to His goodness, preferring gratified lust to the glories and provisions of His coming kingdom and yet He waits on it. He puts forth, the power of His Spirit to draw man, as He has given His Christ to save and to bless him.

This is the exposure of man, and the revelation of God; and these things are the purpose and object of this parable of "the great supper."

No merely bidden one will ever be found at that table. All must be compelled, brought there and drawn there, or they never would be there.

But, further, if chap. 14 shows us the need of this compelling, of which I have spoken, chap. 15 shows us the mode of it. We see this in the case of the prodigal. We read in the Psalms, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." They are made willing. The hidden energy of the Spirit is used, but it acts in the way of making willing, not of drawing. And this is illustrated in the prodigal.

The prodigal was "compelled to come in." But how? Against his will? No. It was in spite of himself I know; but still, it was not against his will, but by making him willing.

"He came to himself." By the hidden power of the Spirit this was done. He saw his present misery in its just character; he saw it as the fruit and witness of his past ways. This was coming to himself. But this discovery is welcome to him. However, humbling such knowledge may be, he willingly yields to it, and is convicted. And then, he is made willing also to return, in thought and remembrance, to his father and his father's house. And he acts upon all this. He rises and goes to his father, convicted and confessing; but when his father lets him still further learn what a father he was, by falling on his neck and kissing him, he receives it all without an unbelieving word upon his lips. He sits at the table with the robe and the ring upon him, with the fatted calf before him, and the music and the merry-making of the house all around him, and in the spirit of faith he accepts it all—for as he had learned himself for his humbling, he had learned his father for his joy and blessing.

Thus is he made willing; thus is he "compelled" to come in. The energy of the Spirit thus "brings him in," as the parable in chap. 14 speaks. The "great supper," the supper in the father's house, is spread, and spread for him, but he takes his place at it as a returned child, and a most welcome guest.

A Heart for Christ

(Read Matt. 26.)

In this solemn chapter, we have a great many hearts revealed. The heart of the chief priests, the heart of the elders, the heart of the scribes, the heart of Peter, the heart of Judas. But there is one heart in particular unlike all the others, and that is the heart of the woman who brought the alabaster box of very precious ointment, to anoint the body of Jesus. This woman had a heart for Christ. She may have been a very great sinner—a very ignorant sinner, but her eyes had been opened to see a beauty in Jesus which led her to judge that nothing was too costly to be spent on Him. In a word, she had a heart for Christ.

Passing over the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes, let us look for a moment at the heart of this woman in contrast with the heart of Judas and the heart of Peter.

1. Judas was a covetous man. He loved money. A very common love in every age. He had preached the gospel. He had walked in company with the Lord Jesus, during the days of His public ministry. He had heard His words, seen His ways, experienced His kindness. But, alas! though an apostle, though a companion of Jesus, though a preacher of the gospel, he had no heart for Christ. He had a heart for money. His heart was ever moved by the thought of gain. When money was in question, he was all alive. The deepest depths of his being were stirred by money. "The bag" was his nearest and dearest object. Satan knew this. He knew the special lust of Judas. He was fully aware of the price at which he could be bought. He understood his man, how to tempt him, and how to use him. Solemn thought!

Be it observed, also, that the very position of Judas made him all the more fit for Satan. His acquaintance with the ways of Christ made him a fit person to betray Him into the hands of His enemies. Head knowledge of sacred things, if the heart be not touched, renders a man more awfully callous, profane, and wicked. The chief priests and scribes in Matthew ii. had a head knowledge of the letter of Scripture, but no heart for Christ. They could at once hand down the prophetic roll and find the place where it was written, "Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel." (ver. 6.) All this was very well, very true, and very beautiful; but, then, they had no heart for this "Governor"—no eyes to see Him—they did not want Him. They had Scripture at their fingers' ends. They would have felt ashamed, no doubt, had they not been able to answer Herod's question. It would have been a disgrace to men in their position to exhibit ignorance; but they had no heart for Christ, and hence they laid their scriptural knowledge at the feet of an ungodly king, who was about to use it, if he could, for the purpose of slaying the true heir to the throne. So much for head-knowledge without heart-love.

It is not, however, that we would make little of scriptural knowledge. Far from it. The true knowledge of Scripture must lead the heart to Jesus. But there is such a thing as knowing the letter of Scripture so as to be able to repeat chapter after chapter, verse after verse, yea, so as to

be a sort of walking concordance, and, all the while, the heart be cold and callous toward Christ. This knowledge will only throw one more into the hands of Satan, as in the case of the chief priests and scribes. Herod would not have applied to ignorant men for information. The devil never takes up ignorant men, or stupid men, to act against the truth of God. No; he finds fitter agents to do his work. The learned, the intellectual, the deep-thinking, provided only they have no heart for Christ, will answer him well, at all times. What was it saved “the wise men from the east?” Why could not Herod—why could not Satan—enlist them into his service? Oh! reader, mark the reply. They had a heart for Christ. Blessed safeguard! Doubtless, they were ignorant of Scripture—they would have made but a poor hand of searching for a passage in the prophets; but they were looking for Jesus—earnestly, honestly, diligently looking for Jesus. Wherefore, Herod would fain have made use of them if he could; but they were not to be used by him. They found their way to Jesus. They did not know much about the prophet who had spoken of the “Governor;” but they found their way to the “Governor” Himself. They found Him in the Person of the babe in the manger at Bethlehem; and instead of being tools in the hands of Herod, they were worshippers at the feet of Jesus.

Now, it is not that we would commend ignorance of Scripture. By no means. People are sure to err greatly who know not the Scriptures. It was to the praise of Timothy that the apostle could say to him, “From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation;” but, then, he adds, “through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:15.) The true knowledge of Scripture will always conduct us to the feet of Jesus; but mere head-knowledge of Scripture, without heart-love for Christ, will only render us the more effective agents in the hands of Satan.

Thus, in the case of the hard-hearted, money-loving Judas, He had knowledge, without a spark of affection for Christ, and his very familiarity with that blessed One made him a suitable instrument for the devil. His nearness to Jesus enabled him to be a traitor. The devil knew that thirty pieces of silver could purchase his service in the horrible work of betraying his Master.

Reader, think of this! Here was an apostle—a preacher of the gospel—a high professor; yet, underneath the cloak of profession, lay “a heart exercised in covetous practices”—a heart which had a wide place for “thirty pieces of silver,” but not a corner for Jesus. What a case! what a picture! what a warning! Oh! all ye heartless professors, think of Judas! think of his course! think of his character! think of his end! He preached the gospel, but he never knew it, never believed it, never felt it. He had painted sunbeams on canvas, but he had never felt their influence. He had plenty of heart for money, but no heart for Christ. As “the son of perdition” “he hanged himself,” and “went to his own place.” Professing Christians, beware of head-knowledge, lip-profession, official piety, mechanical religion—beware of these things, and seek to have a heart for Christ.

2. In Peter we have another warning, though of a different kind. He really loved Jesus, but he feared the cross. He shrank from confessing His name in the midst of the enemy’s ranks. He boasted of what he would do, when he should have been self-emptied. He was fast asleep when he ought to have been on his knees. Instead of praying he was sleeping; and, then, instead of being still, he was drawing his sword. “He followed Jesus afar off,” and then “warmed himself at the high priest’s fire.” Finally, he cursed and swore that he did not know his gracious Master. All this was terrible! Who could suppose that the Peter of Matt. 16:16, is the Peter of Matt. 26? Yet so it is. Man, in his best estate, is but like a sere autumn leaf. There is none abiding. The highest

position, the loudest profession, may all end in following Jesus afar off, and of basely denying His name.

It is very probable, yea, almost certain, that Peter would have spurned the thought of selling Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and yet he was afraid to confess Him before a servant maid. He might not have betrayed Him to His enemies, but he denied Him before them. He may not have loved money, but he failed to manifest a heart for Christ.

Christian reader, remember Peter's fall, and beware of self-confidence. Cultivate a prayerful spirit. Keep close to Jesus. Keep away from the influence of this world's favor. "Keep thyself pure." Beware of dropping into a sleepy, torpid condition of soul. Be earnest and watchful. Be occupied with Christ. This is the true safeguard. Do not be satisfied with the mere avoidance of open sin. Do not rest in mere blamelessness of conduct and character. Cherish lively warm affections toward Christ. One who "follows Jesus afar off" may deny Him before long. Let us think of this. Let us profit by the case of Peter. He himself afterward tells us to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith." (1 Pet. 5:8, 9.) These are weighty words, coming, as they do, from the Holy Ghost, through the pen of one who had suffered so much from lack of "vigilance."

Blessed be the grace that could say to Peter, before his fall, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Mark, He does not say, "I have prayed for thee that thou mayest not fall." No; but "that thy faith fail not" when thou hast fallen. Precious, matchless grace! This was Peter's resource. He was a debtor to grace, from first to last. As a lost sinner, he was a debtor to "the precious blood of Christ;" and as a stumbling saint, he was a debtor to the all-prevailing advocacy of Christ. Thus it was with Peter. The advocacy of Christ was the basis of his happy restoration. Of this advocacy Judas knew nothing. It is only those who are washed in the blood that partake of the advocacy. Judas knew nothing of either. Hence "he went and hanged himself;" whereas Peter went forth, as a converted or restored soul, to "strengthen his brethren." There is no one so fit to strengthen his brethren as one who has himself experienced the restoring grace of Christ. Peter was able to stand before the congregation of Israel and say, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just," the very thing he had done himself. This shows how entirely his conscience was purged by the blood and his heart restored by the advocacy of Christ.

And now, one word as to the woman with the alabaster box. She stands forth in bright and beauteous contrast with all. While the chief priests, elders, and scribes were plotting against Christ, "in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas," she was anointing His body, "in the house of Simon the leper." While Judas was covenanting with the chief priests to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, she was pouring the precious contents of her alabaster box upon His Person. Touching contrast! She was wholly absorbed with her object, and her object was Christ. Those who knew not His worth and beauty might pronounce her sacrifice a waste. Those who could sell Him for thirty pieces of silver might talk of "giving to the poor;" but she heeded them not. Their surmisings and murmurings were nothing to her. She had found her all in Christ. They might murmur, but she could worship and adore. Jesus was more to her than all the poor in the world. She felt that nothing was "waste" that was spent on Him. He might only be worth thirty pieces of silver to one who had a heart for money. He was worth ten thousand worlds to her, because she had a heart for Christ. Happy woman! May we imitate thee. May we ever find our place at the feet

of Jesus, loving, adoring, admiring, and worshipping His blessed Person. May we spend and be spent in His service, even though heartless professors should deem our service a foolish "waste." The time is rapidly approaching when we shall not repent of anything done for His name's sake; yea, if there could be room for a single regret, it will be that we so faintly and feebly served His cause in the world. If, on "the morning without clouds," a single blush could mantle the cheek, it will be that we did not, when down here, dedicate ourselves more undividedly to His service.

Reader, let us ponder these things. And may the Lord grant us A HEART FOR CHRIST!

From the pen of a dear departed youth, who lately fell asleep in Jesus, in his sixteenth year. The lines were, with many others, found in his pocket book after his death.

Oh! I have been at the brink of the grave,
And stood on the edge of its deep, dark wave;
And I thought in the still, calm hours of night,
Of those regions where all is ever bright:
And I fear'd not the wave
Of the gloomy grave,
For I knew that Jehovah was mighty to save.
And I have watch'd the solemn ebb and flow
Of life's tide which was fleeting sure the' slow;
I've stood on the shore of eternity,
And heard the deep roar of its rushing sea;
Yet I fear'd not the wave
Of the gloomy grave,
For I knew that Jehovah was mighty to save.
And I found that my only rest could be
In the death of the One who died for me;
For my rest is bought with the price of blood,
Which gush'd from the veins of the Son of God.
So I fear not the wave
Of the gloomy grave,
For I knew that Jehovah was mighty to save.
Banks of the Clwyd, May 6th, 1858.

Here and There

“Here we have no continuing city.” Heb. 13:14. “There shall be no night there.” Rev. 22:6.

O this is a dark scene of sorrow;
For though I may smile today,
My tears may flow fast ere tomorrow,
And my smiles may have all passed away
But there is the region of gladness,
Where joys do perennially flow:
There never a feeling of sadness,
The blessed in Jesus shall know.
O this is a dark scene of sorrow:
I may have heart-treasures today,
But they may be gone ere tomorrow—
Loved objects pass quickly away:
But there is the region of pleasure,
No changes or losses it knows;
There, there all is undying treasure;
And holy, eternal repose.
O this is a dark scene of sorrow,
Sweet friendship may greet me today,
But hearts oft estrange ere the morrow,
And sympathy withers away:
But there is the realm of communion,
Unearthly-unbroken-divine;
There Christ is the center of union,
Each breast, Lord, the image of thine!
O this is a dark scene of sorrow;

Though happy in Jesus today,
Temptations may come ere tomorrow,
And I may have wandered astray:
But there is the home of my Saviour,
To sin and temptation 'tis barr'd;
I there shall rejoice in His favor,
And "forever" shall be with the Lord.
I shall soon leave this dark scene of sorrow,
Ah, yes, I might leave it today;
For my Lord may be here ere tomorrow,
And take His poor pilgrim away.
On thee and thy promise relying,
O keep me, dear Saviour, while here,
Till "glory!" with transport, I'm crying,
Uprising to thee in the air.
A. M.

Human Religion or Divine? Which Is It?

A short time since, I was asked to go and see a poor dying woman, who was concerned about her soul, but evidently very ignorant as to the true ground of a sinner's peace with God.

On entering the cottage, I was struck with the neatness and arrangement of everything. Nothing seemed out of its proper place. A young woman showed us up a small narrow staircase to the attic, where the sick one lay. The same air of cleanliness and comfort was visible in the sick chamber as in the room below.

Immediately my eyes rested on the sick woman, I felt convinced she was passing through deep exercise of mind, and that her time here would be very short. There was much that was interesting in her countenance. Her face had assumed that clay-like appearance which takes place after life is gone. Her eyes were large, black and piercing—most expressive of great concern within. Pale death sat on the cheek, while something like the full energy of life sparkled in the eye. Such was the contrast.

On taking her hand and observing that she seemed very weak, she replied, “ Yes, sir; I am very weak; but I am very glad to see you. Miss—has been speaking to me about you.”

“Do you think the Lord will soon remove you to another world?”

“O yes, sir; I cannot long be here.”

“Dying is always a solemn thing, is it not?”

“O yes, very—very!”

“Are you happy in the prospect of appearing before God after death?” “Not always.” “Are you sometimes?” “At times I am.”

“Why are you not always happy?”

“Oh, I am far from being what I ought to be!”

“Is not that changeableness, think you, owing rather to the foundation on which you are resting?”

“I suppose so—I am not sure. I am not sure I am saved.”

“Will you tell me what is the ground of your hope before God?”

Now she seemed to summon up all her strength, and with an air of confidence and self-complacency, she repeated, without faltering, the following lines—

“‘Tis religion that, can give

Sweetest pleasures while we live;

‘Tis religion can supply

Solid comfort when we die.”

“Yes, indeed, dear woman,” I replied, “that is quite true provided your religion be divine; but there is such a thing as human religion, as well as divine.” She was evidently a little troubled at this saying, and looked at me very keenly. “The Pharisees, you know, were very religious, and yet they rejected Christ. Their religion was not divine surely. They despised the very one in whom God delighted.”

“Yes, I know—that is quite true about them: but they were hypocrites.”

“Well, I admit that; but who knew they were hypocrites? Jesus only could take off the mask, and show what they really were. The common people thought them very good. And no doubt many of them were sincere, though blinded. Paul himself was both sincere and zealous when he was a Pharisee, though he hated the very name of Christ. So that a person may be as religious as a Pharisee, and not be saved.”

“Well, then,” she exclaimed, “what is the difference?”

“DIVINE RELIGION, the Bible says, is “pure and undefiled;” so that it must come from heaven. To be religious, then, in God’s sense, is to be like Christ. To be possessed of His life, filled with His Spirit, and walking in His steps. HUMAN RELIGION is attending to the forms of Christianity, without divine life in the soul. Form without power—profession without reality. You know as well as I do, that a person may be very sincere, and attend church or chapel regularly—sing psalms and hymns—hear sermons—say their prayers, and yet have no saving interest in Christ—no divine life in the soul. Human forms, however sincerely attended to, will never meet God’s righteous demands, or wash away our many sins. And these are the things which concern you most, are they not?”

“Oh yes—oh yes. What am I to do?”

“Well, there is one thing I want to ask you—Is the solemn question about sin settled between God and your own conscience?”

“Oh, tell me!” she cried, with the deepest earnestness, “am I saved?—am I saved?”

“If you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are.”

“Oh, I believe; but are my sins washed away?”

‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’ ‘Without shedding of blood there is no remission.’ Can you depend entirely on the blood?

By this time, the poor woman seemed to feel that her former foundation was crumbling beneath her feet, and all her hopes were perishing. She cried most bitterly, “Oh, I am not saved!—I am not fit to die!—What am I to do?”—her head rolling from one end of the pillow to the other, and her large dark eyes gazing on me in the most pitiful manner. It was enough to rend one’s heart. I was silent for a little, and lifted up my heart for direction. I was afraid she would expire. Many thoughts passed through my mind. She became a little calmer. I felt encouraged to say a little more, and quietly repeated some passages of scripture. But she very soon got excited again about her sins. Nearly the whole of our conversation after this was about the value of the blood of Jesus, as

meeting the case of every sinner that believes in Him. She spoke a great deal about her many sins, and asked if the blood of Christ could put all these away. I showed her from the scriptures, that there were many in heaven now, who had been guilty of far greater sins than hers. This she was slow to believe, and still spoke about her sinfulness. Not a word now about “‘Tis religion that can give.”

She had lost all hope in her former religiousness, but did not see how she could be saved by only believing in Jesus. Her sins were her great trouble, and how she was to be pardoned. I assured her that the blood of Jesus was a perfect remedy for all sin—great sins and little sins; and that while it was needed for the very least sin, it was all-sufficient for the greatest. I tried to make this precious truth plain to her in the following way.

“Suppose,” I said, “that you were guilty of every sin that you have known or heard of, and saw them all written against you there, on the wall before your eyes—the sin of swearing, lying, stealing, drinking, and murder: well, suppose you were really guilty of all these, and many more, the blood of Jesus Christ could wash them all away, just as easily as the sin of a little child in saying ‘No’ to her mother. The child that naughtily said ‘No’ to her mother needs the blood of Jesus to put away her sin, as really as the person who is guilty of all these. Not a particle of sin can ever be put away from God’s sight but by the blood of His own Son.”

She was evidently greatly interested in all this—her eyes constantly turning to the wall, as if she saw her sins written there. It seemed reality to her. But she could find no relief. The scene was most touching. I again sought to direct her attention to the blessed Jesus. “The moment you believe in Him,” I said, “and trust in His precious blood, you will be cleansed and saved from all your sins. Do think on what God’s word says, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’ Now, if you believe that word to be true, and place all your trust and confidence in the shed blood of His dear Son, you will not only be pardoned, cleansed, and saved, but you will be quite happy. Your peace will be made with God. The very instant you trust Jesus you are saved. ‘Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.’”

She began to be more calm, but was evidently under deep conviction, and asked a great many questions. After a little prayer, I proposed to leave, when she again began to speak about her sins, and about being saved, and got into such an agony of spirit that she cried, “You must let me know that I am saved—I must be saved;” looking as if she would catch hold of me.

It was difficult to answer her, and most desirable to soothe her. “How sweet,” I said, “are the words of the blessed Jesus to the weary and heavy laden: ‘Come unto me—I will give you rest.’ ‘Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.’ Here, and here alone, the burdened heart finds relief, and the weary soul quiet—eternal rest. Only rest here—lay your weary soul on Jesus—leave it there—and be at rest. He will put your sins far away, but keep you near to Himself. O do! cast all on Him—trust all to Him—confide only in Him. Do venture your all on Him—He will never fail you, nor forsake you. Only trust Him and all shall be well—forever well.”

Seeing her tolerably quiet, I left. But I can never forget the speaking expression of her eye, as I withdrew from her bedside.

Oh! what a solemn lesson to all who are either living carelessly, or trusting to mere empty forms. They will be found worse than useless on a death-bed. Human religiousness and Divine

Christianity are very different things when we come to die. Nothing short of living connection with Christ, and resting on the sure foundation of His finished work, will save a soul. Dear reader, are you on the Rock? Has death no sting for you? Are you ready—waiting for the Lord's coming?

Next day—Wednesday—I sent her some suitable tracts of a large type, but my friend found her no better—still restless, and speaking about the two kinds of religion and the blood of Jesus. On Thursday, when the same kind friend called, she found her even more unhappy, and still talking only of the same things. Friday morning came, and the usual call was made; but, oh, what a change had taken place! The moment she saw her countenance, she felt sure there was a happy change. She looked so calm and peaceful. The fierce eye was softened, and every feature was at rest. When the question was asked, how she felt this morning, she instantly replied. “Quite happy now!”

“I am thankful to hear that. What is it makes you so happy now?”

“RESTING IN THE BLOOD. All that Mr.—said to me about the blood of Jesus came to me during the night—so clear. It is all true—I am happy now—resting in the blood.”

At this moment, she took from under her pillow the tracts I had sent her, and laid them down on a small table at the bedside, signifying by the act, as it was understood, “I am done with these now—I have found Jesus—I am at rest in Him.” She was evidently sinking fast, but all was peace.

On being asked, “Would you like to see Mr.—again?”

“Yes, very much,” she replied; “but tell him I shall soon be with Jesus. I will meet him in heaven.”

She fell asleep the same day about four p.m.

A few days after this, I called to see the young woman already mentioned. I found she was sister to the departed, and had given up her place as a domestic servant to take care of her sister and the children. (The husband, being a laboring man, was out all day.) This accounted for the house being so orderly. Although she was not a Christian, I was desirous to hear what she had to say of her sister, and, at the same time, to speak plainly to herself. One part of our conversation may be profitable to mention, as revealing the fearful ignorance which prevails in the minds of many as to the way of salvation.

“Ever after the Tuesday,” she said, “my sister was more restless, and more difficult to please; but on Thursday she was quite irritable. I was wishing you had never called. I could not lay the pillow aright, or do anything to please her. ‘Dear me,’ I said, ‘what is the matter?’ ‘Oh, if I knew that my sins were pardoned,’ she exclaimed. ‘Well,’ said I to her, ‘if you pray to God, I am sure He will forgive you your sins.’ ‘Are yours forgiven?’ she sharply replied. ‘No; I know mine are not forgiven, because I have never asked.’ ‘Oh, no! that is not the way. Mr.—says we can only be pardoned through faith in the blood of Jesus.’”

Night came on, and it was arranged that the young woman should go to bed, and the husband sit up. He stretched himself on two chairs by his wife's bedside, so that she could wake him if she wanted anything; but to the great surprise of both husband and sister, they were allowed to sleep undisturbed until the morning. The God of all grace had visited her during the lonely hours of midnight with the light, peace, and joy of his salvation.

When they looked at her in the morning, she was lying perfectly quiet, and told them she did not want anything.

She was quite happy. She saw it all now. The Lord had done it by the power of His own blessed Spirit, and to His most gracious name be all the praise, honor, and glory.

“ Of all the gifts thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood.
Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,
From the same love we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
The gift had been in vain.
We praise thee, and would praise thee more,
To thee our all we owe;
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes Him precious too.”

Hymn for Children

There is a narrow path
Which leads to joys untold,
And children who are walking there
Shall Jesus' face behold.
The way of peace it is,
And happiness, to those
Who know the Saviour Jesus Christ,
And in His love repose.
His presence by the way
Makes their poor hearts rejoice;
And much they long for that bright morn
When they shall hear His voice.
With patient hope they wait
His blessed face to see,
When they will sing, in sweetest songs,
His praise who set them free.
This joy may all be yours,
If you by faith now look
Upon the bleeding Lamb of God,
Who our transgressions took.

I Was on the Wrong Track

The person from whose lips I heard the above words, was a worn-out old man of above seventy years.

Disease was making rapid inroads on his frame, each day found him growing weaker and weaker, so that evidently, he had not long to live. He had been a quiet, inoffensive man, whose character had been remarkably good for sobriety, steadiness, and industry; but I soon discovered that however much he had been noted for these qualities in his life-time, they could not satisfy his conscience, or afford him true peace when he came to die.

I found him in bed, in a sick and helpless condition, and the conversation that then took place was somewhat to the following effect:—"Well, S—," I said, "I see that you are exceedingly ill and worn out, but what about your soul? Are you certain that all is right for the future? Have you peace with God?"

He replied in two words—"I'm busy."

"Busy," I repeated, "at what, or about what? You are praying, I suppose, to get your sins taken away, and to have your soul saved?"

He assented.

"Ah! S—," I said, "you are making a sad mistake—one which hundreds have fallen into. You are putting prayer in the place of Christ. You are looking to, and leaning on, your prayers, instead of the blood of the Lord Jesus. Now, this is not God's way, and He ought to know a great deal better than you or anyone else. His plan for saving lost and ruined sinners is very different from the plan you are adopting. It is by Christ that a sinner is saved, and not by prayers or by works. The Lord Jesus Himself finished salvation on the cross. By his death and resurrection, He has accomplished all that was needed to save the very vilest of the vile. God loved sinners, but He could not endure their sins. Indeed, He so loved them, as to send His only-begotten Son, who, by the shedding of His own blood, perfectly put sin away, so that now the God of all grace shows to you a full salvation for your soul in the blood of Jesus, and proclaims free mercy to you, not through your earnest prayers, but in the name of Jesus. If you prayed with the greatest earnestness for a life-time, you could not wash away your sins, nor have settled peace. Oh, no! peace has been made by the blood, and peace, perfect peace, of conscience comes to us through faith in the blood. You do not gain this by your prayers or tears, your strivings or sincere efforts. Christ has done the whole work. He did it alone, but He did it for us; and now He is exalted at God's right hand as a Prince and a Saviour. His precious blood cleanses from all sin, and furnishes the sinner with a sure resting-place, so sure that, although the earth should crumble to pieces, and the heavens above dissolve, all is well with the soul that trusts in the blood of the Lamb. Remember, God does not say, that you shall be forgiven through your prayers, but He shows you a full and eternal forgiveness for all who believe in Jesus. Now, S—, that is God's way. Do you see it?"

The old man raised his head slightly from his pillow and faintly exclaimed, " Oh, I see it now! I was on the wrong track! I was in error."

"And do you," I asked, "understand how that peace has been made by the blood, and can you get rest there?"

"Yes," he replied again, and "I was on the wrong track."

A few days afterward, I called to see him again. His strength was almost gone, his voice greatly affected, and his outward man completely prostrated by illness; but his mind was now quite composed. His own expression was a very simple but intelligent one: "I have rest now in the blood of the Lamb." On being asked if the thought of the sins of a life-time did not disturb his soul, he answered, "I have no fear now, I can trust the Lord Jesus." It was remarked that the blood was the true foundation of the believer's peace and never could fail. He assented to this, and added, "Oh! I was in error; but now I have seen my error. I, many a time, thought that I had something to do, and that it was hard to be certain, but now I see that Christ has done all."

His sole dependence and confidence were now placed in the blood of the Lamb. There was no doubt, no hesitation, no misgiving. He had got away forever from the darkness of his own reasoning's into the light of divine truth, where a risen Christ is the grand object for the soul. I saw him several times afterward; but in a few days he fell asleep in Jesus, bearing unequivocal testimony to the value of the blood of Christ in cleansing him from all sin.

May many souls, through the blessing of God, be eternally profited by this interesting case of conversion.

I'm Going Home

I am a stranger here,
No home, no rest, I see;
Not all earth counts most dear
Should wring a sigh from me:
I'm going home!
Jesus, thy home is mine!
And I, thy Father's child,
With hopes and joys divine;
This world's a weary wild:
I'm going home!
Home! oh, how soft and sweet,
It thrills upon the heart;
Home! where the children meet,
And never, never part:
I'm going home!
Home! where the Bridegroom takes
The purchase of His love:
Home! where the Father waits
To welcome her above:
I'm going home!
And when the world looks cold,
Which did my Lord revile,
(A lamb within the fold,)
I can look up and smile:
I'm going home!
When its delusive charms

Would snare my pilgrim feet,
I'll fly to Jesus' arms,
And yet again repeat,
I'm going home!
And as the desert wide,
The wilderness I see,
Lord Jesus, I confide
My trembling heart to thee:
I'm going home!
While severing every tie
That holds me from the goal,
This, this can satisfy
The craving of the soul:
I'm going home!
Ah, gently, gently lead
Along the painful way;
Bid every word and deed,
And every look to say,
I'm going home!

Jesus Our Prophet, Priest and King

In Luke 10:39, Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word, owning Him as her Prophet—the one who had come from the Father's bosom to reveal the Father.

In John 11:32, 33, Mary, in her sorrow, falls at Jesus' feet and weeps, and He weeps with her. Here she owns Him as her High Priest, and found He was one who could be touched with a feeling of her infirmities, and comes boldly to Him, who was full of grace and truth, for the grace and help she needed.

In John 12:3, Mary anoints His feet, "and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." Sweet and diffused as its fragrance was, it was not so sweet as her faith was to the heart of her Lord. So precious was it in His esteem, that He declared its fragrance should be known wherever His gospel came.

Matt. 26:12, 13, "She did it for my burial." Her faith understood what even the disciples could not understand. She saw Him slain, as the lamb, for the sins of the people; and looking (I believe) beyond His death and burial to His resurrection, (in v. 7) she anoints Him as king in Zion, the character in which we find Him immediately after entering Jerusalem, exhibiting in weakness what He will hereafter accomplish in resurrection-power and glory.

May our faith recognize our earth-rejected and despised Lord in all these His precious offices: sitting at His feet to learn; weeping at His feet, in the assurance of His sympathy in all our sorrow; and looking forward with joy to that time when He shall be manifested as King of kings, and Lord of lords; and we shall reign with Him in glory.

The Lamp and the Girdle

Notes of a Lecture on the First Epistle of Peter.

In this epistle we get the sorrows of the saints detailed, and the consolation provided for each character of sorrow. We may call it the epistle of the lamp and the girdle—light and strength. The more sorrow, the brighter is hope; sorrow is the parent of hope. If in a path of sorrow, we are prisoners of hope. What has a prisoner to do but to hope when the dungeon alone surrounds him, and chains keep him fast? He is shut up to hope. And this I believe is the condition and calling of the saints down here.

The wilderness lay between Egypt and Canaan. There was no green meadow. Judgment was behind, glory before them—the land of death behind, the place of rest before.

This epistle takes up the wilderness character. It takes up present sorrows, but abounds in hope.

We like to go on too often in easy and smooth circumstances, our lusts and desires gratified, but God cannot go on with you in this path. How much better to have God with you though in the path of sorrow.

In this epistle we do not get the sorrow of penitence and confession of sin, though this humbling of ourselves, this sorrow for sin, is blessed indeed, when our conscience has got defiled; but here we get sorrows connected with our walk with God, and the needed strength and comfort for each one.

In Chapter 1:6 is the first character of affliction—the trial of faith. This belongs to you because you have the faith of God's elect. Faith must be put to trial; it is, as it were, a heavenly stranger in an earthly world; it cannot escape affliction when faith is put to the trial. What is the comfort? "It shall be found," &c. If our hearts were set on God's object, would not that be comfort? The trial would re-appear in that day in a new character altogether. Are saints now looked down upon? reproached? despised? Wait a little. All this will pass through a beautiful transfiguration. There is a transfiguration for our circumstances and sorrows, as well as for our vile bodies; they shall be changed. Be assured all we want is a heart for Christ—to value what we have in Him. All is provided—the comfort, the strength. We can never want Christ to do more for us than He has done. If I had the heart for Christ, I should welcome each trial of faith. Again I say, if we had a heart for Christ, we should welcome poverty, shame, reproach, dishonor.

In Chapter 2:18 the character of sorrow is more ordinary. It is in common with the world. It comes not from the saint's faith, as in chap. 1. My ungodly neighbor may suffer the same, and we think there is no comfort in it, because of this. If Job had argued so, he would have lost all the consolation. He might have thought the same wind and lightning might have caused the same disaster to his neighbor; but to my own soul, the beauty of the history of Job is its being the ordinary wear and tear of everyday life. The very commonness of the trial raises it if we take it up as saints. Job's circumstances were not touched till all had passed under the view of his heavenly Father. What consolation this gives in ordinary trials. The very relationship of life causes us trial,

but we see patience under these sorrows is acceptable with God. (1 Thess. 4:1.) Oh! beloved, is there any richer consolation than this, to know that I, a poor feeble saint, walking amid the circumstances and relationships of life, can be acceptable to God?

Oh! we want hearts for God, for these things, beloved! It is not the moralist who can talk of the dignity of our nature, and of exercising patience, but it is the loving child that can please his Father.

In Chapter 13:13 we get sorrow which comes from our maintaining a walk, in righteousness in the midst of evil. This often costs a good deal. What are we to do? Refuse temptation at all hazards, and maintain a walk of integrity before God. Where is your comfort amid such circumstances? When doing this you are entitled to sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Oh! beloved, is there nothing in this? To have Him occupying our hearts—to be able to retire into His presence with confidence? If you look up, you have an approving countenance meeting you; to have Him unfolding the secrets of His love. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.” Ah! how well we know what it is to humble ourselves in His presence—to confess our failure in dust and ashes—to cry, “unclean, unclean;” needful work at times, but miserable work. I can never sanctify the Lord in my heart if I have not a good conscience. How blessed to have our heart His sanctuary, where He dwells! Here, then, we get sufferings connected with righteousness.

In Chapter 4:11, they are connected with holiness; the one an outward thing, the other an inward. Ah! what inward conflicts I have the moment I have life. All that is of nature is against me. I carry a nature which is sensitive to the least touch of defilement. We must count upon conflicts between flesh and spirit. “Arm yourselves with the same mind.” Here it is living to the will of God. The nature I get in Christ is in collision with all that is of the flesh. The child of God is taken out of the morals of the world; he is not called to walk merely as a moral man, but according to the thoughts of the Holy Ghost. He is separated unto God. Everything of Christ is peculiar. I love such mysterious truth, I love peculiar morality, it has the stamp that it belongs to God.

In Chapter 4:12 we get martyr-sorrows. Do you take the place with a rejected Jesus, or with the proud world? If there is a single thing that is blessed, it is to take our place with a rejected Jesus. The glory is set before us here for our comfort. The glory is not yet seen; while Stephen was being stoned he saw the glory of God.

All we want is a heart for all these things; a heart to value what we have in Christ. You may have sorrows here, but do you ever transfigure them? Then the first shall be last, and the last first. We want power to walk with God in the midst of these sorrows. To remember the Church is in the wilderness, the pillar and ark are with you, and rest is before you.

This lamp, through all the tedious night

Of life, shall guide our way:

Till we behold the clearer light

Of an eternal day.

The Life Boat

A FEW days since, I was sailing on the Frith of Clyde, when I witnessed a scene which I shall never forget, it brought so many precious truths of the gospel, in fresh power, before my mind, that I feel led to write a brief account of it for the benefit of others.

Our steamer came in collision with a small fishing boat, and knocked in the side of it, so that it began to fill rapidly. There were two fishermen on board the small boat. One of these was an old man, whose hat was thrown into the water by the shock. His gray locks floated in the wind, he stretched out his hands towards the steamer, and cried, in piteous accents, for help; while his companion endeavored, with all his might, to bale out the water which was fast sinking their little boat. It was truly a solemn scene. Two immortal souls trembled on the very brink of eternity. Not a moment was to be lost. Quick as thought, the sailors on board the steamer lowered the life boat, and rowed rapidly towards the drowning men, while all on deck looked on with breathless interest. Never have I beheld aught so solemn or so interesting. Each second seemed like an hour, while the sailors were making their way to the sinking boat. Through mercy, they reached it just as it was about to go down, and took the two poor fishermen on board.

Oh! thought I, what a figure of Christ is that life boat! The God of all grace beheld poor sinners about to sink, not beneath the waters of the Frith of Clyde, but beneath the eternal surges of the lake of fire. There they were, vainly struggling and toiling in the broken boat of their own righteousness. The waters of death were rapidly rising around them, and nothing that they could do was of any value whatever. Death and judgment stared them in the face, 'What was to be done?' Redeeming love let down from the throne of God a perfect life boat, in order that perishing sinners might be saved. That life boat is Jesus, who, in the energy of divine love, made His way down from the bosom of God into the very midst of man's ruin—took the sinner's place on the cross—bore the sinner's curse—died the sinner's death—paid the sinner's ransom—secured the sinner's salvation; so that all who believe in His name might be eternally saved.

But let us look at one or two of the leading points in the touching scene of the life boat.

1. The sailors let down the life boat and rowed towards the drowning men, just because they were drowning. Had they not been in that condition there would have been no need. None but drowning men need a life boat. They alone know the need of such. The very thing that drew the sailors to them was their perishing condition. The fishermen did not say, "Oh! we are too far gone; our boat is too much broken; we are not fit to get into the life boat; we must wait until we mend our boat and then we shall have a right to get in; no one could think of being saved so easily as that; we must bale out a little more water; we must do what we can to help ourselves, and then, it may be, you sailors will back us." They never thought of reasoning thus. The case was quite simple. A life boat is for drowning men, and drowning men are for a life boat. To wait to be aught but a drowning man, would be to wait to be unfit for a life boat.

Thus it was with the fishermen, and thus it is with us. A Saviour is for the lost, and the lost are for a Saviour. They are fitted for each other. If I am not lost—totally, hopelessly lost, I do not want a Saviour. It is my lost state that makes me fit for Christ; and the more I feel it, the more I shall value Him. The nearer the fishermen were to drowning, the more they valued the life boat. They did not reason about the matter. Men never reason when eternity with all its dread realities stares them in the face. It was simply a question of life or death, of going to the bottom in a broken boat, or going to shore in a life boat.

Thus it was with the poor fishermen, and thus it is with us. There is no use arguing or reasoning. We are lost—ruined—guilty—undone. We have not to wait to know that we are lost; we are lost already, and Christ has died to save us. There is full salvation in Him for the lost, the ruined, the guilty, the undone. To wait to be anything else, is to put ourselves without the range of Christ's mission; for "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10.)

2. It was not the efforts or the cries or the entreaties of the drowning men that saved them, or that formed any part of their salvation. It was the life boat that saved them and nothing else. Their efforts, cries, and entreaties only proved that they were drowning; they neither saved, or helped to save them. Their effort to bale out the water proved that their boat was broken. No such effort was needed in the life boat. When they found their place in the latter, they glided calmly and thankfully over the very billows which, just before, threatened to swallow them up.

Thus it was with the fishermen, and thus it is with us. Our boat is broken. It cannot keep out the waters of death and judgment. We may struggle, cry, pray, labor; but all the while we are in a broken, sinking boat. Our condition is bad, and we cannot make it better. We must get into the life boat. Christ has wrought out a full, perfect, and everlasting salvation for lost sinners, and God "commandeth all men, everywhere" to rest in that—"to change their mind," and find their ALL in Christ now, henceforth, and forever. (Acts 13:26-39; 17:30, 31.)

3. When the fishermen got into the life boat they knew they were in it. They were not hoping, or desiring, or praying, to be in it. They knew they were in it, and they rejoiced to be in it. They felt sure they had passed from a broken boat into a sound one. Hence, had any one asked them if they were at rest, as to their condition, they could at once have said, "yes." They would not have said, "we fear we do not value the life boat as we ought, or feel as grateful to our deliverers as we ought, and we are afraid we are not just what we should be." All this might be true. Their feelings might be defective. They might be very far short of what they ought to be; but their feelings had nothing whatever to do with their salvation. They were not saved by their feelings, hut by the life boat. True, they had confidence in the life boat, else they would not have got into it. It had been brought so very near to them that they could say, "we have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" it. Moreover, they had "the record" of those already on board, to assure them of the reality of the salvation of all who would put their trust in the life boat.

Thus it was with the fishermen, and thus it is with us. Our feelings have nothing to do with the ground of our salvation and peace. CHRIST HAS DONE ALL. He has finished the work. He has put away sin by His precious blood. He has satisfied God's claims with respect to sin, and manifested His perfect love to the sinner. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," in the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone who believes this precious record is "justified from all things"—he has peace with God—he stands in

grace—and he hopes for glory. (Rom. 5:1, 2.) He sees that all that was against him has been fully met by Christ; that the death and judgment which threatened him have been borne by Christ in his stead, and that nothing remains for him but to enjoy cloudless favor, now, and look for cloudless glory, hereafter.

Reader, I cannot close this paper without making a solemn, pointed, yet affectionate appeal to your heart and conscience, in the presence of God. Let me ask you, then, how is it with your precious soul, at this moment? Are you in the life boat, or are you not? Which? Oh! which? Be honest with yourself. Remember there is no such thing as being half in and half out. You are wholly in or wholly out. If you are in Christ, you are as safe as He is; but if there is the thickness of a gold leaf separating you from Him, you have no life in you. If you ask, 'What is the meaning of being in Christ?' the answer is very simple. What was the meaning of being in the life boat? Cease from your own doings, and rest in what Christ has done. Believe what God says, because He says it. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31.) Christ is the true life boat which can carry the believer safely over the stormy billows of time, and land him in the haven of eternal rest and glory.

God grant my beloved reader may, now, rejoice in that perfect life boat!

Life Through Death: Part 1

It is deeply interesting to note the place which “death,” or the “shedding of blood,” occupies, in the Word of God. It forms the only foundation of man’s approach to, his standing before, or his relationship with, God. It is the only means whereby sin can be put away—the only ground on which divine life and divine righteousness can be imparted. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. 9:22.) This is a truth which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments do most clearly and fully unfold and establish.

No sooner had “sin” made its appearance—no sooner had its dark shadow settled down upon this lower world—than this great truth began to break through the twilight; and, as we turn over page after page of the sacred volume, as the dispensations of God unfold themselves to our view, it gathers clearness and fullness, until, at length, it shines out, in unclouded effulgence, in connection with the Lamb slain “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” to be the channel of peace and pardon, life and righteousness, to all who should, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, believe in His name.

Thus, in the third chapter of Genesis, when “the Lord God” made His appearance, amid the mighty ruin which “the one disobedience” had wrought in His fair creation, we hear Him making mention of “the seed of the woman” as the one who was to bruise the serpent’s head. But how was this to be accomplished? “Thou shalt bruise his heel.” This word “bruise” contains it in the germ of THE GLORIOUS DOCTRINE OF THE BLOOD. The serpent who had introduced the mischief was yet to have his head bruised by the seed of the woman; but, ere that could be accomplished, “the seed” should Himself be “bruised.”

Now, some may say, “this was a very shadowy representation of the doctrine of the blood.” Granted; but, though shadowy, it was real. It was just such a representation as suited the moment in which it was given. Life must be introduced by death. The mighty Bruiser must Himself be bruised. Such was the truth contained in the earliest accents which fell from the lips of the Lord God, in the midst of a scene of ruin, and in the audience of ruined and guilty sinners. Adam heard all this. He saw there was a controversy between “the Lord God” and “the serpent.” He learned that this controversy was to be brought to an issue—a victorious issue by “the seed of the woman.” He was taught that he should be a debtor to another for deliverance, for alas! how could he—himself the serpent’s slave—ever be the bruiser of the serpent’s head? No; this was to be the solitary work of another, and that other was to achieve the victory by having His heel bruised, that is to say, by death.

But, does this fact in the least interfere with the value of the life of “the seed of the woman?” Assuredly not. Who could attempt to reckon up in order all the rich and rare results of that life? God was to be glorified—the mind of Heaven to be refreshed—the human heart perfectly tested—Satan foiled—all by the exhibition of a perfect life here below. Moreover, God’s redeemed were to be furnished with an example as to how they ought to walk. These things will come before us, if God permit, in the progress of this paper, I merely refer to them here, in order that the reader

may not, by any means, lose the sense of the infinite preciousness of the life of “the man Christ Jesus.” “The seed of the woman” should live to die—He should have a heel to be bruised ere the serpent could bruise it—incarnation forms the base of “the great mystery of godliness.” This is a well-known truth, the value of which is beyond all conception.

Yet, notwithstanding the infinite value of incarnation, it could have been of no avail, either for Satan’s eternal defeat, or man’s eternal salvation, save on the ground of accomplished death. It was “the seed of the woman” who was to bruise the serpent’s head; but, how was He to do so? By having His heel bruised. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that THROUGH DEATH He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Heb. 2:14, 15.

But, ere we retire, in company with our first parents, from the garden of Eden, we must glean some further evidence of the truth that all our blessings, our privileges, and our dignities—all that God could bestow upon us, as fallen and ruined sinners, must depend upon death. “Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Gen. 3:21.) In the faith of these utterances which had just fallen upon Adam’s ear, he called his wife’s name, “the mother of all living.” He believed that he was, in some way or other, to get life through death. But, in “the coats of skins” we have something more than life. If the seed of the woman should be bruised to give life, the blood of the animals should be shed to furnish clothing. In other words, life and righteousness are both founded upon death. The very first words which the Lord God uttered in the sinner’s ear, the very first act which He performed in the sinner’s view, shadowed forth this foundation truth of the gospel, that life and righteousness are both founded upon death—that “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

This truth was set forth in the garden of Eden. It broke through the clouds which gathered thickly over the heads of our first parents. They were taught that their need could only be met by death. They had yielded to the serpent’s power, and that power could only be broken by death. They were naked in consequence, and that nakedness could only be divinely clothed through death. They had tried a covering which was not founded on death, but it had proved worthless and vain. A covering not flowing out of blood-shedding must leave the sinner naked. The cattle upon a thousand hills, all the living animals in creation, could not have yielded a coat for a naked sinner. A poured-out life was absolutely essential. Without it, man could neither have life nor righteousness. Through it, he has both the one and the other.

Such, then, my reader, is the striking testimony yielded to the doctrine of the blood, in the garden of Eden. The bruised heel, and the coats of skin, do both alike announce, in the sinner’s ear, the glorious truth that his title to full deliverance from the enemy’s power, and from all the consequences of guilt, is found in blood, and in blood alone. By it he has all: without it nothing. The bruised heel and the coats of skin enabled Adam and Eve to retreat from the precincts of Eden, with a degree and a character of happiness and security which they had never known in the midst of all its fruits and flowers. An unfallen creation could never have told out in a sinner’s ear, the deep mystery of a bruised heel. Nor could it ever have unfolded in his view aught so profoundly interesting—so deeply touching—as the Lord God stooping to provide, by blood-shedding, a covering for a naked sinner. Ah! no; it was in the midst of a ruined creation, and by ruined sinners,

that such wondrous things were seen and heard. The serpent had introduced death, and by death he must be destroyed. His own sword must slay him. "His violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." By death we have a deathless life—a deathless righteousness—a deathless hope—a deathless inheritance.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Life Through Death: Part 2

The history of Cain and Abel now opens before us, and furnishes yet clearer proof of the truth that life and righteousness both rest on one foundation, and that foundation is accomplished death. This is true in whatever way we look at the subject. From the moment that “sin entered into the world, and death by sin,” there was no other mode in which sin could be put away, but by death; no other way in which death could be abolished, but by death; no other way in which Satan could be vanquished, but by death; no other way in which man could be delivered, but by death; and no other way in which all God’s claims could be perfectly met, but by death. But in the death of the cross all these things were divinely accomplished; and we may lawfully inquire if God’s claims are perfectly met—man perfectly delivered—Satan perfectly vanquished—death perfectly abolished—sin perfectly put away—what more is needed? Is not the ground perfectly cleared, by the blood of the Lamb, for the erection of that glorious superstructure of grace, of which the foundation is laid in righteousness, and the top-stone shall be put on in glory? Is not the way laid open for God to impute righteousness to everyone that believeth? Is it not by death that perfect atonement is made? Would anything less do? Is anything more needed? Should anything else be mingled? To these inquiries there can be but one reply. But let us proceed to our Scripture proofs.

“And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.” (Gen. 4:3 - 5.) Now, it must be evident to the reader that, so far as the birth, nature, and moral condition of these two men were concerned, there was not so much as a hair’s breadth of difference. They were both born outside of Eden. They were both the sons of fallen Adam. They both inherited a fallen nature from their fallen parents. They were “born in sin and shapen in iniquity.” Hence, therefore, it was not because Abel was a better man than Cain that his sacrifice was accepted. Nor was it because Cain was a worse man than Abel that his sacrifice was rejected. The difference was not at all in the men; but altogether in their sacrifices.

And what was the difference in their sacrifices? The self-same difference, as we have already observed, between Adam’s apron and God’s coat. The former was not founded upon blood; the latter was. The former was a human device; the latter, a divine provision. The former left the sinner “naked,” and therefore “afraid;” the latter left him “clothed,” and therefore “confident.” Thus it was also in reference to the sacrifices of Cain and Abel. There is a kind of moral link between Adam’s apron and Cain’s offering; and there is also a moral link between God’s coat and Abel’s sacrifice. The former exhibits the path along which blind, fallen humanity is sure to rush in every age and in every clime: the latter unfolds to us that holy path along which the lamp of revelation shines, and in which the footprints of faith are always discernible.

But how, it may be asked, did Abel catch the beams of revelation’s heavenly lamp—the lamp of eternal truth? The answer is plain. Did not the Lord God, from His own lips, preach the gospel in the sinner’s ear, when He declared that the “seed of the woman” should bruise the serpent’s

head? And did He not unfold the gospel in the sinner's view when, from off dead victims, He drew, with His own hand, the material with which to form a covering for naked sinners? Truly so; and here it was that Abel's faith might well find its warrant. God taught him that grand truth that a fallen, ruined, guilty sinner can only reach the divine presence BY BLOOD. The richest and rarest fruits that ever grew in Paradise—the most fragrant flowers that ever bloomed in Eden's bowers—the costliest productions of earth's surface—all the wealth of the universe, could not avail to blot one speck of guilt from the conscience. Why? A bloodless sacrifice is but a worthless vanity. Where no blood is, there is no atonement, no life, no pardon, no peace, no righteousness, no heaven, no glory. Where there is blood—the blood of Jesus, and faith in that blood—you have all these present and eternal realities.

This foundation truth was rejected by Cain. He did not believe that a sacrificed life was necessary to enable him to draw nigh to God. He did not believe that life could only be had through death—that “the fruit of the ground” could never form the basis of righteousness, in the presence of God. He brought a bloodless offering, and therefore his sin remained, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” He might have labored and toiled to procure “the fruit.”—“His offering” might have cost him the sweat of his brow; but all was of no avail. Neither the sweat of his brow nor the labor of his hands could purge his conscience, nor avert the sentence which was connected with “the one disobedience,” namely, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Nothing but the blood of a spotless victim could remove from the sinner's horizon the dark and heavy clouds of “death and judgment.”

All this was a matter of simple faith with Abel. It was not that he was a whit better than Cain, who really had the pre-eminence by birth. The reader cannot be too clear or simple in his apprehension of this point. If he would have a just sense of divine grace, of the efficacy of the blood, and the value of faith, he will need to see that as to Cain and Abel, looked at from God's point of view, “there was no difference.” The difference lay not in the men, but in their sacrifices; and the difference in their sacrifices lay not in the matter of costliness or labor. No; the difference—the sole difference—the vital difference—lay in this all-important fact, that Abel offered blood, and Cain did not. Abel found his refuge in a sacrificed life, Cain depended upon the labor of his hands. “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.” (Heb. 11:4.)

Let it be particularly noticed here, that Abel “obtained” a great deal more than the mere pardon of his sins, by blood shedding. “He obtained witness that HE WAS RIGHTEOUS.” From whom? From the only one who could give it. “God testified.” Of what? His works? his sincerity? his feelings? or even his faith? No; but “of his gifts.” And what was there in his gifts to win the title of “a more excellent sacrifice?” The answer is, BLOOD! Abel obtained not merely pardon, but righteousness, by blood. He was not merely delivered from Satan, but brought to God, by blood. He not merely escaped hell, but reached heaven, by blood. He was not told that his sins could be blotted out by blood, but that he must get righteousness by something else. Abel knew no such doctrine as this. He caught the very earliest ray of that lamp which “mercy took down from off the throne of God,” and thereby he learned that precious, eternal, divine, all-glorious doctrine, that a guilty sinner, who in himself deserves only death and judgment, can get life and righteousness “through faith in the blood.”

And observe, further, it is not said merely that Abel knew himself to be righteous, though surely he did know it “by faith.” It was not the mere testimony of his own conscience, nor of his feelings, nor of his fellow, nor of angels. He had God’s testimony to the fact that he was righteous, “through faith in the blood.” Now we know that God could not set His seal to anything which is not perfect and, therefore, when God testified that Abel was “righteous.” it is obvious he needed nothing more. He was not only a saved, living, pardoned man, delivered from hell; but a righteous, accepted man, fit for heaven; and all “through faith in the blood.”

And now one word as to the evidence of the truth of our thesis, to be gleaned from the times of Noah, we shall just take one passage. “And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor.” (Gen. 8:20, 21.) Here the same truth shines before us. The new world was to stand, as it were, on the foundation of the blood. Nothing else would do. Nothing more was needed. Nothing else was mingled. All the orders of creation might issue from the door of the ark, in health and vigor; but before ever a sweet savor could ascend from earth to heaven—before ever the odor of acceptable worship could go up to the throne of God, an altar was erected, and blood was shed, and this shed blood formed not only the base of Noah’s worship, but of God’s covenant with all creation.

Reader, pause, here, and ask yourself this question, “What has the precious blood of Christ done for me?” Say, has it cleansed your conscience from all guilt, and told out to you all the deep secrets of a Father’s love? See and make this a personal question. See that you are now resting in the blood. If conscience has cast its eye over the entire page of your history and seen it stained with SIN! SIN! SIN! then let faith look down into the eternal bosom of God, and listen to the accents which issue thence. What are they? LOVE! LOVE! LOVE! BLOOD! BLOOD! BLOOD!

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Life Through Death: Part 3

(Part 3.)

The next proof to which I shall call my reader's attention is furnished by the well-known institution of the Passover. This type has been already referred to, in the pages of "Things New and Old;" but that need not, by any means, prevent our making use of it, in connection with our present subject.

Let us turn, then, at once, to Exod. 12 Here we find, in terms as plain as plain can be, "SALVATION BY BLOOD." Not, be it remembered, salvation by blood and something else; but salvation by BLOOD ALONE. I desire to use great plainness of speech; believing, as I do, that these lines will be read by thousands of plain people. I would ask the very plainest reader, What was it that sheltered the Israelite from the sword of the destroyer?

He will, I doubt not, answer me in the very words of Jehovah Himself, who said to Israel, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

"True, the lamb was to be "without blemish, a male of the first year:" for what else could have suited? What else could have met Jehovah's claims?" Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month." (v. 5, 6.) All this was divinely true. A spotless lamb was needed -a lamb "taken out" and "kept up." Naught save a spotless victim could ever suit the altar of the God of Israel; but ten thousand unblemished lambs—"males of the first year"—"taken out" and "kept up" forever, would not have warded off the stroke of justice, or turned aside the keen edge of the sword of the destroyer. No; the blood had to be shed. "The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (ver. 6.) The sentence of death should be executed, either on the Israelite, or on a substitute. Death is the sinner's due. Death has passed upon all because of sin; and it is morally impossible that aught but death can save a sinner from a sinner's doom. If grace has found a substitute—one to stand in the sinner's place, then it follows that he must, in order to deliver the sinner, submit to what was really due to him.

Thus it was, in Israel's case, on that memorable night in which the destroying angel passed, with his drawn sword, through the land of Egypt. Had he seen a living lamb, ever so unblemished, standing outside the Israelite's door, what would have been the result? Death to the firstborn within! But, it may be asked, why would he not execute the sentence upon the living lamb? The answer is plain enough, and let my reader mark it. It was only a slain lamb that could save a sinner. It was the blood of the lamb applied, by faith, to the lintel, and not a living lamb, at the door, that saved Israel. "When I see the blood, I will pass over." The blood told the tale that death had already done its work, in reference to all within the bloodstained lintel.

Here, then, we have a lovely type of salvation by blood. The blood was amply sufficient for Israel's salvation. Nothing less would do. Nothing more was needed. Nothing else was mingled. The blood stood alone. It was Israel's sole and all-sufficient title to salvation. "Through faith he kept the Passover and the SPRINKLING OF BLOOD, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch

them.” (Heb. 11:28.) Nothing could be plainer than this. That the paschal lamb was a type of Christ, the most cautious reader will admit. “Christ our Passover is sacrificed (or slain, see margin) for us.” (1 Cor. 5:7.) This settles the question. The death of the paschal lamb was a figure of the death of Christ; and what the death of the former did for Israel, the death of the latter does for all who put their trust in it. The death of the lamb gave perfect peace to Israel; the death of Christ gives perfect peace to the believer. Nothing more than the death of the lamb was needed to secure Israel; nothing more than the death of Christ is needed to secure the believer. An unslain lamb could not have availed the Israelite; an unslain Christ could not avail the sinner.

True, it is in resurrection that the value of Christ is set forth; but it is His death that saves us. The blood that saved Israel flowed from a slain lamb; and the blood that saves us flowed from a crucified Christ.

Does this, in any wise, detract from the value of the pure and spotless life of Christ? By no means. Pure and spotless He was, blessed forever be His peerless name! He was the Holy One of God. His whole life was a fragrant odor ascending to the throne of God. His perfect path might well have been the admiration of angels, as it is the model for saints. He ever moved in a line of implicit obedience to the Father's will; He was, in all things, the living expression of the Father's heart; and He walked in the unclouded sunshine of the Father's countenance, from the manger to the cursed tree. The Holy Ghost delights to dwell on this; and so will all who are taught of Him.

But, then, His spotless, holy, obedient life could not blot out our sins, or justify God in justifying us. My reader cannot be too clear as to this. Let him drink in the precious instruction furnished by the Paschal Lamb. We must not anticipate the teaching of the New Testament, which will, if God permit, come before us, in due time. But I would ask him to dwell upon the institution of the Passover. Let him see that it was, in very deed, the death and not the life of the lamb that saved Israel; and not merely saved them from the sword of the destroyer, but put them in a position in the which they were privileged to enjoy the fruits of salvation.

If an Israelite had been asked what it was that saved him from the destroyer, what would have been his reply? A very brief one, we may be sure. He would have replied in a word of five letters, namely, BLOOD! He would have quoted Jehovah's words, in proof, “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” He knew nothing about salvation by the blood and something else. No; no, my reader, the Israelite could have taught us a very simple lesson. The blood was everything to him, as a ground of salvation and peace. And, surely, it should be everything to us likewise. If he was not taught to mingle anything else with the blood, neither should we. If the blood of a lamb was sufficient to save an Israelite from the hand of death, surely the blood of the Eternal Son of God is sufficient to save us from all the consequences of our sins - from the wrath of God and from eternal judgment. It is justly due to the blood of such a sacrifice that all who put their trust therein should be safe under its shadow forever.

There are two ways of casting dishonor upon the blood of Jesus; first, by supposing that it only goes half way in procuring salvation; and, secondly, by supposing that it is, only a half salvation which it procures. The ordinance of the Passover contradicts both these suppositions—contradicts them, in the plainest possible way. Israel's first-born were saved by the blood alone; and they were wholly saved by the blood. Let us remember this. They never thought of adding aught thereto. Having that, they wanted nothing more. It perfectly saved them from judgment, and gave them

perfect peace.

Reader, my object, in this paper, is not, the Lord knoweth, controversy, but to unfold the truth of God as I find it in His word, and to benefit your precious soul. I want you, ere you lay down this number of "Things New and Old," to be able to say, "Blessed be God, I have gotten peace, through the blood. I am happy, now, I rest in the blood, I am eternally saved." God grant it may be thus! May you see a fullness, a sufficiency, a dignity, a glory, a divine virtue, in the atonement which you have never seen before. May your doubts and fears be forever set aside, and may it be your happy privilege, now, henceforth, and forever, to have "LIFE THROUGH DEATH."

Life Through Death: Part 4

I would, at this point, remind the reader that I do not, by any means, pretend to adduce all the Scripture proofs on the subject which has been engaging our attention. Far from it. I merely refer to a few leading, well-known passages; but all who are sufficiently interested in the matter can easily turn to various other scriptures which, though not referred to here, do clearly set forth the great truth that we can only have “life through death.”

We now proceed to the book of Leviticus, which may be said to be an almost unbroken series of proofs of our thesis. In glancing, rapidly, through the sacrifices of this book, I shall take it for granted that we have, in them, so many striking and beautiful types of that one great sacrifice offered on the cross for us and our salvation. This, we trust, will not be questioned by any reader of “Things New and Old.” But, even should any one raise an objection to those sacrifices being viewed typically, he cannot fail to see that, whatever they were, death formed the grand prominent circumstance in them all. I speak not of the meat offering in which there was nothing whatever about blood-shedding. Whether we look at the burnt offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, or the trespass offering, we find the same thing. In each and all, we meet the words, “he shall kill it.” Blood-shedding was essentially necessary to the completion of the sacrifice. Accomplished death lies at the foundation of everything. This point cannot be too strongly insisted upon. It is clearly and fully established in every part of Scripture, and in none more fully than in the types of Leviticus at which we are about to look, not indeed in their marvelous detail, but simply for the purpose of establishing the truth of our subject.

1. And, first, as to the burnt offering. (Lev. 1) Here we have the death of Christ as the expression of His perfect devotedness to God. This offering was wholly burnt; neither the worshipper nor the priest partook of it. It was all consumed on the altar—all went up, as a sweet savor, to the throne of God. But, how was the devotedness expressed? Was it by a spotless life merely? No. It was by accomplished death. True, there was a spotless life—a holy life—a devoted life—a precious life—a matchless life; but all this would not have availed to make an atonement, or to tell forth the living depths of devotion in the heart of Christ, had the blood not been shed. “A male of the first year without blemish” might be “voluntarily” presented at “the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” It might be all that was required by the terms of the ceremonial law; but until the life was taken, until the blood was shed, there could be no “atonement” made—no sweet savor” presented. It was death that formed the basis of everything. Ten thousand unblemished males, voluntarily presented, could not have made an atonement for man, nor presented a fragrant odor to God, save on the ground of accomplished death. True, the life of Christ was most precious to God—ininitely precious, in every aspect of it; but, as the Antitype of the burnt offering, He gave up His life, in order to give full expression to His devotedness.

Here, then, we have a soul-satisfying view of the death of Christ, and of atonement, through that death. The burnt offering prefigures Christ, on the cross, not as a sin-bearer, but as accomplishing the will of God. How do we know this? Because “the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is

brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.” (Heb. 13:11.) But the burnt offering was consumed on the altar, and not “without the camp.” (Lev. 1:6.) In it there was no question of the imputation of sin. It is the figure of Christ “offering himself, without spot, to God.” (Heb. 9) It does not set forth the hatefulness of sin, but the preciousness and divine excellency of Christ, and His devotedness to God, even unto death. It was wholly burnt. It all went up as a sweet savor. Its blood was not “brought into the sanctuary, by the high priest, for sin,” and therefore its body was not “burned without the camp,” but” on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.” (Lev. 1:9.) The death of the burnt offering does not tell us how God hated sin, but how Christ loved God and did His will, even unto the death of the cross life through death.

Hence, when we look at Christ as the burnt offering, we see “atonement” made according to the perfection of Christ’s obedience. It is not Christ putting away sin, a thing divinely true, blessed be God, but Christ doing the will of God. Did He do it perfectly? Truly so. Well, then, “atonement” has been made just as perfectly. Christ, in the burnt offering, acted directly for God. True, He met man’s need likewise—his very deepest need—the need of heart and conscience; but it was as accomplishing the will of God that He did so. This is a grand truth to get hold of. The doctrine of the cross—the doctrine of atonement—the doctrine of “life through death,” cannot be rightly understood, unless we see the special point set forth in the burnt offering.

2. In the peace offering, (Lev. 3) we have a type of Christ as the One who is our peace. Here, too, death was essential. “He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron’s sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.” Before ever “the fat” could be consumed on the altar of God—before ever the offerer could feed on “the flesh”—before ever the priest could feed upon “the wave breast and the heave shoulder,” the life of the sacrifice had to be poured out “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. 9:22.) And if there is no “remission,” there can be no “peace,” no worship, no communion. In order to enjoy perfect peace, I must have perfect justification; and in order to have perfect justification, I must have a perfect atonement, and in order to have a perfect atonement, I must have accomplished death.

All this I have in Christ. He is the true peace offering. He has “made peace through the blood of his cross.” (Col. 1:20.) Observe, it was “through the blood of his cross” that He made peace. It was not by His obedient life, how precious soever that life might be—and truly it was precious beyond all human thought. It was by His blood, and by it alone, He made peace. He gave up His life on the cross, and with that life went all the sin that was, by imputation, attached thereto, so that, in resurrection, all His members might be eternally linked with Him, partaking of the same life and standing in the same righteousness, and in the same infinite favor before God.

Christian reader, remember this. The entire question is settled. An eternal peace has been established by the finished work of the cross. The blood of your divine peace offering has put away all that could, by any possibility, keep you out from God’s presence; and it is your happy privilege to feed upon the flesh of your peace offering, in the clear sense of your perfect justification and acceptance. There is not a speck upon you in the “vision of the Almighty.” You are in Christ, and as Christ, before the throne of God. You are no longer looked at in your former or old creation-state. “You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” You are in the body, as to the plain fact

of your condition, but you are not in the flesh as to the ground of your standing. The flesh is in you, and will be in you, to the end of your earthly career; but God views it as a dead thing. It came to its end when your peace offering yielded up His life on the cross; and now He is your life, your righteousness, your peace, your sanctification, your redemption, your hope, your glory, your eternal all. Oh! let me beseech of you to get a clear, full, deep sense of this into your soul. Be assured of it, if you are cloudy, as to this fundamental truth, you cannot eat the flesh of your peace offering. You will be continually looking at yourself. You will be looking, in some way or another, for the offering of a fresh sacrifice, instead of rejoicing in the eternal results of the sacrifice which has been offered. Remember, if the blood of a bullock could give peace for a time, the blood of Christ can give peace forever. If the former could give an annual conscience, the latter gives an eternal conscience. The character of the conscience depends upon the character of the sacrifice. This is a simple truth. May the Spirit of God enable you to enter into the solid comfort of it!

3. The sin offering (Lev. 4) bears witness to the same great gospel thought. In it we see a shadow of Christ as our sin-bearer—as the one who was “made sin for us.” If we compare the sin offering with the burnt offering, we shall find two very different aspects of Christ. But although the aspects are different, it is one and the same Christ; and hence, the sacrifice in each case was “a male without blemish.” This is easily understood. No matter in what aspect I view the Lord Jesus Christ, He must ever be seen as the same pure, spotless, holy, perfect One. True, He did, in perfect grace, stoop to be the sin-bearer of His people, but it was a perfect, spotless Christ who did so. The intrinsic excellence, the unsullied purity, and the divine glory of our blessed Lord appear in the sin offering, as well as in the burnt offering. It matters not in what relationship He stands, what office He fills, what work He performs, what position He occupies, His personal, His inherent, His essential glories shine out, in all their proper, their divine effulgence. Like the sun in the natural heavens, he may, as astronomers teach, pass through a different sign, every month; but, let the sign be what it may, it is one and the same sun which gladdens and enlightens us by his beams.

Thus it is with the burnt offering and the sin offering. Both typos point to the same great Antitype, though they set Him forth in such contrasted aspects of His work. In the burnt offering, Christ is seen meeting the affections of the heart of God, in the sin offering, He is seen meeting the necessities of the sinner’s conscience. That presents Him to us as the accomplisher of the will of God, this as the bearer of the sin of man. In the former, we are taught the preciousness of the sacrifice; in the latter, the hatefulness of sin. Thus much as to the two offerings in the main. The most minute and accurate examination of the details will only tend to establish the mind in the truth of this general statement. Into these details I do not attempt to enter in this brief article. I merely call my reader’s attention to the fact, that whether we look at the burnt offering, the peace offering, or the sin offering, we see that a sacrificed life was essential. The “sweet savor” of the burnt offering ascended when the blood was shed, and not till then. “The flesh of the peace offering” was eaten when the blood was shed, and not till then. Sin was put away by the sin offering when the blood was shed, and not till then.

4. Lastly, the trespass offering (Lev. 5) passes before us as a witness to the place which death occupies on the page of inspiration. In it we see Christ as the One who not only atoned for sin in the believer’s nature, but also for sins in the believer’s life. It was by blood-shedding, and by that alone, that He did both the one and the other. Christ was not only “made sin for us,” (2 Cor. 5:21,) but He also “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” (1 Pet. 2:24.) He was not made sin during

His life, but in His death. He did not bear our sins during His life, but “on the tree.” This is plain and absolute enough. Whether we look at the types of the Old Testament, or hearken to the statements of the New, all set forth the same glorious truth, namely, that blood must be shed ere sin can be forgiven, righteousness imputed, peace enjoyed, communion realized, or worship presented. All Scripture establishes the precious and all-important doctrine of “LIFE THROUGH DEATH.”

Reader, as our object in this magazine, our object in each successive number, our object in each article, our object in each page and paragraph, is to deal with and profit the souls of men, let me, at the close of this article, affectionately yet faithfully ask you, have you gotten life through death? Have you yet found peace for your guilty conscience, peace for your broken heart, peace for your wearied spirit, through the perfect sacrifice of the cross? Are you satisfied, deeply, solidly, perfectly and eternally satisfied with what Christ has done for you? Have you found all you want in Him? Have you got done with yourself and found your present and everlasting all in Jesus? Oh! do make close, earnest, personal work with your soul in this matter. Do not trifle, do not generalize. Let not truth shoot over your head, but let it come straight home to your heart. May the Lord bless you, and make you a blessing!

Lines Found in the Pocket-Book of the Late Archdeacon Irvine, After His Death

Bear me on Thy rapid wing,
Everlasting Spirit!
Where bright choirs of angels sing,
And the saints inherit;
Waiting round the eternal throne,
Joys immortal are their own;
This the cry of every one—
“Glory to th’ Incarnate Son!”
Four-and-twenty elders rise
From their princely station,
Shout His glorious victories,
Sing His great salvation;
Cast their crowns before His throne,
Cry, in reverential tone,
“Holy! Holy! Holy One!
Glory be to God alone.”
Hark! the thrilling symphonies
Seem within to seize us;
Add we to their holy lays-
“Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!”
Sweetest name on mortal’s tongue,
Sweetest note in angels’ song,
Sweetest anthem ever known;
Jesus, Jesus, reign alone.

The Link of Living Faith

Christ Himself is the only source of life and blessedness to the soul. "He that hath the Son hath life." Outside of Christ—apart from Him, there is no eternal life for the soul. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (1 John 5:11.) He is the fountain, and faith comes to Him. There must be personal connection, by faith, between the dead sinner and the living Saviour. There is no life without it. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. 6:17.) It may be only the hem of His garment that is touched, but it must be touched by faith, and this touch of faith is immediate, eternal life to the soul. (See Matt. 9; Mark 5; Luke 8)

The multitude thronged Jesus, and pressed Him; but no heavenly virtue flowed out from Him to them. There was no action of faith in the curious crowd. It was neither faith nor felt need that brought them there. But the moment that the finger of faith touched the border of His garment, "Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she could not be hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him, before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed IMMEDIATELY. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." This is the Lord's gracious and kindly way with every sinner that comes to him. He immediately and perfectly meets all their need. But she came in the right way, namely, the way of faith. She believed that her case was utterly hopeless, save in His hands. She "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." What a true picture of the sinner's sad condition. Thus she came to Jesus under a deep sense of her need, poverty, helplessness, and of the utter worthlessness of all human aid. Every creature-resource had failed her, and every spring was dried up, save the everlasting fountain of redeeming love. And with all her unrelieved distress she came in faith to Jesus. "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." Precious faith! and she was not disappointed. But who ever was, that came by faith to Him? Not one! "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37.)

And now, mark, dear reader, the wondrous grace that shines in His tender words to this troubled woman. He first calls her "daughter;" as much as to say, We are now intimately connected—we are kindred, of one family, one Father, one hope, and one home. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ." (Heb. 2:11; Rom. 8:35.)

Then He says to her, "Be of good comfort." Take, enjoy all the comfort that springs from being made whole in body, and from being a child of God, "by faith in Christ Jesus." Oh! what a source of comfort these words are, as coming from the lips of Jesus! What a deep springing-well of never-ending bliss!

He then adds, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Faith brings the soul to Christ, the true Physician. He only has the "balm of Gilead"—He only can recover the health of the daughter of His people. (Jer. 8:22.) But how gracious of the Lord to say, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," when He

Himself had done it all. Yes, but there is a deep practical truth in this. The healing virtue was in Him, but faith was the divine way of putting her in possession of it. The unsearchable riches of Christ are thrown open to faith; every spring of healing virtue in the Saviour opens to its touch; it unlocks the whole treasury of God. Christ has indeed done all the work. The great work of atonement—propitiation—redemption by blood, was assuredly accomplished on the cross, and finished there forever. But a man is not saved, he does not possess salvation, until he believes in Christ. Hence, the great doctrine of all scripture on this point is, that we are “justified by faith.” “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” (Acts 10:43.) Faith receives Christ, and links the soul with Him who is the fountain of all blessing. But no blessing is received, until He is received, by faith, through the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, by means of the truth of the gospel. The poor woman only “grew worse” until she came to Jesus. And so must every son and daughter of Adam. There is no spiritual life, health, or blessing, save in Him. The soul must perish that has no connection with Him. She was in the very circumstances of death when she stretched forth the hand of living faith. The connecting link between the sinner and the Saviour is faith in Him. Hence the unspeakable importance of the question, “DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?” Forgiveness—justification—salvation, are received the moment we can answer in His presence, “LORD, I BELIEVE.” (John 9:35-33.) “For it pleased the Father that in him shall all fullness dwell.” “And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” (Col. 1:19; John 1:16.)

He concludes with “go in peace.” All is settled now, and settled forever. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The fountain of her disease had been dried up. God deals with sin, root and branch. She had a solid ground of peace in the precious words of Jesus. Nothing more was required than His own words of sweetest grace. “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” Oh! how full, comprehensive, and pointed they are! Nothing seems to be left out that is needed to give a soul real joy, good comfort, perfect rest, and settled peace.

Master, most gentle,

My woes thou hast borne;

Thy wages I am

For anguish and scorn;

No value myself,

Yet ransomed by thee,

Thy blood puts a worth

Untold upon me.

In tenderness keep,

With aid from above.

My soul in thy peace,

The calm of thy love.

When weak, let thy smile

Fresh healing impart,

And ever abide

Still near to my heart.

Living Devotedness

Few Christians realize what an honorable sphere is open to them, of living devotedness to Christ. We have an example of this in Paul, he was ready to die for the name of Jesus. He had nothing more to gain or hope for here. We want more of this earnest devotedness of heart to the Lord. We want to get above the heavy atmosphere in which most Christians live. Our testimony should not be confined to the seasons of united worship; but abroad in the world, and among the multitudes of poor dying sinners around, we should seek to testify of Jesus both by our words and our ways.

How happy we ought to be as Christians! Nothing can make us unhappy if we have a single eye to Christ-calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. It is the want of this which causes much of the nervous depression and lowness of spirits we meet with in many Christians. If Christ were the one object of our hearts, His glory the one thing we had in view, we should not be thinking or caring about ourselves at all. We want just to yield ourselves to the Lord. Isa. 6 illustrates this. First, the prophet says, "Woe is me," &c.; when purged, the word follows, "Here am I, send me." These principles are carried out through the book of Isaiah; the testimony being first to Israel's uncleanness, and then, in the latter days, they appear as the willing messengers, to others of the grace of God.

May we know the privilege of living devotedness to Christ. It is an honor to be used of Him. At the same time, we must remember that direction is needed as well as devotedness of heart. As in a railroad, the steam is the propelling power, but, without the rails, the carriages would run into the fields or anywhere else, so the word is needed to guide our zeal for the Lord.

The Lord Hath Borrowed It

“He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.”—Isa. 40:11

Rest, for the little sleeper;
Joy, for the ransomed soul:
Peace, for the lonely weeper,
Dark though the waters roll.
Weep for the little sleeper,
Weep, it will ease the heart;
Though the dull pain be deeper,
Than with the world to part.
Hath the dear Saviour found him,
Laid him upon His breast,
Folded His arms around him,
Hushed him to endless rest?
Grieve not, with hopeless sorrow,
Jesus has felt your pain,
He did thy lamb but borrow,
He'll bring him back again.—Anon.

The Love of God Is ...

The love of God is the source from which redemption flows. The perfect sacrifice of Christ is the channel through which it flows. Faith, wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, is the power of enjoyment; and everlasting life, known and experienced, now, is the result. John 3:16.

The Love of Jesus

Rev. 1:5, 6.

In contemplating the love of Jesus, set forth in the above passage, we can trace the four following characteristics, namely:—thinking of its object, visiting its object, suffering for its object, exalting its object.

1. He thought of us. Deep in His own eternal mind, He pondered His much loved Church, before the foundation of the world.

“His gracious eye surveyed us,

Ere stars were seen above.”

2. Did He rest satisfied with merely thinking about us? No; He laid aside all His glory, and came down into this cold, heartless world, as into a vast quarry from whence He would hew out stones for His heavenly temple. He made His way down into this “rough valley” of ours, which had “neither been eared nor sown.” “The day-spring from on high hath visited us.”

3. But He did not rest satisfied with coming down to look at us in our guilt and ruin, our misery and degradation. He suffered for us. He hath “washed us in His own blood.” He loved us, though in our sins; and He has washed us from our sins. He would not leave a single speck upon the objects of His eternal love.

4. What, then, was all this for? Why those unutterable sufferings of Jesus? Why those three hours of profound darkness? Why that bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Simply that the love of Jesus might exalt its object. And, truly, He has exalted us; yea, to the very highest point of dignity. “He hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.”

Thus we see how the love of Jesus has thought of, visited, suffered for, and exalted its object. This is for our exceeding comfort and joy.

But, we should bear in mind, that if we love Jesus, we, too, will often like to think of Him—often delight to contemplate His matchless grace—to ponder over His infinite perfections. Moreover, we will visit Him in the secret of His sanctuary, not to gain a name as persons of much prayer, but to gratify the affections of our hearts for Him who is “fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.”

Again, we shall be ready to suffer for Him, not in order to commend ourselves as persons of great energy, zeal, and personal devotedness, but to express the high estimation in which we hold His divine and adorable Person.

Finally, it will be our constant aim to exalt Him, in every place. Our language will be, “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.”

Let us earnestly pray for such a deep, full tide of divine love in our cold, narrow, selfish hearts, as will render our service, not the mere flash of imperfect zeal kindled by the unhallowed spark of human opinion, but the calm, steady, constant flow of unalterable affection for Jesus—that affection which has its chief joy in pondering over its object ere it comes forth as an actor or a sufferer in His cause.

My Heart Is so Hard

Twenty years ago it pleased God to visit the town of H., and the surrounding villages, with a time of general awakening. It bore no resemblance to those seasons of fitful and forced excitement, resulting from laborious efforts in what are called “special services,” which are too often mistaken for revivals in the present day. It was a time in which the awakening and converting power of God’s Holy Spirit was like “showers on the grass,” or “a dew from the Lord that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.” The preaching of the Gospel was attended by crowds who had not been wont to attend it; seriousness sat on every countenance while listening to the word; old and young, men, women, and children were impressed with the importance of eternal things; and numbers, among whom many have fallen asleep, but the greater part continue to this day, “were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”

One of the converts in this time of blessing was Sarah A., a married woman of middle age, humble circumstances, and no education; but a person of stronger mind than many whose advantages were greater than hers. How she was first led to consider her fallen state, and solemn prospects for eternity, I do not at this distance of time remember; but her convictions and distress were so deep and long continued, as to leave an impression which no lapse of time could erase. Regular in her attendance on the preached word, and diligent in searching the Scriptures, she cried earnestly to God for mercy, and was always ready to listen to any Christian who would converse with her on the solemn question of how she was to be saved. For months her distress continued, amounting sometimes almost to agony; and nothing that was addressed to her seemed to afford the least relief. Her case became the subject of frequent and anxious conference among those who were laboring for the Lord; and often did they unite in prayer on her behalf: but still deliverance was delayed.

The constant burden of Sarah A.’s complaint was the hardness of her heart. “My heart is so hard,” she would say; “I see what a sinner I have been, but I cannot feel it. I believe all you tell me, but though my sins stare me in the face, I cannot shed a tear; my heart is as hard as a stone. What is to become of me, poor, wretched, hardened sinner that I am?” Often and often was she told that we are not justified by feeling, but by faith: that even faith justifies only as it receives Christ, and trusts in Him, in whom all the saving virtue dwells; while she, on the other hand, was trying to make a Saviour of the softened, tender feelings after which she craved. I remember saying to her, “Hardhearted as you are, it was for such as you that Jesus died. Come to Him as you are. Bring your hard heart to Him. Behold the Lamb of God. One believing look to Jesus will do more to soften your heart, than poring over your sins and impenitence will do in a year. You wish for penitential feelings as a warrant for looking to Jesus, and trusting in His precious blood; but depend upon it, if ever you have such feelings as you desire, they will be the effect of beholding Him by faith—of believing God’s record of His Son.” But all seemed to be in vain. While actually holding up before her the love of God in the gift of Jesus, and the love of Jesus in dying on the cross for His very foes, her attention would be fixed, and the hope awakened in one’s breast that she was drinking in the good news. But no sooner did the sounds cease, than she would reply,

with such a look of settled despondency, "It is all true, but I can feel nothing; my heart is as hard as a stone."

One day, when we had almost become accustomed to her despairing looks and accents, we were all startled by hearing that Sarah A. was rejoicing in the Lord. No time was lost in visiting her, to hear from herself how this change had come to pass. Its reality was apparent in her countenance, and in her whole demeanor. Her account was as follows:

"Last night was a dreadful night. Lying awake, and thinking of my sins, wondering how it was that I could neither feel them nor get rid of them, it seemed to me that God was quite giving me up to the hardness of my heart, and that there was nothing for me but the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. What a night have I had! Towards morning I got upon my knees, and began to cry to God. How long I continued I cannot tell; but what the Bible says about God so loving the world as to give His Son, and about Jesus dying on the cross, came to my mind, and somehow I got thinking of His love, and I could think of nothing else. Before I was aware of it my heart melted, and I found myself weeping to think of what Jesus had suffered for my sins. My tears flowed so fast, and yet they were not so much tears of sorrow as of joy. My load was gone, and I could only praise my Saviour, and weep before Him, that He should have died for such a wretch as me. What love! to die upon the cross for such a wretch as me!"

Such was her account; and, as she gave it, she who had never shed a tear when bemoaning the hardness of her heart, wept profusely as she dwelt upon the love of Christ, exclaiming, again and again, "O the precious blood of Christ. That precious blood! It even avails for me!"

The change was as abiding as it was evident. It is many years now since the writer, from change of residence, lost sight of Sarah A.; but as long as he had the opportunity either of observing her or hearing of her, she was rejoicing in Christ, and enabled, amidst much outward trial, to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour.

Dear reader, are you, like this poor woman, looking into yourself for some softening of heart, for some deeper sense of sin, before you trust your soul to Jesus? May you learn by her case, that the only way to have your hard heart softened, is to look to Jesus as you are. "Behold the Lamb of God!" It was for sinners such as you that His blood was shed; and His "blood cleanseth us from all sin."

Nothing but thy blood, O Jesus,

Could relieve the sinner's smart;

Nothing else from guilt release us,

Nothing else could melt the heart.

Sense of sin doth only harden,

All the while it works alone;

But the grace that seals our pardon,

Soon dissolves a heart of stone.

Nourishment for the New Life

It is well, my child, to begin every day with God and His word. It is a sure sign of spiritual life and health. Let your first conscious moments be spent in His holy presence, and your first desires be expressed to Him. Start on your daily course from the throne of grace; in the evening, close it there; yet never leave that sanctuary all day long.

Child-like, attend what thou wilt say;

Go forth and do it while 'tis day,

Yet never leave my sweet retreat.

We are only safe when trusting in Him, and walking in the light of His countenance. Seek, by God's grace, to be kept in the place of simple dependence on Himself.

There is deep reality in communion with God, through the medium of His word, by the power of the Holy Spirit. "How sweet," says the Psalmist, "are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

When our spiritual appetite is good, we are sure to grow. We need spiritual as well as natural food every morning, but we are more in danger of forgetting the former than the latter. Hence the importance of the exhortation, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere (pure, unmixed) milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Show that you heartily desire it; that it is sweet and pleasant to your taste; that you are nourished by it; that you are satisfied with it; and that you return to it with increasing delight.

Oh! that ALL the babes in God's family, and ALL the lambs in Christ's flock, thus relished their divine food. Oh, to cleave to God's word for everything past, present, and future. "Thy testimonies have I taken as my heritage forever."

May the Lord Himself be richly with you, my child, filling your heart with heavenly food and spiritual gladness, and causing you to sing for joy.

Perhaps you would like to commit this page to memory.

Only and Early

Read Psalm 62 and 63.

There is a sweet and profitable lesson taught us in the above psalms. The heart is ever prone to divide its confidence between God and the creature. This will never do. We must “wait only upon God.” “He only” must be our “rock,” our “salvation,” and our “defense.” This is Psalm 62.

Then we are frequently tempted to look to an arm of flesh first, and when that fails we look to God. This will never do, either. He must be our first as well as our only resource. “O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee.” This is the way in which the heart should ever treat the blessed God. This is the lesson of Psalm 63 When we have learned the blessedness of seeking God, “only” we shall be sure to seek Him, “early.”

Our Peace and Portion in Christ

The following letter was addressed to a dear boy, about ten years of age, who had found “peace with God” through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This circumstance may account for any peculiarity there is in the style.

My dear young Brother, For some time past I have had a desire to write you a line. Your joy and peace in believing have indeed been gladness to my heart. The Lord be praised for His precious grace to your soul.....And now, I do pray, “ the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Rom. 15:13.

It is no small mercy clearly to see the ground of peace in the presence of God. Comparatively few Christians rightly understand it. Therefore, settled peace is but little known. Many think of peace as something more connected with their own state of soul, than with the work of Christ.

This is a common mistake. If they are comfortable in their own feelings, they conclude that all is right; if uncomfortable, that all is wrong. But the conscious enjoyment of a calm, peaceful, comfortable state of soul, and the ground of peace, are widely different things, though often confounded. The finished work of Christ is the only ground of peace before God, and not our own feelings. He “made peace through the blood of his cross.” He only could make it, and, blessed be His name, He has made it. It is not now to make. This is the only foundation of peace—“THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS.” All others are false, let them be what they may. Jesus crucified is the “ Rock of Ages! cleft for me.” When this precious truth is really believed, the heart will be at perfect rest, and filled with gratitude and praise.

Peace has reference to victory over enemies. When we hear from the scene of warfare that our foes have been conquered, and a complete victory gained, we know that peace will follow; and our fears and alarms cease, as to the enemy reaching us. We may have been in a state of great anxiety while the conflict lasted, but when it is decided in our favor, we are at rest. Why? Because the enemy is vanquished—the triumph is complete.

The application of all this is plain and easy. “The Captain of our salvation has triumphed gloriously.” The Bible, from beginning to end, is filled with the records of the victories of Christ. But the grand, final victory was accomplished on the cross, when He exclaimed, “It is finished!” “Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Col. 2:15) He, who was on the cross for us, and charged there with our sins, and surrounded with our enemies, is now on the throne for us. Every one of our sins He put away, and every enemy He overcame, thereby making and securing eternal peace, for every believer. Peace flows to us from the complete destruction of our enemies. The Conqueror’s place at God’s right hand in heaven, is to us, the soul-satisfying proof of this, for we are ONE WITH HIM. His place is our place, as He says Himself: “I go to prepare a place for you.....that where I am, there ye may be also.”

It is interesting to observe how frequently Christ speaks about peace. Just before He went to the cross we find Him saying to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27.) And then, at their first meeting after His death and resurrection, His first words to them were, "Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side." (John 20:19, 20.) The blood that flowed from His pierced hands and wounded side had washed all their sins away, and established their peace with God forever. "His own self," says Peter, "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The sins of every believer were on Him, when He was on the cross. There He bore them all. But when His blood flowed - when it was shed - they were all washed away, every one, He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:26.

If, then, I am a believer in Jesus, I know, from God's word, that all my sins were laid on Him, and that He put them all away by the blood of His cross, and made my peace with God forever.

And now—O blessed truth!—having made our peace, He becomes, HIMSELF, our peace in the presence of God. "For HE is our peace." (See Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:14-17.) You will now see, from these scriptures, four things about Christ and peace.

1. Christ gives us peace.
2. Christ made our peace.
3. Christ is our peace.
4. Christ preaches peace.

He is also the glorious center of peace in heaven.

1. For Jew and Gentile with one another. "Who hath made both one."
2. For both with God.

"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) which were afar off, and to them (Jews) that were nigh."

But, further, He is the eternal center of ALL our blessings. God gave us our portion in Him, "before the world began." (2 Tim. 1:9.) "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. 1:3.

This is the grand, practical truth to learn, my dear young brother. May the good Lord Himself be your teacher as well as your lesson. It is the only truth that will lead you out of yourself, and wean your heart away from present things. In place of judging of the value, or possession, of any spiritual blessing by your own feelings or experience, you will count on what you have in Him, and rejoice in its perfectness and security there. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him." Col. 2:2, 10.

Take an example of this precious truth. Suppose, now, you ask me, "Have you always peace?"

"Yes, through grace, always perfect peace in the presence of God."

“Do you mean by that, that you always feel perfectly peaceful and happy?”

“Not exactly. What I mean is this: Christ Himself being my peace, and He being always the same in God’s presence, my peace in Him is always the same.”

It is not a question about my feelings, but entirely about what Christ is, and where Christ is; for “He is our peace.” At the same time, observe, the more simply we feed on this blessed truth, the more fully will it be enjoyed and manifested.

Now, this is what I understand by a Christian saying he has perfect, settled peace in the presence of God. He has it in Christ, not in himself; and he can only enjoy it in Him.

And it is on the same principle, that every other spiritual blessing is to be entered into and enjoyed. Oh, what an important lesson to learn! The value of it is this: it will keep you looking away from yourself and up to Christ,—going to Him, counting on Him, feeding on Him, delighting in Him—reckoning up all your mercies in Him, and being wholly and ever occupied with Him.

Let us look at a few more of our spiritual blessings in this light, that you may fully understand what I mean.

Our Life in Him can never be Forfeited.

Our Righteousness in Him can never be Tarnished.

Our Pardon in Him can never be Reversed.

Our Justification in Him can never be Canceled.

Our Acceptance in Him can never be Questioned.

Our Peace in Him can never be Broken.

Our Joy in Him can never be Diminished.

Our Rest in Him can never be Disturbed.

Our Hope in Him can never be Disappointed.

Our Glory in Him can never be Clouded.

Our Sun in Him can never be Darkened.

Our Happiness in Him can never be Interrupted.

Our Strength in Him can never be Enfeebled.

Our Purity in Him can never be Defiled.

Our Comeliness in Him can never be Marred.

Our Wisdom in Him can never be Baffled.

Our Inheritance in Him can never be Alienated.

Our Resources in Him can never be Exhausted.

And now, my dear young friend, I will not attempt to say anything more at present, but shall leave you in the calm, peaceful, and happy contemplation of your adorable Saviour, and your infinite portion in Him. It is all true, perfectly and eternally true. It is all as real as God Himself.

You may keep up your meditations on this blessed theme, by turning to the passages which either state or prove the various illustrations given of our portion in Christ.

And may God the Holy Ghost lead your mind along these several lines of divine truth, until you can only worship in the sanctuary of His holy presence, and adore Him, from whose heart it has all come forth, to enrich the once-poor children of His grace.

So prays, yours, most affectionately in Christ,

High, in the Father's house above,

My mansion is prepared;

There is the home, the rest I love,

And there my bright reward.

With Him I love, in spotless white,

In glory I shall shine;

His blissful presence my delight,

His love and glory mine.

All taint of sin shall be removed,

All evil done away;

And I shall dwell with God's Beloved,

Through God's eternal day.

Perfect and Permanent

Were we to judge of the comparative value of the soul and the body from what we see around us, we should surely come to the conclusion that the body is much more valuable than the soul. So little attention is paid to the one and so much to the other. We see, on every hand, far more thought, care, labor, and money, spent on the body than on the soul. It is perfectly right, of course, to attend to the body: it is our duty to do so. But the danger of neglecting the soul is all the greater on that account. Our greatest snares are daily duties. Just because they are lawful and right in themselves, we seek thereby to keep the conscience quiet under the plea that duty must be attended to. Surely it is right to do our duty; but it is wrong, always wrong, to neglect the soul. If it is neglected, all is wrong, however prosperous we may be in the world. Has the soul no claims? Do we owe no duty to it? Many satisfy themselves by attending for a few hours, on the first day of the week, to what is called their spiritual interests, and then devote the remaining six days to their temporal interests. Thus the soul comes in for a very small share of their time and consideration.

But we shall neither rightly understand the worth of the soul nor appreciate its claims, until we have learned its value from the word of Christ. "For what shall it profit a man," He says, "if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37.) Here we are plainly taught that one human soul is of more value than the whole world—that if a man were to gain the world and lose his soul, he would be an infinite loser.

The soul is spiritual and must exist forever, either in a state of perfect happiness or the most awful misery. The world is material and must pass away; but the soul will never pass away. It is immortal—it will never die. No, never—never die! It may, alas! be eternally separated from the living God, which is called "the second death;" but it can never cease to exist. Either the Father's house of many mansions or the burning lake must be the everlasting abode of every immortal soul, and of the body, too, after the resurrection. It is this consideration that makes the soul so precious, that gives it such a value to the compassionate heart of Jesus. No one could tell the worth of a soul as He could. He had counted the cost and paid the ransom price of its redemption.

And now, observe, the soul being spiritual and immortal, nothing will meet its need that is not both perfect in its nature, and permanent in its duration. Besides, the soul has to do with God, and nothing will suit Him that is not as perfect as He is Himself. The soul, being immortal, must have an everlasting portion. But where, you may ask, are we to find this character of blessing for the soul? Certainly not in this world. Vanity, decay, and death, are written on everything down here. There is nothing PERFECT—there is nothing PERMANENT. Nothing can be found "under the sun" that will meet the need or satisfy the desires of one human soul.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, we have the record of human experience, with reference to this world, on a large and magnificent scale; and the result proved that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; ALL is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?" (Chap. 1:2, 3.) So long as we seek happiness UNDER THE SUN, we shall not find it. Solomon was a wise man and a great king. He tried and proved

everything that “could be supposed capable of rendering man happy.” (See chapter 2.) He tried mirth and pleasure, wisdom and folly. He made great works, builded houses, planted vineyards, gardens, orchards, and trees of all kinds of fruit. He got singing men and singing women, silver and gold in abundance, and the peculiar treasure of kings. “So I was great,” he says, “and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” (Ver. 9-11.)

So long as the heart of any one is seeking rest, satisfaction, or happiness in this world, it will surely be disappointed. The result in every case must be bitter disappointment, for it can only reap, from such a soil, “vanity and vexation of spirit.” The heart of man is too large for this world to fill. Its capabilities are too vast for all that is under the heavens to satisfy. And yet how eagerly many are chasing after the fleeting phantoms of time, to the entire neglect of the solemn realities of eternity. But supposing that every desired object were reached, and all possessed, what would be gained? Only a deeper sense that all is vanity—that it is not in the power of earthly good to fill up the aching void within. All worldly pleasures, amusements, indulgences, and gratifications, leave the soul more thirsty than ever: they cannot satisfy. Excitement is the right name for worldly pleasures—take that away, and they would prove a most burdensome task. They only increase the painful sense of want, with an intensified desire, which makes the poor neglected soul thoroughly miserable. There is a worm at the root of every gourd, and a thorn in earth’s fairest flower.

The portion, dear reader, which thy soul needs is not to be found within the wide range of nature. Solomon could not find it under the sun, and “what can the man do that cometh after the king?” There is nothing perfect, there is nothing permanent, that has its spring in this sin-stricken world. Oh! what a poor, hollow, worthless thing the world appears in the light of this plain truth! It only excites the feverish thirst of the soul, but cannot quench it. A greater than Solomon found it to be “a dry and thirsty land where no water is.” O reader! think of this! This is a true testimony. There are no living waters in this world. There is no life, no food, no rest, no joy, for the soul, beneath the throne of God. Husks you may have, if you can buy them, but the price is your soul.

But where, you may again ask, are we to find the needed, suited portion for the soul? Let the Spirit of Truth answer. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” And again, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto ME and drink.” (Isa. 55:1-3; John 7:37) Nothing can be plainer than these passages. Christ Himself is the life and food of the soul. “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35.) Here, and here alone, the soul of man will find eternal rest. He is the only perfect and permanent good of the soul. But He is above the sun. He has gone up on high. We must believe in Him, and through believing, come to Him where He is. We must rise in spirit—in heart, above the sun, to find the spiritual blessings which our souls need. “He that hath the Son hath life.” We must possess Himself as our wealthy portion. Oh, have you found your way to Him? Are you occupied with Him? Can you now say—just now—“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that

I desire beside thee.” (Psalm 73:25.) Christ not only fills, but overflows the soul that is occupied with Him alone.

The contrast between a person who is seeking happiness in the world, and one who has found it in Christ, is strikingly presented in the book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. (See Song 1:1-7.) In the latter, the believing soul is with Christ Himself, and that is everything. In His presence there is fullness of joy. It is not, as in Ecclesiastes, an endless variety of things, but a living Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The heart not only believes the truth, but it loves the Person. The blood of the cross having met all the need of the conscience, the Person of Christ meets all the need of the heart. And oh! what confidence, rest, and joy the believer has in Him, speaking of the bride in the Canticles, simply as a believer in Jesus. “Thy love,” she can now say, “is better than wine.” Wine is the symbol of human joy—the joys of earth—but all that the heart now desires is to know and enjoy more of the love of Jesus. For it has found that the blessed realities of His faithful love are sweeter and better far than all it ever found here below. This is the only source of true happiness to the soul, the only spring of real joy.

But observe, further, there is not a word here about sin, forgiveness, or justification; neither was there anything said about these things by the father to the prodigal. Why is this? Is God indifferent to sin? Oh, no! Far from it. It is intolerable to His being. But these matters were perfectly settled, for every believer, in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that when the prodigal returns he is not blamed, or charged with anything, but met by all the affections of the father’s heart. Surely, if sinners believed this, they would not be so unwilling to return to their heavenly Father. Judgment was spent on the cross: the wrath of God was poured out there, and sin was dealt with and put away, according to the glory of God. He had something to say to Christ about the prodigal’s sins, but nothing to the prodigal himself. When the sinner returns to God, in the name of Jesus, he comes before Him in all the value of His work, and that so fully answers for all his sins, that God the Father says nothing about them. True, the sinner himself may be deeply exercised about his sins, and fully confess them, and very right that he should do so, but the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, and fits us to be “in the light, as he is in the light.”

And now, the poor heart is free in the presence of God, and occupied with Jesus there. It can now say, “The king hath brought me into his chambers.” (Ver. 3.) It has learned his wondrous love. It has tasted its sweetness. It is at home with the King in his chamber. Oh! what joy can be compared with this? Every other attraction loses its power when I am here. What are all the varieties spoken of in the book of Ecclesiastes compared with this place of perfect and everlasting joy? They all dwindle into utter insignificance, now that I have found the perfect and permanent good, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” (Heb. 13:8.) When the heart is occupied with Christ Himself it can relish nothing else. In Ecclesiastes the heart was too large for its portion; in the Song of Solomon the portion is too large for the heart—its cup runneth over. To know that the presence-chamber of the King is my eternal happy home, is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But, oh! a strange feeling passes over my spirit, and whispers, ‘Is there any other place for souls besides this?’ Oh, yes! The truth must be told. There is another, and only another; and that is, the burning lake of fire. “Oh, solemn thought!” And know thou, that every child of Adam must be in one of these two places forever and ever. Oh, reader! reader! which is to be thine, the chamber of the

King or the lake of fire? The highest place in heaven or the lowest place in hell? If Christ be the desired object of thy heart, thou art with Him already, in His chamber. Rejoice, then, in thy portion. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice." But, oh 1 if the world be thy portion here, the lake of fire must be thy place forever. Oh, be warned of thy danger ere it be too late! Hast thou no thought, no concern, no care, for thy precious soul? Jesus says it is of more value than the whole world; and wilt thou sell it to Satan for the pleasures of sin, which are but for a moment? Wilt thou barter away the ineffable bliss of heaven for the gratifications of earth? Oh! ponder the bent of thy heart and the ways of thy feet. If thy foot be lifted in the direction of the world, stay! put it not down. Oh, stay! turn round! Let thy back be on the world, and thy face to Jesus. Oh! let the uplifting of thy heart be unto Himself. Believe in Him; trust in His finished work as the ground of acceptance in God's sight. His precious love has long kept the door of mercy open for thee - yes, for thee! Why linger outside? He still says "COME;" "yet there is room." ENTER, this is the "door" that leads to the chamber of the King—to His presence, to His heart, to the Paradise of God, to the eternal blessedness of heaven.

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.)

"Ho! ye thirsty, parched, and fainting,

Here are waters, turn and see;

To the thirstiest, poorest, vilest—

Without money, all is free.

Thirsty sinner,

Drink, and stay not, 'tis for thee.

Perfect Love

1 John 4:17.

Nothing is more marked in the history and experience of souls than the tendency to look in upon self, instead of looking out upon Christ. It has been well remarked, by a recent writer, that “faith is the soul’s outward, not its inward look.” This is most true; and, assuredly, it would be well if it were more fully borne in mind. The object on which faith fixes its gaze is always outside of ourselves. The moment we look in upon self for the ground of faith, we lose the comfort and peace which it is our privilege to enjoy.

This prevailing habit of looking in, instead of out, has had the effect of robbing very many of the divine beauty, preciousness, and power of the passage which stands at the head of this paper. It has set them upon the dreary and perplexing business of examining their love, in order to find perfection in it—a more hopeless task by far than that assigned to Israel of old, when they were commanded, by their hard-hearted and arbitrary master, to make bricks without straw. Unquestionably, an Israelite, roaming through the stubbles of Egypt, in search of material for his daily task, had more chance of success, than a poor, helpless, unworthy sinner, groping amid the darkness of his own heart, in search of anything “perfect.”

That nothing could be further from the mind of the Spirit than the thought of our perfect love, will be clear from the simple reading of 1 John 4:17: “Herein is love perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.” Now, how could our love to God ever be sufficiently “perfect” to give us “boldness in the day of judgment?” How could we ever look forward with unclouded confidence to the judgment-seat, if we were resting on the perfection of our own love? How could our love ever be of such a character as to cast out all tormenting “fear” from our hearts? Impossible.

What, then, does the apostle mean when he says, “perfect love casteth out fear?” He means that God’s perfect love, as manifested to us, and “perfected with us,” in the precious blood of His own dear Son, completely banishes fear from our hearts. If I know that God loves me perfectly, I have no cause to doubt or fear. And how has He told out His love to me? In the blood which flowed from the pierced side of a crucified Christ. That blood has not only satisfied God’s claims as to my sins, but also expressed His perfect love toward my perishing soul. Sin had been judged, and eternally put away by that blood which has told forth the deep secrets of love, that dwell in the bosom of God toward lost sinners. What, therefore, will the “day of judgment” do for the believer? It will make manifest, in the view of heaven, earth, and hell, that there is nothing against him. The light of “the judgment seat of Christ” will show that there is not so much as a speck upon that “white robe,” which owes all its whiteness to the power of the blood. The judgment-seat will be every whit as favorable to the believer, by and by, as the mercy-seat is now. The blood on the latter is not more on his side now, than the Judge on the former will be then. This is an amazing truth, and one divinely calculated to drive out “fear” from the heart, and impart boldness instead.

But let us specially note the manner in which God's love is perfected with us. "As he is, so are we in this world." This, truly, is the perfection of love. As the Judge is, so are we. "We are complete in him"—"accepted in the Beloved"—"in him that is true"—part of Himself—He the Head, and we the members. Christ took our place on the cross. He was made sin—He was judged in our stead. He bore the cross and endured the wrath—paid the penalty, and died the death, for us. He took our place that we might take His. He went down into the very deepest depths of our condition, in order that we might be raised to the very loftiest heights of His position before God. "As he is, so are we, in this world." Thus it is that God's love is "perfected with us," in order "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." Assuredly, the Judge will not condemn Himself. But He is my righteousness. He will not find a flaw in His own work. But that is the very ground of my confidence. He has made me what I am, and set me where I am. "He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." (2 Cor. 5:5.) "We are his workmanship." (Eph. 2:10.)

Hence, it follows, that if the thought of "the day of judgment" awakens a single "fear" in my reader's heart, it is a proof that he does not believe that God has perfectly loved him, or the blood of Christ perfectly cleansed him. It is needless for him to turn in upon himself: he will find nothing there. God is not seeking or demanding aught of him. He has found all He wants in the cross. He Himself has settled the whole question of sin. He has perfectly satisfied Himself as to that. He knew the need, and has met it. He knew the demands, and has answered them. He measured the guilt, and has canceled it. He has put away sin in such a way as to meet His own infinite purity. He has glorified Himself in the removal of that which, else, would have consigned us to eternal perdition. It is as impossible that God and sin can meet, as that God and the believing sinner can be separated. The one is perfectly and eternally put away; the other is perfectly and eternally brought nigh. The one could never be let in; the other can never be east out.

Reader, pause and ask yourself, do you know this perfect love of God? Has it cast out your fear? Does your heart quail at the idea of "the day of judgment?" Are you afraid that the light of that day will be unfriendly to you? If so, you may be sure it is not on the love of God and the blood of Christ you are resting. You are looking at yourself. You do not believe that God's love is perfect; for if you did, you would know that it had reached your case. Neither do you believe that Christ's sacrifice is perfect; for if you did, you would know that it had put away your guilt. If aught were demanded of you, you might well doubt and tremble; for you could not yield it. If your salvation were made to depend on the movement of your eyelash, you never could be sure that the movement was correct. But seeing that all hangs on the perfectness of the love of God, the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the truth of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, a single doubt is an insult to the Holy Trinity.

There are some who think that doubts and fears are signs of spiritual life. They may be so, in the same way that rheumatic pains are signs of natural life; but who would covet such signs? Who would desire perpetual torture as an evidence of his being alive? The apostle emphatically declares that "perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John 4:16.

Pleasant Places

A Fragment on Psalm 16

This psalm presents the Lord Jesus Christ in the place of self-emptied and absolute dependence. “Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust.” This was His attitude, from the manger to the cursed tree. He never, for a single instant, ceased to hang on God. His heart never once cherished a creature expectation—an earthly hope.

Hence, He could, at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, say, “the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.” They might not be smooth places or sunny places, or places agreeable to flesh and blood; but faith, a confiding heart, a subject will, a dependent spirit, could always say they were “pleasant.” He might be misunderstood, misinterpreted, accused of being mad, of having a devil. He might be maligned, despised, rejected, betrayed, denied, deserted, spit upon, buffeted, mocked, cast out—yet, in the face of all, He could say, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” Yes; “pleasant” and “goodly” were the words which the blessed Jesus used to describe His “lines” and His “heritage,” though He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Isa. 53.

And how was this? Just because God filled the entire range of His vision. His outward circumstances, as looked at from nature’s point of view, would not, by any means, appear to have been either “goodly” or “pleasant.” His path was not strewn with roses. It was a desolate, rough, dreary path, so far as earth was concerned. The foxes and the fowls were better off than He. The very beasts of the forest and the fowls of the air had what the Creator of heaven and earth had not. He had not where to lay His head. There was no rest for Him. He could not enjoy many sunny hours in a dark world like this. Earth did not afford Him a single green blade, a single refreshing spring. He was debtor to a poor Samaritan adulteress for a drink of water, in His hour of weariness. The women that came up with Him, from the despised Galilee, “ministered unto him of their substance.” This world had naught for the heavenly man, save the manger, the crown of thorns, the vinegar, the gall, the spear, the borrowed grave. Yet notwithstanding all, He could say that His “places” were “pleasant,” and His “heritage” was “goodly.”

Christian reader, these are the words of your Great Exemplar—of Him who has left you an example that you should follow His steps. Say then, do you feel and acknowledge that the lines have fallen unto you in pleasant places, and that your heritage is a godly one? To answer this, you are not to look within or around. Your reply is not to take its shape from the circumstances or the influences, the men or the things with which you may happen to be surrounded. You must look straight up into heaven; for there, and there alone, properly speaking, are your “lines,” there is your “heritage.” Your lines are fallen within the “many mansions” of your Father’s house, on high; and you have received as your heritage “a kingdom which can never be moved.” You are provided for, forever. You can never want any good thing. Christ is your portion, heaven your home, glory your everlasting destiny. The love that has stooped to pluck you as a brand from the burning, has clothed you with a robe of divine righteousness, and will, ere long, crown you, and make you a

pillar in the temple of God, to go no more out forever.

Well, therefore, may you speak of “pleasant places” and “a goodly heritage.” True, your path, down here, may be rough and thorny—you may be tried by ill health, poverty, bereavement, sorrow, pressure, personal infirmity, and various other circumstances; but then, remember, your lines are fallen to you in “heavenly places;” your heritage is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,” while, at the same time, you are “kept, by the power of God,” in the midst of those very trials, “through faith, unto salvation.” “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot.” This was enough for the heart of Jesus. He needed nothing more. He found His all in God, and there He rested.

Then, as to His hope, what was it? “My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” In these words are wrapped up one of the most profound and precious truths which can possibly engage our attention, namely, that the body of the Lord Jesus came forth from the tomb, bearing the marks of an accomplished atonement, and yet, without the smell of mortality having passed upon it. The foul breath of corruption never reached His pure, holy, sinless, spotless flesh. This is a vital, fundamental truth—a sublime mystery of our most holy faith. The perfect humanity of the eternal Son of God “TASTED DEATH,” and yet, “SAW NO CORRUPTION.” The soul that denies this must be a total stranger to all spiritual communion with the Person of the Son. He has yet to be divinely taught that all-important truth which lies at the very base of the “great mystery of godliness,” namely, that “God was manifest in the flesh.”

Oh! that the Church of God may drink into the spirit, realize the power, and enter into the practical results of this cardinal truth. It is much to be feared that the mysterious Person of the God-man does not occupy the thoughts and command the affections of the saints, as He should. There is far too much looseness and inaccuracy both in reference to His Person and His work. Hence, the fearful prevalence of carnality and worldliness.

Oh! Lord, revive thy work!

The Power and Value of the Name of Jesus

It is truly edifying to trace, through the New Testament, the varied virtues of the name of Jesus. We shall just refer to a few passages.

1. There is salvation in the name of Jesus. "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other NAME under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) The soul that trusts in the name of Jesus, gets all the saving virtue which belongs to that name.

2. There is eternal life in the name of Jesus. "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME." (John 20:31.) The soul that simply trusts in the name of Jesus, becomes a partaker of His life; and that life never can be forfeited, because it is eternal.

3. There is remission of sins through the name of Jesus. "To him give all the prophets witness, that THROUGH HIS NAME whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43.) The soul that simply trusts in the name of Jesus, is forgiven, according to the value of that name, in God's judgment. It matters not what or who he may be that comes to God in the name of Jesus, he gets all the credit, all the value, all the virtue, of that name, and could no more be rejected than the One in whose name he comes. If I go into a bank, with a wealthy and trustworthy man's name on a check, I enter in all the confidence which his wealth and credit can give. It matters not who or what I am; I come in his name. Thus it is with a sinner who comes to God in the name of Jesus.

4. The name of Jesus is the power of prayer. "And whatsoever ye shall ask IN MY NAME, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13, 14.) The believer, coming to God in the name of Jesus, could no more be refused than Jesus Himself.

5. The name of Jesus gives power over Satan and over all manner of evil. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: IN MY NAME shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17, 18. See also Acts 3:6; 16:18; Jas. 5:14.) It may be said that this power is no longer available. I reply, we are merely tracing, through the New Testament, the power and value of the name of Jesus. That name has power in heaven, power on earth, power in hell, power over angels, power over men, power over devils. Let faith use that precious, matchless, powerful, all-prevailing name.

6. God's assembly, wherever it is, is gathered in the name of Jesus. "For where two or three are gathered together IN MY NAME, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) Observe, it does not say, "where two or three are met." Men may meet upon any ground, or for any object they please, but the Holy Ghost can only gather in the name of Jesus. The Church is not a meeting convened by the will of man, but an assembly gathered by the Holy Ghost.

7. The name of Jesus is the Church's power in discipline and excommunication. "IN THE NAME of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. 5:4, 5.) The full credit of the name of Jesus is attached to the act of the assembly, when divinely gathered and divinely acting. Heaven gives the sanction of His name to the act.

8. The name of Jesus will be the object of universal and everlasting homage. "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, of [those] in heaven, and [those] on earth, and [those] under the earth." (Phil. 2:9, 10.)

May God the Holy Ghost unfold to our souls more of the power and value of the name of Jesus, so that we may more fully know what we have in Him, and be enabled to use His name, in more holy confidence, at all times, under all circumstances, and for all purposes.

The Power of the Blood

A Fragment on Exod. 24 In this magnificent chapter, we have a sample of true rest in the love of God, and in the blood of atonement. The elders of Israel had passed through the most profound exercises of heart and conscience beneath the thundering mount. They, like Moses, had quaked under the dread exhibition of the inflexible holiness of the God of Israel, and were in little danger of entering into any false rest, in the presence of the One who had solemnly dealt with their hearts and consciences. Now, this is just what we need in this day of carnal indifference and sluggish ease.

In chapter 19, the elders were down in the camp, amid human infirmity and human defilement. In chapter 24, they are seen on the mount with God. No defilement there; but “under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, and, as it were, the body of heaven in clearness.” What a contrast! What wide extremes! What opposite points in the moral world! How could they ever be harmonized? By what wondrous path could the soul make its way, from the defiled camp of Israel, upward to that sapphire mount, where Jehovah sat in awful majesty, fearful in holiness! “The altar under the hill” furnishes the reply; the blood of atonement stood between the camp beneath, and the mount above, and the elders could enter into its value, and in so doing, pass onward, in holy boldness, into the very presence of God, and there eat and drink in unbroken repose of spirit.

Here is true peace for the conscience; not the peace of carnal indifference; not the tranquility arising from an easy placid temperament; but that profound peace which flows from having every wound inflicted by the thunderbolts of Sinai healed by the blood of atonement. When we really know the value of the cross, we can

“Climb those higher skies,

Where storms and tempests never rise.”

What power there is in the words, “they saw the God of Israel!” They had seen the lightnings, and heard the thunder’s distant roar, when God addressed Himself to man’s legal heart; but now they saw Himself. The precious blood had hushed the loud roar of the thunder, and dispersed the clouds, of which Jehovah had formed His chariot, and now they behold Him in a chariot paved with love. How exquisite! How tranquillizing!

We want more real rest of heart in Christ Himself, in His matchless grace, His unrivaled perfections. We rest satisfied with far too low a character of communion. We must seek fellowship with our Jesus, not merely for what He has, but for what He is. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

“Oh! all ye wise, ye rich, ye just,

Who the blood-doctrine have discussed,

And judged it mean and slight;

Grant but I may—the rest's your own—

In shame and poverty sit down

At this one well-spring of delight.

Practical Holiness

It is as being pronounced clean, through the efficacy of the seven times-sprinkled blood (Lev. 4:6) that we are commanded (2 Cor. 7:1) to cleanse ourselves. It is a sorrowful, and very humbling work, very mortifying to the pride of our hearts, to find all our ways, and our natural comeliness, yea, our very selves too, all defiled by the leprosy of sin. That in us, that is to say, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

This is the sorrowful lesson we are now learning through the seven days of the present dispensation; but the remembrance of our High Priest, of His finished work, of the sweet assurance that all who believe are clean, and the joyful expectation of the eighth, the Lord's day, when He shall come again and present us faultless, will sustain and encourage us to persevere.

The Promise Fulfilled

2 Chron. 22:10; 23

Athaliah was a daughter of the wicked king Ahab, and daughter-in-law of the good king Jehoshaphat. This was a connection entirely opposed to the mind of God, and He marked it, in His righteous judgment, with His sore displeasure. One disaster after another befell Jehoshaphat and his house, because he “joined affinity with Ahab.”

When he commenced his reign, it is said that he “strengthened himself against Israel, and placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah.....And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat.” But afterward he greatly erred in forming an alliance with Ahab to recover Ramoth-Gilead, which all ended in disaster and confusion. 2 Chron. 17-18.

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, who reigned in his fathers stead, had Athaliah “the daughter of Ahab to wife.” She was filled with the cruel and persecuting spirit of her father’s house, and lent herself to Satan to do his work. She was an instrument of cruelty in his hands. For, although her immediate object, in killing all the seed royal, was to take possession of the throne herself, the object of Satan was very different. From the beginning, his aim had been to cut off, by means of death, the line of the promised seed, and thereby frustrate the purpose of God, destroy the faith of His people, and break them off from trusting in His word.

God had promised to David that He would establish his seed forever, and build up his throne to all generations. (2 Sam. 7; Psalm 89) Hence, Satan’s great object now was to prevent the accomplishment of this promise by destroying all the seed royal. “But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.” Having thus, as she thought, got completely rid of the true heir, she took possession of the throne herself, and “reigned over the land.”

This was indeed a sad sight in Judah, and most trying to the faith of the faithful. God had promised the throne, in solemn covenant, to David and to his sons forever, and now a wicked usurper of the apostate house of Ahab occupies it. But faith endures as seeing Him who is invisible. The enemy may appear for a time to triumph, but it is only in appearance, and for a short duration. “The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.” (Psalm 33:11.) God is over all, and above all. His word can never fail. Let us “only believe,” and trust in Him. Faith, in due time, will be answered, the promise fulfilled, and every enemy utterly confounded.

Satan had now done his utmost: he could do no more. Death is the full display of his power; but God is the God of resurrection. Where Satan ends, God begins. He quickens the dead. At this very moment, when the hopes of the house of Judah seemed lost, He was watching over, in His faithful love, the true heir of the throne of David. Accordingly, we read, “But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king’s sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the

wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years." Thus Joash, the true heir, was preserved by the intervention of God. "He was rescued from among the king's sons that were slain." He was like one that had been raised up "from among" the dead. It was a resurrection "from among" the slain ones. The power and instrumentality of Satan end when he has brought in death, but the power and instrumentality of God come into operation just where his end. All his malignant efforts, and the cruelty of his instruments, only prove, more fully, the unchangeableness of God's purpose, and the eternal stability of His word.

There are several points of special interest in this instructive narrative which I desire to notice in order.

1. In the wonderful deliverance of the infant Joash from the hand of Athaliah, we have a striking illustration of the resurrection of Jesus, by the mighty power of God. Joash was stolen "from among the king's sons that were slain." Jesus was raised up from among the dead. The former was hidden in the house of God—the latter is hidden in His Father's house on high.

2. In Athaliah, on the throne of David, we have an equally clear illustration of the present position and guilt of the world, with reference to the crucifixion of Christ, the heir of every promise. The world, led on by Satan, killed Christ. God holds it guilty of the deed. It "is condemned already." When the Jewish "husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance." (Matt, 21:38.) The religious Jew and the godless Gentile joined hands to shed the blood of Jesus. They, together, crucified the, "heir of all things," the Lord of life and glory. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together." (Acts 4:26, 27.) Here we find gathered around the cross of Jesus, the representatives of every class; namely, Jew and Gentile, king and subject, priest and people. The whole world was, representatively, at the cross, and took part in the crowning act of man's sin. Christ refers to this when He says, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31.) The world was judged in the death of Christ, and its prince cast out. They go together. God will keep every man to his colors. Those that fight under the banner of the Prince of life will at last enter into the joy of their Lord; but those that fight under the banner of the prince of this world must be cast out with him.

The whole power of Satan was concentrated at the cross. He brought up all his forces to this point. He staked everything—the power of the world, and the power of darkness. (Luke 22:53.) He had ever watched, with most malignant jealousy, God's chosen vessel of wondrous grace to man. He missed Him when he slew the babes in Bethlehem. He was overcome in the temptation in the wilderness, and bound by a stronger than he. But he returned to Him again. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." He had no power of death over God's unblemished Lamb. He laid down His life of His "own voluntary will." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." (John 10:17-18.) His death, then, was not the result of the power of man or Satan over Him; but of His own perfect subjection to His Father's will. At the same time it clearly proved the extent of Satan's power in the world. As the obedient One He lays down His life. In appearance the enemy triumphs.

But it was not so. "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2:14.) This was absolute victory. He bore the judgment of God against sin in His death, and thereby completely annihilated all the rights and power of the enemy. Morally, judicially, totally, and absolutely, the true seed royal triumphed over the great enemy of God and man. True, "He was crucified through weakness." "But He entered the regions of the dead as the Son of God with power." His presence was felt throughout the deep caverns of the grave. He burst its bars asunder, and carried off in triumph the spoils of the enemy. "He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive." A risen Christ is LORD OF ALL.

But my reader may be disposed to ask, on whom, at this period of the world's history, does the guilt of the death of Christ rest? Most assuredly, we answer, on all them who side with the world. God has not yet publicly vindicated the honor of His beloved Son, or judged the world for its awful guilt in murdering Him. If the blood of Abel cried to God for vengeance on Cain, surely the blood of the holy, spotless Jesus cries for vengeance on those who not only shed it, but despise it. If we are not justified by faith in the shed blood of Jesus, we are condemned by it. There is no such thing as neutral ground, between Christ and the world. There is not a single line of middle ground for any soul to stand upon. If we are not by faith on the side of Christ, we must be with the world, and, as it were, approving of what the world did, though we may not say so in words. In the sight of God, we are on the world's ground, and under the world's guilt and condemnation.

In vain did the chief priests remonstrate with Peter and John on this point. They said, "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts 5:28.) It is quite plain, from this and other passages, that these divinely-qualified preachers brought home, to the consciences of their hearers, the truly solemn charge of blood-guiltiness. But the same precious blood speaks of the love of God, as well as of the sin of man. All who have faith in the blood of Christ are cleansed from all their sins, justified in the presence of God, and "accepted in the Beloved."

3. If Athaliah illustrates the present position of the world, Jehoshabeath illustrates the present position of the Church. She was hidden in the house of God with Joash, the rejected and unknown king, whom the world thought to be dead, but whom she knew to be alive. Of the Church it is said, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:1 - 4.) The eye of Jehoshabeath rested in the fullness of hope on the true and living heir. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." (Heb. 2:9.) "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Col. 3:4.

And now, let me ask, what sympathy could there be between Jehoshabeath and Athaliah? Surely, none whatever! Could the former take any part in the schemes, plans, or principles of the latter? Could she assist her, in any way, in the administration of her affairs, or conform to the fashion of her court? Oh, no! There was not a particle of fellowship between them. Athaliah was a murderer and a usurper, her garments were deeply stained with the blood of the sons of David. Besides, Jehoshabeath knew that the moment Joash was revealed, the usurper would be hurled from her throne - that his appearance would be the death-blow to her reign; therefore, she was content to wait until then. The "six years" would soon run their rapid course: it was but "A LITTLE WHILE," and God would place the true heir upon the throne of David.

The application of all this to the Church is very easy. Whole-hearted separation from the world is her true place; and holy, happy, living association with Christ, her divine Lord and Bridegroom. If the believer is indeed enjoying communion with Christ, he can have no fellowship with the world, either in its spirit, principles, or ways. "For I am jealous over you," says the apostle, "with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin (an unearthly virgin) to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2.) And again, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," (1 John 2:15-16.) May we have no sympathy with either the mother or her children. The first blast of the last trumpet will be the death-knell to them all.

4. If, in Jehoshabeath, we see heart for Joash, in Jehoiada, her husband, we see faith in activity for him. The affections of the former were gathered around the person of the prince—the faith of the latter was energetic, in making every necessary arrangement for the glory and stability of his throne. He was a man of faith, energy, and devotedness. In leading so many to make a covenant with Joash, while yet unseen, he illustrates the present energy of the Holy Spirit, in connection with the preaching of the gospel, in leading souls to trust an unseen Jesus, and to rejoice in hope of His coming kingdom and glory.

"And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds.....And they went about in Judah, and gathered all the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David."

At this point of our narrative, I would most affectionately ask, Have you, my dear reader, embraced, by faith, the unseen, but risen, living Jesus, as your Prince and Saviour? This is a personal question of eternal importance. All that believe in Jesus are within the sure limits of the everlasting covenant. "The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Heb. 13:20.) Have you, dear reader, for yourself, before God, faith in this precious blood? The blood that was shed on Calvary is the foundation of every blessing. There is nothing but judgment, overwhelming judgment, before the sinner, that has not been washed from his sins in the blood of Jesus. Oh! can you say to Jesus, with all your heart, "I am thine, and on thy side: I cleave to thee, and trust to thee alone. The world is guilty. I am guilty, being of it. But thou art righteous, O holy, spotless, blessed Jesus. Yet thou sayest, Come!

'Come unto me.' By faith I come, I come to thee, and bid an eternal farewell to this doomed world of ours. Thy word is plain and sure—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." 'Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' (Isa. 4:1-4.) Through grace, I rest in thy word, rejoice in thy work, confide in thyself, and wait for thy coming. "Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus."

5. The position of the Levites illustrates the future position of the Church in glory, with reference to its place of nearness to the Person of Christ. They were, typically, a dead and risen people; and also, typical of the Church in its priestly character as "a royal priesthood." "And the Levites shall

compass the king round about.....but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.”

The bride of the Lamb, the beloved Eve of the second Adam, will have her own special place of blessed nearness to the Person of Christ in millennial and everlasting glory. She has the temporary title of “bride,” but also the permanent one of “wife.” The affections of the bride will be as lasting as the relationship of wife.

Oh! wondrous grace! wondrous glory! What a “BLESSED HOPE” the Christian’s is. To be chosen by a greater than Jehoiada—“to compass the king round about.....to be with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.” Is the heart of my reader established in this most blessed truth? Is he looking, not for an advent merely, but for a Person, His true place, and proper hope is, “To serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.” “But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 Thess. 1:10; 1 John 3:2.) We shall see His glory, witness His power, hear His wisdom, and enjoy His love, “for we shall be like him;” shining in His grace, and reflecting His glory.

6. Every needful step having been taken by the active and faithful Jehoiada, all things were ready. The seventh, or millennial, year was come, and now, Joash, the rightful heir to the throne of David, is brought forth from his secret hiding-place. He comes in the glory of his father's house. He is surrounded with the “spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David’s”—the bright memorials of the victories of David. “Then they brought out the king’s son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king; and Jehoiada anointed him, and said, God save the king.....The king stood at his pillar at the entering in, the princes, and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise.”

This was a day of great joy and gladness of heart to Joash, to Jerusalem, and to all who waited for his appearing. Faith was now answered, patience rewarded, and the promise fulfilled. “Behold, the king’s son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David.” But if it was a day of light and joy and rejoicing to Joash, and to all who had sided with him during his rejection, it was a day of darkness, and gloom, and terrible despair to Athaliah, and to all who had sided with her during her reign. The day of vengeance was come, and oh! what a day to the despisers of the true heir! “Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the Lord. And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar.” The pillar of immovable promise. This was enough; the first glimpse of Joash filled her whole soul with the terrors of judgment.....Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason! treason! But Jehoiada answered her vain cry with, Judgment! judgment! “Have her forth of the ranges,” was the imperative word of command, “and whoso followeth her let him be slain with the sword,.....and they slew her there.”

Thus, judgment, unmitigated judgment, closed the six years’ reign of the guilty Athaliah and all her deluded followers. Solemn, awfully solemn, foreshadowing of the final doom of this guilty world and all its deluded followers, who are willingly ignorant that the true heir is alive in the house of God on high, and justly claims our allegiance!

The scene being now completely cleared of the usurper and her followers, the king is peacefully, gloriously, and triumphantly placed on the throne of his father David. The nobles, governors, and people of the land “set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. And all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.”

“What a solemn lesson we learn from these concluding words! “The people rejoiced, and the city was quiet.” When? AFTER that they had slain Athaliah with the sword. When, oh! when will this groaning creation rejoice? When will the city of the whole earth be quiet? AFTER the judgment already passed has been executed. AFTER the vials of God’s wrath have been poured out. But not until then. Could Joash have reigned in fellowship with Athaliah? Impossible! The scene must be cleared of the enemies of the king before he sits upon his throne.

Christ’s “hand will take hold on judgment” before He takes hold of the scepter of righteousness. “Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with THEE?” (Psalm 94:20.) The whole scene must be cleared of His enemies, and Satan bound. Then “the prince of the kings of the earth” will ascend His throne of righteousness, and sway His scepter of peace over a restored and delivered creation. Then, UNTO HIM, “whose right it is” to reign, shall all its tribes and tongues, roll their loud, and long, and rapturous Hosanna, around a peaceful, happy, and rejoicing millennial earth. “BEHOLD, a king shall reign in righteousness.....and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” (Isa. 32)

O blessed hour! when all the earth
Its rightful Heir shall yet receive;
When every tongue shall own His worth,
And all creation cease to grieve.
Thou, dearest Saviour! thou alone
Canst give thy weary people rest;
And, Lord, till thou art on the throne,
This groaning earth can ne’er be blest

The Refuge

Ye desolate children of sorrow
As fleet as the bloom of May,
Your dreams of a brighter morrow,
Your hopes, have they pass'd away?
The chill breath of time, does it wither
The bough where ye build your nest?
Ah, come then, ye mourners, come hither,
I'll tell you of endless rest.
I'll tell you of Him who hath spoken
Sweet peace to my weary heart,
And healed it, though wither'd and broken,
With love's all-availing art.
It was He, 'twas the Lord of Glory,
Who died on the cursed tree,
On Calvary, stricken and gory,
A suffering Lamb for me.
Alone on the desolate mountains,
With tangled and sullied fleece,
I wander'd afar from the fountains
Of holiness, life, and peace;
Till He o'er the hills, like a shepherd,
In quest of His stray one, pass'd,
And saved from the lion and leopard
The life of my soul at last.
Ye who dwell like a trembling sparrow
Alone on a leafless bough,

From the point of the archer's arrow
Defenseless, unshelter'd now,
Fly, fly to the Saviour-come hither,
From sorrow, from fear and strife,
To a branch that will never wither—
Come dwell in the tree of life.

The Sareptan and the Shunammite

(1 Kings 17:9-24, 2 Kings 4:8-37.)

It is a most profitable exercise for the heart to trace the varied effects of divine discipline, as exhibited in the history of the people of God. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4-5) It is so very encouraging to find, in the word of God, that He has, from the beginning, been dealing with "men of like passions's with ourselves. For somehow, one is tempted, at times, to think there never was one, in all the ranks of God's redeemed, like me. Hence it is that the Holy Ghost has, in perfect grace and wisdom, left on record such a variety of cases in which we may recognize, as it were, a full-length portrait of our very selves.

In the Sareptan and Shunammite we have two women who were honored of God in being allowed to entertain, successively, His prophets Elijah and Elisha. But they furnish two very different types of character. Indeed, they exhibit as striking a contrast in their spiritual history, as they do in their natural condition and circumstances.

In the first place, let us look at the Sareptan. "The word of the Lord came unto Elijah, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there; behold I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." (1 Kings 17:8, 9.) This was a most remarkable command, whether we look at it in reference to Israel, to Elijah, or to the poor Gentile widow. As to Israel, it spoke volumes. The Lord's prophet called to be a debtor to the ministrations of a Gentile! This was, truly, a striking commentary upon Israel's condition. The bare reference to it, ages afterward, in the synagogue of Nazareth, cut the Jews to the heart, and filled them with wrath. (Luke 4) It told the double tale of their ruin, and of grace to the Gentiles. It pointed forward to a period when drought and sterility should prevail throughout the promised land, and the dayspring from on high should visit the Gentiles.

Then, as to the prophet, it was just an emptying from vessel to vessel. The ravens and the brook Cherith had been ministering to his need; but now he must pass into other circumstances, and be a debtor to a poor Gentile widow. And what were her resources? Hear her own piteous tale: "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Gloomy enough in the judgment of nature! But faith looked beyond the almost empty barrel and exhausted cruse, to that liberal hand which was able to fill both the one and the other. Had Elijah been walking by the sight of his eyes, his heart would have utterly failed him at the prospect which met his view, "when he came to the gate of the city." But he knew in whom he had believed, and was persuaded that the God of Israel could feed him, by the hand of a starving widow of the Gentiles, just as easily as by the instrumentality of ravens.

Finally, as to the Sareptan herself, she was in the very best possible position to prove the reality of that grace which was flowing beyond the enclosure of Israel, to reach to those who were

“strangers and foreigners.” But, then, we find the blessing had to be forced upon her. She would rather not have had it. Her heart was not prepared to prize the holy dignity which was being conferred upon her. She would fain have put it from her. She had to be “compelled” to taste of the fullness of divine love and mercy. There was slowness of heart to commit herself to the truth of the promise. Alas! how like her are we!

How tardy are we to open our mouths wide! How unwilling to lean on the promise of God, because we know so little of the God of the promise!

But not only was she unwilling to be a recipient of divine grace, she was also unable to interpret the voice of divine judgment. “It came to pass, after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?” How little have we, here, of the dignity of a soul in communion with God! How little of the calm and holy subduedness of one passing through divine discipline, in the secret of the divine presence! “What have I to do with thee?” This question exhibits the impatience and fretfulness of unsubdued nature—terrible evils! Again, “Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance?” All this argues a very low spiritual condition. The object of divine discipline can only be understood, in the light of the divine presence, and if that object be lost sight of, the soul is in danger of losing the “profit” which such discipline is designed to yield. “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” Unto whom? “Unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Heb. 12:2.) There is far more depth in the words “afterward” and “exercised” than the majority of us are aware of.

The Sareptan seemed to think there could be no other object, in the Lord’s dealings, than, to “bring her sin to remembrance.” Blessed be God, the believer is privileged to know that God “has cast all his sins behind His back”—that they are plunged in the waters of eternal forgetfulness. Hence, He can never do aught for the purpose of bringing sin to remembrance. His own peace-giving assurance is, “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb. 10:17.) Instead of seeing the sins of His people, God sees only the blood of His own dear Son which has blotted them out forever. If their sins could ever again come into God’s view, or into God’s remembrance, it could only argue that the blood of the cross was not sufficient to cancel them.

What, then, is the object of God’s discipline or chastisement? “That we might be partakers of his holiness.” (Heb. 12:10.) It is not for the remembrance of sins which He has promised to “remember no more.” Nor is it for the punishment of sins which were all judged in the Person of the Sin-bearer, on the cross. The object is stated to be, “That we might be partakers of His holiness.” And again, “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” (1 Cor. 11:32) Thus, it is neither to remember nor punish sin: it is that we should not be condemned with the world, but be partakers of the holiness of God.

It is well to be clear as to this, not only as it respects our own spiritual history, but also that we may avoid a habit which many fall into, of surmising evil in the case of any one who may be passing, in any way, under the rod. There are some who, the moment they see a Christian visited with chastening, judge, like the Sareptan, that it must needs be to “bring sin to remembrance.” This is a serious mistake which we ought carefully to guard against.

We may easily see from the effect of the discipline, in the case of the Sareptan, what was the object of it. She says, on receiving her son from the dead, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." (1 Kings 17:24.) It was to lead her into the knowledge of what she ought to have known, at a much earlier point in her career. How often is this the case with us! How much truth have we professed, which our souls never knew experimentally until we were brought into the deep waters of affliction, that we might be chastened, disciplined, and exercised, under the hand of "the Father of spirits."

And, here, let me say, that the Shunamite began where the Sareptan left off. "It fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually." (2 Kings 4:8, 9.) She recognized, at once, by the exercise of a spiritual judgment, what the Sareptan had to be taught by a heavy affliction. In a word, we have in the Shunamite, a pupil higher up in the school of Christ than the Sareptan. Everything about her bears the stamp of advanced scholarship. She moves before the spiritual eye, with a dignity, an elevation, a moral grace, peculiar to those who breathe the air of the inner sanctuary. It is not, by any means, that the grace which visited "the great woman" of Shunem, was a whit brighter or richer than that which had reached "the widow woman" of Sarepta. Quite the contrary. The grace which could travel out to an alien of the Gentiles, was even richer than that which acted within the enclosures of Israel.

Furthermore, the difference in these two women was not merely a difference of circumstances. True, the Sareptan was a poor widow, who had to stand, with anxious mind and troubled heart, over a "handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse," and from her thrifty plans, to make the trifle go as far as possible. Whereas, the Shunamite was "a great woman," surrounded with abundance. Again, the prophet had to constrain the Sareptan to give him bread; the Shunamite had to constrain the prophet to take it. These, no doubt, are points of difference; but they are only circumstantial and not personal. The real difference lay not in the condition but in the communion; and this difference is apparent, in every movement of the Shunamite.

She has a want which neither "the king" nor "the captain of the host" can supply. She ardently longs to know the quickening power of the God of resurrection. She sighs to occupy the same ground with the Sarahs and the Hannahs of former generations. She desires to behold the Living God, traveling in the greatness of His strength and triumphing, in her case, over all the weakness and death of nature. She longs to bask in the very brightest beams of the divine glory—to have communion with the very highest truth—to tread the highest walks in the divine life.

Such were the aspirations of the Shunamite. She was not, like the Sareptan, contemplating death, standing at the other side of an exhausted barrel and cruse; she rather saw the God of resurrection, at the other side of nature's death and barrenness. Her faith expected "great things" from the Living God, and she was not disappointed. She was allowed to "embrace a son." She was permitted to experience, in her own person, "the power of resurrection." With her, it was not the God of Providence filling the barrel, but the God of resurrection quickening the dead.

Then again, mark her, as she bows her head in the presence of the divine visitation. Instead of having, like the Sareptan, to go down into the depths to get her knowledge, she carries her knowledge into the depths, and, as a consequence, she gets deeper knowledge still. The

Sareptan stood in the presence of death, knowing nothing of resurrection. The Shunamite, in the power of resurrection, was enabled to walk, as a conqueror, through the circumstances of death. (Comp. Phil. 3:10.) She was enabled to lay her dead son where she had, already, laid her dead body, even at the feet of the God of resurrection, who, she knew, could quicken the one as well as the other. Can anyone fail to see the difference? Alas! it is to be feared, that too many of us know but little of this. Too many of us are satisfied with the low ground of the Sareptan, instead of earnestly breathing after the elevated ground of the Shunamite. We count ourselves happy if we find the barrel and cruse replenished by a liberal Providence, and fail to seek after that deeper character of fellowship which flows from a view of God that raiseth the dead. Truly sweet are the providential mercies of our God; but surely there is something higher far than these. There is communion with Himself. And where is this to be tasted? At the other side of death. It does not need resurrection to replenish a barrel and cruse; but it does to quicken a dead body and raise a dead son.

Obviously, therefore, the Shunamite stood on loftier ground than the Sareptan. Subjects of grace they both were, assuredly, but though the subjects of the same grace, their communion was very different. To the Sareptan death was bringing her sin to remembrance. To the Shunamite, death was only furnishing a sphere in which the God of resurrection might show Himself. The Sareptan said to the man of God, "what have I to do with thee?" The Shunamite would not have "to do" with anyone else.

Thus much as to the difference between these honored women, when passing through similar circumstances. But, then, the Shunamite leaves the Sareptan far behind. The former was carried, by the pinions of a more vigorous faith, into regions which the latter could not reach. She moved in a far higher sphere of communion. The spiritual world has its spheres, as well as the natural or the social world; and the sphere in which we move will depend upon the measure of our communion; and our communion will be according to our faith. Now, the Shunamite seems to have moved in the very highest spiritual circle. Her knowledge of God and His ways was profound. She was in possession of a secret which she could not communicate, either to her husband, or to the official Gehazi. Neither the one nor the other could have understood her. She had shut the door upon her dead son, and turned her back upon the dark chamber of death, as much as to say that no one could or ought to enter there save the God of resurrection. She just wrote upon a check the amount of her need, and took it to Jehovah to sign it. Did He refuse? Did He complain of the amount? Oh! no; the faith of this noble woman was bringing Him into a scene where, above all others, the beams of His glory could shine in all their luster. He could fill a dark chamber with light, and a silent chamber with the accents of life. This was glorious work, and faith knew that God could do it. "It shall be well," and "it is well," said the Shunamite; for her whole soul was filled with the assurance that the beloved object which she had just left in the chamber of death, would be raised by the God of resurrection. And she was not disappointed. "Then she went in and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out." "When the God of resurrection had been there as an actor, she could go in as a worshipper.

Christian reader, let us learn from this Shunamite to seek a closer, deeper, more personal walk with God.

The Double Phase of the Second Advent

1 Thess. 4:13; 5:11. These verses form a very distinct section of this instructive and valuable epistle, in which the inspired apostle sets forth the two great phases of the second advent of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, viz.: 1st, That phase of it which bears upon a sorrowing Church; the 2nd, That phase of it which bears upon a rejoicing world.

The Holy Ghost makes use of the same grand truth, at once to comfort the heart of a weeping saint and to warn the heart of an exulting worldling. The tears of the former, and the boastings of the latter, are both met by the same all-important and most influential doctrine.

Now, it is usual to ascribe to death what the apostle here ascribes only to the Lord's coming. We frequently hear it said, when a christian friend has departed, "We shall soon follow him." This is not what the apostle says; but quite the reverse. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that have fallen asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." And why not? Is it because they were so soon to follow them? By no means. This would be put to death in the place of a returning Christ. The comfort which the Holy Ghost had to offer to the bereaved heart of a saint, rested on a totally different ground. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so also them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The coming of Christ was so near to the apostle's heart—so vividly and so naturally before his soul, as the proper object of hope, that he can say, "we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." The worldly heart would say, "My Lord delayeth his coming;" but the true attitude of a saint, in reference to the second advent of Christ, is set forth in the expression, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord."

The two great boundaries of the Church's existence, down here, are the cross and the coming of Christ. In the cross, death and judgment are forever set aside, as regards the Church; and, instead thereof, the whole scene is filled with glory. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and after them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." (Heb. 9:27, 28.) Christ's coming in glory, without any reference to, or connection with, sin, is the distinctive hope of the Church. "He hath appeared once, in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and, hence, He has nothing more to say to sin; but when He comes again, it will be unto salvation.

Now, it is important to see with distinction the double phase of Christ's second coming, as set forth in Thessalonians, by the two expressions, "the coming of the Lord;" and "the day of the Lord;" the former has distinct reference to the Church: the latter to the world: the former has nothing to do with "times and seasons;" the latter has: the former is unconnected with events amongst the nations; the latter is not.

The great burden of the prophets is the moral government of God amongst the nations of the earth, including His dealings with that peculiar nation, Israel—a subject of immense interest to the saint, not because of his personal connection therewith, but because it involves the counsels of

God, and His ways with man on the earth. But we may look in vain, throughout the pages of Old Testament prophecy, for any enunciation of the doctrine of the Church's position, her calling, or her hope. These things "were not in other ages made known to the sons of men, as they are now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit." (Eph. 3:5.)

Such being the case, it is evident that the hope of the Church cannot be affected by those events which form the more immediate subject of the Old Testament prophets "That blessed hope" shines out in all its peculiar brightness, without so much as a single intervening cloud. "The bright and morning star" glitters on the Church's horizon, and the fondly cherished hope of seeing it cheers her heart and animates her spirit during the dreary watches of this dark night. "I will give him the bright and morning star," is Christ's own promise; and He Himself is that star.

The Holy Ghost, by the prophet Malachi, presents Christ to the hopes and expectations of the pious remnant of Israel, as "the Sun of Righteousness" who shall "arise with healing in his wings;" but "the bright and morning star" awakens an entirely different train of thought in the soul. The Church will have been in the enjoyment of her morning star before the beams of the Sun of Righteousness cheer the sorrowing heart of the remnant of Israel. It is only those who are on the watch during the night who are favored with the sight of the morning star; when the Sun shines forth over the earth, at the opening of the millennial morning, the God-fearing remnant shall catch the first glimpse of His beams; and when He comes to His meridian height "every eye shall see him."

The moment Christ rises up from the Father's throne, the Church rises from earth to meet Him in the air. For that moment the Church waits. Till then, the Holy Ghost works, in connection with the gospel of Christ, for the purpose of gathering out the remainder of God's elect. Till then, He also works to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. But when the time, arranged in the divine counsels, has fully come," The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." This is the Church's special hope, and in full keeping with Christ's gracious promise in John 14 "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Observe the peculiar grace of the words "I will come again"—"the Lord Himself shall descend." He will not send an angel, nor a legion of angels; no; He will come Himself. Such is His grace—such, too, the dignity put upon His beloved bride.

And all this is founded upon the truth, that "Jesus died and rose again." "If," says the inspired apostle, "we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and all who sleep in Jesus, being part of His body, shall be raised up, and presented with Him in His coming glory. God raised Christ from the dead; and, if we believe that, we can, in like manner, believe that all who sleep in Jesus shall be raised up and brought with Him, at His glorious appearing. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11.) All is founded upon our connection with Christ. The head and the body, being one, shall appear together in glory. "For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up

together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” Similar is the teaching in 1 Cor. 15 “Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

Here we have the hope of the Church very clearly and simply enunciated; and most needful it is that the saints should receive it as clearly and simply as it is here laid down, seeing that the enemy has sought to encumber it with a variety of other things, which however interesting as subjects of study, are nowise attractive as objects of hope. For example, some would teach the saints that they must be trampled down under the feet of the beast, ere their hearts can be gladdened by the sight of the morning star. Where do I find this in 1 Cor. 15, or 1 Thess. 4? And yet these scriptures do, as we have said, clearly set forth that which constitutes the Church's hope. So also in chap. 1, we read, “ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living God, and to wait”—for what? The beast? No. The man of sin? No. The false prophet? No. The full development and final destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's image? No. What then? “To wait for his Son from heaven.” This is simple and conclusive enough for any mind that is desirous of being subject to the authority of holy scripture.

The Church is not taught to wait for any movements amongst the nations, for the restoration of the Jews, for the development of the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, for the consolidation of the Roman Empire, for the drying up of the river Euphrates, in order to prepare the way of the kings of the east; in short, she is not to wait for any earthly event whatever, but simply for the Son from heaven—“the bright and morning star.” True, all these things are the direct subject of prophetic testimony, and, as such, profoundly interesting to the spiritual student of scripture, just as the destinies of Sodom were interesting to Abraham, though, personally, he had nothing whatever to do with them.

Every Christian, whatever may be the measure of his prophetic knowledge, should take an interest in the study of prophecy, not that he may build up a system, or defend a theory, but simply that he may be more or less acquainted with the ways and counsels of God, and the destinies of this lower world. But his specific hope is a totally different thing. He will not find that in the pages of Old Testament prophecy. There is nothing there about the Head and the body, the Bridegroom and the bride meeting in the air. He will read of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Tyre, Gog and Magog; and the connection of all these with the city of Jerusalem, and the land of Israel. But these have naught to do with the outlining of the “bright and morning star.” That star is the emblem of a celestial glory, far removed from this dark and stormy world—a glory which shall appear to the Church while a Christ-rejecting world is still wrapped in profound slumber, or intoxicated with its own proud and godless schemes.

Now, when we turn to the second phase of the advent, as presented in 1 Thess. 5:1-11, we find something entirely different. We here come to “times and seasons,” concerning which the apostle felt he had no need to write to the Church, because she had nothing to do with such, so far as she herself was personally concerned. The Church belongs to the day and to the light, and therefore has no need to be guided by “times and seasons,” or “the signs of the times.” Such things have direct reference to those who shall be involved in the terrors of the “day of the Lord,” and by no means to those who have to do with the morning star—those who shall have met Christ as a

Bridegroom in the air, before the revelation of the day.

It must be evident, to every reflecting mind, that there is a vast difference between the appearance of the morning Star, and the revelation of the sun's full brightness. Nor is the difference less striking between the coming of a bridegroom to an expecting bride, and the bursting in of a thief upon an intoxicated or a slumbering household; and yet the two phases of the advent are thus strikingly contrasted. "Yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they (not ye) shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them (not upon you) as travail upon a woman With child, and they shall not escape." This is peculiarly solemn, and eminently calculated to strike terror into a worldly heart. Indeed, the coming of the thief is as terrifying, as the coming of the Bridegroom is attractive. But the two things are as distinct as they can be, and they cannot be confounded without serious damage to the mind of a saint.

It would seem as if the Thessalonians had suffered from having so confounded them. They seem to have, at first, feared lest their departed friends should not participate in the joys of Christ's return; and when corrected as to this, they would appear to have run into another error; namely, that of fearing lest they themselves should be involved in the terrors accompanying "the day of the Lord." This latter thought is fully corrected in the second epistle; and, in the apostle's mode of correction, there is, if possible, a still fuller and clearer presentation of the double phase of the advent. He says, "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind neither be troubled, whether by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand," or had actually set in. Here the two things are brought into direct contrast, and the saints are exhorted, on the ground of their participation in the joys of the former not to dread being involved in the terrors of the latter. This is most conclusive. The coming of the Lord is the Church's hope, the day of the Lord is the world's dread; the former will be the consummation of the saint's joy; the latter will be the death-knell of the worldling's happiness.

"The day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night." It is never said that the morning star shall so come as a thief in the night. True, the Lord says to the angel of the church, in Sardis, "If, therefore, thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Rev. 3:3.) This passage, so far from presenting any difficulty, rather affords a strong confirmation of the truth on which we have been dwelling. The Church of Sardis had a name to live, and was dead: it had sunk down, very much to the level of the world, and therefore it is that the Lord presents to it that phase of His advent which properly belongs to the world. If the saint mingles with the world, he must expect to be threatened with the world's portion. If Lot goes down to Sodom, he must participate in Sodom's woes. But we know full well, that "a thief" is not Christ's proper aspect to the Church. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." We, properly, belong to the day; but if we, through ignorance or unfaithfulness, get out of our proper position, we cannot expect the Spirit to animate us with our proper hopes. If we sink to the world's level, we shall look at the future from the world's point of view. "Ye are all the children of the light and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness. Wherefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night; but let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of

salvation; for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” Such is our proper position—our proper hope. And be it observed, that our living together with Christ is founded on the fact that Christ died for us. His dying for us secures our living with Him, whether we wake or sleep.

It is well to note this. It sweetly reveals the grace of Him with whom we have to do, whose death for us secures, infallibly, our being linked with Him in that eternal glory for which both He and His saints now wait. By this gracious assurance, and not by any feeling of dread or uncertainty, would the blessed Spirit superinduce a watchful condition of soul. And, assuredly, the heart that could use such a truth as an excuse for not watching, can know but little of the real power of either grace or glory. Such an one would say, “Let us continue in sin that grace may abound.”

I would only observe, in conclusion, that the apostle closes his view of both phases of the advent, with the same sweet exhortation, “comfort yourselves with these words.”

The Shepherd's Hand

(John 10:28, 29.) Great comfort there is in John's Gospel, in this day of confusion. The ministry there is so desultory. The Lord labored alone, and in a scene of recognized apostasies. His own to whom He had come, had not received Him; the world which He had made, had not known Him; He was outside everything. But to Himself in that condition He calls His sheep. He finds them here and there. All places in the wilderness are alike to Him, Samaria or Judea. He deals with souls immediately, personally, closely, and in solitude. He deals with them individually, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." John 1:12. He entered in among them "by the door;" coming to sinners in the way of grace, and forth from the bosom of the Father. And the sheep became distinguished by one characteristic—their ears were awakened by the Spirit to know the voice of Him who thus came to them in grace, as from the Father, with words of life and salvation.

For so we find it in all the early chapters of this Gospel, where the Lord's ministry is recorded. Each of those whom He finds and gathers is seen to be awakened to know His voice and to follow Him. Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, in chap. 1; the Samaritan, in chap. 4; the convicted sinner, in chap. 8; the blind beggar, in chap. 10—all are given ears to hear His voice, and all, as it were, had their ears nailed to His door-post. In other words, their hearts are fixed, their thoughts are centered, their confidence is set, and He is the common object. Their need is brought to Jesus only, and left with Him.

They listened; they knew His voice; they followed. This listening is a sinner's wisdom and a sinner's salvation. He is wise to be silent, for he can say nothing for himself; he is saved by being silent, if he thus take occasion to listen to Jesus. And such were all these. They listen, they know his voice, they follow. Some have a quicker ear, some a more dull one. But no matter. Their ears are opened to Him.

They are not seen as linked together, but each gathered to Him. A wandering, free, unprescribed ministry we trace here: and the elect are not seen as linked together, save in this characteristic I have been noticing, that each and all of them have an ear for the voice of that Shepherd who had entered by the door, who had come from the bosom of the Father, doing His works, and speaking His words.

For in such a character as this in grace so suited the bosom from whence He came, and the Father whom He represented, the Lord enters every scene in the early chapters of this Gospel. This we may at once perceive. He enters the place where Andrew and his companions go to Him, as the Lamb of God. He enters on the spirit or on the solitude of Nathanael, as the One who was about to open heaven to Him. He enters on the thoughts of Nicodemus, as the One whom the Father had sent for healing and life. He enters the conscience of the Samaritan woman as the gift of God. He enters on the impotent man at Bethesda as his immediate Healer, working after the pattern of the Father. He enters into the midst of the multitude in chap. 6 as the sealed of the Father, to give life to the world. He enters on the guilt of the convicted sinner, as the light of life. He

enters on the blindness of the beggar as the light of the world.

Thus, entering by the door, as the Shepherd of the sheep, He saves, and blesses, and quickens, and refuses to do anything else. He will not be a Judge or a King, nor will He display His power or get Himself a name in the world. He came from the bosom. He was declaring the Father. He was full of grace and truth; and entering in upon the flock, He entered only to bless.

But, again, I observe, He meets them in all conditions, one here, and another there one now, and another then. A wandering, free, unprescribed ministry we trace, and such only, in these early chapters of John. And He does not fold them together in this Gospel. They enter by Him, the door, and find salvation and pasture, and aboundings of life; but it is “one flock and one Shepherd.” He does not put them again as in the fold of Jerusalem. He does not encamp them again around the tabernacle, or put them under the shade of Lebanon. But are they unsheltered? Have they been gathered to be exposed? He goes on, in chap. 10, (where we have His own commentary upon His own ministry,) to satisfy this question. And He tells us, that though the sheep had been gathered after this free and broken manner, yet are they gathered to a place of everlasting security. They had been found in a world of apostasies, a scene of infinite confusion, a trackless desert, where death and darkness brooded—where all foundations were out of course. The Lord had found them, some in Samaria, some in Galilee, some in Judea. But now, having gathered them, He has everlasting rest and security for them. They have come to Himself, and they shall find that a place of strength, a fortress, a strong tower, a munition of rocks which no malice of all their enemies can ever touch. It is His own hand and the Father’s hand. No place less than that, folded there, if we please so to speak, a flock kept in that hand, out of which none can ever pluck them.

Great comfort, again I say, in all this; for we find ourselves in scenes of confusion and apostasy, such as the ministry of the Lord, in John’s Gospel, recognizes. The work of Christ, by His Spirit and His Gospel, is desultory now as it was then. His elect are found everywhere; but they have got an ear to hear His voice, an ear nailed to His door-post; round Himself they have gathered for salvation, and pasture, and life in its aboundings, and they are kept in the unassailable fortress of His hand and the Father’s.

Well, let me add, if the Spirit lead us, through the further teaching of the Epistles, to take our place in the body of Christ, as here we see it in the hand of Christ, I would not apprehend it merely, but I would desire grace to enjoy the calling that gives me to Him, who is the head over all things to the Church, and makes me of the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. Eph. 1.

A Sleepless Night

(Read Esther 6)

“On that night could not the king sleep.” How was this? What was it that drove sleep from the monarch’s eyes, and slumber from his eyelids? Why could not the mighty Ahasuerus enjoy a mercy, which doubtless, was the portion of the very meanest of his subjects? Some may say, “The heavy cares of royalty robbed him of that which “a laboring man enjoys.” This might be so on other nights; but, “in that night” we must account for his restlessness in quite another way. The finger of the Almighty was in that sleepless night. “The Lord God of the Hebrews” had a mighty work to accomplish on behalf of His beloved people, and, in order to bring that about, He drove “balmy sleep” from the luxurious couch of the monarch of one hundred and twenty-seven provinces.

This brings out in a very marked way the character of the Book of Esther. The reader will observe that, throughout this interesting section of inspiration, the name of God is never heard, and yet His finger is visibly stamped upon everything. The most trivial circumstance displays His “wonderful counsel and excellent working.” Nature’s vision cannot trace the movement of the wheels of Jehovah’s chariot; but faith not only traces it, but knows the direction in which it tends. The enemy plots, but God is above him. Satan’s every movement is seen to be but a link in the marvelous chain of events, by which the God of Israel was bringing about His purpose of grace respecting His people. Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it shall ever be. Satan’s malice—man’s pride—the most hostile influences—all are but so many instruments in the hand of God, for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes. This gives the sweetest rest to the heart, amid the ceaseless tossings and fluctuations of human affairs. “The end of the Lord shall assuredly be seen. “His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.” Blessed be His name for this soul-sustaining assurance! It quiets the heart, at all times. Jehovah is behind the scenes. Every wheel, every screw, every pivot in the vast machine of human affairs is under His control. Though His name be not known or acknowledged by the children of earth, His finger is seen, His word is trusted, and His end expected by the children of faith.

How clearly is all this seen in the Book of Esther. Vashti’s beauty—the king’s pride therein—his unseemly command—her indignant refusal—the advice of the king’s counselors—all, in short, is but the unfolding of Jehovah’s ripening purposes. Of “all the fair young virgins gathered at Shushan the palace,” not one must be allowed to win the king’s heart, save Esther—the daughter of an obscure Jewish house—a desolate orphan. Again, of all the officers, ministers, and attendants, about the palace, not one must be allowed to discover the conspiracy against the king’s life, save “a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai.” And, on that sleepless night, nothing must be brought to while away the monarch’s weary hours, save “the book of the records of the chronicles.” Strange recreation for a voluptuous king! But God was at the back of all this. There was a certain record in that book, about “a certain Jew,” which must be brought immediately under the eye of the restless monarch. Mordecai must come into notice. He must be rewarded for his fidelity; and so rewarded, as to cover with overwhelming confusion the face of the proud

Amalekite. At the very moment that this record was passing under review, none other than the haughty and wicked Haman must be seen in the court of the king's house. He had come in order to compass the death of Mordecai; but, he is forced, by the providence of God, to plan for Mordecai's triumph and dignity. He had come to get him hanged on the gallows; but, he is made to clothe him with the king's robe, to set him on the king's horse, and, like a footman, to conduct him through the street of the city; and, like a mere herald, to announce his triumph.

"Oh! scenes surpassing fable, and yet true."

Who could have imagined that the noblest lord in all the dominions of Ahasuerus—a descendant of the house of Agag, should be compelled thus to wait upon a poor Jew—and that, too, such a lord—such a Jew—and, at such a moment? Surely, the finger of the Almighty was in all this. Who but an infidel, an atheist, or a scepter, could question a truth so obvious?

Thus much, as to the Providence of God. Let us, now, look for a moment at the pride of Haman. Despite of all his dignity, wealth, and splendor, his wretched heart was wounded by one little matter, not worth a thought, in the judgment of a really great mind, or well-regulated heart. He was rendered miserable by the simple fact that Mordecai would not bow to him! Albeit he occupied the nearest place to the throne—although entrusted with the king's ring—although possessed of princely wealth, and placed in a princely station, "yet" he says, "all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." (chap. 5:13.) Miserable man! The highest position—the greatest wealth—the most extensive influence—the most flattering tokens of royal favor—all "availed nothing" just because a poor Jew refused to bow to him! Such is the human heart! such is man! such is the world!

But "pride cometh before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Haman proved this. At the very moment when he seemed to be about to plant his foot on the loftiest summit of his ambition, a just and retributive Providence had so brought it about that he was, in a most marvelous manner, compelled to prepare a triumph for Mordecai—a gallows for himself. The man whose very presence embittered a life of magnificence and splendor, he is obliged to wait upon; and the very gallows which he had ordered to be prepared for his intended victim, was made use of for his own execution!

And, here, let us ask, why did Mordecai refuse to bow to Haman? Did it not seem like a blind obstinacy to refuse the customary honor to the king's noblest lord - his highest officer? Assuredly not. Haman, it is true, was the highest officer of Ahasuerus; but he was the greatest "enemy of Jehovah," being the greatest "enemy of the Jews." He was an Amalekite; and Jehovah had sworn that He would "have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Exod. 17:16.) How, then, could a true son of Abraham bow to one with whom Jehovah was at war? Impossible. Mordecai could save the life of an Ahasuerus, but he never could bow to an Amalekite. As a faithful Jew, he walked too closely with the God of his fathers, to admit of his paying court to one of the seed of Amalek.

Hence, then, Mordecai's stern refusal to bow to Haman, was not the fruit of a blind obstinacy and senseless pride, but of lovely faith in, and high communion with, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He could never relinquish the dignity which belonged to the Israel of God. He would abide, by faith, under Jehovah's banner; and, while so abiding, he could never do obeisance to an

Amalekite. What, though His people were “scattered and peeled”—“though their beautiful house” was in ruins—though Jerusalem’s ancient glory was departed—was faith, therefore, to abandon the high position assigned, by God’s counsels, to His people? By no means. Faith would recognize the ruin, and walk softly; while, at the same time, it laid hold of God’s promise, and occupied, in holy dignity, the platform which that promise had opened up for all who believed it. Mordecai was made to feel, deeply, the ruin. He clothed himself in sackcloth, but he would never bow to an Amalekite.

And what was the result? His sackcloth was exchanged for royal apparel. His place at the king’s gate was exchanged for a place next the throne. He realized, in his own happy experience, the truth of that ancient promise, that Israel should be “the head and not the tail.” Thus it was with this faithful Jew of old. He took his stand on that elevated ground where faith ever places the soul. He shaped his way, not according to nature’s view of things around, but according to faith’s view of the word of God. Nature might say, “Why not lower your standard of action to the level of your circumstances? Why not suit yourself to your outward condition? Had you not better acknowledge the Amalekite, seeing that the Amalekite is in the place of power?” Nature might speak thus, but faith’s answer was simple: “Jehovah hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation.” Thus it is ever. Faith lays hold of THE LIVING GOD AND HIS ETERNAL WORD, and abides in peace and walks in holy elevation.

Christian reader, may the hallowed instruction of the Book of Esther be brought home to our souls, in the power of the Holy Ghost. In it, we see the Providence of God—the pride of man—the power of faith. Moreover we are furnished with a striking picture of the actions of Jehovah, on behalf of His people Israel—the sudden overthrow of their last proud oppressor—and their final restoration, and everlasting blessedness, rest, and glory.

Sow Beside All Waters

Sow ye beside all waters,
Where the dew of heaven may fall;
Ye shall reap if ye be not weary,
For the Spirit breathes o'er all.
Sow, though the thorn may wound thee,
One wore the thorns for thee;
And though the cold world scorn thee,
Patient and hopeful be.
Sow when the tempest lowers,
For calmer days may break;
And the seed in darkness nourished,
A goodly plant may make.
Sow when the morning breaketh
In beauty o'er the land;
And when the evening falleth,
"Withhold not thou thine hand,
Sow, the' the rock repel thee,
In its cold and sterile pride;
Some cleft there may be riven,
Where the little seed may hide.
Fear not, for some will flourish,
And though the tares abound,
Like the willows by the waters,
Will the scattered grain be found.
Work while the daylight lasteth,
Ere the shades of night come on;

Ere the Lord of the vineyard cometh,
And the laborer's work is done.
Watch not the clouds above thee,
Let the wild winds round thee weep;
God may the seed time give thee,
But another's hand may reap.
Have faith, though ne'er beholding
The seed burst from its tomb;
Thou knowest not which may perish
Or what be spared to bloom.
Boom on the narrowest ridges,
The ripened grain will find;
That the Lord of the harvest coming,
In the harvest-sheaves may bind.

Tell Jesus

From the parallel passage in Mark 6:30, &c, we find that “the apostles gathered together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.” And here we read that the disciples of John the Baptist, after burying his body, “went and told Jesus.” The remedy for both elation and sorrow is His own immediate presence. He said, (Mark 6) “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile.” While there, the faith of the disciples was tested. The multitude was large, and the provision but five loaves and two fishes. The selfish hearts of the disciples would reason thus, “There is but enough for us—this is what we brought for ourselves—send them away.” But no, the Lord says, “They need not depart, give ye them to eat.” True, the supply was small; but they had God and the loaves; and the answer to their selfish reasoning was twelve baskets of fragments.

“The world knoweth us not.” The world does know Christians far too well, because they resemble it so much in their plans, their pursuits, and speculations.

That Blessed Hope

Titus 2:13.

It is worthy of remark, that the Spirit of God never enters upon any lengthened proof of the doctrine of the Lord's coming. He assumes it to be the proper, settled, well-defined hope of the Church of God, and uses it accordingly, on all occasions. Thus, in the 2nd chapter of Titus, we find this "blessed hope" introduced in connection with the most common-place relations and duties of domestic life; such, for example, as servants "not answering again; not purloining."

Now, it is very needful to observe this. It teaches us that the coming of the Lord is not a matter of mere speculation for the learned, but that it is a "blessed hope," to animate the heart of a poor servant, amid the wear and tear, the weariness and drudgery, of daily life. Such an one, by "not purloining and not answering again," can, in his measure, "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour," just as much as an apostle. And at the same time he can cherish "that blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." How blessedly simple is this! A servant might feel disposed to ask, "What can I do for the Lord? How can I adorn His doctrine, or promote His cause?" The Holy Ghost opens a most definite, simple, happy sphere for such a one, by teaching him, not to purloin, and not to answer again.

But some may say, "Would not common honesty keep a person from 'purloining?' and would not a moral sense of propriety keep one from 'answering again?'" Very likely; but nature, common honesty and moral sense cannot be trusted. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." In order to please God, we must be partakers of the divine nature, and walk in the energy thereof. This divine nature we get by "believing on the name of the only-begotten Son of God;" and we walk in the energy of this nature "by faith." In this way every little thing we do is fruit to God—everything is fragrant with the grace of Christ, and ascends as a sweet odor to the throne of God. An apostle, traveling in the energy of the Spirit, from nation to nation, in apostolic zeal and power, planting and watering churches, and a servant at his daily toil, can each, in his own sphere, "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour," and can each, cherish the "blessed hope" as that which precisely meets the need and the longing desire of his soul.

How gracious of our God to give us such a hope! How happy to know that it is not for death and judgment we are taught to wait, but for that very One "who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood"—the One who thought of us before all worlds, visited us in due time, suffered for us on the tree, that He might exalt us to the very highest place of dignity and glory, in companionship with Himself.

There are only four passages, properly speaking, in the New Testament, which refer to the condition of the soul while absent from the body. I shall quote them for my reader. The first is Luke 23:43, "And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Blessed exchange! The cross of a malefactor exchanged for the bright paradise of God—a world of woe for a world of bliss!

The second is Acts 7:59. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Here again, we have a blessed exchange. Who can utter or conceive the joy of a spirit passing from the presence of cruel murderers, with their gnashing of teeth and stoning with stones, into the presence of Him who stood with open arms to receive the soul of His servant?

The third is 2 Cor. 5:8. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The unclothed or separate state, is not the object of hope though surely it is a happy transition from a body of sin and death—"a vile body," a crumbling tabernacle, into the region of unhindered spiritual communion. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (v. 4.) The unclothed state, though one of unhindered communion, is not one of perfect bliss. The saint will not be perfect until "mortality is swallowed up of life," and that will be on the morning of "the first resurrection," when he will be conformed, in body, soul, and spirit, to the image of his Lord. (See Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2.)

The fourth and last passage is Phil. 1:23. "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." Here it is distinctly stated, that it "is far better," to be away from this scene of conflict, trial, and sorrow. But the apostle does not say that it is the best thing. It is good to be here, while the Lord will have it so. It is better to be with Christ, when our work is done. But the best thing of all will be, when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; AND SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD." 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

This is "that blessed hope" which the Lord Jesus set directly before the hearts of His sorrowing disciples, on the eve of His departure, when He said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

This is "that blessed hope" which the angels announced to the apostles, when they said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:2.) The coming is as sure as the going, and in the same manner.

Finally, this is "that blessed hope" which glitters like a precious gem on every page, almost, of the New Testament; and which God the Holy Ghost has set as the polar star in the Church's horizon, of which she should never lose sight, which should give tone and character to all her ways down here.

If my reader will turn to Lev. 25:14-16, he will see that an Israelite was taught to regulate the sale of his land by the year of jubilee. If that year were at hand, the value of property was diminished. So is it exactly in reference to "that blessed hope." If the heart be cherishing the fond thought of seeing the Bridegroom, it will make but little of present things. If we were on the look out to catch the earliest dawn of that cloudless morning the appearing of "the morning star," what an unworldly people we should be! How separated! How elevated!

Alas! that the Church should have so lost the sense of "that blessed hope." Alas! that she should have put the coming of death instead of the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom. May the Lord revive, in the midst of His people, this purifying and comforting hope. May He make ready, and call

forth a faithful band of “wise virgins,” who with hearts established in that “grace” which hath appeared to all, and with trimmed lamps and burning lights, shall heartily respond to the cry, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh,” in those suited accents, “COME, LORD JESUS; COME QUICKLY!”

‘Tis night—but O, the joyful morn
Will soon our waiting spirits cheer;
You gleams of coming glory warn
Thy saints, O Lord, that thou art near.
Children of hope, beloved Lord!
In thee we live, we glory now,
Our joy, our rest, our great reward,
Our diadem of beauty thou!
And when exalted, Lord, with thee,
Thy royal throne at length we share;
To everlasting thou shalt be
Our diadem, our glory, there.

Thou Shalt Find It After Many Days

John Flavel was minister of Dartmouth, in England. One day he preached from these words, “ If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.” (1 Cor. 16:22). The discourse was unusually solemn, particularly the explanation of the curse. At the conclusion, when Mr. Flavel rose to pronounce the blessing, he paused and said, “How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loves not the Lord Jesus is Anathema Maranatha?”

The solemnity of this address deeply affected the audience. In the congregation was a lad named Luke Shut, about fifteen years old, a native of Dartmouth. Shortly after he went to sea, and sailed to America, where he passed the rest of his life. His life was lengthened far beyond the usual term. When a hundred years old, he was able to work on his farm and his mind was not at all impaired. He lived all this time in carelessness and sin; he was a sinner a hundred years old, and ready to die accursed.

One day, as he sat in his field, he busied himself in re-fleeting on his past life. He thought of the days of his youth. His memory fixed on Flavel’s sermon, a considerable part of which he remembered. The earnestness of the minister—the truths spoken—the effect on the people—all came fresh to his mind. He felt that he had not loved the Lord Jesus; he feared the dreadful anathema; he was deeply convinced of sin—was brought to the blood of sprinkling. He lived to his one hundred and sixteenth year, giving every evidence of being born again.

The True Ground of Peace

“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”—Exod. 12:13.

The blood on the lintel secured Israel's peace. There was nothing more required in order to enjoy settled peace, in reference to the destroying angel, than the application of the blood of sprinkling. God did not add anything to the blood, because nothing more was necessary to obtain salvation from the sword of judgment. He did not say, “When I see the blood and the unleavened bread or bitter herbs, I will pass over you.” By no means. These things had their proper place, and their proper value; but they never could be regarded as the ground of peace, in the presence of God.

It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what it is which constitutes the groundwork of peace. So many things are mixed up with the work of Christ, that souls are plunged in darkness and uncertainty as to their acceptance. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of Christ; but the devils know this, and it avails them naught. What is needed is to know that we are saved—absolutely—perfect—eternally saved. There is no such thing as being partly saved and partly lost; partly justified and partly guilty; partly alive and partly dead; partly born of God and partly not. There are but the two states, and we must be in either the one or the other.

The Israelite was not partly sheltered by the blood, and partly exposed to the sword of the destroyer. He knew he was safe. He did not hope so. He was not praying to be so. He was perfectly safe. And why? Because God had said, “When I see the blood I will pass over you.” He simply rested upon God's testimony about the shed blood. He set to His seal that God was true. He believed that God meant what He said, and that gave him peace. He was able to take his place at the paschal feast, in confidence, quietness, and assurance, knowing that the destroyer could not touch him, when a spotless victim had died in his stead.

If an Israelite had been asked as to his enjoyment of peace, what would he have said? Would he have said, “I know there is no other way of escape but the blood of the Lamb; and I know that that is a divinely-perfect way; and, moreover, I know that that blood has been shed and sprinkled on my door-post; but, somehow, I do not feel quite comfortable. I am not quite sure if I am safe. I fear I do not value the blood as I ought, nor love the God of my fathers as I ought.” Would such have been his answer? Assuredly not. And yet hundreds of professing Christians speak thus, when asked if they have peace. They put their thoughts about the blood, in place of the blood itself, and thus, in result, make salvation as much dependent upon themselves as if they were to be saved by works.

Now, the Israelite was saved by the blood alone, and not by his thoughts about it. His thoughts might be deep or they might be shallow; but, deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with his safety; he was not saved by his thoughts or feelings, but by the blood. God did not say, “When you see the blood I will pass over you.” No; but “When I see.” What gave an Israelite peace was the fact that Jehovah's eye rested on the blood. This tranquillized his heart. The blood was outside, and the Israelite inside, so that he could not possibly see it; but God saw it and that was quite

enough.

The application of this to the question of a sinner's peace is very plain. Christ, having shed His blood, as a perfect atonement for sin, has taken it into the presence of God, and sprinkled it there; and God's testimony assures the believer that everything is settled on his behalf. All the claims of Justice have been fully answered; sin has been perfectly put away, so that the full tide of redeeming love may roll down from the heart of God, along the channel which the sacrifice of Christ has opened for it.

To this truth the Holy Spirit bears witness. He ever sets forth the fact of God's estimate of the blood of Christ. He points the sinner's eye to the accomplished work of the cross. He declares that all is done; that sin has been put far away, and righteousness brought nigh—so nigh that it is "to all them that believe." Believe what? Believe what God says, because He says it, not because they feel it.

Now, we are constantly prone to look at something in ourselves as necessary to form the ground of peace. We are apt to regard the work of the Spirit in us, rather than the work of Christ for us, as the foundation of our peace. This is a mistake. We know that the operations of the Spirit of God have their proper place in Christianity; but His work is never set forth as that on which our peace depends. The Holy Spirit did not make peace; but Christ did. The Holy Spirit is not said to be our peace; but Christ is. God did not send "preaching peace" by the Holy Spirit; but "by Jesus Christ." (Comp. Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:14,17; Col. 1:20.)

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ; He makes us to know, enjoy, and feed upon Christ. He bears witness to Christ; takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the power of communion, the seal, the witness, the earnest, the unction. In short, His operations are essential. Without Him, we can neither see, hear, know, feel, experience, enjoy, nor exhibit aught of Christ. This is plain; and is understood and admitted by every true and rightly-instructed Christian.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, the work of the Spirit is not the ground of peace, though He enables us to enjoy the peace. He is not our title, though He reveals our title and enables us to enjoy it. The Holy Spirit is still carrying on His work in the soul of the believer. He "maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered." He labors to bring us into more entire conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. His aim is "to present every man perfect in Christ." He is the Author of every right desire, every holy aspiration, every pure and heavenly affection, every divine experience; but His work in and with us will not be complete until we have left this present scene, and taken our place with Christ in the glory. Just as, in the case of Abraham's servant, his work was not complete until he presented Rebecca to Isaac.

Not so the work of Christ for us. That is absolutely and eternally complete. He could say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4.) And, again, "It is finished." The blessed Spirit cannot yet say He has finished the work. He has been patiently and faithfully working for the last eighteen hundred years, as the true—the divine Vicar of Christ on earth. He still works amid the various hostile influences which surround the sphere of His operations. He still works in the hearts of the people of God, in order to bring them up, practically and experimentally, to the divinely-appointed standard. But He never teaches a soul to lean on His work for peace in the presence of divine holiness. His office is to speak of Jesus. He does not speak of Himself. "He,"

says Christ, "shall take of mine and show it unto you." He can only present Christ's work as the solid basis on which the soul must rest forever. Yea, it is on the ground of Christ's perfect atonement that He takes up His abode and carries on His operations in the believer. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." No power or energy of the Holy Spirit could cancel sin. The blood has done that. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the Spirit's work in us, and Christ's work for us. Where they are confounded, one rarely finds settled peace as to the question of sin. The type of the passover illustrates the distinction very simply. The Israelite's peace was not founded on the unleavened bread or the bitter herbs, but upon the blood. Nor was it, by any means, a question of what he thought about the blood, but what God thought about it. This gives immense relief and comfort to the heart. God has found a ransom, and He reveals that ransom to us sinners, in order that we might rest therein, on the authority of His word, and by the grace of His Spirit. And albeit our thoughts and feelings must ever fall far short of the infinite preciousness of that ransom, yet, inasmuch as God tells us that He is perfectly satisfied about our sins, we may be satisfied also. Our conscience may well find settled rest where God's holiness finds rest.

Beloved reader, if you have not as yet found peace in Jesus, we pray you to ponder this deeply. See the simplicity of the ground on which your peace is to rest. God is well pleased in the finished work of Christ—"well pleased for his righteousness' sake." That righteousness is not founded upon your feelings or experience, but upon the shed blood of the Lamb of God; and hence your peace is not dependent upon your feelings or experience, but upon the same precious blood which is of changeless efficacy, and changeless value in the judgment of God.

What, then, remains for the believer? To what is he called? To keep the feast of unleavened bread, by putting away everything contrary to the hallowed purity of his elevated position. It is His privilege to feed upon that precious Christ whose blood had canceled all His guilt. Being assured that the sword of the destroyer cannot touch him, because it has fallen upon Christ instead: it is for him to feast in holy repose within the blood-stricken door, under the perfect shelter which God's own love has provided in the blood of the cross.

May God the Holy Ghost lead every doubting, wavering heart to find rest in the divine testimony contained in those words, "WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD I WILL PASS OVER YOU."—The above is an extract, slightly altered, from the MS. of "Notes on the Book of Exodus."

The Way up to Jerusalem

Read Mark 10:17-52.

In the above scripture we have three distinct types of character presented to us in the rich man, the disciples, and blind Bartimaeus.

In the person of the rich man, we may see a very numerous class set forth. He was not, by any means, without real anxiety respecting his soul's interests. He was seeking "eternal life," and had evidently struggled to obtain it "by works of law." Yet, with all his legal efforts, he was ill at ease. He felt there was something lacking, and therefore he comes to Christ.

But, in his very first question, we detect the wrong ground on which this singularly interesting man was standing. He says, "What must I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" His mind, still darkened by the mists of legalism, had never admitted the wondrous truth that "eternal life" is "the gift of God," and not the reward of human doings. His question proved him to be very far behind in his apprehension, not only of God's dealings with man, but also of his own real state in God's sight. Hence, the Lord Jesus sends him back to Moses! He sends him back, as it were, to the foot of Mount Sinai, to learn the solemn and impressive lessons taught there, amid thunders and lightnings, blackness, darkness, and tempest. Such is the real bent and object of the Lord's reply: "Thou knowest the commandments." It is as though He had said to him, "You are hundreds of years too late, in your inquiry. The doing principle has been tried long since, at Mount Sinai, where it ended in failure. I am here on the ground that man's doings are set aside. Eternal life is God's gift, not man's earning."

However, the rich man did not know where the law really put him. He was ignorant of the holiness of the law, and of his own ruined condition. He says, "All these have I observed from my youth." No one, who knew the height of God's law, and the depth of man's ruin, could make such a statement. Persons who speak of keeping the law, "know neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." If man could keep the law, then, either he is perfect, or the law is imperfect. But the "law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good." (Rom. 7:12.) Hence, it is not possible, that a sinful being could so keep the law as to get life by it, and, therefore this rich man was quite astray in saying he had kept all the commandments; for had he done so, he would not have lacked anything; whereas, Christ says to him, "One thing thou lackest." "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." (Rom. 10:5.) If, therefore, a man could say he had kept the commandments, he should have a right to life as a matter of positive earning. But who would dare to put forth such a claim? Who has so kept the law as to be able to claim life from God? Not one. "By works of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." (Rom. 3:20.) "For as many as are of works of law are under the curse." (Gal. 3:10.) "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

Why, then, it may be asked, does the Lord refer this man to the commandments? Simply that he might see by them how far short he was of what he ought to be, and so learn his need of

something outside of himself. He sends him back to the schoolmaster, and when he professes to have learned all that the schoolmaster had to teach him, the Lord applies another and a more searching test, by calling on him to let go the world, and take up the cross. This was far more than he was prepared for. The world shone too brightly, and the cross seemed too gloomy, in his eyes, to admit of any response to such a call. The world was heavier, in the balance of his heart's affections, than Christ.

It would be all well enough, if he could get eternal life and hold the world as well. The heart likes, right well, "to make the best of both worlds." But it will not do. If a man comes to Christ to bargain about eternal life, he will, assuredly, find the price far beyond his means. Whereas, as we shall see presently, if a man comes as a beggar, he gets all he wants for nothing; if a man comes as a doer, he must be told what to do; if a man comes as a sinner, he is told what to believe.

However, it will always be found that the cross is too heavy for anyone to take up who has not first seen Christ nailed to that cross for him and for his salvation. Further, "the way going up to Jerusalem," that is, the way which Christ trod, and which all must tread who walk in His steps, will be found too rough for all, save those whose "feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." I must, by faith, lean on the cross, ere I can carry it; and I must possess eternal life, ere I can walk in the footsteps of Jesus. To attempt to carry the cross until I enjoy a crucified Saviour, is more difficult than even to stand beneath the fiery mount. This rich man, who thought he had kept all the commandments, was repulsed by the dark shadow of the cross, and "went away grieved."

But, did the Lord Jesus mean to teach this man that he could "inherit eternal life" by doing, selling, or giving? By no means. What then? He was answering him on his own ground. He had come as a doer, and he went away because he could not do. Like Israel in Exod. 19 They said, "All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do;" and when Jehovah did speak, "they could not endure that which was commanded." (Heb. 12:20.) Man speaks about doing, and when he is told what to do, he is neither willing nor able to do it. God's word to all "who desire to be under the law" is "Do you not hear the law?" (Gal. 4:21 Gal. 4:21.) "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." (Rom. 10:5.) "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke 10:26.)

Hence, then, this amiable and interesting person was not disposed even to set his foot upon "the way going up to Jerusalem." The thought of relinquishing the world, its riches and its pleasures, was far beyond him. He wanted "eternal life," but if it was to be purchased by giving up his riches, he would not pay the price, and so "he went away grieved."

2. The disciples furnish us with another type of character. They were able, through grace, to say, "Lo, we have left all and have followed thee." They were a stage beyond the rich man. They had seen sufficient attraction in Christ to lead them to give up their earthly all, and attach themselves to His blessed Person. This was all well. They should be no losers; for Christ will be no man's debtor. Whatever is devoted to Him, He will pay back "a hundred-fold now in this time,.....and in the world to come eternal life."

But, then, "many that are first shall be last, and the last first." It is one thing to begin, it is another thing to continue. It is one thing to enter upon the path, it is another to pursue it. This is a most solemn truth.

“And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid.” (Ver. 32.) Why was this? Why this fear and amazement? Had they not voluntarily given up all to follow Christ? Yes; but they had not just anticipated that the cross would be so heavy or the way so rough. They had given up this world’s brilliant offers; but they did not reckon upon the dark clouds which hung over the path leading to Jerusalem; and, therefore, when called to encounter these things, they were “amazed” and “afraid” They had not, like the rich man, to go away “grieved,” because unable to shake off the influence of this world’s wealth; but they followed Christ in amazement and fear, because of the roughness and darkness of that path along which He was conducting them. Theirs was obviously a different case. They had life, and did not need to “inherit” it by works of law, or works of self-denial. But, then, if they wanted to follow Christ, they had to count the cost, for He was on His way up to Jerusalem. He had “steadfastly set his face “to meet the terrific array of all the powers of darkness, together with the scorn, the reproach, the enmity, and derision of those whom He had come to save.

And mark the grace of those words, “Jesus went before them.” He put Himself in the forefront of the battle. He exposed Himself to the marshaled hosts of earth and hell. “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him and the third day he shall rise again.” (ver. 33, 34.) With a steady gaze he contemplates the whole scene; but most graciously omits one ingredient in His approaching cup of unutterable sorrow, namely, His desertion and denial by those who had left all to follow Him.

How little they entered into all these things is evident from the fact, that while on the way up to Jerusalem, they were occupied about the question of their respective places in the kingdom. A heart that is filled with love to Christ will find full satisfaction in the assurance of being near to Him. It is not so much the place I am to get, as the Person who will be the center and spring of all my joy forever. Paul, in Phil. iii., is not occupied with the place which he is to have in the coming kingdom. No; to “win Christ” was the fondly-cherished object of that devoted heart. From the moment he beheld the beauty and excellency of that blessed One near the city of Damascus, until he was “offered up” in the city of Rome, he was carried forward by the intensity of love to His Person and His cause. And, assuredly, no one ever drank more deeply of His “cup,” or entered more thoroughly into His “baptism” than Paul.

3. It only remains for us to look, for a moment, at the case of “blind Bartimaeus.” In this poor, blind beggar, we see one who, virtually, rebuked both the rich man and the disciples, for the moment he laid his open eyes on the Son of David, without casting back a lingering look at his garment which he had “cast away” in order to come to Jesus, and without a single thought about the roughness and darkness of the path, he “followed Jesus in the way.” What “way?” “The way going up to Jerusalem.” It may be said that “he had no possessions to give up, and he knew nothing of the direction or end of that way.” very likely; but that does not alter the matter. The valuable point for us to get hold of is, that when the eye is filled and the heart is occupied with Christ, we never stop to think of what we have to give up in order to get Him, or what we have to endure in order to follow Him. HE HIMSELF ENGROSSES THE WHOLE SOUL; and naught but this will enable us to bound along the path after Him. What was all the world to Bartimaeus? or what the roughness of the way? His eyes had been opened, and not only opened, but filled with the fairest vision that

ever fixed the gaze of men or angels, even the Person of the Son of God—God manifest in the flesh, and, therefore, leaving far behind his blindness and his beggary, he pressed forward after that wondrous Person who had met all his need.

Why did not Christ tell him about the commandments? Why did He not call upon him to take up his cross and follow Him? Why did He not hold up before his view the “cup” and the “baptism?” Because he was not a bargainer, but a beggar. Because he was not talking about his doings, but confessing his need. And, finally, because he was not thinking about what place he should get in the kingdom, or about the roughness of the way thither, but seeking to get to Jesus and to follow Him when found. This is simple enough. Christ never proposed conditions to a poor, blind, broken-hearted sinner. He came down from heaven, “not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

It is beginning at the wrong end to call upon a ruined and helpless sinner to give up the world in order to find Christ. He is “without strength;” what can he do? If I tell a miser that he must give up his gold, or a sportsman that he must give up his sport, or a drunkard that he must give up his drink, before he can come to Christ, he will tell me I might just as well ask him to cut off his right hand. But, let such an one have his eyes opened to behold the bleeding Lamb of God—let him see God’s salvation—let him hear the glad news of sins forgiven, and eternal life and righteousness bestowed through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then, mark the difference. Instead of “going away grieved” at the hardness of the conditions proposed, “he goes on his way rejoicing” in the fullness of the salvation revealed; and instead of moving along “amazed” and “afraid,” because of the roughness and gloom of the path, he presses forward toward the mark, with a cheerful alacrity which naught but companionship with Christ can impart.

Reader, can you see your own character in any of the foregoing types? What is the present condition of your soul? Are you anxious to get eternal life, but still shrinking from the immense sacrifice which you think is involved? Let me entreat you to “behold the Lamb of God” bleeding on the cursed tree to put away sin. Think not of any sacrifice which you must make, but of that sacrifice which He has made. This will give you peace. Look away from self-straight to Jesus; let not the weight of a feather come between. He has done ALL; and the soul that believes in a dead and risen Christ, is quickened, pardoned, justified.

However, it may be, you have found pardon and peace in Jesus; and, moreover, you have let go your hold of this world and pushed out from the shore to go to Jesus. But you find the way very rough, and the cross very heavy.

The contemptuous sneer of old associates—the bitter reproach and opposition of many around you—the narrowness of your sphere, and the loneliness of your path—all these things are against you; and you find amazement and terror creeping, at times, over your spirit. Well, be not afraid. Remember that the Master is before you, you can distinctly trace His blessed footprints all along that rough and cloudy path. Persevere! You must “through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22.) Keep your eye steadily fixed on Jesus. The time is very short. “Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry;” and then your ears will hear the gladsome words, “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

“We Shall See Him As He Is”

All flesh shall see His glory; but I shall see Himself. “SEE HIM as he is,” in all the realities of His love, grace, and glory. Restored Israel will have their new hearts and new spirits; but I shall have my new body—“LIKE HIM.” “Fashioned like unto his glorious body.” They will be in the center of the earthly glory, I shall be in the same heavenly glory with the Son of God—“WITH HIM in glory.”

O how the thought that I shall know

Jesus that suffered here below,

To manifest God's favor,

For me, and for the saints I love,

Both here and with Himself above,

Doth my renewed nature move

At that sweet word “Forever!”

Forever to behold him shine!

For evermore to call Him mine!

And see Him still before me;

Forever on his face to gaze!

And meet His full assembled rays,

While all the Father He displays

To all the saints in glory!

Not all things else are half so dear

As His delightful presence here.

What must it be in heaven!

‘Tis heaven on earth that we can say,

As now we journey, day by day,

“Himself has borne our sins away:

Our sins are all forgiven.”

But how will His celestial voice

Make each enraptur'd heart rejoice,

When we in glory hear Him!
When we no longer at the gate,
But in His blessed presence wait,
When Jesus on His throne of state
Invites us to come near Him!

What If It Be True After All?

Some years ago, a young man was walking thoughtfully along a crowded thoroughfare in Manchester. For some time he had been a skeptic in religious matters. In the society of young men of a similar class, he had been led first to doubt the truth of the gospel, and then to reject it as "a cunningly devised fable." But a change had recently come over his thoughts. Circumstances had altered with him for the worse; his prospects had become clouded; and the vaunted friendship of former companions had proved utterly hollow and worthless. Fair-weather friends had forsaken him, while Christian friends evinced a deep sympathy in his trials, and a real anxiety both for his temporal and eternal welfare. By their advice he had accompanied them the previous evening to "the place where prayer was wont to be made." He did not believe that the prayers to which he listened could be heard and answered; but he was constrained to contrast the happiness of those around him with his own misery. It was on the following day that he was walking through the busy streets, thinking of what he had seen and heard the evening before, when, in the midst of all the roar of traffic, something seemed to whisper in his ear, "What if it be true after all?" It did not seem as if the thought had merely been suggested to his mind, but as if a spirit had whispered, with thrilling earnestness, "What if it be true after all?" Staggered for a moment, the young man soon tried to re-assure himself. He mingled with the crowd, and endeavored to forget the question, but in vain. He tried to laugh himself out of the impression it had made, but in vain; the words were indelibly fixed upon his mind. Wherever he went, whatever he did, the inquiry still seemed ringing in his ears, "What if it be true after all?" Soon he saw that, if true, eternal destruction awaited him. He was led to inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" and after a severe conflict, was enabled to "behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Surely this was the work of the Holy Spirit. It is recorded thus, by the subject as well as the writer of this brief sketch, that his brethren may be encouraged to pray for those who are still in darkness, and never be weary in well doing. And should it meet the eye of a single skeptic, may the question be divinely applied to his conscience also, "What if it be true after all?"

"Be not weary, praying Christian,

Open is thy Father's ear

To the fervent supplication,

And the agonizing prayer;

Prayer the Holy Ghost begetteth,

Be it words, or groans, or tears,

To the prayer that's always answered;

Banish, then, thy doubts and fears."

What Wait I for?

Psalm 39:7.

This is a searching question for the heart; but it is oft times a most salutary one, inasmuch as we may constantly detect ourselves in an attitude of waiting for things which, when they come, prove not to be worth waiting for.

The human heart is very much like the poor lame man at the gate of the temple, in Acts 3 He was looking at every passerby, "expecting to receive something;" and the heart will ever be looking out for some relief, some comfort, or some enjoyment, in passing circumstances. It may, ever and anon, be found sitting by the side of some creature-stream, vainly expecting that some refreshment will flow along its channel.

It is amazing to think of the trifles on which nature will, at times, fix its expectant gaze—a change of circumstances—change of scene—change of air—a journey—a visit—a letter—a book—anything, in short, is sufficient to raise expectations in a poor heart which is not finding its center, its spring, its all, in Christ.

Hence the practical importance of frequently turning sharp round upon the heart with the question, "What wait I for?" Doubtless, the true answer to this inquiry would, at times, furnish the most advanced Christian with matter for deep humiliation and self-judgment before the Lord.

In the sixth verse of the thirty-ninth psalm, we have three great types of character, as set forth in the "vain show"—"vain disquietude"—and "heaping up." These types may sometimes be found combined; but very often they have a distinct development.

There are many whose whole life is one "vain show," whether in their personal character, their commercial position, their political or religious profession. There is nothing solid about them—nothing real—nothing true. The glitter is the most shallow gilding possible. There is nothing deep, nothing intrinsic. All is surface work—all the merest flash and smoke.

Then, again, we find another class, whose life is one continued scene of "vain disquietude." You will never find them at ease—never satisfied—never happy. There is always some terrible thing coming—some catastrophe in the distance, the bare anticipation of which keeps them in a constant fever of anxiety. They are troubled about property, about friends, about trade, about children, about servants. Though placed in circumstances which thousands of their fellow-creatures would deem most enviable, they seem to be in a perpetual fret. They harass themselves in reference to troubles that may never come, difficulties they may never encounter, sorrows they may never live to see. Instead of remembering the blessings of the past, and rejoicing in the mercies of the present, they are anticipating the trials and sorrows of the future. In a word, they are disquieted in vain.

Finally, you will meet another class, quite different from either of the preceding—keen, shrewd, industrious, money-making people—people who would live where others would starve. There is

not much “vain show” about them. They are too solid, and life is too practical a reality for anything of that sort. Neither can you say there is much disquietude about them. Theirs is an easy-going, quiet, plodding spirit, or an active, enterprising, speculating turn of mind. “They heap up, and know not who shall gather.”

But, reader, remember, on all three alike the Spirit has stamped “vanity.” Yes, “all,” without any exception, “under the sun,” has been pronounced by one who knew it by experience, and wrote it by inspiration, “vanity and vexation of spirit.” Turn where you will, “under the sun,” and you will not find aught on which the heart can rest. You must rise on the steady and vigorous pinion of faith, to regions “above the sun,” in order to find “a better and an enduring substance.” The One who sits at the right hand of God has said, “I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.” (Pro. 8:20, 21.) None but Jesus can give “substance”—none but He can “fill”—none but He can “satisfy.” There is that in Christ’s perfect work which meets the deepest need of conscience; and there is that in His glorious Person which can satisfy the most earnest longings of the heart. The one who has found Christ on the cross, and Christ on the throne, has found all he can possibly need, for time or eternity.

Well, therefore, might the psalmist, having challenged his heart with the question, “What wait I for?” reply, “My hope is in thee” No “vain show,” no “vain disquietude,” no “heaping up” for him. He had found an object in God worth waiting for; and, therefore, turning away his eye from all beside, he says, “My hope is in thee.”

This, my beloved reader, is the only true, peaceful, and happy position. The soul that leans on, looks to, and waits for, Jesus, will never be disappointed. Such an one possesses an exhaustless fund of present enjoyment in fellowship with Christ; while, at the same time, he is cheered by “that blessed hope” that when this present scene, with all its “vain show,” its “vain disquietude,” and its vain resources shall have passed away, he shall be with Jesus where He is, to behold His glory, to bask in the light of His countenance, and to be conformed to His image forever.

May we, then, be much in the habit of challenging our earth-bound, creatures seeking hearts, with the searching inquiry, “What wait I for?” Am I waiting for some change of circumstances, or “for the Son from heaven?” Can I look up to Jesus, and, with a full and an honest heart, say, “Lord, my hope is in thee?”

May our hearts be more thoroughly separated from this present evil world and all that pertains thereto, by the power of communion with those things that are unseen and eternal.

“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.

“With these my happy lot is cast,
Through the world’s deserts rude and waste,
Or through its gardens fair;
Whether the storms of trouble sweep,
Or all in dead supineness sleep,
Still to go on be my whole care.”

Where Should We Look?

Read Psalm 73 and 77.

In Psalm 73, the soul looks out, and reasons on what it sees there, namely, successful wickedness and suffering righteousness. What is the conclusion? “I have cleansed my heart in vain.” So much for looking about one.

In Psalm 77, the soul looks in, and reasons on what it finds there. What is the conclusion? “Hath God forgotten to be gracious?” So much for looking in.

Where, then, should we look? Look up—straight up, and believe what you see there. What will be the conclusion? You will understand the “end” of man, and trace the “way” of God.

Whole-Heartedness for Christ

Perhaps one of the most affecting indications of Judson's entire consecration to Christ, as his one object and theme, was afforded in his native land, when he revisited it in broken health, after an absence of thirty years. "Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town, and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the close of the usual service, and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear attend, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the 'precious Saviour,' of what He had done for us, and of what we owed to Him; and he sat down, visibly affected. 'The people are very much disappointed,' said a friend to him on their way home; they wonder you did not talk of something else: 'Why what did they want?' he replied: 'I presented to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world.' 'But they wanted something different a story.' 'Well, I am sure I gave them a story—the most thrilling one that can be conceived of.' 'But they had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes.' Then, I am glad they have it to say, that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the gospel of Christ; and when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people today, and remembering where I should next meet them, how could I stand up and furnish food to vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge, "I gave you one opportunity to tell them of ME; you spent it in describing your own adventures!"

The Widow of Nain

Luke 7

The Lord again and again touched the defiling thing. He seems to have done so very advisedly, for He did it somewhat unnecessarily. His word would have wrought His purpose without His touch—but He touched the leper, and He touched the bier; either of which would have left Him unclean, had He been anyone but Himself, or had He stood in the relationship of a mere Jew to the law of Moses. In that case, instead of virtue going out of Him, He Himself would have needed cleansing. But He needed no cleansing. No ordinance for purifying could befriend Him. He was magnifying the law, as an obedient Jew, in all things, making it honorable, fulfilling all righteousness; and yet, had He not, on such occasions, held a peculiar relationship to the law, He would have been nothing less than disobedient to it; for the law both demanded and provided these cleansings for these defilements. But we know He was not disobedient. The revelation of His Person makes all simple though He was a Jew, and most surely and simply a man, partaker of flesh and blood, yet was He unspotted, undefilable, in the midst of pollutions, such as none other was.

And, connected with this, we see in Him the overflowings of life. He meets the power of death in all its forms and measures, in diseases of every sort, and death itself—in the different stages or places of its victory, on the bed, on the bier, or in the sepulcher. There was this exuberance, this fullness of life in Him, that could go forth and meet all this power of death, and death itself. It was life in victory.

And still further, as connected with all this, we notice the ease with which this virtue that was in Him, this exuberant power of life, does its divine work in this scene of the power of death. He speaks, and it is done; disease and death give place to health and life. Of old it had been, “Let there be light, and there was light;” now, in like simplicity, it is, “I will, be thou clean.” Life has lost nothing of its original fullness or authority in Him. It quickens all that it meets, and can bring itself to bear upon its subject by a touch or by a word.

All this is seen in the case at Nain. And further—what I would more specially heed at this time—we see the grace with which this life that was in the Son of God puts itself forth and does its work. It flows out to heal, and to heal perfectly. It flows out to impart, but not to enrich itself.

In this case at Nain, there were two healings effected—the body of the dead son was raised to life again, and the heart of the widowed mother was satisfied and each of those healings was perfect in its generation. When the young man revived, we read, “he sat up and began to speak,” giving witness of the full life that was in him, life performing its proper offices; while she not only saw her son in life again, but gets him back to herself again—for we read, “Jesus delivered him to his mother.”

This was perfect grace towards her. She lost nothing. Jesus did not claim him for Himself as the fruit of the life He had imparted. This would not have been the thing. The life would then have been

seeking a return. But that is not its way. This overflowing life, as I may say, acts in the greatness of its own nature; and being rich in itself, it flows out only to impart itself.

And it will, I believe, be found to be always the ease, that the Lord never claims the person, or the services of the person whom He heals. And this is much to be observed. It is, “go in peace,” or “go thy way,” or “take up thy bed,” or “go into thine house,” or words of like spirit. He never claims the healed one for Himself, making the deliverance He had conferred His title to services. And how can we, I ask, sufficiently admire this?

He would not let the poor Legion, the poor restored Gadarene, be with Him, though he desired and sought it, but told him to go back to his friends. Jairus’ daughter He left in the bosom of her family. The child at the foot of the holy mount, delivered by His grace and power from so fearful a state, He delivered back to his father. Here the widow’s son, restored to life, He restores to his mother. He claims nothing on the ground of the healings or recoveries, or revivings, which He works. Grace would not so dishonor itself—for its nature is to share or to impart to others, not to enrich itself. The Lord does not save us in order that we may serve Him otherwise, “grace is no more grace.”

This absence of the Lord making any claims to either themselves or their services, in the case of those whom He heals, is not casual—it is advised. It is a needed expression of what He is. We could not do without it. Would the time of His healing be a time for Him “to receive money, to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen?” Does Christ give in order that He may receive again? Even the spirit of Elisha may give us an answer—how much more the spirit of Elisha’s Lord. (2 Kings 5)

There is something very blessed in this constant, undeviating way of the Lord. He did good and lent, hoping for nothing again. He gave, and His left hand did not know what His right hand was doing. He found servants in the world, it is true; but they were the fruit of His call and of the energy of His Spirit; the fruit, too, of affections kindled in hearts constrained by His love. He called Levi, and Levi followed. He called Andrew and Simon, and James and John, and they followed. He did not heal them, and then claim them. He called them and endowed them; and then, sending them forth, He said to them, in the spirit of His own service, “freely ye have received, freely give.”

He chose them that they should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain, and be for reward and honor in the day of the kingdom; but this was quite another thing. They might say within themselves, “The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again.” This was quite right on their part—but this likewise was quite another thing. Jesus loved, and healed, and saved, looking for nothing again; never, in one single instance, claiming either the persons or the services of those whom He restored and delivered. Grace would then have been wanting in its finest expression—but He came that in Him, and in His ways, it might shine in the exceeding riches and glory that belong to it.

It comes forth, again we say, to heal and to heal perfectly, not to enrich, but to impart, itself.

And the first duty of faith is to take our place exactly there. We should charge our hearts to know this secret—and instead of painfully inquiring of ourselves whether we are making suited returns to the healing and life-giving of the Son of God, we should rather believe, that it is in the large

overflowings of life that He has visited us, finding, as in creation of old, His delight and His glory in His own works.

Wilderness Food for God's Redeemed

When the Lord visited and redeemed His people Israel, and brought them forth into the wilderness, it was not, surely, for the purpose of letting them die there. It was His gracious purpose to provide for them, all their journey through; and, in the 16th chapter of Exodus, we have the account of His marvelous provision.

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." They had just said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we sat by the fleshpots, and where we did eat bread to the full." But now the word is, "bread from heaven." Blessed contrast! How vast the difference between the flesh-pots, the leeks, the onions, and garlic of Egypt, and this heavenly manna—"angel's food!" The former was nature's provision; the latter was God's. That belonged to earth; this to heaven.

But, then, this heavenly food was a test of Israel's moral condition, as we read, "That I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no." It needed a heart weaned from Egypt's influences to be satisfied with, or enjoy "bread from heaven." In point of fact, the people were not satisfied with it; but, despising it, pronounced it "light food," and lusted for flesh. Thus they proved how little their hearts were delivered from Egypt, or disposed to walk in God's law. "In their hearts they turned back again into Egypt." It demands a heavenly taste to feed on bread from heaven. Nature cannot relish such food; it will ever yearn after the things of this world; and, therefore, it must be kept down.

In contemplating Israel as "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," and also, as "eating the spiritual meat, and drinking the spiritual drink," we are to remember that they are "our types." All true believers are "baptized into Christ's death," and risen again, "through the faith of the operation of God." As such, they feed upon Christ, as "the bread of life which came down from heaven." This is their wilderness food—Christ ministered by the Holy Ghost, through the written word; while, for their spiritual refreshment, the Holy Ghost has come down, as the fruit of the smitten rock—Christ smitten for them.

Now, it is evident that, in order to enjoy such meat and drink as these, our hearts must be weaned from all that addresses itself to us as natural men. A worldly heart would neither find Christ in the word, nor enjoy Him if found. The manna was so pure and delicate, that it could not bear contact with earth. It fell upon the dew-drops, (see Numb. 11:9,) and had to be gathered ere the sun was up. Each one, therefore, had to rise early, and seek his daily portion. So it is with the people of God now. The heavenly manna must be gathered fresh, every morning. Yesterday's manna will not do for today, nor today's for tomorrow. We must feed upon Christ every day, with fresh energy of the Spirit, else we shall cease to grow.

Moreover, we must make Him our first object. We must seek Him early, before other things have had time to gain possession of our hearts. Many of us fail in this. We give Christ a secondary place, and the consequence is, we are left feeble and barren. The enemy takes advantage of our

excessive spiritual indolence, to rob us of the blessedness and strength which flow from habitual feeding upon Christ. The new life in the believer can only be nourished by Christ. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John 6:57.)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as One come down from heaven to be His people's food, is unspeakably precious to the renewed soul; but, in order to enjoy Him thus, it is needful that we realize our true wilderness position, separated unto God, in the power of an accomplished redemption. If I am walking with God, through the wilderness, I shall be satisfied with the food which He provides for me, and that is Christ coming down from heaven. "The old corn of the land" of Canaan has its antitype in Christ ascended up on high, and seated at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. As such He is the food of those who know their high position, as "raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenlies" with Him. But the manna is for God's people in their wilderness experience. It was by it the redeemed of the Lord were sustained in their journey from Egypt to Canaan.

Nothing can be more striking than the position of Israel in the desert. Egypt was behind them; Canaan before them; and the wilderness around them; and they were called to look up to heaven for their supply. The wilderness afforded not one blade of grass. In God alone was their portion. Most touching and beautiful type of God's pilgrim people in this wilderness world! They have nothing here. Their life, being heavenly, can only be nourished and sustained by heavenly things. Though in the world, they are not of it, for Christ has chosen them out of it. As a heaven-born people they are on their way to their birth-place, and are sustained by food sent from thence. Theirs is an upward and an onward course. The glory leads only thus. It is in vain to cast the eye backward, in the direction of Egypt. Not a ray of the glory can there be discovered. "They looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." Jehovah's chariot was in the wilderness; and all who desired companionship with Him should be there also; and, if there, the heavenly manna must be their food, and that alone.

True, it was strange sustenance, such as an Egyptian could never understand, appreciate, or live upon; but those who had been "baptized in the sea and in the cloud," could, if walking in happy consistency with that significant baptism, enjoy this food, and be sustained thereby. So it is now, in the case of a true believer. The worldling cannot understand how he lives. Both his life, and that which sustains it, lie far beyond his ken. Christ is his life, and on Christ he lives. He feeds upon the matchless grace of One who "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." He traces Him from the bosom of the Father—the eternal dwelling place of light and love—down to the cross—the place of shame and reproach—and from the cross up to the throne, the place of majesty, victory, and glory, and finds Him in every stage of His wondrous journey to be most precious food for his soul. All around him, though, in point of fact, Egypt is (morally) a waste howling wilderness, affording nothing for his renewed mind; and just in proportion as he finds any material to feed upon must his spiritual man be hindered in its progress.

It is a sad thing to find Christians seeking after the things of the world. It proves very clearly that they are loathing the heavenly manna, and esteeming it "light food." They are ministering to that which they are called to mortify. The activities of the new life, in the believer, will ever show themselves in connection with the keeping down of "the old man and his deeds;" and the more that

is accomplished, the more shall we desire to feed upon “the bread which strengthens man’s heart.” As in nature, the more we exercise the better the appetite; so in grace, the more our renewed faculties are called into play, the more we feel the need of feeding daily upon Christ.

It is one thing to know that we have life in Christ, and full forgiveness and acceptance before God, and it is quite another to be in habitual communion with Him—feeding upon Him, by faith—making Him the exclusive food of our souls—“eating his flesh and drinking his blood.” Very many profess to have found peace in Jesus, who, in reality, are feeding upon various things which have no connection with Him whatever. They may be found habitually dipping into the newspapers, and the varied, frivolous, and vapid literature of the day. Will they find Christ there? Is it by such instrumentality that the Holy Ghost ministers Christ to the soul? Are these the pure dew-drops on which the heavenly manna falls for the sustenance of God’s redeemed in the desert? The question, here, is not as to the right or wrong of the case, but simply, are these things Christ, or are they not? They, unquestionably, are not.

Now, how can a child of God live upon such? We know, by the teaching of God’s word, that he carries about with him two natures; (See Gal. 5:17;) and, it may be asked, which of the two is it that feeds upon the world’s news and the world’s unhallowed literature? Is it the old or the new? “the flesh” or “the spirit?” There can be but the one reply. Well, then, which of the two am I desirous of cherishing? Assuredly, my conduct will afford the truest answer to this inquiry. If I really desire to grow in the divine life, I shall seek, with my whole heart, that character of nourishment which is designed of God to promote that growth. This is clear. A man’s actions are always the truest index of his desires and purposes. Hence, if I find a professing Christian neglecting his Bible, yet finding ample time—yea, some of his choicest hours—for the newspaper, I can be at no loss to decide as to the true condition of his soul. I am sure he cannot be spiritual, cannot thrive, cannot be feeding upon, living for, or witnessing to, Christ.

If an Israelite did not gather, in the freshness of the morning hour, his daily portion of the divinely appointed food, he would speedily have become lacking in strength for his journey. Thus it is with the Christian. He must make Christ the paramount object of his pursuit, else his spiritual strength will, inevitably, decline. He cannot even feed upon feelings and experiences connected with Christ; for they, inasmuch as they are fluctuating, cannot form the soul’s spiritual nourishment. It was Christ yesterday, and it must be Christ today, and Christ forever.

Oh! that we all entered more fully into the truth and power of these things. May the Holy Ghost awaken in our souls more earnest desires after the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then a little of this present scene will go a great way with our hearts.

An Extract from the. MS. “Notes on the Book of Exodus.”

A Worshipper and a Workman

(2 Tim. 2)

VERY serious damage is done to souls by displacing truth and confounding things which God has made to differ. If a man teaches plain and positive error, we may be on our guard against him; hut if he comes with misplaced truth, we are far more likely to be ensnared.

Thus, for example, there are terms made use of in the chapter before us, which only apply to one who "has passed from death unto life;" as "a workman," "a good soldier," "a sanctified vessel." If these be applied to one who has not yet rested his burdened conscience on the all-sufficient sacrifice of the cross, he will assuredly be plunged in hopeless confusion and perplexity. If a helpless sinner casts his eye toward the door of the Father's house, and finds it garrisoned by the "ifs" and "buts" and conditions of a cold and dark legality, he must retire in despair. And yet how often is this done! How often are the responsibilities which devolve only upon the true believer, pressed upon the conscience of the unregenerate. The effect of this unskillful division and application of the word is most deplorable. Anxious spirits are driven back—burdened consciences have their grievous yoke made more grievous still—hearts that have long sighed for peace and struggled hard to find it, anywhere and everywhere but in Jesus and His precious blood, are bowed down in hopeless sorrow—all by the system of confounding the worshipper and the workman.

How important, then, to distinguish them! How important to show the conscience-smitten sinner that the work which is to make him a worshipper was finished, over eighteen hundred years ago, on the cross! How needful to lead such an one entirely out of Himself, to fix the earnest and believing gaze of his soul upon "the one offering of Jesus Christ, once!" It is utterly impossible that true, solid, eternal peace can be enjoyed, or true spiritual worship presented, until the conscience is purged by the blood of the cross. I must know, not only that all the claims of my conscience, but that all the claims of God's throne have been perfectly answered by One who died in my stead, ere I can breathe freely, walk at ease, or worship within the veil. There is no if, no but, no condition. The door is thrown open as wide as the sinner's heart could desire. His nature his condition, and all his heavy liabilities have been divinely met in the cross. God can say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit," not because he has kept all my commandments, nor even because he has earnestly tried but reluctantly failed to keep them, nor yet because he has sincerely repented and purposes to lead a new life; no; but because "I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM." Here is true peace. God knew the exact amount of ransom required, and He has Himself found it—found it all—found it for me.

Reader, rest here! See the full amount of ransom told out beneath the eye of infinite holiness in the life-blood of Jesus! See it! hear it! believe it! rest in it! You are not asked to throw the weight of a feather into the balance to make up the full amount. Jesus has paid all; and as the eternal Father raised Him from the dead and enthroned Him at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest heavens, He, as it were, declared in the audience of all created intelligence—He sounded abroad

through the entire universe, “I have found a ransom” It is needless for you to say, “I can find no rest, I am so terribly bad. I try to live better, but it is all the same. The more I try the worse I am; I try to keep the commandments; I attend the public ordinances of religion; I sometimes hear as many as three sermons on the Lord’s day. I do all I can, but yet I have not got peace; I am not happy, I do not know that my sins are forgiven.” Dear friend, all this is “I.” You must look away from this poor, miserable, guilty, hell-deserving “I” altogether. God says, “I have found a ransom.” Has He found it in you, or out of you? Has He said, “I have found ninety-nine parts of the ransom, and you must find the hundredth?” Ah! no; He has found it ALL. He has done all that He knew to be necessary, and He tells you “the glad tidings” in order that you may “hear and live.”

Do not, therefore, read another line of this article until your weary heart has found sweet repose in God’s ransom. He does not ask you to pay a farthing; but He tells you He has paid all. Take Him at His word—confide in His love—lean on His ransom. May God the Holy Ghost open your eyes to see and your heart to understand and believe the things that make for your eternal peace. Then, but not until then, you will be a worshipper—a purged worshipper; and, moreover, it is only when you are a purged worshipper that you can be a purged workman. To attempt to be a workman before you are a worshipper is to reverse God’s order, and to make shipwreck of everything. You must put things where God puts them, and leave them there. It was when the leper was pronounced clean that he began to wash his clothes. (See Lev. 14:8.) Had he attempted to do so before, he would have polluted the water instead of cleansing himself. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. 7:1.)

This is the way to be a purged workman—a sanctified vessel—an approved servant. “If,” says the apostle to his son Timothy, “a man purge himself from these, (i.e., the dishonorable vessels in the great house,) he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” (2 Tim. 2:21.) To be purged, as to my conscience, by the blood of Jesus, is one thing; to purge myself, by the powerful activities of the divine life within, from the defilement of the scene around me, is quite another. These things must be kept distinct. To confound them is to derange the entire Christian character to rob the soul of peace and destroy the testimony.

The Christian is called to carry on a constant struggle. The moment his soul has found peace in Jesus, this struggle begins. It is when the shout of victory falls fully and clearly on the ear of faith that the battle begins. This may puzzle nature, but faith understands it perfectly. The believer is at once a conqueror and a combatant. He plants his foot upon “the foundation of God,” which “standeth sure”—so sure that all the enemy’s power cannot shake it—and in the enjoyment of the peace which that sure foundation yields, and not in a spirit of bondage, doubt, or fear, he “departs from iniquity.” And what is his object in thus departing—thus purging himself? Is it that he may be a worshipper? By no means. He must be that ere ever the struggle begins. What then? That he may be a purged workman—a meet vessel—an instrument which “the Master” can take up and use. This is simple enough; and it is as practical as it is simple.

Christian reader, you have tasted the reality of a purged conscience, are you calling on the Lord “out of a purged heart?” Are you struggling to “flee youthful lusts, and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a purged heart?” You may, perhaps, feel

disposed to say, "I see such hopeless confusion and division all around me, that I know not with whom to follow or where to find a path for my feet." Well, that may be; but remember this, if the professing church were broken up into ten thousand times as many more fragments- if controversy, division, and confusion, were to roll like a desolating tide over the entire of Christendom, yet is each Christian man solemnly responsible to depart from iniquity the moment he sees it. He is called to "purge himself" from dishonorable vessels. And, moreover, it is in proportion as he so departs—so purges himself, that he will be "meet for the Master's use."

Remember, the question here is not as to peculiar views or opinions in reference to matters ecclesiastical. So; it is far deeper, far more personal, far more practical. Wherever you are, you are called to this mighty struggle—this noble work of purging yourself, in order that Christ may use you. How are you responding to this call? Are you sighing after greater nearness and likeness to Jesus? Are you sick of the cold and heartless profession of the day—the withering formalism that seems to be settling down upon the professing church? If so, press on! press on! Let "upward and onward" be the motto distinctly inscribed upon your whole course and character. Be not satisfied with anything short of AN ENJOYED CHRIST. This is your privilege; see that you live up to it. Do not ask, "What harm is there in this or that?" But ask, "How can I enjoy most of Christ?" Seek to breathe the atmosphere of His presence—to drink into His Spirit—to walk in His footsteps—to grow in His likeness.

Finally, let us all remember that it is the energy of attaining, and not the measure of attainment, which leads to communion. If an apostle met a babe in whom he perceived the energy of attaining, he could have communion with the babe; but if the apostle were to make his measure of attainment the ground of fellowship, the babe would be shut out. The question is not, Do you agree with me? but, Are you following hard after Christ?

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