

THINGS NEW AND OLD VOLUME 2

by C.H. Mackintosh

A collection of articles and writings by C.H. Mackintosh from Things New and Old Volume 2, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

57 Chapters

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Things New and Old Volume 2

Abide With Me

John 14:23

Abide with me. Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness thickens: Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh! abide with me.
Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me.
Not a brief glance, I beg—a passing word;
But as Thou dwelt with thy disciples, Lord—
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come not to sojourn, but abide with me.
I need thy presence every passing hour—
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh! abide with me.
I fear no woe, with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is Death's sting? Where, Grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me!
Reveal Thyself before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.
And when my soul, released from earth, shall soar

To realms of bliss, where I shall weep no more,
Oh! wondrous thought! oh! glorious ecstasy!
Forever, Lord, shall I abide with Thee!

And Am I One With Thee?

And am I one with. Thee, Thou spotless One?

And underneath this wild heart's restless heavings

Beats there the pulse of life immortal, everlasting, and divine,

A portion of thy fullness infinite?

Lord, hast thou linked Thy heart to mine,

And with that golden cord of living life and power,

(Indissoluble to bind each bidden member of Thyself, In living unity to Thee,)

Into the circled chain of glory and the Deity,

The "mystery" of eternity,

Hast gathered such as me?

Yea, Lord, and to these atoms of the dust,

Uncovering Thy throne, Thy bosom, and Thy home,

Hast raised us in Thyself—there seated, are we seen,

While angels, wondering, gaze to see us lost in Thee.

Oh, mystery of God incomprehensible!

The source and center Thou;

Thy heart of love unfathomable,

Which doth enclose us all, yet gives itself to each,

Choosing these earthen pitchers now to be

Recipients of Thy life divine,

And man, Thy dwelling place!

Then Lord, oh, bid that life disclose,

Revive, expand, and thrill through every heart,

Responsive to Thine own.

Touch every chord; each soul irradiate from Thyself,

Thou life-impulsive center of the whole,

Till every yearning heart, upheaves to Thee alone.
So at thy voice these clay-bound vessels, conscious of Thy power,
Springing aloft as fountains to their source.
Then seeing Thee, shall burst, transfigured into glory at Thy feet,
Then like the colored rainbow, round Thy throne,
Shall every jewel's varied hue, each scattered ray,
Of reflex glory shine to tell the effulgence, Lord, of Thine,
Prismatic in its radiance shall Thy church be shown,
The vessel of Thy beauty, not its own.

Awakening in Ulster: Part 1

The Editor has received letters from various friends and correspondents, in reference to the remarkable movement in the North of Ireland; and it has occurred to him that a page or two of this magazine might be devoted to a matter so profoundly interesting to every lover of Christ and of souls. He is rather induced to refer to the subject, in this way, having been prevented, by pressure of work, from replying to the numerous communications which have come to hand.

The most conflicting opinions have been formed and uttered, with respect to this movement, but, in order to have anything approaching to a correct idea, one must be an eye witness of it in its progress and practical results. Above all, one needs to contemplate it from a divine point of view, in order to arrive at a sound conclusion respecting it.

Many have felt disposed to call in question the spirituality of the entire movement, because of the attendant circumstances, in certain individual cases. This would be a serious mistake. It, most assuredly, is not our province, nor is it within the range of our capacity, to dictate to the Almighty Workman, the exact mode in which He is to do His work. He may, in some cases, carry on His new creation, so softly, so gently, so silently, that those who are standing by may be wholly unconscious of the mighty work. In other cases, He may see fit to conduct the soul through such deep exercises as to evoke the most heart-rending cries and groans. Are we competent to account for the contrast? Are we called upon to do so? Surely not. Look, for example, at the contrast between Lydia and the jailor, in Acts 16. Of the former, we read, "whose heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul." The latter, on the other hand, "sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas." Now, it would be as unwarrantable to object to the excitement connected with the jailor's conversion, as to question the reality of Lydia's case because all was done so quietly. Neither the excitement nor the quietness had ought to do with the salvation of the soul. The one was struck down; the other was not; both were saved by Christ.

See, also, the striking contrast between the quiet conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch, in Acts 8 and the overwhelming conversion of Saul of Tarsus, in Acts 9. The one was as real as the other, though the attendant circumstances were so widely different. A person may be converted without ever moving from his seat, as in the case of the Eunuch; or he may fall to the earth, like Saul. He may be led into instant joy and peace, in believing, or he may remain stunned and prostrate for three days; the circumstances, in no wise, affect the genuineness of the conversion. It is the Christ I reach, and not the way I reach Him, that saves my soul. To question the truth of a conversion because of certain exciting circumstances, attendant thereon, would be as unwarrantable as to make such circumstances at all essential.

Regeneration is a divine work. The Agent in that work is the Holy Ghost. The instrument is the word of God. And, as to the mode, it is as completely above and beyond us, as either the instrument or the Agent. God is sovereign. He giveth not account of any of His matters; and if we presume to set up our own judgment as a rule of what ought to be, in any given case, we shall find

ourselves wholly astray. The mysteries and marvels of God's new creation will baffle and confound the most sagacious and deep-thinking. Circumstances will be continually occurring which the poor human mind cannot account for, and concerning which we have only to say, "It is the finger of God."

When anything presents itself before us which is palpably opposed to the word of God, it is our place to judge it, inasmuch as the word and Spirit of God can never, by any means, clash. But, then, we must be very sure of our authority; and, moreover, we must ever remember what deep need there is for the exercise of a humble spirit and a sober mind, when the things of God are in question.

The writer of these lines has, during the last two months, visited almost all the principal scenes of this most interesting movement in the province of Ulster. He has done this with a double object, namely, first, to judge for himself; and, secondly, to help, so far as the Lord might enable him, by ministering the word to exercised souls. The result of all that he has seen and heard, is a deep and settled conviction that the work is of God.

That Satan should seek to mar such a work, is only what might be expected. Wherever the Holy Ghost has been specially manifesting His precious operations, there, the enemy is sure to intrude himself in order to soil and tarnish what he cannot prevent. The agencies of which he makes use, in his malignant opposition, are manifold and various. He will produce counterfeit cases. He will make use of physical and mental infirmity. He will bring forward corrupt and designing persons who "by good words and fair speeches will deceive the hearts of the simple," and make a gain of godliness. He will even make use of the mistakes, infirmities, and failures, of really sincere and earnest men. In a word, he will make use of any and every instrumentality, in order to bring discredit upon a work which is as manifestly of God, so far as it goes, as was the work at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

It is easy to account for Satan's intense opposition to this most blessed work. One has only to look at some of the practical results, in order to see how his kingdom is interfered with. The public house closed. The drunkard reclaimed. The language of obscenity and blasphemy exchanged for the accents of prayer and praise. These and such like fruits declare the origin of the work, and fully account for the enemy's opposition thereto.

But what proves, more than anything else, the truly spiritual nature of this work, is, that when souls are brought under conviction, nothing seems to meet their need, but the name of Jesus. Some passage of Scripture in which the Person or the sacrifice of Christ is unfolded, is sure to act as a precious balm to the smitten conscience and the troubled heart. Was it ever known that Satan led any one to feel his guilt, or crave the knowledge of Jesus? Is there a name in all the universe that Satan hates more intensely than the name of Jesus? Is Satan divided against himself? Is it not obvious that, when a man is brought to feel his lost and ruined condition—when he is led to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"—when he is led to find rest and peace in the precious blood of Christ, it must be the operation of the Holy Ghost—the drawing of the Father's hand? Unquestionably. There may be many things connected with the work of the Spirit, which must be traced to the infirmity of the person who is the subject of that work; but this does not, in the least, interfere with the fact that God is working. We must separate the precious from the vile, and give God the glory of all that which wears the distinct stamp of His hand upon it.

It would be impossible to enter upon anything like a detail of the localities in which the Holy Ghost has been carrying on His work, or of the cases in which His work has been manifested. In some instances, as many as 100 persons, have been smitten down, at one meeting; and when the reader is informed that this work has been going on, for many weeks, throughout the counties of Antrim and Derry, he will see, at once, that details are wholly out of the question. The simple object of this brief and hasty article, is to give a judgment of the work, as a whole, and to point out to the reader, one or two of its more prominent characteristics.

Looking at the work, in the main, there can be but one judgment formed by every well-adjusted mind, and that is, that God the Holy Ghost has been displaying, in our midst, the mighty wonders of His new creation. Souls are springing up into life, before our eyes, throughout the length and breadth of the land! Regions where Satan seemed to have planted his seat, have received the beams of gospel light. Districts over which cold religious formality had cast its mantle, have heard the life-giving voice of Jesus. Streets and houses from whence had issued the sounds of revelry and debauchery, now send forth the strains of prayer and praise. Families in which strife and confusion prevailed, now gather in peaceful communion and worship, round the family altar. These are facts; and with such facts before us, we cannot hesitate as to our judgment of the work, as a whole. There may be, and there are, mistakes, errors, infirmities, and failures; but the work, as a whole, is the work of God the Holy Ghost.

And, now, one word, as to some of the remarkable characteristics. It is well worthy of notice that, in many cases, the work of conviction is carried on without reference to any special agency in the shape of ministry. In the field, by the wayside, in the house, souls are stricken in a moment, and led to cry, in excessive anguish, for mercy. When in this state, it is of the very last importance that the pure gospel of salvation—salvation by grace—salvation by blood—salvation by faith, should be poured into their ears. Convicted souls must be set on the rock of ages. They must be led to see the fullness, the extent, the efficacy, the infinite preciousness of the sacrifice of the cross, else they are sure to fall back upon themselves and get into a state of extreme wretchedness, darkness, bondage, and mental gloom. The writer has come in contact with many of what are called “relapsed cases;” that is, persons who have lost the sense of pardon, or who have never, it may be, been thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of salvation through the finished work of Christ. Many have been stricken, several times, with conviction. It is not easy to account, with accuracy, either for those frequently stricken, or for the relapsed; but, in many instances, both the one and the other may be attributed to imperfect apprehensions of the true ground of a sinner’s peace. The quickened soul has not been fully emancipated. He has not been so firmly fixed on the rock, as to be able to resist the surging tide of legal thought and feeling. The case of the relapsed or the frequently stricken, forms a deeply interesting subject for observation and reflection.

One more feature may be noticed. It is this. In almost every locality, the Lord seems to have laid hold of some notorious character as if He would have a signal monument of mercy to hold up to the view of the enemy and the objector. Someone who has been the pest of the neighborhood has been stricken down by the convicting power of the Spirit of God, and brought to sit at the feet of Jesus “clothed and in his right mind,” and then sent among his neighbors to “tell what great things the Lord hath done for him.”

I shall here furnish the reader with a description of one of these striking cases. It is that of a drunkard, who was in the habit of blaspheming this entire work and cursing all who had come, in any measure, under its influence. On the very evening of his conversion, he had succeeded in extorting money from his mother, for the purpose of procuring more drink; but as he was on his way forth, the hand of God was laid upon him, in a most remarkable manner. He was smitten down, in a moment, by the convicting power of the Spirit of God; and, ere the morning dawned, the drunken blasphemer had become a happy worshipper of God; and those who visited him during the following day, found him calmly meditating upon some precious portions of the Word.

The following case of conversion was detailed to the writer by the person, who was, herself, the subject. She said, 'I had been into town, and felt under much concern, all the morning.' When I came home, I sat down to my work, and, all in a moment, a flash of light passed through me; I sprang to my feet, ran out to a neighbor's house, and, for four hours, I could do nothing but cry for mercy." The above may be regarded as a tolerably fair specimen of many of the cases. Persons are stricken down, while sitting at their work, and, sometimes, remain in agony for 36 hours, neither eating nor sleeping, but crying out "O Jesus, come! O, come, and apply thy blood to me."

It is well worthy of notice that, in cases where the convicted persons have been, previously, well taught in the letter of Scripture, or much under the sound of clear gospel preaching, they are far more speedily brought into the enjoyment of settled peace in Jesus. This is an important and interesting fact, and one well calculated to illustrate the value of having young people grounded in the knowledge of Scripture.

In conclusion, whether we look at the work as a whole, or examine its salient points—whether we consider its origin, or mark its practical results in individuals and localities, our hearts should be stirred up to pray that the tide of the Spirit's reviving grace may roll onward, from province to province, from county to county, from town to town; yea, that it may pass through the entire compass of the vineyard of Christ, so that the number of God's elect may be gathered out, and the day of glory hastened. Thank God, this movement has had a most decided influence upon the ranks of the people of God. It has roused the indifferent, it has stirred up the lethargic, it has awakened the slumbering. These are happy results for which we have to be deeply thankful.

May the Lord endow all His servants with the needed grace and wisdom for this most solemn and interesting time, that they may be enabled rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give to each his portion of meat in season.

Note—lest, by any means, this paper should fall into the hands of anyone who might feel disposed to make light of this most solemn work, I shall mention a circumstance which was related to me, by two or three credible witnesses. Some young men agreed together that one of their party should fall down and pretend to be stricken, while the others were to call to some person whom they saw approaching, to pray with the pretended case of conviction. The unhappy young man had the hardihood to carry on this piece of daring and blasphemous mockery. It was begun as a farce; but, alas! it ended as a most awful tragedy. He was struck dead on the spot!

Now, many mockers and scoffers are left alive, for this is the day of God's long-suffering; but this unhappy young man was struck dead, for God, in His moral government, sees fit, at times, to make a signal and solemn example. Hence, therefore, let mockers and scoffers beware.

'Tis not for man to trifle! life is brief;

And sin is here.

Our age is but the falling of a leaf,

A dropping tear.

We have no time to sport away the hours;

All must be earnest in a world like ours.

Awakening in Ulster: Part 2

As some of our readers may, possibly, be desirous of knowing something of the origin of this remarkable awakening, we are induced to furnish another paper on the subject, not only because of the uncommon interest attaching thereto, but also because it tends to prove the immense value and importance of prayer and the word of God.

So far as we have been able, amidst so many conflicting reports and opinions, to glean anything like accurate information, we believe that this marvelous work of God commenced at a place called Connor, in the County of Antrim, from thence it extended to Kells, Ahoghill, Ballymena, Hasharkin, Ballymoney, Moorefort, Coleraine, Newtownlimavady; and, in short, through large districts of the counties of Antrim and Derry.

Thus much as to localities. And now, as to instrumentality. Nothing, perhaps, in this entire movement, is more remarkable than the way in which the Spirit of God has swept away every pedestal on which man could presume to exhibit himself. He has written folly upon all human pretension, cast a cloud over all human glory, and leveled with the dust all human assumption. One of the most distinct utterances of this entire movement is, "No flesh shall glory in his presence." A very few words both as to the origin and progress of the work, will suffice to illustrate and confirm this remark.

The writer had an interview, some weeks ago, in the presence of a beloved fellow-laborer, with one of those who were the means in God's hand of commencing this work. He is a man in humble life, with but little education. Having been awakened, by the Spirit of God, to a sense of his guilt and danger, he continued, for the space of two years, in a state of intense mental anguish, endeavoring, like hundreds of others, to "establish his own righteousness," but finding no rest whatever for his troubled heart and burdened conscience, in aught that he could do. In this condition of soul, he heard of a Christian lady who had been stopping in Ballymena, and, who feeling discouraged by the deadness and coldness of all around her, was about to leave the country. This earnest man resolved to seek out this person, and from her lips he learned the emancipating tidings of a full, free, present, personal, and perfect salvation, through the one offering of Jesus Christ, on the cross. Feeling deeply impressed with a sense of the low condition of things, in the professing church, he and one or two others, of a kindred spirit, united in fervent prayer to God for a revival of His work. They prayed. God heard- heard and answered-answered, as He ever does, in a way they never anticipated.

"Yea, in that sphere I stand, poor worn,

Where thou wilt for thy name perform

Above whate'er I ask or think."

Here, then, my reader has, in few words, the source of a stream of blessing which has, already, flowed through a large and important portion of the province of Ulster. And let him carefully note

and deeply ponder the fact, that when he gazes upon that source, he finds it to be, simply, “the word of God and prayer” This, truly, is an impressive fact, and one which ought to be carefully weighed. Men may argue, reason, object. They may point to second causes and such like; but he is remembered, the source of this copious stream of blessing, when carefully sought out, will be found in “the word of God and prayer.”

Is it not obvious, then, in contemplating the origin of the awakening in Ulster, that man has nothing to glory in? An illiterate man, in humble life, learns from the lips of a stranger, the simple gospel of Christ. He, with one or two others, equally humble, equally illiterate, begins to pray and preach, to preach and pray; and here you have the origin of the great work of awakening in Ulster. The stream has flowed onward, with marvelous rapidity. It has deepened and widened, as it flowed. Thousands have been refreshed by it. The enemy has sought to interrupt its course, to muddy its water; but, let me repeat, it has its source in “the word of God and prayer.”

I am deeply anxious that my reader should rise from the perusal of this paper with the distinct impression upon his mind, that the remarkable movement in Ulster had its origin in “the word of God and prayer.” No man, nor body of men, can boast. The Holy Ghost has proved Himself sovereign, in this, as in all beside. He has wrought, without the slightest reference to creed, caste, or denomination. The tide has risen majestically, and its undulations have been felt in every department of the professing church. No intelligent person can contemplate this work, either in its origin or its progress, and not be struck with this remarkable feature. The most illiterate men have been taken up, by the Holy Ghost, and used in the glorious work of turning sinners from darkness to light. The writer has seen assembled thousands hanging on the lips of persons who, literally, could not utter a sentence of good grammar. He has seen persons smitten down without any apparent reference to ordinary ministrations.

These are facts; but, let it not be supposed that we undervalue education or mental culture. Still less, let it be imagined, that we refuse to recognize divinely gifted and divinely appointed evangelists and pastors. God forbid. We fully own the divine institution of the Christian ministry; nor could we say how highly we prize habits of profound and prayerful meditation upon the word of God. We do not believe that all are fitted or called of God to be evangelists, pastors, or teachers; and, moreover, we have, during the last few weeks, heard many attempting to expound the word of God, of whom charity itself should declare, “they know neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.” We have generally observed that where those recently converted confined themselves to a simple, earnest, heartfelt, statement of what God had done for their souls, or fervent appeals to the heart and conscience, they were heard with interest and profit; but, directly they approached to anything like the position or sermonizing, their statements were crude, profitless, and often intolerable.

Still, let the professing church weigh the fact. The Holy Ghost has used illiterate men. He used them, in apostolic times; He used them, in the middle ages; He is using them, now. An illiterate plowman, with Christ in his heart, is better far than a Christless scholar with all the learning of the schools at his fingers' ends. There cannot be a greater mistake than to imagine that a man, dead in trespasses and sins, however deeply read in classics, is capable of dealing with souls. This has been made fully manifest, in the present movement. Unconverted men are completely at sea, when called upon to deal with cases of spiritual conviction, whereas the most unlearned person

who has found Christ for himself, can minister Christ to another. He may not be a divinely qualified, evangelist, pastor, or teacher; but he can point to “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

We must, now, close; but ere doing so, we would desire to press upon the reader the need, value, and importance of earnest, persevering prayer. If he be one whose lot is cast in a barren land where all is sterile and dreary, where the gospel is never heard and conversions are unknown; what should he do? Let him imitate our friends at Connor, Rasharkin, and elsewhere. Let him betake himself to “prayer and the word of God.” If he cannot find some kindred spirit with whom to work, in holy fellowship, then, let him begin alone. Let him wait on God. Yes; let him wait, wait, wait; and he shall, assuredly get an answer. Let him not say “I know, of a surety, that all God’s elect will, in due time, be gathered out, and I must not run before Him.” This is just Satan drawing an inference from God’s premises. It is true that God will gather out His own; but it is equally true that the means He uses to reach that end are “the word of God and prayer.”

Hence, therefore, we earnestly and affectionately exhort all christians to the instant in prayer to God, that He will not only deepen and consolidate His work in those regions where it has begun, but also carry it into “the regions beyond,” so that multitudes may be gathered to Christ, and those who are gathered may be built up on their most holy faith.

The following letter from a dear and valued fellow-laborer who has been, for many years, engaged in the work at Newtown Limavady, will, we doubt not, be read with much interest in connection with the foregoing paper. It supplies what many of our readers may be desirous of obtaining, namely, accurate details from the pen of an intelligent eye-witness.

Newtown Limavady, July, 1859.

Beloved Brother,

As it may tend to the glory of God to make known through the medium of the press the wonderful work of His Holy Spirit in this immediate neighborhood, I shall proceed to detail what took place under my own eye during the first seven days of the revival in this extensive valley.

Having seen, at Moorefort and elsewhere, in the county of Antrim, very many cases of conviction among the people, I thought it well to call together the inhabitants of New-town, on the following Lord’s day, the 5th June, in order to relate the wonders I had seen there, and to pray God to pour out a similar blessing upon us.

A large assembly took place, and another meeting was decided on for Monday. After the speaking in the open-air on that evening, two cases took place, attended, as usual, by violent and irresistible screaming, the body prostrate and reduced to a helpless condition. Presently, this state of things subsides, and with subdued voice, a call “for Jesus” escapes their lips, the body becomes quiet, and, in due time, (varying very much as to its duration) a full confession of His blessed name flows from their hearts and lips, and they stand up, declaring they have found peace with God through the atoning blood of His beloved Son. On Tuesday, six cases occurred; on Wednesday, about thirty; on Thursday, to avoid any disunion, all parties assembled in a public place of worship, but there was no manifestation. On Friday, in a field in front of my own house, an immense work of God, and that in wonderful power, was presented to the astonished eyes and hearts of a vast

concourse of beholders; not less than one hundred souls were brought under conviction of sin, the greater part being "struck down" to the ground. Some of the women and children were conveyed into the house; others followed to assist them, and, shortly, nearly every room was crowded with persons, crying out, and praying for mercy. The lawn was literally strewn, like a battle field, with deeply wounded-sin-stricken ones, under conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, who was revealing Christ to their souls, and giving them victory over the enemy, by the blood of the Lamb.

But who can describe what was going on in the house? In one large room were gathered no less than thirty persons, on their knees, waiting and calling upon God in silent prayer for the remission of their sins; while the other rooms were filled with souls either calling out for mercy, praying, or singing praises to God for mercy received. This was going on in all parts of the house. It was wonderful to see strong men, whose well-known lives could, ere this, bear no examination, leap up from the ground and rejoice in God their Saviour, and begin at once to preach Christ to their companions and fellow-townsmen, beseeching them to cry for mercy and forgiveness.

This effusion embraced all ages from the little child up to the age of threescore and ten, but the converting power of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the outward manifestation, for it is believed that numbers of persons present that night were convicted of sin, and found peace with God, without being struck down. This truly wonderful time was followed, on Saturday night, by another display of power little less in extent. A much esteemed servant of Christ was unexpectedly present. The Lord blessed his visit. A very large shower of blessing took place, and his testimony was, that he had never witnessed anything in Antrim to equal it. This house was not emptied till 7 o'clock on the Lord's day morning. Up to this day, the 12th June, the manifestation had been, I believe, entirely confined to this locality, so much so, that many from the country flocked down to attend the meetings so much blessed. This was particularly the case on the annual fair-day, the 13th, when not less than, 5000 persons (some say 7000) were assembled in the field, to hear the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Another scene of the gracious power of God was again manifested, and the field covered with groups of saved souls, ministering to the newly stricken ones, who were to be met with in all directions, and, as usual, seeking for mercy and pardon through the perfect atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

During the services on the Lord's day, this wonderful manifestation of the actual presence of God in the midst of us, broke forth in two places of public worship in the town, and afterward spread over the country with great rapidity. Persons were struck down everywhere; in the cabins, fields, "highways and hedges," apart from the ministry of the word. And now, the whole country is greatly reformed as to its outward conduct. Everywhere you may find persons meeting together, singing, praying, reading, and rejoicing. The results appear to be abiding; those who believe, (as the vast majority certainly do,) that the whole work is of God, look up, take courage and adore. Men and women who were abandoned characters, others well trained in all the usual morality of religion, are now alike rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven, by the sacrifice once offered. No pen can adequately describe the scenes of this never-to-be-forgotten week; the Lord's name alone be praised for His wondrous grace, in richest blessing, to so many precious souls!

I may add an instance of His mighty grace, by stating the fact of a young man who was in the act of mocking the affected ones being struck down suddenly, and soon after finding peace through the knowledge of forgiveness. Another, one of the wildest of men and one who would readily have

used his strength against others, under any little provocation, told me “he now stood before God clear of sin by the blood of His dear Son, and as white as the whitewashed wall before him.” But I need not proceed with special cases. God has wrought a work here eternally to be remembered by very many souls, whose sins have been forgiven, and who now rejoice in God their Saviour, with a full consciousness of eternal life being their everlasting portion.

O.B.T.

Awakening in Ulster: Part 3

Having, in our September number, endeavored to show that this blessed work had its origin in the Word of God and prayer, there is one point which we earnestly desire further to press upon the attention of our readers, and that is, the immense importance—yea, the urgent need of giving God the Holy Ghost His own place. That the work is, in very deed, His, no rightly instructed mind will question. We are aware, alas! that some do question it—that some oppose it—that many are indifferent to it. We mourn for all such; but we cannot presume to hope that minds which will not be convinced by the grand practical results of this most glorious, soul-stirring movement, will be, in any wise, swayed by aught that we could advance on the subject. Indeed, we are not careful to argue in defense of a work which so clearly proves itself to be of God, in the judgment of all who are really capable of appreciating the proof. If it were not so manifestly of God, it might be needful, in some sort, for man to undertake its defense; but the Holy Ghost wants no defenders. He can carry on His own work, and prove it, too, without man's aid or man's arguments.

We believe, most firmly, that the work has been begun and continued by the Holy Ghost; and our sole object in penning this paper is to press this conviction upon the mind of the reader in such a way as will lead him to a devout and reverent recognition of its truth. We endeavored to show, in our last, that there is no pedestal for human pride; we are anxious to show, now, that there is no food for human curiosity. Man's bustling self-importance has been cut up by the roots by the mode in which the Holy Ghost has worked; man's pride and curiosity have been rebuked by the fact, that the Holy Ghost has been working. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1:26-29.)

This statement applies, in the most marked manner, to the present awakening in Ulster. It is, at once, unwarrantable and unbecoming for man to meddle or to vaunt himself. It would be his wisdom to tread, with unshod foot, the hallowed precincts of the divine presence. The Lord is gone forth; let us follow in a spirit of holy worship and adoration, not in a spirit of self-importance or idle curiosity. Let us beware of running before the Lord—of meddling with, or prying into, His work. We shall find an abundance of suited occupation in following His wondrous footsteps—admiring His precious workmanship, and worshipping in His holy presence.

This is true, always true, everywhere. It was true, in the days of Wesley and Whitfield. It was true, in the days of Jonathan Edwards. It is true, in America; true, in Scotland; true, in Wales; true, in the province of Ulster. "No flesh shall glory in his presence;" and no flesh shall pry into His doings. It is most needful to remember this. God the Holy Ghost will not brook human interference, or human curiosity, in any department of His work. He will use men as His instruments, and they have to be thankful for the high honor and holy privilege; but He knows full well how to wither up man's pride

and self-importance. Man may bow his head and worship, in $\nu\beta\lambda\nu$ of the Spirit's mighty operations; but, the moment it becomes a question of human excitement or vain curiosity, the Holy Ghost is grieved and He must resent it, in His own peculiar way.

In looking through the gospel narrative, we can easily see how utterly offensive to the spirit of our blessed Lord was everything in the shape of popular demonstration, fleshly excitement, and idle curiosity. He shrank from them, on every occasion. He could not work where they were manifested, and, therefore invariably retired. Take, as an instance, John 6 He could feed five thousand people with "five barley loaves, and two small fishes;" but He did this because there was a needs be, and not for the purpose of working a miracle. He did it to feed the hungry, not to astonish the curious. He did it to supply man's want, not to display His own power. Hence, "when Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." He could willingly minister to every form of human need; but he sensitively shrank from human excitement and popular demonstration. He came to be the Servant of man's necessities, not the object of his vain applause. He came to be used, not to be gazed at. He was always ready whenever man was empty. It needed no laborious effort to find Him. He pursued, in heavenly energy and untiring zeal, His path of service, but could not tolerate man's bustling self-importance or prying curiosity.

The same is true, with respect to God the Holy Ghost. He came down to earth on the day of Pentecost, and has been here, ever since. He, too, came to be the Servant of human need wherever He could find it, not to elicit human applause, or feed idle curiosity. If He wrought miracles or spoke with tongues, it was not to draw attention to Himself, but to overcome the unbelief of the human heart, and exalt the name of Jesus. Man, ever shallow and short-sighted, would make a great ado about the miracle or the tongue, and lose sight of the divine object therein. He would make it an occasion of superstitious wonder, instead of a ground of holy worship. This, the Holy Ghost must always resent. He is sure to retire when man thus intrudes upon the hallowed sphere of His most precious operations.

He can minister; He can bless; He can enlighten; He can quicken; He can emancipate; He can travel hither and thither in His glorious majesty and divine independence; but the very moment man intrudes to meddle or interfere, the Holy Ghost must resent the intrusion.

Now, it is because we are most fully persuaded that the awakening in Ulster is the work of the Holy Ghost, that we desire that our readers should recognize its truly spiritual character, and carefully avoid mingling the human with the divine. The work is of God, and oh! let God have all the glory. Let there be no anxiety, on man's part, to show himself as an actor, or to set forth what great things he has done. We are all far too ready, like the chief Captain Lysias, to say, "then came I." This will never do. It can only have the effect of grieving and hindering the Holy Ghost. If He is pleased, in His sovereign grace, to make use of some "younger brother"—some "left-handed man;" or if He takes up "an ox-goad," "a cake of barley meal," or "a sling," let us be thankful, not boastful; let us be full of praise and adoration, not of vain excitement, or self-importance. Let us not, like Saul in 1 Sam. 14 spoil, by our busy meddling, a victory which we had no hand in obtaining. We have nothing to boast of. We were very much settled upon our lees when the Holy Ghost began His gracious work in our midst; and it would, therefore, ill become us, now to bustle forth as though we were the people. If the Lord do but condescend to take us up to accomplish any

little service, let us humbly bless His name, and seek His grace to serve him more effectually; but oh! let self be trampled in the dust.

Again, let us carefully guard against eyeing this movement as the means of subserving the interests of a party. Let us seek to breathe more the air of heaven where the tide of joy deepens and widens when one sinner is brought to the feet of Jesus. It is not said, there is joy in heaven when the ranks of this or that denomination are augmented. Ah! no; the grand paramount object is to win souls to Christ and build them up in Him. One soul linked on to Christ is a work done for eternity—a work which shall endure when denominational distinctions shall have vanished like the vapors of the morning. We claim for ourselves, and we cede to others, the privilege of worshipping God according to the light which He may impart; but we would rather be the honored instrument in bringing one soul into the fold of Christ, than to conduct ten thousand into any denominational enclosure. Let my party as well as myself be wholly set aside, so that Christ may be glorified.

Finally, let us beware of treating this great work of God the Holy Ghost, merely as a curious phenomenon—as something for the intellect to speculate upon—for curiosity to feed upon. True, it is a great work, a glorious work, a gracious work, a work which may well be placed side by side, with the awakening in the last century, the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, yea, with the day of Pentecost itself. But, as in all these gracious visitations, the Christian traces, with deep thankfulness, the distinct actings of the Holy Ghost, so should it be, with respect to the awakening in Ulster, in 1859. There may be, and there is, much to engage the attention of the philosopher, and gratify the heart of the philanthropist; but it is the spiritually minded Christian alone who can really enter into its true character, and its true results.

And, now, a word or two, ere we close, in answer to two special objections which we have heard urged against the spirituality of this movement. These objections are founded, first, upon peculiar features; secondly, upon counterfeit cases.

1. As to the first of these objections, we most fully admit that the present awakening in Ulster exhibits features quite peculiar to itself—features which cannot always be satisfactorily explained. But what of that? Must we question the whole movement because we cannot understand some of its incidental features? Surely not. For one case which, we cannot understand, there are fifty which we can. We can understand a drunkard made sober—an immoral man made chaste—a thief made honest—a scene of family brawls made a scene of family worship. We can fully understand these things. We may not be able to account, with accuracy, for the relapses, the dreams, the visions, or the prophecies; but are we called upon to do so? Are these the main features of the movement? No; they are but comparatively rare incidents. The main features we can understand, and on these we should base our judgment. As to the special cases, a sound mind would suspend its decision, and patiently wait for further light.

2. Then, as to counterfeit cases, it is an admitted fact that counterfeit money proves the existence of genuine coin. Did the fact of there being a Judas amongst the apostles prove the mission of the twelve to be a fallacy? Why then should a few counterfeit cases be urged as an objection to a movement which numbers by thousands its genuine conversions? We admit the counterfeit cases, but we are thankful for the genuine. It is a mercy to be able to detect the former, but it is a greater mercy to be able to appreciate the latter. Like a cashier in a bank, he is thankful for the ability to detect a forgery, but that does not hinder his accepting a genuine note. Thank God for the

thousands of genuine cases—the thousands of true spiritual conversions—the thousands who are able to say, with scriptural clearness and spiritual decision, “I know that my sins are forgiven; I have peace with God; I am happy, now—quite happy; I am on the Rock. Thank God, for all such! We think of these, when the infidel objects; we think of these, when the skeptic sneers; we think of these, when the Pharisee speaks in terms of cold contempt; and we earnestly pray for all opposers, that God may grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

The work is of God; and our present object is not so much to convince those who deny this fact, as to admonish, in true brotherly love, those who admit it. We would affectionately exhort all true lovers of Christ and lovers of souls, to give God the Holy Ghost His true and proper place—to watch His movements—to honor His leadings—to follow His current—to let Him have free course. We are free to acknowledge that we have a great dread of human interference, lest the Spirit should be grieved and quenched, and the good work hindered. We heartily rejoice in the cheering tidings which daily reach us, of the progress of this blessed awakening. God grant it may go forward! May nothing hinder its course! May the four quarters of the globe and the islands which stud the bosom of the ocean be visited by its holy influence, and the Eternal Trinity shall have all the praise forever and ever. Amen.

Awakening in Ulster: Part 4

We feel it, in some measure, due to our readers to notice a special feature of this movement which has come more prominently out within the last few weeks. We allude to the matter of dreams, visions, and prophecies, many of which are most striking and solemnizing. Some have seen the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, and on the throne. Others have seen an awful pit yawning to receive them, and then the Lord Jesus nailed to the cross to save them from that pit. Some have fallen into a trance and been carried, in spirit, into heaven where they saw marvelous visions. Others, again, have been struck dumb and blind for a certain period, and, on recovery, have foretold when they would be struck again. In many cases, these prophecies have been literally and punctually fulfilled. In one instance, the person affected declared that she was so visited, not on her own account, but to convince sinners. In short, many of the cases are attended with circumstances of deep interest and awful solemnity. Our space does not admit of detail; we can merely give a brief statement of the extraordinary facts, and offer a remark or two thereon.

And first, then, we would ask, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should speak to his creatures "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed?" (Job 33:15) He has done so in all ages. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles have been so addressed; Abraham was thus addressed, in Gen. 15 Abimelech was thus admonished, in Gen. 20 We have Jacob's dream, in Gen. 28 Laban's dream, in Gen. 31 Joseph's dreams, in Gen. 38 The dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker, in Gen. 40 And Pharaoh's own dreams in Gen. 41 We have Nebuchadnezzar's dream, in Dan. 2 We have Daniel's dreams and visions, in Dan. 7 Paul saw a vision, in Acts 16 Various other instances might be adduced, but the above will suffice for our present purpose. God has thought proper, in all ages, to address His people and direct His servants by dreams and visions.

However, it will most probably be objected, that the cases which we have above brought forward, were all prior to the completion of the canon of Holy Scripture. True; but do they not prove that God did, in those times, make use of dreams and visions as means of communication with His people? Undoubtedly. Well, it devolves upon the objector to prove that He cannot and does not do the same, at the present day. We believe He can and does. We believe that many have been awakened to a sense of their danger, and brought to think seriously of their souls and eternity, by means of a dream. To rest in, or build upon, a dream, would be, obviously, quite a different thing. I could never find peace for my guilty conscience in visions or dreams, for the simplest of all reasons, that visions and dreams could not cancel my guilt or satisfy the claims of the holiness of God. I may be aroused to a sense of need, by a vision or dream; but my need can only be satisfied by Jesus and His precious blood, as unfolded in the Word, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

We most fully admit the need and importance of judging all dreams, visions, and prophecies, by the truth of God, and rejecting everything contrary thereto. This is the plain duty of every child of God. We are responsible to "try" the visions as well as "the spirits;" but to deny the fact that God can communicate with His creatures in the way of a dream or a vision, must be pronounced a

most unwarrantable assumption. Who can limit the Almighty? Who can prescribe His mode of acting? Can He not arrest a man, by a vision of the night, now, as well as in the days of Nebuchadnezzar? Can he not cause a person to see a vision, now, as well as in the days of the Apostle Paul? Who can doubt it, save one who makes his own limited understanding the measure of what the Almighty can or ought to do, and rejects everything which lies beyond the narrow range of his own reason. This is infidelity, than which nothing can be more contemptible and absurd, though it seems so uncommonly clever and far-seeing.

The human mind vainly undertakes to account for everything that comes under its notice; and all which cannot be satisfactorily explained upon certain known laws and principles of science, must be rejected. God is excluded. He cannot possibly act in any way beyond the reach of man's reason. Pitiably skepticism! Wretched reasoning, which depends for its truth upon the exclusion of God! The very moment you introduce God, faith says, "He can do anything." This is faith's simple, artless, happy, safe way of settling everything. If God is pleased to speak to us in dreams and visions, He can do so. If He is pleased to endow us with a knowledge of what shall be on the morrow, He can do so. If He is pleased to strike a man down and evoke from the depths of his agonized and convicted heart the piercing cry of anguish and terror, He can do so. He can cause a man to see with his mental eye the gulf of fire—the eternal pit of hell yawning to receive him. He can cause him to see the great white throne, prepared, in awful majesty, to try his case. He can cause him to see the roll, containing the black catalog of all his crimes, unfolded to the gaze of his alarmed conscience.

Now, need we marvel if, when such solemn realities are made to pass before the vision of the soul, the very strongest frame should be convulsed and laid prostrate? Must we have recourse to the medical profession to explain the various phenomena of the new creation? If a man is struck down to the earth, and made to cry out for mercy, is this hysteria or nervous affection? Has the Holy Ghost nothing to do with it? When the jailor "came trembling, fell down, and cried out," was it hysteria or nervousness?

Had the Holy Ghost nothing to do with it? We need hardly say, we admit the existence of hysteria and nervous affection, in every possible form; but directly men attempt to explain by these things the beautiful mysteries of God's new creation, we hesitate not to pronounce them the vain speculations of unbelief, the object of which is to shut out the Holy Ghost from His own proper sphere, or to confine His mighty operations within the limits prescribed by man's puny understanding.

It is of the very last importance, at the present moment, that Christians should fully understand and faithfully confess the grand truth of the presence and sovereign rule of God—the Holy Ghost. If we contemplate His operations abroad amongst men, the word is, "The wind bloweth where it listeth." (John 3:8.) And if we contemplate His acting in the church, the word is, "Dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. 12:11.) In a word, the Holy Ghost is sovereign in all things. He will work when, where, and as He pleases; and if we presume to apply to His mighty, and marvelous doings the rule and square of human reason, or to account for them on the principles of science and philosophy, we shall find ourselves entirely astray. We are wholly incompetent to give a reason for any special mode of acting which the sovereign Spirit may be pleased to adopt. He may see fit, in an age of cold religious formality, and uninfluential orthodoxy, to carry on His work of

conversion amid circumstances of a most astounding, exciting, and solemnizing nature. If professing christians have been proving by their principles and practices that they have very little, if any, faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, need we marvel if He should manifest Himself in such a way as to confound and astonish? If men, and even christians, have fallen very much into the habit of trying everything by the standard of reason and common sense, of arraigning all that meets their view before the tribunal of science and philosophy, need we marvel if the Holy Ghost should display His power after such a fashion as to write folly and confusion upon science and philosophy, and to baffle and confound reason and common sense? "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. 1:19. 20.

But let it not be supposed that we would, by any means, undertake to endorse, as genuine, all the physical manifestations, or all the dreams, visions, and prophecies of the past few months. Far from it. We are quite prepared to admit a vast amount of infirmity, affectation, imitation, and even gross imposition and dishonesty. Nor is this all; we feel assured that just in proportion as the Holy Ghost manifests His power, will Satan manifest his in opposition. This has ever been the case. A strong belief in the Person and actings of the Holy Ghost, will always be attended by an equally strong belief in the person and actings of Satan. But, allowing the widest possible margin for human failure and Satanic power, we are fully persuaded that the Lord may, and does see fit, at times, to allow visions of the eternal world to break in upon the soul, in order to rouse men to a sense of the reality of things which appear on the page of inspiration, and which have been read and heard for years, without impression or practical result. And we are as fully persuaded that, when the Lord does permit such visions or dreams, no one can possibly account either for the measure or the mode of the physical effects and manifestations. We do not believe that the soul will ever be allowed to rest in such dreams or visions, if the Holy Ghost is really working. We can only rest in the revealed truth of God— "the holy scriptures;" but He may and does make use of dreams and visions to arouse the slumbering conscience, alarm the skeptic mind; and, at times too, to confirm a wavering heart.

One thing is certain, we are sure to err when we venture to lay down an iron rule, or frame a rigid system; the Holy Ghost will never be confined by such. He is sovereign in His doings. Let us remember this. His operations lie beyond the range of the most enlarged and vigorous understanding. He can cause people to dream dreams, see visions, and utter prophecies. Who will question this? Who will attempt to prescribe a limit to the power of the Holy Ghost, or to the mode of His operations? Who will undertake to say that there is not, at the present moment, an urgent need for the peculiarly solemn and arresting manner in which He is pleased to manifest His power? Have we not all had to complain of coldness, barrenness, and deadness? Has there not been a deplorable amount of skepticism and practical infidelity, even amongst professing christians? And should we not hail, with unmingled thankfulness, anything and everything calculated, in any measure, to meet such a condition of things? For our own part, we can only say, with hearts full to overflowing, the Lord be praised for every exhibition of His right hand and holy arm—for every display of the lighting down of His power—for every utterance of His solemn voice, in the ear of this iron age of unbelief and formal profession!

We would, however, venture a word of faithful admonition: first, to those who are the subjects of the dreams and visions; and, secondly, to all who may see or hear of such.

1. And, first, to all who have seen visions or dreamed dreams, or uttered prophecies, we would affectionately say, beware of resting in such things—beware of building upon, or boasting of, such things. You must rest only in Christ—build only upon Christ—boast only in Christ. All beside will prove utterly insufficient. Keep close to His precious sacrifice, and close to that eternal Word which testifies thereof. Thus you will be secure, peaceful, and happy. In the cross of Christ, God is glorified, conscience satisfied, and Satan silenced. This could never be said in reference to a dream, a vision, or a prophecy. These latter may be very good in their place, but they can never form the foundation either of the glory of God or the sinners peace. Christ is all.

Furthermore, we would add, beware of spiritual pride and self-complacency. Satan may craftily whisper into your ear, “Very few have seen visions, dreamed dreams, or uttered prophecies, like you. You are peculiarly privileged, specially favored, highly honored. You are no ordinary Christian.” In this way, he would completely upset you, by tempting you out of the only safe position, of self-emptied humble dependence upon Christ. If you turn to 2 Cor. 12 you will find that, when Paul had been favored with extraordinary “visions and revelations of the Lord,” in “the third heaven,” he needed “a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him down here, “lest he should be exalted above measure.” From this we learn, very plainly, that “visions and revelations” cannot improve that evil nature which every true believer carries about with him. Paul’s old nature was as bad, when he came down from the third heaven, as when he traveled, in the fury of his zeal, from Jerusalem to Damascus, to imbrue his hands in the blood of the saints of God. Had it not been so, there would have been no need for “a thorn in the flesh. “But Paul was in danger of being “exalted above measure,” and hence there was given him the “thorn,” but, with the thorn, a deeper sense of the all-sufficient grace of Christ, so that he was led to glory, not in “visions and revelations of the Lord,” but in his own personal “infirmities.” He found Christ amid the visions and revelations of paradise, and Christ amid the buffetings and infirmities of earth. To him it was Christ, only; Christ, everywhere; Christ, in all. So may it be with you, through the grace of the in-dwelling Spirit.

2. And, now, one word to those who may see or hear of persons having the visions and dreams, or uttering the prophecies. Beware of undue excitement, or a spirit of mere curiosity. No doubt, such things are very wonderful, very solemnizing, very arresting; but let us express our amazement in the presence of God, not in the presence of poor, feeble, erring mortals, who are in danger of being puffed up thereby. In dealing with the latter, it should be our constant aim to lead them to cling simply to Christ, and to glory in Him alone. Thus we shall really benefit them, and God will be glorified. It is a very serious thing to injure, by our actings or expressions, the very feeblest lamb of the flock of Christ; and we fear that very great damage has been done by crowds of persons flocking to see those who have had visions and dreams. It is not only calculated to do injury to the really genuine cases, but also to tempt persons to affectation, imitation, and positive dishonesty and wickedness. Let us consider these things. Let us remember our holy responsibilities to the souls of men, and to the cause of Christ.

During the progress of this movement, we have been forcibly reminded of the following passage of scripture, “Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for

Jesus sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.” (John 12:9.) It is one thing to come for the purpose of seeing Lazarus, and quite another thing to come in order to see Jesus. No doubt, it is most glorious to behold the works of God, either in nature or in grace. Far be it from us to seek, in any way, to check a right desire to “behold the works of the Lord.” We merely offer a word of brotherly admonition, because of the infirmity of the flesh and the craft of Satan.

May the Lord, in His infinite mercy, continue to hold this work in His own hand, that so it may be protected from every hostile influence. May the shining river flow onwards, until every corner of the vineyard shall have felt its fertilizing and refreshing virtue!

Being Let Go

(Acts 4:23.)

“And being let go, they went to their own company.” This simple statement presents a beautiful example of the instincts and tendencies of the divine nature. We always find that when a man is released from some special engagement—set free from some special demand upon him—in a word, when he is “let go,” he will, most probably, seek the company of those who are most congenial to his tastes. When parade is over, the soldiers betake themselves to their various associates and pursuits. When a school breaks up, the pupils do the same. When the warehouse or counting house is closed, the young men betake themselves, some to the religious assembly, some to the reading room, some alas! to the tavern, the theater, or the gambling house. “Being let go,” they are almost sure to go “to their own company.” It is when a man is fully at leisure being let go to their own company. It is when a man is fully at leisure that you see what his bent and tendency really are. When he gets free from present claims, you will be able to judge of the pursuits and companions of his heart’s selection. Two men may be seen standing behind the same counter, from 8, in the morning, till 6, in the evening; but mark them when the clock strikes six—observe them when “let go”—and you will find one making his way to the tap-room, and the other to some place of worship or religious instruction. Thus it is always. “Being let go,” we soon find out “our own company.”

Reader, how do you act, when “let go?” What company do you seek? Do you betake yourself to those who, like the assembly, in Acts 4 occupy themselves in holy worship, prayer and praise? Or do you own as your companions, the giddy and the thoughtless, the profane and the immoral, the scoffer and the skeptic, the infidel and the atheist? Oh! search and see. Just ask yourself, when next you take your seat in the midst of your own company, “Would I, at this moment, like to hear, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God?” Are you washed from your sins in the blood of Jesus? Are you saved? Are you at peace with God? Let me beseech you, dear friend, to make close, earnest, personal work of it, this very hour. Do not trifle with your immortal soul, and with a boundless eternity. God is in earnest—Christ is in earnest—the Holy Ghost is in earnest—Satan is in earnest—and will you trifle? Will you delay? “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. 6:2.) May God the Holy Ghost lead you, now, to believe in the love of God, and lean fully and, without a shadow of doubt, upon the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Then you will seek the “company” of the redeemed, on earth; and, when “let go” from every weight and hindrance, down here, you will join “your own company” in the mansions above.

The Captain and the Quadrant

A godly man, the master of an American ship, during one voyage found his ship bemused for days, and he became rather anxious respecting her safety. He went down to his cabin and prayed. The thought struck him, if he had with confidence committed his soul to God, he might certainly commit his ship to Him; and so, accordingly, he gave all into the hands of God, and felt at perfect peace; but still he prayed, that if He would be pleased to give a cloudless sky at twelve o'clock, he should like to take an observation, to ascertain their real position, and whether they were on the right course.

He came on deck at eleven o'clock, with the quadrant under his coat. As it was thick and drizzling, the men looked at him with amazement. He went down to his cabin, prayed, and came up. There seemed still to be no hope. Again he went down and prayed, and again he appeared on deck with his quadrant in his hand. It was now ten minutes to twelve o'clock, and still there was no appearance of a change: but he stood on the deck waiting upon the Lord, when, in a few minutes, the mist seemed to be folded up and rolled away by an omnipotent and invisible hand; the sun shone clearly from the blue vault of heaven, and there stood the man of prayer with the quadrant in his hand; but so awe-struck did he feel, and so "dreadful" was that place, that he could scarcely take advantage of the answer to his prayer. He, however, succeeded, although with trembling hands, and found, to his comfort, that all was well. But no sooner had he finished taking the observation, than the mist rolled back over the heavens, and it began to drizzle as before.

This story of prayer was received from the lips of the good Captain Crossby, who was so useful in the Ardrossan awakening; and he himself was the man who prayed and waited upon his God with the quadrant in his hand,

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw;

Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;

Gives exercise to faith and love;

Brings every blessing from above."

Christ Seated and Expecting

Consistency with the divine mind is holiness—at least one character of holiness. Separation to God is, I know, another.

To mourn when the Lord laments, to dance when He pipes, this is holy. The proposal to make the children of the bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom was with them, was an attempt to defile them, however religious it might be deemed. And Jacob praying, after the hosts of God had met him at Mahanaim, was an exercise of spirit not consistent with the divine mind. It was mourning, when Christ was piping. The Lord by His messengers were greeting him as on his return home, but he himself was trembling and disturbed at the thought of Esau and his four hundred men.

Now, this holiness, or consistency with the divine mind, is looked for in the people of God, I would say, in two respects, in this 10th chapter of Hebrews. In this chapter, we see Christ seated and expecting. These two things mark Him as One ascended to the right hand of God. He is seated, because He has done with sin forever, having accomplished atonement by the one offering of Himself, thus having perfected forever them that are sanctified. But He is also expecting, because He has not yet entered His kingdom in power and glory, nor will He, till His enemies are made His footstool.

Thus, Christ in heaven is witnessing the sufficiency of the already accomplished sacrifice for sin, and also looking onward, in hope, to the coming day of glory and dominion.

Consistency with the divine mind, which, as we have said, is one form of holiness, requires that our condition here on earth, as the people of God, should be according to this condition of Christ in heaven. This chapter, therefore, after showing us the Lord thus in heaven seated and expecting, calls on us to take a corresponding attitude of soul here; to enter with boldness within the vail, and there to hold fast the profession of our hope. In spirit we are to be seated and expecting, as He is. We are to bear witness to the sufficiency of the blood of the Lamb of God, by resting in the atonement already perfected, and looking to nothing beside it or beyond it, for the sprinkling of our hearts from an evil conscience; and at the same time, to be unsatisfied with all present conditions, longing, as in hope, for the coming day of the glory and presence of the Lord.

Thus, we are to rest, and yet to wait; to be settled and quieted in conscience, and yet to be longing and expecting, as for a portion and inheritance. We are to have faith and hope in our souls—faith, because of the accomplished reconciliation; hope, because of the futurity of glory.

In our way, we are to reflect Christ in heaven, as He is seated and expecting. In a great sense, there is infinite distance between Him and us. That I need not say, save as in this passing way, for His glory. He is the Sanctifier, we the sanctified. That bespeaks this infinite distance. But still, in our way, we, though still here on earth, are to reflect a seated and an expecting Christ in heaven.

But again. This consistency of which I speak, is looked for in our assemblies, as well as in our souls. Our assemblies are, in their way, also to reflect a seated and expecting Christ. The services

in the house of God are to be of this same character. We are, as this chapter still tells us, to be “exhorting one another,” and “so much the more as we see the day approaching.” Our business with each other, is to provoke one another unto love, and to good works.

Now, being thus occupied with exhortations to charity and services, if in God’s strength we may move each other thereto, we bear witness to ourselves and among ourselves, that we are already a reconciled people, having done with the judgment of sin, as a seated Christ has done with it. Were it not so, we should have other work to do, then to be provoking one another to love and to good works. But resting, as Christ himself does, in accomplished atonement, as at the end of sin, this good work of mutual or common exhortation becomes our due and suited business. And further. The apostle goes on to tell us, that this ministry of exhortation is to be among us, because “the day is approaching”—thus intimating that we are to be an expecting as well as a seated assembly.

I ask then, what condition of things on earth or among us down here, can be more blessed than this? In our souls, and in our assemblies, we are, after these manners, called to reflect Christ in heaven. It is something like Moses, who of old was to go down, and make things in the midst of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, according to the patterns of the things shown to him on the mount.

Surely, I may say, this dignifies, as well as gladdens our souls and our assemblies. We are not straitened in the call and provisions of grace—sadly, humbling indeed in our own bowels, in the answer which we make to such a call—but not in the call itself.

But at the close of this teaching which our chapter thus reads to us, we have to listen to a solemn word of warning. See verses 26-31.

This passage lets us know, that to turn back to the provisions of a worldly sanctuary, and thus to sin against the truth we have now received; to gainsay the mystery of accomplished reconciliation by the blood of the Son of God, by returning to confidence in that which anything or everything else could give us, is ruin to the soul. It is treading underfoot the Son of God. It is doing despite to the Spirit of grace. It is provoking the vengeance of the Lord, and falling into the hands of the living God. And to such a condition nothing attaches, but a fearful looking for of judgment. This unbelief, this confidence in flesh, this living in the world in the return to ordinances, is to un-seat Him that is passed into the heavens.

Is there not a cause, now-a-days, why we should afresh bear in mind ourselves, and remind one another, that the Lord Jesus in heaven is there both seated and expecting?

Conscience and Revelation

Read Genesis 3:7-21

There is a very wide difference between man's conscience and God's revelation—a difference well worthy of my reader's careful consideration. The scripture given above unfolds this difference in the fullest manner. Man got his conscience in, and by, the fall. This one fact is sufficient to show the real nature of conscience. By the one act of disobedience, man became possessed of that thing called conscience, which is, simply, "the knowledge of good and evil." Previous to that act, man knew only good. He moved in the midst of a scene in which God had said, all was "very good." Evil had no place in that fair creation. The traces of "eternal power and godhead," were visible on all hands. Every leaf, every flower, every tree, every shrub, every blade of grass, stood in its place, and gave evidence of the goodness of God. Every bird warbled its Maker's praise. There was not so much as a single element of evil throughout the entire sphere over which man was appointed to rule, and, therefore, man knew nothing of the difference between "good and evil," until he hearkened to the tempter's voice. In a word, he got his conscience in, and by the fall.

And what was the first effect of conscience? It told man that he was "naked." He had not known aught of this before. Conscience told him this. It could do nothing more. It could not point him to a covering. It told the one dismal tale of nakedness. It had naught else to tell to Adam; and it never has had aught else to tell to one of Adam's guilty race. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." This was all that was gained by hearkening to the voice of the serpent. They had never thought of nakedness before. Conscience was at work. Innocence had fled, never to return, and conscience had come in, with all its startling powers, to make them sensible of their condition, and fill them with guilty fear.

And let my reader remark, here, that conscience had to do with their actual state. It did not tell them aught about God. It spoke from within. It brought them no glad tidings from without—no cheering accents from a source above and beyond themselves, in which their poor terrified hearts could find comfort. They had gotten their conscience by listening to Satan's lie about God; and it was, therefore, impossible that it could convey a single ray of light to their troubled souls. It is only needful to see how man got a conscience, to know its effect upon him. Some there are who think that conscience, if left to itself, will assuredly lead a man to God. How could it? Did it do so in Adam's case? Surely if ever the true effect of conscience could be seen, we should look for it in the 3rd of Genesis. Did it lead Adam to God? The very reverse. How was it possible that what had its origin in the belief of a lie about God, could ever lead a soul into His presence? It told them of their own state, but could not tell them of God's character. The consciousness of my own state is one thing. The revelation of God's character is quite another.

"They knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden." Conscience made them cowards, and drove them away from God. Satan had told them,

in effect, that God was not kind in withholding the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In short, he made it appear that God would not give them an apple. He belied God; and man believed his lie. Here is the root of fallen humanity. Here is the old stem from which have shot forth the branches of a corrupted nature. The unregenerate man is formed and fashioned by the serpent's lie. It is not merely in his ways and words that man proves himself a fallen creature. His secret thoughts concerning God, and his inmost feelings toward Him, are the lamentable proofs of his lost estate.

Reader, allow me to ask you one or two plain questions. What are your secret thoughts about God? Do you think he is a God of wrath? Would you be afraid to find yourself in His presence? Do you regard Him as an angry Judge, who is seeking occasions against you, holding above your head the sword of judgment, and only waiting to cast you into the lake of fire? If such are your thoughts concerning God, let me tell you they were the thoughts which caused Adam and Eve to hide themselves behind the trees of the garden. The serpent had falsified the divine character in their eyes; and the result was, they were afraid of God, and fled to hide, at the very sound of His voice. "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Such was the source of all those dark, gloomy, suspicious thoughts which fill the human mind, in reference to the blessed God, the eternal fountain of all goodness, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, the Planner, Revealer, and Perfecter, of redemption's wondrous scheme.

Let us now look, for a few moments, at God's revelation of Himself. No sooner had Satan's lie fallen upon man's heart, than down came "the Lord God" to contradict it. It is well to look closely at this. Let us draw near and hearken diligently to all that passed in the garden. Let us ponder it deeply. Some would tell us that the Lord God came down to drag man forth from his lurking place, in order that he might receive his sentence. Where do we find this in the inspired record? Let my reader examine attentively, Gen. 3, and say if he can find any foundation for such an idea. Alas! it is to be feared that this thought springs from the same source as Adam's fear. The human mind is sure to interpret everything in such a way as to make against God. Set the unrenewed mind to expound a text, or to interpret a providence, and it will be sure to do both the one and the other, in such a way as to make against the divine character. Whence came the tendency so to do? From the enemy of God and man. Let there be no mistake about this in my reader's mind. The natural heart hates God. It is governed by Satan's lie. Go where you will; take up whatever form of human religion you please; contemplate man in whatever condition you can find him, and you will observe a general rule, and that, too, without a single exception, the human heart has hard thoughts about God. "I knew thee, that thou wast an austere man." Such is man's language, with respect to God.

Now, when we come to examine closely the scene in the garden, we find that the Lord God really came down to contradict and confound the enemy, and to take up man as an injured being. True, man was a guilty being also, and God had, in the exercise of His moral government, to allow man to reap as he had sown; but then we must distinguish between God's government of the world, and His grace to the sinner. It is very manifest that the same God who first appears as man's Creator, appears again as man's Friend. He appears to interpose on the sinner's behalf, and to pass an eternal sentence upon the serpent. It was the serpent who had done the mischief, and he must have his head bruised. He had injured man, and man must crush him beneath his feet. He had dared to meddle with God's creation, and of that creation he must lick the dust. He had said that God would not give man an apple, and God declares he will give His Son. In a word, "the Lord

God,” when He “walked in the garden in the cool of the day,” appeared only as the sinner’s Friend. He came to give a full and an immediate contradiction to Satan’s falsehood. He came to take up the controversy—to make it a question between Himself and the serpent; and, from that, as we look down along the stream of time—as we run the eye over the page of inspiration, we find an unbroken series of acts, on God’s part, calculated to throw hack in the enemy’s face, his foul and blasphemous lie against the divine character—acts on which faith sees inscribed, “in radiant letters, ‘GOD IS LOVE.’” Thus it has been in the past; and when we look forward into the future, and see an eternity of glory, all resting on the one foundation, namely, “the blood of the cross” we can understand something of the difference between Satan’s lie, man’s conscience, and God’s revelation.

All this leaves entirely untouched the great question of God’s government of the world. The woman, as we know, had to hearken to the solemn declaration, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow, thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” Adam, too, had to hear that which applied immediately to himself; “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Thus much, as to the old creation, and man’s condition therein. Labor and sorrow, death and the curse are the accompaniments of the old creation and of man, as a fallen creature.

But, there was more than this. There was God’s revelation of Himself. It is one thing to gaze, with solemn awe, upon the “dreadful” wheels of God’s moral government, and it is quite another thing to read the deep secrets of his bosom of love. The government of God may, oftentimes, be wrapped up in a dark cloud of mystery which the finite mind can never penetrate; but His love shines, in living luster, all around. Now, faith bows the head to the former, while it basks in the light of the latter. We are not called to unravel the mysteries of God’s government; but we are privileged to enjoy his love. We are the subjects of the former; but we are the objects of the latter. My reader should seek a clear understanding of the difference between God in government, and God in the gospel. The distinctness is not sufficiently attended to, and hence it is that many minds are confused, many passages of scripture not understood, and many of the actings of providence entirely misconstrued. If we only look at God in His government, we shall never know Him. It is when we see Him in the cross, that we understand His love, and know Him as “a just God and a Saviour.” Precious, saving, life-giving knowledge! If we could only look forth upon a world of sin and misery, sickness and death, poverty and wretchedness—a world in which we see, at times, the upright suffering, and the wicked successful, how should we ever know God? Impossible. It is “in the face of Jesus Christ” that God has revealed Himself to the sinner’s heart. And oh! who can utter the blessedness of finding oneself in the full blaze of divine revelation, after having groaned beneath the crushing burden of self-consciousness? For one who has endured the terrors and agonies of conscience, to find himself in the embrace of redeeming love, is surely heaven begun upon earth. To find God actually taking my part against Satan—yea, against myself, and opening His bosom of love to my guilty soul, and all this in such a way as to glorify Himself, imparts peace and joy unutterable.

Thus, in Adam's case, we see that conscience terrified him, and drove him to hide. Revelation gave him confidence, and attracted him forth from his covert. It is so in every case. Conscience could never tell a man what God is. It is the sole province of revelation to do this. Conscience has to do with self: revelation has to do with God. The former turns the eye inward upon self; the latter turns it outward upon God; that terrifies me by telling me I am not what I ought to be; this tranquillizes me by assuring me of what God is. I am a sinner, and he is a Saviour. We meet in Jesus, and all is eternally settled. When Adam and Eve listened to the precious accents of divine revelation, they came forth from their hiding place and rushed, as it were, into the arms of divine love, there to receive divine life, and be clothed in divine righteousness. They were not dragged forth by the hand of justice, but drawn forth by a heart of love. The Lord God was the first preacher of the gospel. Adam and Eve were the first hearers, and they were both converted. What a preacher! What an audience! What a result!

And let me here observe, that the true attitude for a sinner to take, in the presence of divine revelation, is that of a listener. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." (Psalm 85:8.) To enter the place of a doer, before you have occupied that of a listener, is to reverse God's order, and throw everything into confusion. Adam tried this plan, and found it a failure. He tried "works." He "sewed fig leaves together," but it was no use. He could not even satisfy his own conscience, or remove his guilty fear. He had to listen to the voice of God—to hearken to divine revelation. And what did that revelation teach him? That after all, God was his friend—that the very One whom the serpent had represented as unkind, was going to provide a Saviour for him—a bruiser for the serpent's head. No marvel, then, that he was attracted forth from his hiding place. The love of God gave him confidence, so that he could speak of Eve as "the mother of all living." Nor was this all. "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Adam got both life and righteousness by simply hearing and believing God's revelation. Could he have gotten these by the dictates of his own conscience? How could he? Where were they to come from? How was it possible for one dead in trespasses and sins, to procure for himself divine life and divine righteousness? It was wholly out of the question. They could only come from God. Man could not find them; but God revealed them, and faith received the revelation.

May the Lord enable my reader to understand, with distinctness, the difference between human conscience and divine revelation. May He know the deep blessedness of resting, in child-like simplicity, upon God's eternal word.

An Earnest Appeal

Christian reader, I feel constrained to make an earnest appeal to your heart and conscience, in the presence of Him to whom you and I are responsible, and to whom our hearts and ways are fully known. I do not mean to judge you, or speak invidiously to you. Neither do I wish to write in a bitter or complaining spirit. I only desire to stir up your pure mind—to wake up the energies of your new nature—to exhort and encourage you to a more earnest zeal and whole-hearted devotedness, in the service of Christ.

The present is a deeply solemn moment. The day of God's long-suffering is rapidly drawing to a close. The day of wrath is at hand. The wheels of divine government are moving onward with a rapidity truly soul-subduing. Human affairs are working to a point. There is an awful crisis approaching. Immortal souls are rushing forward along the surface of the stream of time into the boundless ocean of eternity. In a word, the end of all things is at hand. "The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision."

Now, my reader, seeing these things are so, let us ask each other, how are we effected thereby? What are we doing in the midst of the scene which surrounds us? How are we discharging our fourfold responsibility, namely, our responsibility to God, our responsibility to the church, our responsibility to perishing sinners, our responsibility to our own souls? This is a weighty question. Let us take it into the presence of God, and there survey it in all its magnitude. Are we really doing all we might do for the advancement of the cause of Christ, the prosperity of His church, the progress of His Gospel? I candidly confess to you, my friend, that I very much fear we are not making a right use of all the grace, the light, and the knowledge which our God has graciously imparted to us. I fear we are not faithfully and diligently trading with our talents, or occupying till the Master return. It often occurs to me that people with far less knowledge, far less profession, are far more practical, more fruitful in good works, more honored in the conversion of precious souls, more generally used of God. How is this? Are you and I sufficiently self-emptied, sufficiently prayerful, sufficiently single-eyed?

You may, perhaps, reply, "It is a poor thing to be occupied with ourselves, our ways, or our works." Yes; but if our ways and our works are not what they ought to be, we must be occupied with them—we must judge them. The Lord, by his prophet Haggai, called upon the Jews of old, to "consider their ways;" and the Lord Jesus said to each of the seven churches, "I know thy works." There is a great danger of resting satisfied with our knowledge, our principles, our position, while at the same time, we are walking in a carnal, worldly, self-indulgent, careless spirit. The end of this will, assuredly, be terrible. Let us consider these things. May the apostolic admonition fall, with divine power, on our hearts, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." (2 John 1:8)

Epaphras

(Col. 4:12.)

There is a very striking difference between the inspired records of the people of God, and all human biographies. The former may, truly, be said to be, “much in little;” while many of the latter may, as truly, be said to be, “little in much.” The history of one of the Old Testament saints— a history stretching over a period of 365 years, is summed up in two short clauses. “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” (Gen. 5:24.) How brief! But yet how full! how comprehensive! How many volumes would man have filled with the records of such a life? And, yet, what more could he have said? To walk with God, comprehends all that could possibly be said of any one. A man may travel round the globe; he may preach the gospel in every clime; he may suffer in the cause of Christ; he may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick; he may read, write, print and publish; in short, he may do all that man ever could or did do; and, yet, it may all be summed up in that brief clause, “ he walked with God.” And right well will it be for him, if it can be so summed up. One may do nearly all that has been enumerated, and yet never walk with God, one hour, yea, he may not even know the meaning of a walk with God. The thought of this is deeply solemnizing and practical. It should lead us to the earnest cultivation of the hidden life, without which the most showy services will prove to be but mere flash and smoke.

There is something peculiarly touching in the mode in which the name of Epaphras is introduced to our notice, in the New Testament. The allusions to him are very brief, but very pithy. He seems to have been the very stamp of man which is so much needed, at the present moment. His labors, so far as the inspired penman has recorded them, do not seem to have been very showy or attractive. They were not calculated to meet the human eye or elicit human praise. But oh! they were most precious labors-peerless-priceless labors. They were the labors of the closet, labors within the closed door, labors in the sanctuary, labors without which all beside must prove barren and worthless. He is not placed before us, by the sacred biographer, as a powerful preacher, a laborious writer, a great traveler, which he may have been, and which are all truly valuable, in their place. The Holy Ghost, however, has not told us that Epaphras was any one of the three; but, then, my reader, He has placed this singularly interesting character before us, in a manner calculated to stir the very depths of our moral and spiritual being. He has presented him to us as a man of prayer— earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer—prayer, not for himself, but for others. Let us hearken to the inspired testimony.

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently, (agonizing) for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.” (Col. 4:12, 13.) Such was Epaphras! Would there were hundreds like him, in this our day! We are thankful for preachers, thankful for writers, thankful for travelers in the cause of Christ; but we want men of prayer, men of the closet, men like Epaphras. We are happy to see men on their feet, preaching Christ; happy to see them able to ply the pen of a ready writer, in the noble

cause; happy to see them making their way, in the true evangelistic spirit, into “the regions beyond;” happy to see them, in the true pastoral spirit, going, again and again, to visit their brethren in every city. God forbid we should undervalue, or speak disparagingly of such honorable services; yea, we prize them more highly than words could convey. But, then, at the back of all, we want a spirit of prayer—fervent, agonizing, persevering prayer. Without this, nothing can prosper. A prayerless man is a sapless man.

A prayerless preacher is a profitless preacher. A prayerless writer will send forth barren pages. A prayerless evangelist will do but little good. A prayerless pastor will have but little food for the flock. We want men of prayer—men like Epaphras—men whose closet walls witness their agonizing labors. These are, unquestionably, the men for the present moment.

There are immense advantages attending upon the labors of the closet—advantages quite peculiar—advantages for those who engage in them, and advantages for those who are the subjects of them. They are quiet, unobtrusive labors. They are carried on in retirement, in the hallowed, soul-subduing solitude of the divine presence, outside the range of mortal vision. How little would the Colossians have known of the loving earnest labors of Epaphras, had the Holy Ghost not mentioned them. It is possible that some of them might have deemed him deficient in zealous care on their behalf. It is probable that there were persons, then, as there are those, now, who would measure a man’s care or sympathy by his visits or letters. This would be a false standard. They should see him on his knees, to know the amount of his care and sympathy. A love of travel might take me from London to Edinburgh to visit the brethren. A love of scribbling might lead me to write letters by every mail. Naught save a love for souls, a love for Christ, could ever lead me to agonize as Epaphras did, on behalf of the people of God, “that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

Again, the precious labors of the closet demand no special gift, no peculiar talents, no preeminent mental endowments. Every Christian can engage in them. A man may not have the ability to preach, teach, write or travel; but every man can pray. One, sometimes, hears of a gift of prayer. It is not a pleasant expression. It falls gratingly on the ear. It often means a mere fluent utterance of certain known truths which the memory retains, and the lips give forth. This is poor work to be at. This was not the way with Epaphras. This is not what we want and long for, just now. We want a real spirit of prayer. We want a spirit that enters into the present need of the church, and bears that need, in persevering, fervent, believing intercession, before the throne of grace. This spirit may be exercised, at all times, and under all circumstances. Morning, noon, eventide, or midnight, will answer for the closet laborer. The heart can spring upward to the throne, in prayer and supplication, at any time. Our Father’s ear is ever open; His presence chamber is ever accessible. Come when or with what we may, He is always ready to hear, ready to answer. He is the Hearer, the Answerer, and the Lover of importunate prayer. There are no accents He likes better than, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” He himself has said, “ask-seek-knock”—“men ought always to pray, and not to faint”—“all things, whatsoever ye shall ask, in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”—“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.” These words are of universal application. They are intended for all God’s children. The feeblest child of God can pray, can watch, can get an answer, and return thanks.

Furthermore, nothing is so calculated to give one a deep interest in people as the habit of praying constantly for them. Epaphras would be intensely interested in the Christians at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. His interest made him pray, and his prayers made him interested. The more we are interested for any one, the more we shall pray for him, and the more we pray, the more interested we become. Whenever we are drawn out in prayer for people, we are sure to rejoice in their growth and prosperity. So also, in reference to the unconverted. When we are led to wait on God about them, their conversion is looked for with the deepest anxiety, and hailed, when it comes, with unfeigned thankfulness. The thought of this should stir us up to imitate Epaphras, on whom the Holy Ghost has bestowed the honorable epithet of "a servant of Christ," in connection with his fervent prayers for the people of God.

Finally, the highest inducement that can be presented to cultivate the spirit of Epaphras is the fact of its being so directly in unison with the spirit of Christ. This is the most elevated motive. Christ is engaged in behalf of His people. He desires that they should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God;" and those who are led forth in prayer, in reference to this object, are privileged to enjoy high communion with the great Intercessor. How marvelous that poor feeble creatures, down here, should be permitted to pray about that which engages the thoughts and interests of the Lord of glory! What a powerful link there was between the heart of Epaphras, and the heart of Christ, when the former was laboring fervently for his brethren at Colosse!

Christian reader, let us ponder the example of Epaphras. Let us imitate it. Let us fix our eye upon some Colosse or other, and labor fervently in prayer for the Christians therein. The present is a deeply solemn moment. A correspondent in Scotland makes the following most impressive statement: Matters are coming to a crisis; and men are taking sides: and it is all well. We are no longer left in doubt as to who will serve the Lord, and who will not. May the Lord break up His own way into the hearts of many, and prepare His people for suffering and doing His holy will." These are true sayings, and they tend to make us feel our urgent need of men like Epaphras. Men who are willing to labor, on their knees, for the cause of Christ, or to wear, if it should be so, the noble bonds of the gospel. Such was Epaphras. The first notice we have of him is as a man of prayer (Col. 4:12); and the last notice of him is as a companion in bonds with the devoted apostle of the Gentiles. (Phil. 1:23)

May the Lord stir up amongst us a spirit of earnest prayer and intercession. May He raise up many of those who shall be cast in the same spiritual mold as Epaphras. These are the men for the crisis.

God's Infinite Love

Lines said to have been written by an idiot, in a lunatic asylum.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,

Were every blade of grass a quill,

Were the whole world of parchment made,

And every man a scribe by trade,

To write the love

Of God above,

Would drain the ocean dry,

Nor would the scroll

Contain the whole,

Though stretched from sky to sky.

God's Salvation and Man's Condition

There is no subject of such importance to a sinner as that of salvation—the salvation of his own soul. Compared with this, all others dwindle into utter insignificance. Indeed, were he truly alive to his condition as such, he could think of no other, feel interested in no other, occupy himself with no other, until he knew that this all-important one was really settled on a solid basis. He would seek first to have this secure, whatever else was left in uncertainty.

The unsaved sinner is like a person on the brink of an awful precipice, up to the very edge of which, an enemy has decoyed him, and then, with fiendish subtlety, watching for an opportunity to give him the fatal push, that would plunge him headlong down the fearful abyss. Now, what should we think of a person, in such a condition, who could remain unconcerned, if he knew his danger? who, though faithfully warned of his position, and of the enemy who was seeking his destruction, nevertheless, gave no heed to the warning, manifested no desire to flee from the danger, or to escape from the hands of his crafty, cruel foe? We should justly conclude that he was an insane person, one who was alike insensible to the dangers of his situation, the kindness of his friend, and the treachery of his enemy.

Well, such, and worse than such, is the condition, and the conduct, of every unpardoned sinner who neglects God's "great salvation"—who despises, or trifles with, the faithful warnings, and the affectionate invitations of the gospel. He is on the very brink of the slippery precipice of the lake of fire. He is every moment exposed to the yawning gulf beneath. Another step, and his doom may be sealed forever—for who can tell what a moment may bring forth? Yet, strange to say, he professes to know his danger, and dares to make light of it. Awful delusion! but he believes the lie of Satan rather than the truth of God, and shuts his eyes to the danger he is in. Such, indeed, is the awful condition, the imminent danger, of every one who neglects the "great salvation." He may be kind, loving, gentle, moral, amiable. He may not openly despise, or avowedly reject salvation, but in heart he neglects it—treats it with carelessness—and the only termination of such a course, if persisted in, is eternal condemnation. "How shall we escape if we NEGLECT so great salvation? And oh! what immense numbers there are of this class. Many of the most moral, and well conducted amongst men, are living in the utter "neglect" of God's "great salvation." Oh! fearful condition! fatal delusion! And the great enemy of souls and salvation, is doing his very utmost to hide from the view of his poor deluded victims the reality of their position, until it be too late. Moreover, while the sinner's ear continues shut to the voice of God, and his heart closed to the love of God, he is in the hands of Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He is led on by him as his prince, and energized by his spirit. He may think he has an independent will of his own, and can think and judge for himself, yet all the while he is the merest dupe of Satan, and led "captive by him at his will." (2 Tim. 2:26.)

Some he leads on very gently, getting them to believe that God's time for their conversion is not yet come, and that they must wait His time. He only can change the heart. But, in the meantime, they may take their enjoyment, such as the world offers, in a rational way, honestly confessing

they are not christians yet, so that they are quite consistent. Such, alas! are as surely, though quietly and orderly, on the broad road, as ever they can be. This is a subtle, but most successful snare of the enemy. It well suits those, who have a measure of light, but at the same time a real love for the world. Some who have less light, and less conscience, he pushes along more roughly; while others he drives furiously, and their race is soon run. But at whatever speed, and in whatever character they go, his only terminus is the burning lake, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth. But, blessed be the God of all grace, so long as the soul is in the land of the living, it is in the place of hope. God is above Satan; He is above all, He keeps the door of mercy wide open, night and day, for the chief of sinners. "And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) The first look of faith, to Jesus is immediate deliverance. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else." (Is. 45:22.) Many have been rescued by the Saviour-God, when on the very brink of hell, and plucked as a brand out of the fire. He only can do it, and we must look to Him. We have many examples recorded in Scripture, and set up as finger posts, pointing out to us the way of escape, and the way of eternal life. Such are the dying thief on the cross, Saul of Tarsus, and the Philippian jailor. Let us look for a moment at the latter. When, by Satan, driven to the very point of despair, "He drew out his sword and would have killed himself." But the voice of love from "the inner prison," that cried aloud, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here," stayed his hand, and rescued him from the snare of the enemy. He was just about to strike the fatal blow, and rush headlong into the gulf of hell. For a moment, he stood quivering on its slippery edge, and Satan eager to push him in; when the sweet accents of love and mercy from the heart of God, fell upon his ear, arrested his attention, and turned his thoughts to the voice that spake. Those kind words, "Do thyself no harm," broke the poor jailer's heart, and he fell a captive, not to the malice of Satan, blessed be God, but to the victorious love of Jesus. The prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered from the terrible one. (Is. 49:24.) "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.... And he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts 16:22, 34.) Oh! that my dear reader may be led to pause, and listen to the voice of love. It is Jesus that speaks, and words of perfect grace fall from his lips. I am come, He says, "to seek and to save that which was lost." Oh! then, turn to Him, ere you take another step. As a lost one turn to Him. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Psa. 2:12.) Reader, think of this. All who are not in the arms of Jesus, are in the grasp of Satan. There is no middle place.

That which may, alas, be treated with neglect, thought little of, and cared little for, is, nevertheless, God's "great salvation." Hence, the solemn warning, appeal, and exhortation, in the word before us. "THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" These truly solemn words were first spoken to the Hebrews who had made a profession of Christianity, but were in danger of slipping back into Judaism. Still, they are equally true and applicable to us, and to all, who, at any time, or on any ground, are found neglecting this salvation. The subject is one of universal, and individual importance, and cannot be overlooked or disregarded by any without incurring God's sore displeasure. "Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah 2:9.) It is of His providing and preparing. "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my

oxen and my failings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage.” (Matt. 22:4.) It is divinely suited to man’s condition. It is ready now, ready for the acceptance of all who will receive it. It is full and free—free to the most unworthy. “Ho, everyone 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.” (Isa. 55:1).

It is emphatically called the “great salvation.” And that for several reasons. We will notice some of them.

1. Because of the greatness, and authority of Him by whom it was published. “Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.” “God....hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” (Heb. 1) The law was spoken by angels. The Jews “received the law by the disposition of angels. (Acts 7) But God hath spoken to us, by His own beloved Son, who is, essentially and officially, above angels. “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?” What a messenger! oh! what importance must be attached to the message which He brings! “THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.”

2. Because of the greatness and glory of Him by whom it was accomplished. When Christ, “by Himself,” had “purged our sins,” He “sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” He who, in perfect grace to us, when working out our salvation, went down to “the lowest parts of the earth,” is now in the highest place in heaven. The cross has been exchanged for the throne, and the reed of mockery for the Royal Scepter of universal dominion. “ But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.” Oh! what a workman! What must His work be!

3. Because of the greatness of the ruin, and wretchedness, from which it saves. How few know their real condition in the sight of God, though it is written on every page of Scripture. Vain man’s thoughts of himself, and God’s true statement of his condition, are widely different. “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” By nature, he is a child of wrath; because of unbelief, “condemned already.” Yet out of all this sad, sad condition, God’s “great salvation,” effectually, and immediately, delivers. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we HAVE redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Rev. 3:17 Col. 1:12, 13, 14.)

4. Because of the greatness of that blessedness into which it introduces. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” We can never get higher, or better than this. To be brought to God, is to be brought to the knowledge of God—into fellowship with God—full conformity to God and the eternal enjoyment of God. This is perfect blessedness! “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Oh! what a place to be brought into! “The midst of the paradise of God.” This is rest—God’s own rest; a higher, a holier, a happier, can never be found. And to feed on Christ there, as “the tree of life.” No “tree of the knowledge of good and evil there. How different from man’s paradise. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places

in Christ.” (1 Pet. 3:18. Rom. 5:11. Rev. 2:7.)

Well may the grand theme of the Gospel testimony be called the “great salvation.” Oh! how great—how good —how glorious! It is salvation from the depths of hell to the heights of heaven; from “the wrath to come,” to an “eternal weight of glory.” And is this—is this really—what so many are neglecting? Is this what so many are despising and rejecting? Few will say, in plain terms, that they are doing the latter, but many will confess to the former. Many will acknowledge that they are neglecting the “one thing needful.” Well, my dear reader, be assured that the former comes to the same thing as the latter in the end. “How shall we escape if we NEGLECT so great salvation?” Escape from eternal woe is utterly impossible, if we persist in neglecting Christ, in whom alone salvation is to be found. “How shall we escape?” is the deeply solemn and unchangeable word of God.

May you be led, my dear reader, to realize its full weight on your heart and conscience now. May you be kept from trifling with a matter of such immediate, unspeakable, and eternal importance to your own soul. Can anything compensate for the loss of your precious soul? “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” No amount of pleasure, gain, or gratification, in this world, can ever make up for eternal misery in the world to come. Why, then, oh! why should you be so thoughtless, careless, and negligent about salvation, “which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory?” Oh! receive Him by faith, as your Saviour, and then you receive salvation “with eternal glory.” Then you possess, as your present, and everlasting portion, “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” All is open and free to faith. “Only believe.” Salvation is by faith alone. Faith in Jesus. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” But oh! believe on Him now. His word can never be truer, His salvation can never be freer, and you can never be more welcome. Why not come now? He is waiting for you. It will be joy to His loving heart to embrace you. It will be joy to all heaven to receive you. Can you delay? Surely not! Flee to the arms of his mercy—flee at once. Tomorrow may be too late. “Behold, NOW is the accepted time. Behold, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION.” (2 Cor. 6:2.)

Salvation! oh, thou bleeding Lamb,

To thee the praise belongs;

Salvation shall inspire our hearts,

And dwell upon our tongues.

Grace, Godliness, and Glory

“The carnal mind,” which “is enmity against God,” would always make a bad use of His grace to sinners. It dislikes grace, and will always speak against it. It is contrary to its nature. The Apostle had no sooner stated the blessed truth, that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,” than he anticipates, and answers, the opposition of the natural mind to the sovereign grace of God. (Rom. 5:6.) “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

The believer is dead to sin in the sense in which Christ is dead to it. This is a deeply precious truth. The following passages make it perfectly plain. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.....Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 6:1-11.

Grace, the pure grace of God, is the only power of a holy, godly walk in this world. As the Lord said to one who was passing through deep trial, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:9.) It is only by grace that we can “Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Titus 2:10-14.) The law demands perfect obedience, and will not yield one point, but gives no power to obey. The divine favor which is our only strength, flows to us through the channel of our gracious, blessed Saviour. He is the rule of the believer’s life, and the grace of God is his power to follow him. “For he hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps.” (1 Pet. 2:21.) The law knows nothing of grace, it shows no favor, it can only condemn the offender. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17.) From this portion in Titus we learn the three following things:

1. GRACE brings salvation—complete deliverance. The moment that the grace of God, in Christ Jesus, is received by faith, there is complete salvation to the soul—a full deliverance from sin and all its consequences. The condition of the sinner, in God’s sight, is immediately changed. He has “passed from death unto life”—from a condition of death, unto one of eternal life. (John 5:24.) This is also the source and power of holiness. The believer being vitally connected with Christ—a partaker of the divine nature—and indwelt by the Holy Ghost—he brings forth fruit unto God. “This only would I learn of you,” says the Apostle, “received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?.....

We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal. 3:2, 14.

2. The same grace that brings salvation, leads to true, practical GODLINESS. “Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” That is, grace teaches us to deny everything that is unlike God, and displeasing to Him. And also to deny the tendencies of our own hearts to go out after the world. But grace

teaches us to do what is good and right, as well as to deny what is evil and wrong. “We should live soberly”—great sobriety, moderation, evenness of mind, temper, and conduct, should characterize every believer. Also “righteously”—justly and honestly towards men. “And godly”—in all holiness of heart and life towards God. This is true sanctification, namely, separation from the world—set apart for God. Such are the happy fruits of the sovereign, boundless grace of God, to lost, ruined sinners, in this present evil world.

3. Grace teaches the believer to look for GLORY. He may be a dull scholar, but the lesson is plain enough. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Here we have set before us, Christ Himself, the hope of our hearts and coming glory—the full display of the millennial glory of our Saviour-God. The grace that brings salvation, and leads to godliness, sets us in the position of waiting, watching, and looking for the Lord from heaven. Alas, that this blessed hope should be so little understood, and have so little hold of our hearts. What can be plainer? The grace that brings our salvation, sets it before us. It is fitted and intended to govern our affections, and form our character for the blessed Lord. His first appearing was in grace. His second appearing will be in glory. In this passage, our salvation and walk are sweetly connected with both.

May we be led to a deeper knowledge of GRACE, to a higher character of GODLINESS, and to a more transforming hope of GLORY.

Grace Triumphant

(The substance of a discourse, in which, special notice was taken of a dear departed young sister, who fell asleep in Jesus, January 11th, 1851).

About three months ago, I saw her, in this place, for the first time. She was introduced to me, immediately after the preaching, by one who felt a deep interest in her soul's welfare, and who had brought her a considerable distance to hear the gospel. Under these circumstances, I immediately felt interested in her.

But her appearance was sufficient, of itself, to engage the sympathies of the heart. She was evidently concerned, and under deep emotion when I spoke to her. Her expression was calm, but most earnest, which told me at a glance, what was passing within. The truths to which she had been listening, were now to her soul, deep and solemn realities. Life and death, heaven and hell, sin and salvation, the glorious Person, and finished work of Christ, are indeed realities to a truly-awakened—a divinely-convicted conscience. There is little disposition to trifle in such a scene. Though many persons were passing and repassing, "the one thing needful" engaged all her attention. After a few words in a general way, I said to her, in plain terms,

"Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?"

"I am afraid not, sir," she softly and quietly replied.

"The Scriptures say it is eternal life to know Him—to know Him as the one who loved us, and died for us on the cross."

"I don't think I am saved, Sir," she answered with much feeling.

"Well, surely, if you have not faith in Jesus, you are not saved; for although He has finished the work, we are not saved until we believe."

"I feel very anxious about my soul; but I know I am not saved."

"Have you been exercised about these things for some time?"

"Oh yes! very much, and has often spoken to me about them."

"Well, you have been hearing once more, that the blood of Jesus is the only ground of peace for a troubled conscience. He has done all the work, blessed be His name. He glorified God and put away our sins on the cross. Now, the moment you believe that, and truly rest in Jesus as your Saviour—your only Saviour—your sins will be all forgiven, every one, and your mind will be at rest. If I believe that Jesus put away all my sins when He shed His precious blood, and made my peace with God, I must be happy. And if I were to doubt that, I should be doubting the word of God. You believe, I am sure, that you would be utterly lost without an interest in Christ—that we can only be saved through faith in Him."

“Oh yes, Sir, I am sure of that, I hope I shall soon believe.”

“Well, the only way to get an interest in Christ is by believing. We are ‘the children of wrath by nature, but we become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.’ ‘And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.’ (Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:17.) All who have faith are interested in Jesus, and in all the happy fruits of His blessed work. They are joint heirs with Him. Only trust Him. He is worthy to be trusted. He will never disappoint you. May the Lord enable you to look to Jesus as your own Saviour, and rest in Him. You will never be happy until you do so.”

After some further conversation, we parted, but not in spirit. She was much on my mind.

“There is a spot where spirits blend,
And friend holds fellowship with friend.”

The Spirit of God was now at work in her soul, and she was in deep earnest about her salvation. She came long-distances to be at the various meetings, both on week day and Sunday evenings, and she was greatly helped and encouraged to do so by those with whom she lived. But, in a short time, GRACE TRIUMPHED, through faith, over all the darkness and unbelief of the natural mind, and established her soul in the full salvation of God. And here, for the sake of others, I would notice particularly, the truth that was blest to her conversion.

The subject was the parable of the “Pharisee and the Publican,” where Jesus so plainly connects these two things, namely, the confession of sin and the justification of the sinner. “God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified.” This is a point, beloved friends, of the deepest practical importance. Observe, the poor publican does nothing but confess his own unworthiness—take the ground of a sinner before God- and cast himself entirely on His mercy. “Well now, in such a case, what could God do? What could He say? Could He say to the poor helpless soul, “There is no mercy in God for thee?” Impossible! dear friends. That would be to deny Himself, and the whole truth of the Bible, for therein we learn that “God is love,” and that He “delighteth in mercy.” What then would be the Lord’s answer to such a one? We have it from His own lips. “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified.” Oh! mark the precious emphasis of these three words. “I tell you.” “I,” the truth itself— “the faithful witness,” “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified.” The same moment that he was in his true place, acknowledging his true condition, and cast entirely on the mercy of God, he was a justified man, an eternally-saved sinner. He was pardoned and justified, according to the riches of divine mercy, and the value of the sacrifice of Christ.

Three things seem naturally and inseparably connected in the justification of a sinner, and will actually be experienced, if we simply follow the scriptures.

1. There is the sinner confessing his sin, and condemning himself.
2. “God, who is rich in mercy,” acting from Himself, by virtue of Christ’s precious blood, forgives the sin, and declares the sinner “justified from all things.”
3. Faith listens to this gracious announcement, receives it as the word of God, and the soul finds peace and rest therein. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God,

through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:9. Rom. 5:1.)

These three things, which go together in the word of God, ought never to be separated in the believer’s mind; but alas! they often are. So few know their true place as sinners; and consequently most are ignorant of the true grace of God, and strangers to that peace, which the knowledge of grace alone can give. Let me beseech you, beloved friends, to receive, in the simplicity of faith, these blessed truths. Many go halting nearly all their days, from not seeing them. I mean, from not seeing that God immediately justifies the sinner who believes in Jesus. But, oh! let me ask, Are there any poor publicans here this evening? How many of you are crying out, from the depths of your souls, “God be merciful to me a sinner?” Is this really the ground you are on? Are you truly crying to Him, the fountain of mercy, in the name of Jesus? If so, rest assured, my dear friends, that you are justified already, that your many sins are blotted out, and that you have everlasting life. But remember, you must believe this in order to have peace. Oh! for mercy’s sake, for the truth’s sake—for your own soul’s sake, do not separate, what the blessed Lord here joins together. Mark well these two points—namely, the sinner’s true confession, and God’s true justification.

The Lord was graciously pleased to bless the word to her soul. Before leaving the room, she confessed her faith in Jesus. Her words were something like the following,

“Now I believe! I think I am saved!” In reply, I said,

“Has the Lord brought you down to the lowly place of the poor publican?”

“Yes, I believe He has.”

“Then, remember His own words, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified.” Only believe His word, and you will be quite happy. Don’t you be parting asunder, what He has put together.”

I now felt sure that she was the Lord’s—that she was a child of God “by faith in Christ Jesus.” The change was soon manifest. From a state of deep exercise of mind, she had passed into one of tranquility and peace. Those who felt deeply interested in her saw it with joy, and felt persuaded that the work was God’s. Indeed, so decided was the change, and so real her peace and joy, that she applied for communion almost immediately, such was the energy of the divine life in her soul. And with the full consent and approval of those who witnessed her daily walk, she was received to the Lord’s table, early in December. But her Christian course was a brief one. Her wilderness journey was a short one. She was scarcely through the lied Sea, when she was called to pass the Jordan.

She was privileged to break bread only three times, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus, when, on the 28th of December, she was suddenly called away, to attend the death-bed of a dear mother, who fell asleep in Jesus, on the 4th of January. She died of fever. It was a time of deep grief to dear Alice, but she was happy in Jesus, and knew the consolations of His blessed presence. But though she bore up wonderfully, and insisted on looking after things that were needful, it became quite evident that she had caught the fever. And on Monday the 10th, the day that her dear mother’s body was laid in its resting place, she was completely overcome, and she lay down to die. The fever went to the brain, and there it raged, but her sufferings were short; the following

morning, she was with Jesus. The Lord in tender mercy, sent his messenger of peace, to close the troubled scene—to release His suffering child, and take her home to be with Himself forever. When “absent from the body,” we are “present with the Lord.” On Thursday the 13th of January, the poor body was laid in its resting place, until the morning of the first resurrection.

Oh! what grace! what mercy! in all the Lord’s dealings with her, during the past three months. Her brief stay amongst us, is full of the deepest interest, because the Lord is in it all. We can trace the footsteps of love in every turn of her short history. I can hardly realize that she is gone. There she sat; her countenance is as fresh before me, as if she were sitting there at this moment. The earnest expression, the placid look, the slight flush from intense feeling, are vividly before me. But her seat is empty. Her soul has winged its way to the realms of never-ending bliss, there to be with Jesus, until the last trumpet shall sound; when her now-decaying body shall be raised up, and “fashioned like unto Christ’s glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” (Phil. 3:21.)

But, oh! my dear friends, has this solemn dispensation no warning voice for us? Are we as anxious for the salvation of souls as we ought to be? What think you would be the feelings of her Christian master and mistress now. Had they shown no anxiety about her soul? or made no effort to take her to the preaching of the gospel? What an awful reflection it would have been, had she died in her sins. Not that we can save the souls of our servants, or our children, but we can bring them in faith to the preaching of the gospel, as God’s appointed means of salvation. And I know of no effort, which the Lord has so signally blessed, as that of believers bringing their unconverted friends and relatives to the preaching of the gospel. They listen and pray for their friends, and God’s institution is honored. And oh! what unspeakable consolation to the friends of Alice now, to know, to be assured that her soul is with Jesus; and that though suddenly cut down with a fever raging in the brain, she was perfectly safe. Oh! beloved friends, are we all doing what we can, to win souls to Jesus? Are our consciences clear before God as to those who live with us, whether they be servants, children, or friends? Are we ready to deny ourselves—to make personal sacrifices from love to souls, and faith in the gospel of God, as His means of their salvation? “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” 1 Cor. 1:21.

And oh! what a solemn warning voice, this event has, to the careless and unconcerned sinner! Where, dear fellow sinner, would you have been this evening, had her case been yours? Had the fever reached your brain last Monday, and proved fatal on the Tuesday, where would your soul have been at this moment? We know where the poor body would have been. The gloomy grave might have closed over it on the Thursday, but, oh! solemn! awfully solemn thought! where would your precious soul have been? The thought can hardly be endured now, though we realize these things so little. Oh! what a mercy that you are here this evening—that you are in the land of the living, and in the place of hope. May you believe the gospel now! May you flee for refuge to Jesus now! He bids you come! Oh! refuse Him not! Suffer not another evening to pass away unimproved! You may be listening to the gospel for the last time on earth.

Remember you have been warned—Remember you have been invited. If you die in your sins, you will have only yourselves to blame. The Lamb has been slain. The sacrifice for sin accepted. God is well pleased, and is now beseeching you to be well-pleased with his beloved Son, that you may live and not die. May you this evening, “BELIEVE AND LIVE!” Forget not what took place last

Monday, and oh! who can tell that tomorrow may not bring fever with it, to someone present. Tuesday is coming, and who can tell that it may not bring death with it. Thursday is coming, and who can tell that it may not bring an opened grave with it, to someone who is now sitting at his ease. We say not these things in order to drive you to Jesus, but that you may see the danger of delay. Jesus is worthy to be loved and trusted for His own sake. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) May you be drawn to Him by the cords of love, and find immediate rest to your souls, and then, oh, then, come what may, you will be safe forever.

He Dwelt Among Us

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” John 1:14.

He “dwelt among us,” and we saw,
Though veiled in human guise,
The mighty God, the Prince of Peace.

Omnipotent, All-Wise;
He who upholds the universe,
And all its need supplies.

He “dwelt among us,” and we saw
His power to raise the dead;
That mighty power of old displayed,
At which the darkness fled:
He spake, ‘twas done! and death itself,
His high behest obeyed.

He “dwelt among us,” and we saw
His pity to the poor;
His kindness to the fatherless,
His help where sorrow bore;
Dispensing freely as He went,
His precious heavenly store.

He “dwelt among us,” and we saw
In Him the Man of Prayer;
Upon His God and Father, too,
He roll’d His every care;
Content, whatever was His will,
To suffer and to bear.

He “dwelt among us,” and we saw

Perfection in His mien;
Yea, perfect grace, and truth, and love,
In Him were ever seen:
Unmoved and undismayed,
He passed Through Calvary's tragic scene.
He "dwelt among us," and subdued
The powers of death and hell;
And now He's gone again to heaven,
And O, with rapture tell,—
He'll shortly come to take us home.
That we with Him may dwell.
A. M.

Hoping and Having

There is a vast difference between hoping for salvation, and actually having it. Many never seem to get beyond the former, though it is their privilege to enjoy the latter. Wherever the gospel is received, in its divine fullness, it proves itself to be “the power of God unto salvation.” (Rom. 1:16.) Its language is, “This day is salvation come to this house.” (Luke 19:9.) It “gives knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.” (Luke 1:77.) In every case in which the gospel is really laid hold of, it imparts peace and gladness. When the Ethiopian eunuch received it, through the preaching of Philip, “he went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:39.) The Philippian jailer “rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” (Acts 16:34.) “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1.) It could not be the gospel—God’s good news, were it to leave one in doubt. How could God send glad tidings to people, to leave them in doubt? Impossible. When God speaks, His word must impart a certainty equal to itself. If a truthful person tells us a thing, we feel certainty; and our certainty will be in proportion to the truthfulness of the witness. Were we to be uncertain we should simply be calling in question his veracity; or at least, we imply that his word is not sufficient to satisfy us. Now, “if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 John 5:9-11.)

And, be it carefully observed, the gospel does not seek to “persuade men” to believe something about themselves. It does not call upon me to believe that I am a Christian. It is a serious mistake to suppose that the subject of gospel testimony is anything about oneself. It is something about Christ. It is something that God tells me about His Son; and when I, by grace, believe it, it makes me quite happy. It gives me life and righteousness, peace and joy, rest and satisfaction. I am called to look away from self, altogether, straight to Jesus. The object which God presents is His Son; there is no uncertainty there. The One who presents the object is God; there is no uncertainty there. My authority is the Word; there is no uncertainty there. The moment a man looks at himself, for the ground of his confidence or peace, he is all astray. He is plunged in doubt and confusion. What we really want is to keep close to the word—close to Christ—close to the sacrifice. This will take us out of self, and fill us with a divine object in whom we can find all we need. The devil can never shake the confidence of one who has once got thoroughly settled in the gospel of Christ. There may be conflict, trial, exercise, difficulty, depression, sorrow, and the like; but nothing can ever shake the peace that is really founded upon the word of God. It is eternal and divine. It partakes of the character of that word on which it is founded, and of the sacrifice of which that word bears witness. “The worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” (Heb. 10:2.) This is plain. To be “once purged” settles everything. “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” (John 13:10.) “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3.)

Some there are, who seem to think that the only result of the sacrifice of Christ is to put us into a solvable state, that is, a state in which salvation is possible. The idea of being saved—of knowing salvation—of being assured that we are saved, is, in the opinion of such persons, the very height of presumption—the essence of spiritual pride—a setting up for being holier than one's neighbors—a being righteous overmuch. This, however, is a great mistake—a mistake arising from not seeing the true ground of salvation, and the true authority for knowing that we are saved. The former we have in the blood of Christ; and the latter, in the word of God. Self has naught to do with either the one or the other. God declares unto us “glad tidings.” He tells us of salvation, through the name of Jesus, of perfect remission of sins, through the blood of the cross. Now, the question is, can God's word give certainty? If He sends us glad tidings, ought they not to be believed; and, if believed, should they not make us glad? How could God's glad tidings leave us in doubt? Impossible. Where doubt exists, God's word is not believed—the fullness of Christ is not seen—the value of the blood is not apprehended. Self, self, self, is the object before the mind, and hence, there is no peace, no joy, no happiness, no holiness. The soul that is dwelling in the gloomy region of doubt can neither be holy nor happy.

Dear reader, let me entreat you not to be satisfied with hoping for salvation. Stop not short of having it. Adam knew he was saved, when God clothed him. (Gen. 3)

Noah knew he was saved when the Lord shut him in. (Gen. 7:16.) The Israelite knew he was safe with the blood on the door post. (Exod. 12) The manslayer knew he was safe when he entered the city of refuge. (Num. 36) Rahab knew she was safe, under the cover of the scarlet line. (Josh. 2) Thus it is, in every case, where God's remedy is revealed and His word believed, there is certainty and peace. It is no longer hoping, but having. It is worthy of God and His word, to give settled peace to the heart that trusts in Him. It would not be like Him to leave a soul in doubt and uncertainty. I should just possess all the assurance which God's word is capable of imparting.

May the Lord grant, to the anxious reader, an artless confidence in the divine testimony to the value of the blood.

I Will Come Again: Part 1

“In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2, 3.) This is a truly precious promise. It was given to comfort the hearts of the sorrowing disciples, and many a weary heart it has comforted since then. You will observe, that in these verses, “I” and “you” occur very frequently. The heart of Jesus, and the hearts of His disciples, are in close quarters. Love unites them. In heart, they are one. The tender love of Jesus is sweetly manifested. The disciples were filled with sorrow because He was going to leave them. “Whither I go,” He says, “ye cannot come.” This was a trying word to the heart. In answer to Peter’s question, “Whither goest thou?” the Lord first refers to His own death on the cross for them, and then meets the trouble of their hearts with this blessed promise, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” He does not say, “I will send for you,” oh, no! but “I will come.” Such was His love, He would come for them Himself. Love values its object. To have spoken of sending others for His disciples, would not have expressed how much He loved and valued them.

But whither was He going? To His Father’s house on high, to His immediate presence, he was going home. And will He receive us to Himself there? He is there now, and He will come for us, and receive us to where He is Himself. “That where I am,” as He says, “there ye may be also.” Our place will be WITH HIM, through the rich merits of His blood. And that, we know, is the highest,—best,—most blessed place in heaven. And though all will be in the same glory with Himself, yet each one will have his own distinct and special place there. Paul will not have Peter’s, and Peter will not have Paul’s. Each one will have his own place, not only in the heart of Christ, but in the house of many mansions, and in the glory of the Lord. “I go to prepare a place for you. In short, it will be HOME, our own eternal, happy home. Such is the love of Jesus! It is the love of the divine Bridegroom for His “ransomed bride,” and such His faithful promise, I will come again.”

In the seventeenth chapter, we have the same precious truth presented, not in the form of a promise, but expressed as a prayer. “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.” He bears us on His heart continually. His great desire is, that we may see His glory, and be with Him in it. Here, it is His “given” glory that He speaks of He glorified God on the earth, and God has glorified Him at His own right hand in heaven. (Comp. John 12:28; 13:31, 32; 17:4, 5.) And now, He prays the Father that we may all be with Him in the glory. “And him the Father heareth always.” “A little while,” and we shall be with Him, and like Him in His “given glory.” And, oh! surely, our deepest, highest joy will be, to see Him, who passed through such shame and suffering for us, crowned with glory and honor. Our joy will not consist, so much, in being there ourselves, as in seeing Him there. Every eye will be fixed on Him, every heart will be ravished with His glory and beauty. And the thought that we are there through His suffering, shame, and dishonor, will tune every voice to sing His praise, in loudest, sweetest strains.

And now, having the promise, and knowing the desire of His heart, our true position is to be watching and longing for His coming. He has not named the day or the hour, that we may be always waiting for Him. We are not to be looking for troubles, or trials, or death, but for the Lord Himself. These may come before Him, but this precious promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself," places nothing between the heart of the disciple and his Lord's return. His coming again is the proper object of His people's hope. Like the Thessalonians who were "turned from idols to serve the living God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." Affection should lead us to pray, "COME, LOUD JESUS." Like the loving wife who counts the hours of her husband's absence, and longs for his return.

In Rev. 4 we find, in vision, the promise fulfilled, and the prayer answered. Affection, as well as faith, lays hold on this. The redeemed of the Lord are seen in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne. They are seated on thrones, wearing crowns, and worshipping. And although "out of the throne proceed lightnings, and thunderings, and voices," they are not disturbed. They are perfectly at home. They are with Christ, and that makes heaven home to them. His promise is fulfilled, and the desire of His heart of love is answered. Before a single seal is broken,—a single trumpet sounded,—a single vial poured out, the Church is called away. He comes for her, and receives her unto Himself—unto His own home, in His Father's house on high. She is secure within the veil. This is a deeply precious truth. Judgments are now coming on the earth, with overwhelming rapidity, as the lightnings, thunderings, and voices indicate. But she has been removed from the scene on which the judgments fall, and has entered with Christ, on her eternal rest and glory. The promise is fulfilled, and the prayer is answered.

"How happy are we, who in Jesus agree, To expect His return from above; We sit under His vine, and delightfully join, In the praise of His excellent love. United to Him we drink of the stream, ever flowing in bliss from the throne; Who in Jesus believe, we the Spirit receive, That proceeds from the Father and Son. We remember the word of our crucified Lord, When He went to prepare us a place, I will come in that day and transport you away, and admit to a sight of my face. Come, Lord, from the skies, and command us to rise, To the mansions of glory above; With our Head to ascend, and eternity spend, In a rapture of heavenly love."

I Will Come Again: Part 2

Again, we read in our Lord's parable (Luke 19:11-27), "And he said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Here, the subject is not the Saviour coming for his people to receive them unto Himself, but the setting up of the kingdom of God in power.

The "nobleman," represents Christ; "the far country," heaven; "a kingdom," the millennium, or Messiah's reign in righteousness and peace over the whole earth; "and to return," the Lord's second appearing. "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9:28.) His first appearing was in lowly grace, His second appearing shall be in "brightest glory." (See the two appearings spoken of in Titus 2:11-14.)

When the meek and lowly Jesus presented Himself to the daughter of Zion as her king, she refused Him. She saw no beauty in Him that she should desire Him. He was "despised and rejected of men." But, without Him, the head, the kingdom could not be set up, and having, by his obedience unto death, accomplished the great work of atonement—the only foundation of future glory—He goes back to His Father; there, in heaven, to be invested with all power, authority, and universal dominion. And then, in the glory of His kingdom, as foretold by Dan. 7:13, 14, He will return to what was once the scene of His humiliation. "And I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Such will be the heavenly glory of the "Nobleman's" return. Not, as at first, subjecting Himself, in perfect grace, to the will of man; but, in kingly power, subjecting all things to the will of heaven.

But before leaving this world to go back to heaven, He calls his ten servants, and delivers to them ten pounds. They each receive a pound, and He says to them. "occupy till I come." They were to trade with the pound during His absence. Every believer, yea, and each one who professes to be a believer, is a steward. He is entrusted with goods, which, during his Lord's absence, he is to employ in his Lord's service. But whether we are viewed in the place of privilege, as in John 14:1-3; or in the place of responsibility, as in Luke 19, the coming of the Lord is the great truth set before us, and that by Himself. The longings, desires, and affections of the heart are sweetly met by the promise, "I WILL COME AGAIN." Our service acquires a right tone and character, when rendered in obedience to the injunction, "OCCUPY TILL I COME." The former class of scripture passages, keeps Him before the mind as the hope of the church; which hope nourishes the affections, forms the character, and governs the life. The latter presents Him as the Lord of glory, who shares, on His return, with all His true servants, the glory and dominion of His kingdom. Thus, we are taught, that the expectation of His return, is the main spring, both in patient waiting, and in diligent service. We need to have it always before us. Christ Himself so places it, in these scriptures. It was the "evil servant," who said, "My Lord delayeth his coming." Oh! to be governed

in everything by the abiding hope of His coming.

“A little while—he’ll come again:

Let us the precious hours redeem.

Our only grief to give him pain,

Our joy to serve and follow him.

Watching and ready may we be,

As those that long then Lord to see.”

The “Nobleman” next refers to the conduct of his citizens —the Jews. He dwelt in Israel—it was His home as the Messiah, and as such, He calls heaven the “far country.” Oh, wondrous grace! But though “He came unto His own, His own received Him not.” “My people,” He has to say, “would not hearken unto my voice, and Israel would none of me.” “I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.” (John 1:11. Psalm 81:11. Hos. 5:15.) They not only rejected Him as their king, but when He was gone, they sent an insulting “message after Him, saying, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’” The Spirit and nature of this message, come fully out, in the opposition of that perverse nation, to Christ and His gospel, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. And Stephen, whom they stoned, may be viewed as the one who carried it up to Jesus. At the same time, it is equally true of all who refuse the ever-blessed Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. But a day of reckoning comes! Solemn day! Awfully solemn day, to the despisers of Jesus, and the neglecters of His “great salvation.”

And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.” The conduct of the several servants is now judged, and the results stated.

The “good and faithful servants” He rewards with a share in the government of the kingdom. They reign with Him, over the millennial earth. “Have thou authority over ten cities.” “And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4-6.) The “wicked servant” is judged out of His own mouth. And the openly avowed enemies of the king, are slain before Him. This takes place immediately on our Lord’s return, at the commencement of His reign, and preparatory to it. “When he was returned,” it is said, “having received the kingdom, then he commanded his servants to be called unto Him.” The Lord will not set up His kingdom in the midst of evil and disorder. He must judge everything, and place every one, and everything on their true and proper foundation. Now, at this present time, “All the foundations of the earth are out of course.” (Psalm 82:5.) Then, He will re-place, re-set, re-construct, everything. He will restore all things. Israel, long “scattered and peeled,” will be restored to their own land, and become the head nation of the earth, and all the nations of the Gentiles shall be blessed through them. “The whole creation,” which has been subject to vanity, decay, and death, ever since the fall of man, “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:18-23.) The curse will be removed from the face of nature, Satan bound in the bottomless pit, and “The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.” (Rev. 20:12. Mal. 4:2.)

The effect of the sin of the “first Adam,” was to bring a curse on the ground, and cover it with barrenness and death. Hence, the thorn and the thistle, the toil and the sweat, the sighs and the groans. On the other hand, the effect of the righteousness of the “second Adam,” will be, when he appears, to remove the curse, and cover the face of the earth with fruitfulness and life-to heal the hurt inflicted through sin, and to fill the hearts of all with joy and gladness. “Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.” “His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.” (Psalm 72:17)

One song employs all nations; and all cry,

“Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us!”

The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks

Shout to each other, and the mountain tops

From distant mountains catch the flying joy,

Till, nation after nation taught the strain,

Earth rolls the rapturous Hosannah round!

Cowper.

But when? oh, when, the heart exclaims, shall these promised, peaceful, happy times arrive? Just when the “Nobleman” returns, “having received the kingdom.” He brings them with him. “The heavens’ we know, must receive Him until these times arrive. “Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:17-21.) But when they do arrive, our God, according to His promise, “shall send Jesus Christ,” and “the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” “Jesus Christ”— “the presence of the Lord,” is the source from whence they flow. He is the center and power of “the kingdom of God,” in its full, manifested glory.

Thus our hearts are taught, from all these scriptures, to keep looking for the Lord Himself; our expectations are all from Him. Nothing must be allowed to come between the heart and the blessed Master-not even the promised kingdom, with all its glories. That will assuredly come, as the Lord hath said, but He comes first. Our place now, is one of service, responsibility, and patient waiting. “Occupy,” is His own word, “till” when for how long? “till I come.” This includes the entire period, from the time that He left for the far country, until He come again. There is not a word throughout the whole parable about the kingdom being set up during His absence. True, all who believe in Jesus now, and receive him as their Lord and Saviour, are in it, they belong to it, because they belong to Jesus. But now it is by faith, then it will be by sight. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:13, 14.) This is indeed the true position of every believer in Jesus, at this present time. No language can be more explicit, “Who HATH delivered us,” “and HATH translated us,” “we HAVE redemption,” “the forgiveness of sins.” These are the sure words of God Himself, and blessed be His name, they rest not on any conditions to be performed by us, but on the imperishable basis of the Redeemer’s blood. We

have ALL “through His blood.” We are blessed according to God’s own estimate of the value of the blood of “His dear Son.” Consequently, there is no uncertainty whatever, as to the believer’s position in Christ, and in the kingdom now, and nothing can hinder his enjoyment of that blessed position, save the unbelief of his own heart. God’s word is plain, positive and absolute.

But art thou, O my reader, a believer in Jesus? —Art thou trusting in Him? —As one lost and ruined under sin, hast thou fled for refuge to Him? —Art thou looking for His return? —Art thou ready to meet Him with a joyous welcome? Or, alas! would He find thee, were He to come now, amongst those, who, in heart, are saying, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” Oh! surely not! Oh! flee now from the ranks of the king’s enemies. They will all be slain at His coming. Submit thyself unto Him. Bow to His scepter of love and grace. He bids thee come. “Whosoever will let him come,” “And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Oh, come! come, now! Why delay? What has He done? What has He said? that thou shouldst refuse to come. He is the fountain of life, the King of Glory. Who would refuse to live and reign with Him? Who would prefer the world to Christ, the regions of despair to the mansions of glory? “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” (Psalm 2:12.)

“I Would-but Ye Would Not”

Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41.

'Tis evening—over Salem's towers a golden luster gleams,
And lovingly and lingeringly the sun prolongs his beams;
He looks, as on some work undone, for which the time has past;
So tender is his glance and mild, it seems to be his last.
But a brighter Sun is looking on, more earnest is His eye,
For thunder-clouds will veil Him soon, and darken all the sky;
O'er Zion still He bends, as loath His presence to remove,
And on her walls there lingers yet the sunshine of His love.
'Tis Jesus—with an anguish'd heart, a parting glance He throws;
For mercy's day she has sinned away for a night of dreadful woes;
“Would that thou hadst known,” he said, while down roll'd many a tear,
My words of peace, in this thy day; but now thine end is near;
Alas! for thee, Jerusalem, how cold thy heart to me!
How often in these arms of love, would I have gathered thee!
My sheltering wing had been your shield, my love your happy lot:
I would it had been thus with thee, I would, but ye would not.”
He wept alone, and men pass'd on, the men whose sins he bore;
They saw the man of sorrows weep, they had seen him weep before;
They ask'd not whom those tears were for, they ask'd not whence they flow'd;
Those tears were for rebellious man; their source, the heart of God:
They fell upon this desert earth, like drops from heaven on high,
Struck from an ocean-tide of love that fills eternity.
With love and tenderness divine, those crystal cells o'erflow;
'Tis God that weeps, through human eyes, for human guilt and woe.
That hour has fled; those tears are told; the agony is past;

The Lord has wept, the Lord has bled, but has not loved his last.
His eye of love is downward bent, still ranging to and fro,
Where'er in this wide wilderness there roams the child of woe;
Nor his alone—the Three in One, who looked through Jesu's eye,
Could still the harps of angel bands, to hear the suppliant sigh;
And when the rebel chooses wrath, God mourns his hapless lot,
Deep breathing from His heart of love, "would, but ye would not."

Narrative of a Recent Visit to Ireland: Part 1

Soon after we went on board the steamer at Greenock, we found several passengers, from different parts of Scotland, on their way to the scene of the “Revival” in Ireland. We moved off at eight o’clock precisely. The evening was fine, but it soon became too dark to trace the bold outline of the beautiful scenery on the Clyde; still, it was sufficiently light to make walking and conversation on the deck very pleasant.

The revival, in the North of Ireland, and in the West of Scotland, was the general subject talked of. All seemed greatly interested in it, and disposed to speak about it. Those who had seen, or read, something of it, were free to communicate what they knew. An important point, immediately connected with the revival, became the subject of an interesting conversation.

It was plainly stated by several, who took part in the conversation, that the pressing need in Ireland, at the present moment, is a calm, clear, full statement of the gospel of the grace of God. Exciting preaching, which acts on the feelings, and leads the awakened one to be occupied with self, is most injurious. A soothing, instructing, peace-giving gospel, is the character of truth needed at present. There is no balm for a sin-sick soul, like the precious blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit Himself is evidently at work in the present movement. He is awakening many to a sense of their need as sinners, apart from the instrumentality of preaching. And when that is the case, nothing will meet the felt need of such, but the love of Jesus, and the work which He finished on the cross. All other remedies will only increase their anguish. Several other points connected with the work of the gospel, were happily, and we trust profitably conversed upon. By and by the company began to retire, but the deck was not cleared until near twelve o’clock.

By the good hand of our God upon us, we reached Belfast, a little before five o’clock the following morning. We found the sailors quite free to speak about the revival in connection with their own line of things. We spoke to some of them as to their own individual salvation, and gave them some tracts. We then got on to a car for the Ballymena railway station. In speaking to the carman about the meetings in Belfast, we found he had been at some of them, but had little apprehension of their spiritual importance. We spoke to him about the Saviour, and gave him several tracts, which he promised faithfully to read.

As we had nearly an hour to wait for the six o’clock train, we had an opportunity of speaking to people at the station. One of the porters on the platform said to us, “There is a wonderful change come over this town, Sir. Where there used to be nothing but drinking, and swearing, and fighting, there are prayer meetings now. And as you go along the street of an evening, you hear psalm singing everywhere.” The police told us, substantially, the same thing. We felt it well to avail ourselves of every source of evidence, as to the genuineness of the work. We had no difficulty in introducing the subject of religion to anyone. All seemed impressed by what God was doing in their midst. In the railway carriage it was the same.

Through mercy we reached—about nine o’clock.

After breakfast, and the usual questioning of the children on scriptural subjects, the bell rang at ten o'clock precisely, for the morning meeting. This was to us a deeply interesting meeting. It is composed of the family, farm-laborers, and neighbors. A large room, in the stable yard, has been fitted up to accommodate upwards of a hundred persons. It was well filled every morning, but crowded on Lord's day morning. Then, they meet at eight o'clock, as many who attend have several miles to walk to their different places of worship. The number of conversions in the immediate neighborhood, and the earnest desire of many now to hear the word, have increased the importance of this meeting. The gospel was preached. All were deeply interested. The Lord has wonderfully blessed souls there. It was most refreshing, and gave wondrous joy to our hearts, to hear from the lips of so many, that they were now happy in Jesus, and saved by His precious blood. At twelve o'clock, the children of the Sunday school, met in the lecture hall, to receive their annual treat. This was a most blessed sight, viewing it as the fruit of the love of Jesus in those who were now seeking the spiritual and the temporal good of all around. About two hundred children were feasting very happily on the good things of this life, and waited upon by many kind and godly friends. Oh! what has the Spirit of Christ done here! so many poor, humbly-clad children, thus cared for, thus treated with such kindness. The Lord's own name be praised; His grace has done it. Here, we had an excellent opportunity of conversing with many who had been "stricken;" for the Lord had done a great work in this place, and was still working. Three days after this, in the same room, we were present when three persons were "stricken," besides witnessing many under deep emotion, and the greater part of the large assembly in tears. This lecture hall was fitted up by the same kind friend as the other. It accommodates about one thousand persons. On a Lord's day evening, when the gospel is preached, it is generally well filled; sometimes crowded. After the dear children had partaken heartily of the abundance that was placed before them, they were addressed and questioned on the solemn subjects of the soul's salvation, and on what fitted us to feed on the rich provisions of God's love forever. For many of their answers, we felt truly thankful to the Lord. The Lord bless, a thousand-fold in every quarter, this work of faith and labor of love. Surely this is beginning at the right time. But as a detailed history of even one day's conversation, visiting, and preaching, amongst those dear and interesting people, would fill up more than our space, we will condense our remarks under distinct heads, and endeavor, briefly, to give the substance of our nine days' sojourn in the scene of the revival, and amongst the young converts.

1. As to the character of the work. We were fully and deeply persuaded, from what we witnessed, that the work is truly divine. That it is directly, and manifestly, a work of God's Holy Spirit. Doubtless, much of human infirmity, acted upon by the subtlety of Satan, may be mixed up with it. But after making large allowance for such things, there still remains a great, a glorious, a blessed work of the Spirit of God. No one can deny it who visits the scene for himself, and we cannot understand how anyone can doubt it, that knows the preciousness of Jesus. It is more than a quarter of a century since some of us knew the Lord, and during all that time, we have never tasted such unmingled joy, as in seeing the grace of God shining so sweetly in such numbers of men, women, and children. We had many opportunities of conversing with the converts themselves. Most of them had been "stricken;" but many of them had been awakened, and brought into peace, through deep exercise of soul, without any outward manifestation, or prostration of body. Several were brought to Christ while we were there. Some were "stricken;" but we felt convinced that more were gathered without any outward manifestation. And that a real, deep, blessed work of God, was going on in souls. The morning meeting, which has already been

referred to, gave us an excellent opportunity of speaking, from time to time, with those who were exercised.

No feature of this blessed work of God's Spirit, struck us more forcibly, than the uniform testimony from the lips of the young converts, that they were quite happy in the love of Jesus. None of them seemed to have the least doubt on their minds, as to their own, present, personal, salvation. Not that they had much intelligence as to the value of the sacrifice of Christ, which is the alone ground of peace, but they had confidence in Himself, and in the power of His blood to put away their sins. They have, in some quarters, a habit of saying, "one drop" of the blood of Jesus is sufficient to put away all our sins. They mean to put honor on the blood by this expression, although it is not a Scriptural one. To us, who knew something of their state of mind before this blessed awakening, this testimony was the more surprising. We were only the more fully convinced that the work was God's, and, in a great measure, accomplished outside of man's instrumentality. No tongue or pen can adequately describe the joy of heart we experienced, in hearing so many, young and old, confess, with joyous countenances, the Lord Jesus, as their loving, gracious Saviour. Their confession, substantially, may be summed up in these beautiful words, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." The name of Jesus is the grand attraction to their hearts. And this universal acknowledgment of Jesus as their one object and delight, proves, beyond a doubt, that they are led by the Spirit of God, whose mission into this world, is to testify of Jesus, glorify Jesus, and lead souls to confide in Jesus. The church is gathered round Christ as its center, and the Holy Ghost is the alone power of gathering to that divine center. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) Not, observe, where two or three, "gather" or "meet," but "where two or three are gathered." This beautiful action of God's Spirit in many of the young converts was manifest to us. We could see that Christ was the object of their new life, and the center round which they were gathered. Many of them, alas! had not the knowledge of this blessed truth. The instincts of the new life often go beyond the intelligence of the soul that possesses it. But what an honor and a privilege to be helpers of their faith and joy!

May the Lord lead His precious lambs to receive instruction from the lips of those who are taught, and led by the Holy Ghost!

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Narrative of a Recent Visit to Ireland: Part 2

2. As to the fruits of the work, in the testimony and ways of the converts themselves. These are so numerous, and so various, that it is difficult to make a selection. It was manifest to all that the majority were quite decided for Christ. They evidently loved the Saviour, and delighted in that which bore the stamp and savor of His name. Their love for each other—their desire for the word, for prayer, and the various religious meetings, was great. Many of them manifested deep concern for the salvation of others, especially for their own relatives, and traveled far to speak to them about their souls. Indeed, this has been one of the principal means used of God for spreading this blessed work. We will give a few select cases under this head, which we met with at Moore Fort, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Newtown-Lhnavady, Ahoghill, Ilasharkin, &c.

At an early period of our visit we called to see one who was lying ill. We found her in a very peaceful, happy state of mind. She knew that she was in the Lord's hands, and was happy to leave herself there. Her mind was at rest. A blessed state indeed for a sick disciple to be in. We trust it had its proper effect on our own hearts. After being fairly introduced, we asked a few questions, such as,

“And has the Lord made you truly happy in Himself?”

“Indeed, sir, and He has, glory be to His holy name. I am perfectly happy in Him now. Quite content, I can truly say that.”

“But now that you are unwell, are you ‘quite content’ with what He is doing now?”

“Oh, yes, sir! glory be to Him! If it be His will, I am quite content to be here. I am perfectly happy. He can soon raise me up if it be His holy will.”

“Yes, surely, that is quite true, and I suppose we should pray, not so much to get better, as that we may learn the lesson He is teaching us. But now, tell me, what is it that makes you so happy?”

“Oh! it is Jesus, the blessed Jesus! I have nothing but Him. But we don't need any more. He has put away all our sins by His precious blood, and He will never leave us.”

“But now, are you quite sure, that He has put yours all away?”

“Quite certain, sir, I have no doubts whatever. He loved me, and gave Himself for me, I have no doubts at all, glory be to Him.”

We were truly delighted with our visit. What can be more refreshing to the soul, than to hear a young disciple, meekly, but firmly, expressing her adoring love to Jesus, her perfect confidence in His precious blood, and the full assurance of her salvation in Him. A neighbor, who had followed us in, told us of the Lord's grace to herself, and to nearly every member of her family. In the presence of such wondrous grace, we united in prayer and thanksgiving to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies. We afterward learned, from a dear sister in the Lord, that the sick one we had been visiting, had labored so hard in seeking to lead souls to Jesus, that

it was thought she had overworked herself. She had been most zealous, from the time she was stricken, for the conversion of others.

Sometime after, we called to see a carpenter, who had, before his conversion, been a most profligate character. He was well known throughout the whole neighborhood as a “heavy drinker,” and as guilty of many crimes connected with that dreadful vice. After going on for many years, in different places, in his evil ways, a grief and a pest to all who had anything to do with him, he at length became thoroughly sickened with himself, and knowing well, that everyone else was, he determined to put an end to his degraded, miserable life. He wrote a letter, which was to tell the awful tale of his soul's wretchedness, and where his body would be found. He started for the fatal spot, but, oh! what pen can write the riches of the Lord's mercy to his soul! When on his way, an arrow, from God's own quiver, plumed with love, struck his conscience, and he fell prostrate to the earth. Oh! what grace! what pure, unmingled grace! What a rescue! Delivered from the hands of Satan who was leading him straight to the gulf of hell; he is now in God's hands and alone with Him. The fearful guilt of an awfully wicked life is now revealed in the light of an awakened conscience. Oh! what anguish of spirit—what prostration of body! Thus was he found by those, whose feet the Lord directed in that way. Soon after, his eyes were opened to see the Lord's love to his soul, and the cleansing, peace-giving power of the blood of Jesus. But such was the effect on his body, of this great moral change, that he lay in bed, nerveless and powerless, for a week.

When we saw him, he had returned to his work. He spoke to us calmly, and happily about the Lord's goodness. And to several questions which were asked, as to forgiveness, he stated in the plainest manner, that he believed his sins, which were many, were all forgiven, and that he had peace with God. He expressed a desire to obtain some gospel tracts, that he might give them away to others. He told us that his desire now was to spread the truth, and he did not know any way he could do it so well, as by distributing tracts. And as his house was a good distance from the workshop, he had good opportunities by the way.

A parcel of tracts has since been sent to him. He is now received into Christian fellowship. Oh! “is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” To the Lord alone be all the praise and glory given. Reason may speculate, but faith can only worship in the presence of such mercy. What a monument of the grace of God to the chief of sinners! When Egyptian pyramids, granite columns, and brazen statues shall have crumbled to dust; the brand plucked from the fire, washed in the blood of Jesus, and made whiter than snow, shall stand on the plains of glory, throughout the countless ages of eternity, the monument of redeeming love. These are the only monuments that shall never decay. May the Lord raise up many more such, to shine in His grace, and to reflect His glory, forever and ever.

Within a stone's throw of this man, there lived another, a coachbuilder, whom we visited. His character was very similar to the one described, with this difference, however, that his circumstances were better, and his power of evil thereby increased. He was in the habit of blaspheming the Revival, and mocking even those of his own family, whose hearts the Lord had turned to Himself. After a week's hard drinking and rioting, during which, he had squandered about ten pounds, he reached home on Sunday morning, having been refused admittance by more than one public house, on the same morning. The time for the evening meeting came on. He had not been in a place of worship for many years. His wife and child intreated him to accompany them to

the evening service. "I thought," he said to us, "I would go just to please them, for my wife, I am sure, was broken hearted with me. When we were sitting there, something came over me, I trembled, and was deeply impressed—I lost all power over myself, and fell down; but being next to my wife, she caught me, and my head fell into her lap. I was taken out, and brought home, and from that day to this, I have been a completely changed man."

"You believe then, Mr. —, that the Lord met you that evening, in the riches of His own grace, and saved your soul?"

"I do, indeed, sir. I have no doubts. If you knew what I was before, and what I have been since, you would wonder."

"You have no doubt, then, that your sins are all forgiven—that you are saved now, through the blood of the Lamb?"

"Thank God, I am very happy in Jesus. I believe He is my Saviour. I trust in Him; but I know I have a great deal to learn."

Thus did this once-desperate character quietly talk with us, in his own counting house, about the mercy of God, and the love of Jesus to his soul all seemed reality. We could only bless and praise the Lord, and heartily wish God speed to the beloved lambs of His flock. Surely, if they are dear to the heart of Christ, they ought to be dear to ours. O, that we bore them more on our hearts before the Lord, and prayed more earnestly that He would preserve them from the numerous temptations that are in this present evil world.

In a neighboring town we visited two blacksmiths and a tin smith. They had all been "stricken." One of the blacksmiths, while speaking of the Lord's mercy to his soul, turned round, and, pointing to the middle of the smithy-floor, said, "I was stricken there, while going about my work. No one was speaking to me at the time, but I had been at a revival meeting the evening before, when a great many were stricken. I felt much, impressed, and wondered what all this could be. I could not get it out of my head all the evening; and when I awoke next morning, it was the first thing I thought of; and in the forenoon I was struck down myself."

This, we found, was the experience of many. Having been deeply impressed and solemnized at a meeting, especially by others falling down and crying for mercy, they continued to be filled with the scene until they were themselves stricken. The three smiths, who live within a few doors of each other, expressed to us, the fullest confidence as to their present, complete salvation in Christ. It was a strange, a new, a glorious sight— passing from one smithy to another, and hearing that class of men speaking warmly and affectionately about the love of Jesus, His precious blood, the goodness of God, and the wonderful change that had taken place in their habits of living. We could only exclaim, What hath God wrought? Who but Himself could turn a smithy into a sanctuary!

One of these smiths said to us, in the course of conversation, "Were it not for my family, sir, I would go and preach to sinners everywhere about the love of Jesus. A very little would serve me, and I could trust Him for that. I am thankful for my family too, out they tie me to this place."

"That is quite right; but you may have many opportunities of preaching the gospel here, in your own town, and in your own shop."

“Yes, indeed, thank God; and I think I have spoken to nearly every one that has entered my shop since I knew Jesus for myself.”

Surely, these are happy and blessed fruits of this great Revival—this great work of God’s Spirit. Many more might be given, but these will so far prove the reality and genuineness of the work. Such a class of men are the least likely of any to be affected by influences short of the direct agency of God’s Holy Spirit. Surely the fruits thereof are to His glory. May He ripen such by His grace, and add to their number a hundred-fold.

3. As to the results of the work in general. A thousand witnesses might soon be found in any of the districts we visited, ready and willing to testify to the happy and blessed results of the movement in many ways. We found the unconverted as free as the converted to acknowledge this. All say that there is a wonderful change on the face of society. The public houses are greatly deserted, and the town halls and meeting houses, are crowded daily, with anxious inquirers after the way of salvation. So that the results are positive, as well as negative. Not only are bad habits given up, but good ones are followed.

As it is universally admitted, that intemperance is the fruitful source of crime, suffering, misery, and disorderliness, of all sorts, we will give a few facts on this point, which prove a great deal. We were informed by a medical gentleman of long standing in the neighborhood, and whose information was from the first source, that drunkenness had greatly decreased since the Revival commenced. In proof of this, he stated the results of his own observations in the course of his professional visitations, and also, “that there was a deficiency of four hundred pounds, in the excise duty, on the sale of strong drink, in the Coleraine district, during the month of June.” Surely this is a great and glorious fact as to the social improvement of the district. Such a deficiency in the revenue, proves a decrease in the consumption, of nearly one thousand gallons. A public house keeper, in Coleraine, stated to a person connected with the press, “that on Saturday, the first weekly market day, after the revival commenced, there had not been a measure wet in his house the whole day.” Others, we know, were in a similar condition about the same time. These facts speak for themselves. It is the Lord alone that can empty the taverns, and fill, with thirsty souls, the tabernacles of His grace.

4. As to the effects of the physical features of the work. The features themselves have been so much spoken of, that we need not say anything on that point. The effects of these physical manifestations in many instances, have been of the most blessed kind. They have been felt in the assembly and neighborhood, as the voice of God, the blowing of the silver trumpets. The loud, piercing cry for mercy, of the stricken one, has a most touching, thrilling, solemnizing effect. Preaching, exhortation, or familiar discourse, fail to affect the heart, and alarm the conscience, as does the piteous wail of a soul in anguish, under a deep sense of sin. True, the Spirit could use the former as well as the latter, but such has not been His way in the late Revival. But it will be said that mere nature will sympathize with the cry of distress. That is true, happily true, thank God. But He has used the cry of the stricken ones to reach the consciences of others, and awaken them to a sense of their need, as sinners in His sight. So that numbers are brought under the deepest convictions of sin, when preaching is completely interrupted. Then an unmoved person, or a tearless eye, could hardly be seen in the whole assembly. Generally speaking, when the neighborhood has been thoroughly aroused, and a deep interest awakened in spiritual things, the

cases of striking have decreased in number, though the real work of God may be deepening and spreading. The end has been gained by means of striking, and like the “sign gifts” in apostolic times, it passes away.

But O, dear reader, has the blast of that silver trumpet no other sound in our ears? What, if it be sounding, at the same time, the solemn midnight cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.” (Matt. 25) Are we ready? Are we longing and watching for our Lord’s return? Are our lamps trimmed and burning brightly? The mere lamp of profession will not do in that day; there must be the oil of heavenly grace in the heart.

Soon, soon, that cry may indeed be heard, “Behold, this Bridegroom cometh.” “It is high time to awake out of sleep.....The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

What meaneth, think you, this new, this strange work in our day? Since this year commenced, The Lord Himself has entered the gospel field, in the majesty and power of His own Spirit. Whole districts have, as it were, sprung into new life—have put on Christ, and are rejoicing in Him. Thousands of hearts and tongues are this day celebrating His worthy praises, who, but a few months ago, scarcely knew His name. And by what means, you may ask, has this wonderful work been accomplished? Without means, we answer, in the ordinary use of that word; excepting, that in most cases, it has been accompanied by a spirit of real, earnest prayer. The Lord has done it Himself. The tardy and cumbrous machinery of man, suits not the speed of His Spirit now. He it: rapidly gathering out His own, perfecting His body, the church; and surely, ere long, He will be here Himself. “Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Lord Jesus, come!

Nor let us longer roam

Afar from Thee, and that bright place

Where we shall see Thee face to face.

Lord Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come!

Thine absence here we mourn;

No joy we know apart from Thee,

No sorrow in thy presence see.

Come, Jesus, come.

Lord Jesus, come!

And take thy people home;

That all Thy flock, so scattered here,

With Thee in glory may appear.

Lord Jesus, come!

(Continued from page 197.)

Just As I Am

It gives great rest to the heart of a sinner, to know that the grace of God and the blood of Christ meet him, just as he is, and where he is. He does not need to be anything but what he is, in order to know and enjoy the sweetness of divine grace, and the cleansing power of the blood of the cross. All efforts to be anything but just what I am, can only have the effect of hiding from my view the light of the dayspring from on high, which has visited us, as sinners, in the darkest depths of our moral ruin. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1:15.)

There are three expressions used in the word, to set forth the truth as to a sinner's state, before God. "Look not upon me, because I am black." (Cant. 1:6.) "Behold, I am vile." (Job 40:4.) "Woe is me, for I am undone." (Isa. 6:5.)

Here, then, we have the plain truth of holy Scripture, in reference to ourselves— "black"— "vile"—and "undone." Our character, "black;"—our nature, "vile;"—our condition, "undone." There is no use in seeking to make it out otherwise. Such is the plain teaching of God's holy word, respecting the writer and the reader of these lines—the plain truth, as to our character, our nature, and our condition. Let us repeat the words, "black," "vile," and "undone." These are very humbling words. Man's proud heart does not like them. But they are God's words, and, if we do not, from our very inmost depths, own the truth of this, it is only because we do not see ourselves as God sees us. All who do not see and own this, are wrapped in the shades of ignorance, enveloped in a mantle of self-conceit, or clad in the rags of their own righteousness.

Now, I want the reader to cast aside the "rags," to put off the "mantle," to rise above the "shades," and to see and own, clearly and fully, that he is, verily, as viewed in that light where all are seen to be what they really are, "black,"— "vile,"—and "undone." This is a grand point, in the history of the soul. Very many, from not being thoroughly grounded in this, pursue a zigzag, up-and-down course, all their days. They have not laid hold of the truth of God as to their character, nature, and condition. They have not begun where God begins, namely, at the very lowest point. They have not fixed the steady, intelligent, earnest gaze of faith upon the sacrifice of the cross, as God's own remedy, clear, full, and entire, for their own very character, nature, and condition, as laid bare in the searching light of the divine presence. They have not traveled to the utmost limit of nature's ruin. They have not viewed it as a dead, worthless, judged thing, wholly and forever gone, as regards any confidence in it, or expectation from it. They think there is still something to be done with it, something to be done by it, something to be gotten from it; and, inasmuch as their thoughts respecting it are never realized, and never can be, they are always in a state of uncertainty as to their acceptance before God.

Intimately connected with this failure in learning the reality of nature's ruin, stands another thing, namely, failure in apprehending the reality of God's grace. If divine grace deals with my sins, what must it do? Assuredly, it must put them away. This is what divine grace must do, because it is divine. If divine righteousness were to deal with my sins, it would condemn them. I have both the

one and the other, in the cross. There, divine righteousness dealt with my sins; and, there, divine grace reigns toward me as a sinner. "Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 5:21.) The grace which forgives me, is as perfect and as divine as the righteousness which condemns my sin. Nay more, when the eye of faith rests upon a risen Christ, we see that God is not only gracious but righteous, in accepting as righteous the most ungodly sinner that simply trusts in the blood of Jesus. The entire question of sin and righteousness was gone into and finally settled, between God and His Christ, on the cross; and when the sinner believes this, he has peace-peace as settled as the work of the cross could make it.

That which must ever produce uneasiness of conscience and anxiety of heart, is the thought that perhaps, after all, there is something between me and divine righteousness which has yet to be settled. This will yield mental anguish and soul-torture, just in proportion to my earnestness and sincerity. And hence it is that many truly converted, divinely-quickened, godly souls, looking at themselves, and not seeing that the whole question of sin and righteousness has been finally settled—that every divine claim has been answered—that sin has been condemned—that their "old man with his deeds" has been crucified and set aside forever—and, finally, that a risen Christ, in glory, is the full definition of what they are, before God, are filled, at times, with terror, doubt, and uneasiness. I say, "at times," for it may be, occasionally, they enjoy gleams of sunshine. At intervals, they experience a respite from the terrible workings of legality; and their renewed affections getting, for the time being, occupied with Christ and heavenly things, their whole souls are drawn out in earnest aspirations, they feel as though they could, now, "read their title clear, to mansions in the skies," and they fondly hope that the days of their mourning are ended. But, alas! ere long, the mists and vapors rise around them; the dark shadows of legalism settle down upon them, and they are ready to say that their past joys were all vain and delusive, and that they doubt if they have either part or lot in God's salvation.

Should the above be, in any measure, descriptive of my reader's condition, I would earnestly entreat him to draw nigh once more, and, in the clear light of divine revelation, GAZE UPON THE SACRIFICE. Therein, he will see, not an attempt to whiten the blackness of his character, to improve the vileness of his nature, or prop up his undone condition. Oh! no; in the cross, he will see God's full salvation erected on the clearly-discovered ruins of "all flesh." On the cross, the whole question was settled. There was nothing left undone. Where is the proof? I look down into yonder tomb, where the victim lay, and I see it empty. I look up to the throne of the majesty in the heavens, and I see it filled. Filled, by whom? Filled, by the One who hung on the cross, and lay in the tomb. What does this tell me? It tells me that all is done—sin condemned and put away—everlasting righteousness brought in, and secured to the believer—the law magnified and made honorable—God glorified in the putting away of my sin, as He never could have been in the punishment thereof—Satan thoroughly vanquished—marvelously foiled by his own weapons—death robbed of its sting, the grave of its victory. Such are the wondrous utterances of the vacant sepulcher and the occupied throne.

Then, as to the mission of the Holy Ghost; what did He come to do? Was it to whiten, by His blessed operations, nature's blackness, to improve its vileness, or prop up its undone condition? Nay. What then? He came to tell of the Sacrifice—to point to a crucified and risen Saviour—to declare that all was done—to apply, by His resistless energy, "the word of God," to the hearts and

consciences of sinners, and so wake them up from nature's death and darkness, and introduce them into the life, light, power, and blessedness, of "the new creation," wherein "all things are of God." It is well to see this. Well, to see that no energy, operation, or influence of the Holy Ghost could whiten my blackness, improve my vileness, or alter one hair's breadth, my condition. "If any man be in Christ"—he is not whitened, improved, or altered "flesh," but "a new creation." (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.) This makes a vast difference. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 6:6.) If I am looking for any improvement in my nature, I am looking for what I shall never find. I am seeking to make bricks without straw. Hopeless labor! But, if I simply hearken to what the Holy Ghost tells me about Christ; if I believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God; if I believe, through grace, the record which God has given of His Son, then have I eternal life; I am born of God; I am "a new creation." I am no longer looked at as being in the nature, condition, or guilt of the old Adam, but as being in Christ, possessing His nature, standing in divine righteousness, and accepted in all the acceptableness of Jesus. My old nature, with all its guilt and all its liabilities, came to its end, in the death of Christ, who, as risen again from the dead, is the measure of what each believer is, in the divine presence. (Let the reader look carefully at the following scriptures, which prove all that has been stated: —John 1:12, 13; 3:5-8; 5:24, 25; 6:40; 20:31. Acts 13:39. Rom. 5:1; 6:6; 7:5, 6; 8:9. 2 Cor. 5:17-21. Eph. 1:6. Col. 2:10. 1 John 3:1; 4:17.)

This makes the whole matter very clear. The believer is no longer to be occupied with the expression, "Just as I am." He can, now, say, "Just as Christ is;" for "as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17.) This is wonderful! But it is worthy of God. He could not have His child in any other condition, before Him. Nothing lower than this could satisfy the infinite love of His heart; and, moreover, It is to the glory of His grace, that we should be in His presence, in all the perfectness of His own beloved Son— "Complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." (Col. 2:10.) No human, no angelic mind could ever have conceived such love as this. It could only have had its source in the bosom of God. That one who is "black," "vile," and "undone" should have all his blackness, vileness, and ruin put away by the cross, and he himself linked with a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ in heaven, is what only God Himself could have planned, accomplished, and revealed. But thus it is, and all that is needed in order to enter into, and abide in, the joy and comfort thereof, is an artless faith in God's pure record—in that word which is settled forever in heaven.

May God the Holy Ghost, by the application of the truth as it is in Jesus, strengthen the foundations of personal faith, give full deliverance from the dreadful workings of legality, and lead forth the people of God, in that sacred liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free.

Let Us Go Again

(Acts 15:30.)

“Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.” In a former number of this magazine, we presented to the notice of our readers, a motto for the evangelist, in the expression, “to preach the gospel in the regions beyond.” This is the grand object of the evangelist, let his talents or sphere of action be what they may.

But, the pastor has his work as well as the evangelist; and we are desirous to furnish a motto for him likewise. Such a motto we have in the words, “let us go again.” We are not merely to regard this expression as the narrative of what was done, but a model of what ought to be done. If the evangelist is responsible to preach the gospel in the regions beyond, so long as there are regions to be evangelized; the pastor is responsible to “go again and visit his brethren,” so long as there are brethren to be visited. The evangelist forms the interesting connection; the pastor maintains and strengthens that connection. The one is the instrument of creating the beautiful link, the other of perpetuating it. It is quite possible that the two gifts may exist in the same person, as in Paul’s case; but whether this be so or not, each gift has its own specific sphere and object. The business of the evangelist is to call out the brethren; the business of the pastor is to look after them. The evangelist goes, first, and preaches the word of the Lord; the pastor goes again and visits those upon whom that word has taken effect. The former calls out the sheep, the latter feeds and takes care of them.

The order of these things is divinely beautiful. The Lord would not gather out His sheep and leave them to wander uncared for and unfed. This would be wholly unlike His gracious, tender, thoughtful way. Hence, He not only imparts the gift whereby His sheep are to be called into existence, but also that whereby they are to be fed and maintained. He has His own interest in them, and in every stage of their history. He watches over them, with intense solicitude, from the moment in which they hear the first quickening accents, until they are safely folded in the mansions above. His desire to gather the sheep tells itself forth in the large-heartedness of the expression, “the regions beyond;” and His desire for their well-being breathes in the words, “let us go again.” The two things are intimately connected. Wherever the word of the Lord has been preached and received, there you have the formation of mysterious, but real and most precious links between heaven and earth. The eye of faith can discern the most beautiful link of divine sympathy between the heart of Christ in heaven, and “every city” where “the word of the Lord” has been preached and received. This is as true now, as it was eighteen hundred years ago. There may be many things to hinder our spiritual perception of this link; but it is there, for all that. God sees it, and faith sees it likewise. Christ has His eye—an eye beaming with intense interest, and radiant with tender love—upon every city, every town, every village, every street, every house in which His word has been received.

The assurance of this is most comforting to everyone who feels that he has, in very deed, received the word of the Lord. Were we called upon to prove, from scripture, the truth of our assertion, we should do so by the following quotation: "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for behold he prayeth." (Acts 9:10, 11.) Can aught be more touching than to hear the Lord of glory giving, with such minuteness, the address of His newly-found sheep? He gives the street, the number, so to speak, and the very occupation, at the moment. His gracious eye takes in everything connected with each one of those for whom He gave His precious life. There is not a circumstance, however trivial, in the path of the very feeblest of His members, in which the blessed Lord Jesus is not interested. His name be praised for such a comforting assurance! May we be enabled to enter, more fully, into the reality and power of such a truth!

Now, our gracious Shepherd would fill the heart of each one acting under Him with His own tender care for the sheep; and He it was who animated the heart of Paul to express and carry out the design embodied in the words, "let us go again." It was the grace of Christ flowing down into the heart of Paul, and giving character and direction to the zealous service of that most devoted and laborious apostle.

And observe the force of the words "go again." It does not matter how often you may have been there before. It may be once, or twice, or thrice. This is not the question. "Let us go again," is the motto for the pastoral heart, for there is always a demand for the pastoral gift. Matters are ever and anon springing up, in the various places in which "the word of the Lord" has been preached and received, demanding the labors of the divinely-qualified pastor. This is, in an especial manner, true, in this day of spiritual poverty. There is immense demand—a demand on the evangelist, to think of "the regions beyond"—a demand on the pastor to "go again and visit his brethren, in every city" where "the word of the Lord" has been preached, "and see how they do."

Reader, do you possess aught of pastoral gift? If so, think, I pray you, of those comprehensive words, "let us go again." Have you been acting on them? Have you been thinking of your "brethren"—of those "who have obtained like precious faith"—those who, by receiving "the word of the Lord," have become spiritual brethren? Are your interests and sympathies engaged on behalf of "every city" in which a spiritual link has been formed with the Head above? Oh! how the heart longs for a greater exhibition of holy zeal and energy, of individual and independent devotedness—independent, I mean, not of the sacred fellowship of the truly spiritual, but of every influence which would tend to clog and hinder that elevated service to which each one is distinctly called, in responsibility to the Master alone. Let us beware of the trammels of cumbrous machinery, of religious routine, of false order. Let us beware, too, of indolence, of love of personal ease, of a false economy, which would lead us to attach an undue importance to the matter of expense. The silver and the gold are the Lord's, and His sheep are far more precious to Him than silver and gold. His own words are, "Lovest thou me? feed my sheep." And if only there is the heart to do this, the means will never be wanting. How often may we detect ourselves spending sums of money, unnecessarily, on the table, the wardrobe, and the library, which would be amply sufficient to carry us to "the regions beyond," to preach the gospel, or to "every city," in order to "visit our brethren!"

May the Lord grant unto us an earnest self-denying spirit, a devoted heart to Him and to His most holy service, a true desire for the spread of His gospel, and the prosperity of His people. May the time passed of our lives suffice us to have lived and labored for self and its interests, and may the time to come be given to Christ and His interests. Let us not allow our treacherous hearts to deceive us by plausible reasonings about domestic, commercial, or other claims. All such should be strictly attended to, no doubt. A well-regulated mind will never offer to God a sacrifice arising out of the neglect of any just claim. If I am at the head of a family, the claims of that family must be duly responded to. If I am at the head of a business, the claims of that business must be duly met. If I am a hired servant, I must attend to my work, to fail in any of these, would be to dishonor the Lord, instead of serving Him.

But, allowing the widest possible margin for all righteous claims, let us ask, are we doing all we can for “the regions beyond,” and for “our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord?” Has there not been a culpable abandonment both of evangelistic and pastoral work? Have we not allowed domestic and commercial ties to act unduly upon us? And what has been the result? What have we gained? Have our children turned out well, and our commercial interests prospered? Has it not often happened that, where the Lord’s work has been neglected, the children have grown up in carelessness and worldliness? And as to business, have we not often toiled all the night, and gazed on an empty net in the morning? On the other hand, where the family and the circumstances have been left, with artless confidence, in the hand of Jehovah-jireh, have they not been far better cared for? Let these things be deeply pondered, with an honest heart and a single eye, and we shall be sure to arrive at just conclusions.

I cannot lay down the pen without calling the reader’s attention to the fullness of the expression, “see how they do.” How very much is involved in these words! “How they do,” publicly, socially, privately. “How they do,” in doctrine, in association, in walk. “How they do,” spiritually, morally, relatively. In a word, “how they do,” in every way; And, be it well remembered, that this seeing how our brethren do must never resolve itself into a curious, prying, gossiping, busybody spirit—a spirit that wounds and heals not, that meddles and mends not. To all who would visit us in such a spirit as this, we should, assuredly, say, “be ye far from hence.” But, to all who would carry out Acts 15:36, we desire to say “our hands, our hearts, our houses are wide open; come in, ye blessed of the Lord. ‘If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide.’”

O Lord, be pleased to raise up evangelists to visit “the regions beyond,” and pastors to visit, again and again, “the brethren in every city.”

Life Through Death: Part 5

The first seven chapters of the book of Leviticus unfold, with divine fullness, beauty and power, the doctrine of sacrifice. In the eighth and ninth chapters, we have the doctrine of priesthood; but, whether it be a question of sacrifice or priesthood, the shedding of blood has its own prominent and divinely-appointed place. If blood-shedding was the great foundation-fact in the doctrine of sacrifice, so was it also in the doctrine of priesthood. Let us take a passage or two in proof. "And he brought the bullock for the sin offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering. And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it..... And he brought the ram for the burnt offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.....And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." (Lev. 8:14-24.)

The above quotations will suffice to show the place which the blood occupied in the consecration of the Aaronic priesthood. True, the priest required to be entirely free from bodily blemish, and from ceremonial defilement. (See Lev. 21) In pedigree, and in person, he needed to be unblemished, ere he could approach to the altar of the God of Israel; yet, "without shedding of blood" he could not stand to minister, before God, or on behalf of his people. Without blood, the altar could have no priest, the priest no altar, the people neither altar nor priest. A blood-sprinkled ear was needful in order that the priest might hear the divine communications. A blood-sprinkled hand was needful, in order that he might perform divine service. A blood-sprinkled foot was needful to tread the courts of the sanctuary; and a blood-stained altar was that alone from which the pure incense could ascend to the throne of God.

Thus, then, sacrifice and priesthood both rested upon blood. The sacrifice should be unblemished and so should the priest; but neither the one nor the other was of any avail without shedding of blood. "Almost all things are, by the law, purged with bloods" "The book of the covenant" was sprinkled with blood; "all the people" were sprinkled with blood. (Exod. 24) The priests were consecrated by blood. The sacrifice was founded on blood. The altar was dedicated by blood. The entire economy was held together in the power of the blood. The divine presence in the assembly was secured by blood. All uncleanness was put away by blood. All the privileges of the dispensation were enjoyed through blood. Everything was secured by blood; and without it, was there, literally, nothing. The tide of evidence, on this point, is rapidly rising around us, as, in the light of inspiration, we pursue our inquiries.

Passing onward, from the subject of sacrifice and priesthood, let us inquire as to how the leper was cleansed. How was he set free from the influence of his foul and depressing malady? Was it by a spotless life? No; but by an accomplished death. Hear what the word saith. "Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds, alive and clean, and cedar wood and scarlet and hyssop." Were the "two birds alive and clean," sufficient to cleanse the leper? Nay, they could not, as such, remove one speck. True, they were alive, and clean, too, but this could not avail. It was absolutely necessary for the priest to "command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: as for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." (Lev. 14:1-7.)

Here, we learn that the cleansing of the leper was founded upon blood shedding. Until the blood was shed the priest could not pronounce the leper "clean." The "two birds alive and clean"—the "cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop"— "the earthen vessel"— "the running water," all would have proved unavailing for the poor leper, had not the blood been shed. In other words, we may trace the blessed Lord Jesus down from the bosom of the Father—we may see Him incarnate—behold Him in the manger, and track His wondrous path across this earth—follow Him through all the scenes and circumstances of His life and ministry; but, until we see, by faith, His precious blood poured out on the cross, there is no cleanness for us. This is the plain doctrine of the word. This is the doctrine which the Holy Ghost continually lays open before us, whether in the types of the Old Testament, or the plain and positive statements of the New. Shed blood is the foundation of everything, which, as lost sinners, we receive from a holy God. By blood we have all; without it nothing.

"The priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." In this we have a type of the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, through the Eternal Spirit.

"As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water." Here, we have a risen Saviour, ascending into the heavens, bearing in His Person the marks of an accomplished atonement. The living bird was not "let loose into the open field" until it was dipped in the blood of the slain bird, by which blood the leper was sprinkled and made clean. Thus also, the Lord Jesus Christ, did not take His seat at the right hand of God, until He had, by Himself, purged our sins. (See Heb. 1) There could not be a more striking and beautiful type of a crucified and risen Christ, than that presented by the "two birds" in this instructive ordinance. "The living bird, let loose, in the open field," shows us Christ bursting all the bands and fetters of death, and coming forth into the wide fields of resurrection, there to range, in fellowship with all those whom His precious blood had cleansed from the foul leprosy of sin.

We shall close this article, as also our series of Old Testament proofs, by referring the reader to the sixteenth chapter of the book of Leviticus, which contains a record of the great day of atonement. An exposition of such a chapter could not be attempted in this paper; but the study of it will tend to establish the heart in the truth with which we are immediately occupied. I shall quote one passage to show the wide aspect of the atonement. "And this shall be a statute forever unto

you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you; for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be cleansed from all your sins, before the Lord.....And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar; and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.” (Lev. 16:29-33.)

Here, we have a marvelous view of the extent and efficacy of the blood. The tabernacle, and those that stand therein—the sanctuary, and those that worship there—the place of worship and the worshippers all stand in the power of the blood. And why? Because “without shedding of blood is no remission.” “The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for IT IS THE BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Lev. 17:11.) Can aught be plainer than this? The whole power of atonement is in the blood. It is not that the blood is a circumstance in the work of atonement—it is not, as it were, the top-stone of the building—it is not added to something else, in order to complete the work. No; “it is the blood that maketh atonement.” It does not say, “the blood helps to make an atonement, or is part of the atonement—or is the closing scene in the work of atonement.” By no means. The blood stands absolutely alone. It renders God’s people “clean from all their sins;” and that, moreover, not merely before men, or before angels, but “before the Lord.” If, then, we are “clean from all our sins before the Lord,” what more can we need? Nothing more, save the beams of everlasting glory to shine around us. There is nothing at heaven’s side of the cross but the glory. Such is the power of the cross, such the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, that it renders the very vilest sinner fit to stand in the full blaze of the glory. Not a single jot or tittle of sin can ever enter into the Divine presence; but the cross has condemned sin, and put it away forever, in order that the believing sinner might be brought nigh, in the power of divine righteousness. The higher the light in which the believer stands, the more clearly it is seen that there is not a single soil upon him “before the Lord.” Glorious, precious, peace-speaking, emancipating truth! May the reader know the full power of it! We here close our series of Old Testament proofs. Sufficient evidence has been adduced to show the place which the doctrine of the blood occupies, in the word; and, not only so, but to set forth the evil of mixing anything else with the death of Christ, as the ground of a sinner’s pardon, his righteousness, or his acceptance, before God. If God’s word declares that “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul,” then, assuredly, if we add aught thereto, no matter what, we directly contradict the divine statement; and we cannot do so without robbing our souls of the full value of the blood of Christ. Where the simple doctrine of the cross is interfered with, there cannot be divinely settled peace as to the question of sin. This is a weighty consideration. The more we allow God’s thoughts to fill our hearts, the more shall we be convinced that, not only have we “life through death,” but also righteousness, peace, pardon, holiness, worship, communion, priesthood, all through death.

May the Holy Ghost write these things upon all our hearts!

Loose Him and Let Him Go

(John 11:44.)

There are many divinely quickened souls who need to know the power of those commanding words, “loose him, and let him go.” (John 11:44.) They have been quickened out of a state of death, by the life-giving voice of the Son of God, but they “come forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes,” and their faces “bound about with a napkin.” That is to say, they have not, as yet, been able to shake off the trammels of their former condition, or go on their way in the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. That they have received divine life, is manifest from the very struggles, fluctuations, and conflicts of which they complain. Those that are “dead” know nothing of such things. So long as Lazarus lay in the silent tomb, in the cold grasp of death, he never felt his grave-clothes to be any hindrance to movement, or his napkin to be any hindrance to vision. All was dark, cold, and lifeless; and the grave-clothes were the suited trappings of such a condition. A man whose hands and feet were fast bound, in the fetters of death, could not possibly feel any inconvenience from grave-clothes; and one whose eyes were fast sealed, by the stern hand of death, could not feel any inconvenience from a napkin.

Thus it is with the unconverted, the unregenerate, the unawakened. They are “dead”—morally—spiritually, “dead.” Their feet are fast bound in the fetters of death; but they know it not. Their hands are confined by the handcuffs of death; but they feel it not. Their eyes are covered by the dark napkin of death; but they perceive it not. They are dead. The robes of death are around them—the grave—clothes are upon them and suit their condition.

But, then, in some way or another, the persons, for whom I write this paper, have been acted upon by the mighty, quickening voice of the Son of God— “the Resurrection and the Life.” A verse of scripture, a sermon, a lecture, a tract, a hymn, a prayer, some passing event, has proved, to them, a life-giving voice. It has sounded upon their ears, it has fallen upon their hearts, it has penetrated to the very depths of their being. They are aroused, they know not how. They awake up, they know not why. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8.) The life is there, in all its reality. The new birth has taken place. The new nature has been communicated. Those who are standing by, who know what life is, see the movements, the struggles, the heavings and workings of life; but, as yet, the grave-clothes and napkin are there. I believe there are many in this condition—many quickened—many born, who know not the privileges which attach to their birth, or the source and object of the life which has been communicated to them. In a word, they need that the voice which has already said, “Lazarus, come forth,” should, also, say, “Loose him, and let him go.” They have been quickened; they need to be emancipated.

Let us take an example or two from the word of God. The prodigal was quickened before he was emancipated; “I will arise and go to my Father,” was the utterance of the new life—the aspiration of the new nature. When he spoke thus, he was full of doubt and uncertainty as to the mode in which the Father would receive him. He was full of legality—full of the thought of servitude instead of the

thought of sonship. The new life was there, but, as yet, it was connected with numerous doubts and fears within, and the rags of his former condition were upon him. He had been acted upon by a life-giving voice, and he only needed to be emancipated. The new nature having been imparted moved toward the source from which it had sprung, but, as yet, its movement was cramped, as it were, by the grave-clothes, and its vision impeded by the napkin.

Now, who would think of maintaining the monstrous idea, that the prodigal ought to have continued in his rags? to have persisted in his doubts, fears, and uncertainty? Who would assert that for the rest of his days, Lazarus ought to have worn his grave-clothes and napkin, in order to prove that he was a living man? It will be said that the Father's embrace dispelled the prodigal's fears, for how could he fear in the arms of paternal love? But was it not the Father also, who commanded the rags to be displaced by "the best robe." And, then, as to Lazarus, it may be urged that the voice that had quickened and raised him, commanded him to be loosed and let go. Exactly so; and is it not just the same in reference to anyone who has obtained new life by believing in the name of the Son of God? Truly so. He should, no longer, wear the rags of the "far country," nor the trappings of the grave. His hands and feet should be unbound, so that he may serve the Lord Christ, and run in the way of His commandments. His face, too, should be uncovered—the napkin should be removed—so that he may gaze upon the One whose voice has quickened him.

But, let us take another example. In the seventh chapter of Romans, we have a striking case of a quickened soul, not yet emancipated. Here, we see the earnest struggles of the new life—the fervent breathings of the new nature. Here we find one who can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and yet he has to say, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Now, the believer is not "sold," but "bought"—"redeemed with the precious blood of Christ"—"ransomed from the power of the grave"—"delivered from going down to the pit." Again, we find this quickened soul confessing, "what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." This is a condition of perpetual defeat, whereas the believer can say, "we are more than conquerors" and, "thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." (See Rom. 8:37, 2 Cor. 2:14.) Lastly, we hear this quickened soul exclaiming, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But the believer, instead of being a "wretched man," seeking for deliverance, is really a happy man, rejoicing in being fully and eternally delivered. In short, the seventh chapter of Romans which has been so sadly misunderstood, is a simple picture of a soul divinely quickened, but, not yet divinely emancipated—a soul not yet able to say, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2.) It is one who has been acted upon by the authoritative word, "Lazarus, come forth," but of whom it has yet to be said, "loose him, and let him go." In other words, there is life, but not liberty. There is sufficient light to see the wretched condition of "the old man," but not sufficient to see the position of the new—there is the just perception of the spirituality of the law, without the knowledge of deliverance from its condemning power. Should any rest satisfied with such a condition? Is this the true believer's proper standing? Assuredly not. As well might we maintain that Lazarus ought to have been quite satisfied to go on, all his days, "bound hand and foot, with grave-clothes, and his face bound about with a napkin." This would never do. The Lord does not do His work by halves, either as to soul or body. He never says, "come forth," without adding, "loose him, and let him go." He could never leave His people in bondage—"sold under sin." How could He? "Were He to do so, would it not argue either that He could not, or would not deliver them? If He were to leave His people in doubt, would it not argue

that His word was not sufficient to give certainty? Assuredly. But who would assert this? None that know the love of His heart—the value of His sacrifice—the authority of His word.

And, be it remembered, that it is the self-same voice that quickens and emancipates—that gives life and liberty—that delivers from the dominion of death, and leads forth in the liberty of life. It is well to see this. The life and the liberty are connected, as coming from the same source. The life which the believer has is not old Adam-life improved, but new Adam-life imparted; and the liberty in which the believer walks is not liberty for the old Adam to fulfill his horrible lusts, but liberty for the new man to walk with God and tread in the holy footprints of Christ. How does he get this life and liberty? By the word of God, received by faith, through the power of the Holy Ghost. The same voice that quickened Lazarus quickens the soul. And where is this voice heard? “In the word of the truth of the gospel.” The soul that believes on the name of the Son of God has received new life. What life? The resurrection life of Christ. The simple word of the gospel is the seed by which this new life is produced. And what does this gospel, this message of glad tidings, declare? That Christ died and rose again—that He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—that He is gone into heaven—that He has, by Himself, purged our sins—that He has met every claim, every demand, every objector—that Justice is satisfied—conscience tranquillized—the enemy confounded. This gives life and liberty—new life—divine liberty. It carries the soul entirely out of the old creation and all its belongings, and introduces it into the new creation and all its privileges, joys and glories. The death of Christ delivers the believer from the old Adam condition in which he was born; and His resurrection introduces him into the new Adam condition in which he is born again.

Now, all this is by the word of God—the voice of Christ—the operation of the Holy Ghost. There is no human effort, in the matter. The dead body of Lazarus was acted upon by the voice of Christ; and the soul “dead in trespasses and sins” is acted upon by the voice of Christ. The one is as independent of man as the other. The quickening power for both soul and body is in “the voice of the Son of God.” (see John 5:25. comp. with verses 28, 29.) This takes all the glory out of man’s hand, and places it where it ought to be, even in the hand of the Son of God. He must bear all the glory, forever, blessed be His name!

Oh! how ardently I long that those precious souls for whom I write may fully enter into what I have written. I write for quickened souls who are not yet emancipated—who have life, but not liberty—who have “come forth,” but are not yet “loosed and let go.” There are many such. There are many in the condition of the prodigal when he arose from the far country, but had not yet reached the father’s arms—many in the seventh of Rom. 1 earnestly long for their full emancipation. I would affectionately remind them that the whole work is done—the sacrifice completed—the ransom paid. They have not to read another syllable in order to get settled peace. Christ has made peace. God is well pleased. The Holy Ghost bears witness. The word of God is plain. Where, then, is the foundation for a doubt? The reader may exclaim, “alas! it is in myself.” Yes; but, my dear friend, you have nothing to do in a matter which has, already, been done for you. The righteousness of God is “to him that worketh NOT.” If you had to do aught in order to get righteousness, then, Rom. 4:5. would not be true. Remember— oh, remember, and delight in that most glorious “NOT.” It will not suffer the weight of a feather of human doings, human feelings, or human anything, to be thrown into the scales, in order to make Christ’s sacrifice available for you. Christ has done all for your present, personal and perfect salvation.

May the Lord, the Spirit, emancipate precious souls from the grave clothes in which they are entangled. May many hear and understand those thrilling accents, "Loose him and let him go."

Love Lies Bleeding

Dear little flower, fain would thy name unfold
A tale of love which never can be told.
It calls aloud, poor sinner, don't despair,
Look to the cross, for Love lay bleeding there.
Yes, poor distressed one, hear thy Saviour's voice,
In His salvation let your soul rejoice;
Now with your burden to the cross repair,
And see it vanish—Love lay bleeding there.
He asks for nothing—you have naught to give;
You can do nothing—just believe and live!
Then you shall know, your every sin He bare,
And shall rejoice that Love lay bleeding there.

The Lowest Step in the Ladder

B. Good morning,—I want to ask you a question; you know I like to puzzle you people a bit, who think yourselves so wise on doctrine.

A. Well, let us hear it; you generally favor me with a few when we meet. I know your mind is ill at ease, so that I can understand all about the questions.

B. Now, I know you will be giving me the old story, about not being done with myself, but I want a direct answer to my question. Well, then, I got up this morning at six o'clock, say, and after the usual morning duties, left at eight for business. But now, observe, up to that hour eight o'clock, suppose I had confessed all my sins to God, and been forgiven, but at nine o'clock, I drop down dead; what about the sins I committed between eight and nine?

A. Well, if your forgiveness depended on your confession of sin, and asking forgiveness, and you had not done either, of course you would have died in your sins. But if, on the other hand, your forgiveness depends on the efficacy of the blood of Christ, they would have been all forgiven, whether you confessed them or not; on the ground, mark, of God acting in grace towards you, through the atonement of His beloved Son. God forgives the believer, not because he confesses his sins, but because Christ put them away on the cross.

B. That is a point I cannot see. It is certainly a comforting one for those who believe it. I know it is your doctrine. I believe we can only be forgiven through faith in the blood of Christ, but we must apply to it—confess our sins, and ask forgiveness. “Whoso confesseth and forsaketh shall find mercy.”

A. Just so. Confession, I fully admit, has an important place in the word of God. “If we confess our sins,” the apostle says, “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9.) Whenever we truly confess our sins, God graciously forgives them. It is His own appointed way for the relief of the conscience. But suppose you commit a sin, and remain ignorant of it all the days of your life, what then? you can neither confess it, nor ask forgiveness. How are you to be forgiven in such a case?

B. That is exactly what I want to know. But I want it explained from scripture. Of course, we are to pray for the forgiveness of sins, known and unknown. But I freely confess that my mind is not at rest. I am not satisfied. I cannot feel as you do, that I am perfectly safe, and as sure of heaven as if 1 were there. Indeed, I very much question if any man on earth can really know that. My belief is that no one can be perfectly certain, while he is here. And I think I am right too. We are so constantly sinning, are we not?

A. Yes, indeed we are, and the consequences of sin unforgiven, must be awful and eternal. But what does the word say on this important point? “If any man sin,” not, observe, if any man sees his sin, and is sorry for it, and confesses it; but simply, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1.) The full, immediate, and perfect forgiveness of

every believer, is founded on the finished work of Christ for us. His advocacy is founded on His righteousness and His propitiation. He may, by the Spirit through the word, lead us into deep exercise of soul about sin, but the forgiveness is complete on another ground.

But now, will you excuse me referring to “the old story, about not being done with self?” How much of Christ, think you, is there in all your theories and reasonings. What of His precious blood? You seem to reckon up things without Him. I know you don’t mean it. But does it not simply come to this, “what would have become of me, this morning, at nine o’clock, had I not done so and so between eight and nine?” As if the whole weight of your salvation depended on your own opportunity and ability to deal with sin. Now, what is this? Look fairly at it. Is it not putting self in the place of the precious blood of Christ? To me, it is, because the scriptures so plainly teach “that without the shedding of blood is no remission.” God alone is competent to deal with the question of sin, and this He did once for all, on behalf of the believer, in the cross of Christ. By the shedding of His blood, it was eternally settled. It can never again be raised Blessed, blessed truth!

B. Excuse me, I believe that as firmly as you do. It is only the blood of Christ that can wash away our sins. But how am I to know, how can I be sure, that all my sins are pardoned?

A. Only through believing: there is no other way. “Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” (Acts 10:43.) If you are really resting on the sacrifice of Christ, and trusting to that alone for pardon, you may be quite sure of the full and everlasting forgiveness of all your sins. For the value of that sacrifice is infinite. And being so, it extends to every moment of your life, and to every point in your condition. Were its efficacy only to reach to eight o’clock, and you to live till nine, it would be insufficient for your need. In short, it would be imperfect. Only see where we land, when we get off the lines of divine truth. But what does that word say to every believer in Jesus? “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” (Eph. 1:7.) This is a full statement of the case, and whenever you have got to the end of yourself, as an utterly lost sinner, and have no refuge but in the grace of God, flowing through the sacrifice of Christ, you will be at perfect rest, and ready to go at any hour of the day.

B. Now don’t you speak too strongly. I want an explanation. There is no good in putting one down with strong expressions. I want to see it. They may appear plain enough to you, but they are not so to others. I feel quite sure that nine tenths,—nineteen twentieths of your hearers do not understand the meaning of that word “grace,” which you are so constantly speaking about. Take any congregation you please, in London, and you will find very few who understand the meaning of such words. I know it. And you use them, as if all understood them as well as yourself. I believe a great deal of preaching goes over peopled heads. Whenever you are going to preach a sermon about grace, you tell me, and I will come seven miles to hear it.

A. Thank you. But come when you will, I trust you shall hear me preaching grace—the boundless grace of God to ruined sinners. I know of nothing else that meets the sinner’s condition.

But, tell me, why is it that so few gospel hearers understand what grace is? The word itself occurs very frequently in the scriptures. And to a lost sinner it is the most important word in the Bible. It is the source and spring of every mercy that we receive from God. As the Apostle Paul says, “by the grace of God I am what I am.” (1 Cor. 15:10.) But for that precious grace he would have continued to be “the chief of sinners,” and gone as straight, and as fast, to hell as ever he could go. And but

for the same grace, so would every child of Adam, without exception. "There is none that seeketh after God." (Rom. 3:11.) The believer is saved by grace, —he stands in grace, and throughout eternity he will shine in grace, the pure unmingled grace of God.

But now, why is it, think you, that grace is really so little understood? Just because, so few know their need and helplessness. Whenever we have learned the meaning of these two words NEED and HELPLESSNESS, we will soon find out the meaning of the word GRACE. The "woman of Canaan," when led to take her true place, as a Gentile dog, at the foot of the master's table, learned it there in the school of Christ. But it was under a deep, deep sense of her pressing need, and utter helplessness. (Matt. 15.) This is the only place, my dear friend, truly to learn the meaning, and appreciate the value of divine grace. We must be at the lowest step in the ladder, where grace flows, before we can understand the meaning of that precious text, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20.)

B. Well, yes, it is very plain, I can see what you mean; I understand it. You need not say any more on that point. But you must remember that everyone has not the same faith. She had great faith.

A. True, she had, but on what was it founded? What had she to look to? Only grace. The grace that dwells in the heart of Jesus. All the promises were to the children of Israel. He was the Minister of the circumcision. And she was one of the outcast race of Canaan, on whom the curse of God rested. She had no right, no title to Christ as the Jewish Messiah. And she was brought to feel this in the bitterness of her soul, that the grace of God might shine out in all its divine sovereignty, freeness, and fullness. But she trusted His heart of love. She counted on the grace that dwelt there, notwithstanding His seeming harshness. She knew that He had only to speak the word and her every need would be met. But she knew also, that she had no light to that word, no claim upon Him. This was crushing-awfully crushing to proud human nature. And then, to hear from those lips of grace, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," must have greatly increased the anguish of her soul. Still, she clings to Him in the energy of a faith which counts only on Himself, notwithstanding His covenant engagements with Israel. "Lord, help me," was the earnest believing cry of her heart. "It is not meet," He answered, "to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." "Truth, Lord," was her instant reply, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the Master's table." Wondrous faith! but, now she is in her true place, and grace flows out. The struggle is over. The victory is won. She is satisfied with what grace gives. It was to this point He was leading her, and He waited till she got there. And now, that heart of perfect love, which was only waiting for the opportunity, flows forth, in streams of living grace. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The full resources of His love are thrown open to her. This is a true picture of the sinner's place and condition, and of the grace, that immediately and perfectly meets both.

Now, my dear friend, whenever you are brought by faith to this point, all will be victory and peace. Your anxieties and struggles will be over. The moment we take this place, we are met and blessed by God, according to the love and grace of His own heart. He acts from Himself, on the ground of the perfect, and eternally efficacious sacrifice of Christ. We are pardoned, justified, and accepted in the Beloved. We have eternal life in Him. And, now, the clock may chime either eight or nine, or any hour in the twelve, but neither measured time, nor unmeasured eternity can ever break the bond that binds our hearts to the blessed Jesus. "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus

Christ.” “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (John 5:20. Rom. 8:1.) But I must be off, I have stood more than an hour with you. Good bye. The Lord be with you.

B. Well, good bye, God bless you. I will think on what you have been saying. I am coming some evening too.

A. Pray, think of the sinner’s place, the lowest step in the ladder.

Oh! what has Jesus done for me?

He pitied me—my Saviour.

My sins were great; His love was free;

He died for me—my Saviour.

Exalted by His Father’s side,

He pleads for me—my Saviour.

A heavenly Mansion He’ll provide

For all who love my Saviour.

Jesus, Lord Jesus,—

Thy name is sweet, my Saviour,

When shall I see Thee face to face,

My wondrous, blessed Saviour?

The Night Is Far Spent

From all that we have seen, heard, and learned since this year commenced, we are the more fully convinced, that “the night is far spent, the day is at hand”— that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” (Rom. 13:12. Jas. 5:8.) True, He has long patience, blessed be His name, and His longsuffering is salvation. “But the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 Pet. 3:9.

The gracious Lord thus patiently waits for the co-heirs of His glory. But when the last co-heir has been called out from the world, and united, by faith, to Himself, the living Head, His body shall be perfected, and the end of the present period, or dispensation, shall come. (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:13; Col. 3:4.) The night will then be fully spent, as regards the church, and the morning fully come. This is a deeply solemn thought, which should lead the servants of the Lord, to the most entire, whole hearted, self-sacrificing devotedness. The general— the almost universal— awakening, which we have seen “near home,” and heard of “afar off,” presses home, with something like divine power, this thought to the heart. It is reported, that in Sweden, out of a population of about three millions, two hundred thousand have been awakened to the importance of their souls salvation. In Turkey, it is said, thousands are ready to declare themselves believers in Christ, simply from reading the holy Scriptures. It is estimated that five hundred thousand have been received into the various churches, in the United States, as the fruit of the Revival there. Reports are reaching us from India, Australia, and other foreign parts, that God is evidently working, and turning the hearts of many to the blessed Jesus, the Saviour of all them that put their trust in Him. May God speed the gospel plow, and may many hearts be deeply furrowed, and richly sown with the good seed of eternal life!

But the year 1859 has also been a year of the most special, sovereign, marvelous grace. This is deeply encouraging to every lover of souls. We may call it a year of the most intensified grace of God. Multitudes of the chief of sinners have been singled out— stricken down—truly converted to the Lord, and made happy forever in His changeless love. And many have found, that while they were yet praying, God was, in wondrous grace, answering their prayers. Many have learned this year to speak intelligently and experimentally of “the power of prayer.”

We have many instances before us of the most immediate, direct, and gracious answers to prayer and faith; especially when these have been accompanied by efforts to bring the persons cared for under the sound of the gospel. Would to God that these three things were more uniformly connected in the minds of Christians, viz. faith, prayer, and effort. God’s own appointed means are thereby honored. The object of our solicitude should, if possible, be brought, in faith, to where the gospel is plainly preached to the hearts and consciences of sinners. And so surely as this is done, there will be blessing. This is a mode of action which cannot fail, sooner or later, to be owned of God in blessing. But let us persevere, in faith. Out of many cases which we could relate, we will, for the encouragement of others, select one, which is very fresh upon our minds.

A Christian brother, who is in the habit of speaking to his fellow-workmen about their souls, had frequently spoken to one who was "seeking," as he termed it; so that he was not opposed; though, for a length of time, he refused to accompany our brother to the preaching. But as he continued seeking, and never finding, he grew weary, and at last consented to go to the preaching. On the evening of October the 7th, they both entered a small room, in the south side of London, where the gospel is preached every Friday evening. During the preaching, it pleased the Lord to reveal to our friend his real condition as a lost sinner, and, at the same time, the grace that meets it. He was deeply impressed, but made peaceful and happy, through seeing that Christ had done everything for him, a poor, ruined, helpless sinner. He left the room, after confessing what the Lord had done for him, a new man in Christ Jesus. But now, his whole heart and soul were deeply concerned about his dear wife and children. He could not help speaking constantly to them, and praying fervently to the Lord about their conversion. They saw his new and wondrous joy, and were struck with the change that had come so suddenly at last. Friday evening, the 14th came, and in walked our new friend and his dear wife. She was evidently filled with emotion, and he was all earnestness. He was, as it were, determined that she should be blessed. She became much impressed under the preaching, and was frequently moved to tears. The great work was evidently begun that evening. This only strengthened the faith and encouraged the heart of the husband. In speaking with him a little after the preaching, he related, in the most energetic manner, the happiness of soul he had enjoyed since last Friday evening. Looking round to his wife, he said, "You have seen what a changed man I am, and how happy I have been all the week." "Last Monday," he exclaimed, "my joy was so great, that I thought I should have had to leave my work." "But," he added, looking to his wife, "she must be brought too. I shall have all my joy over again in her." This was true faith. He never seemed to doubt that it would be the case.

On Lord's day morning, the 16th, our friend, with his wife and daughter, walked into the room before the service commenced, looking so earnest, as if bent on blessing. At three o'clock the same day, there was an address delivered to the children, and the daughter, a young woman, was present. It pleased the Lord, on that occasion, to impress her mind. In the evening the three were present. The husband and father was counting on blessing. He prayed much; and others, who now knew the desire of his heart, were praying with him. His faith, however, was strong. He trusted God. When the service was over, he came up to the preacher, as one who had been watching the action of the truth in their souls, and said, "I believe my wife is all right, but I am not so sure about my daughter." "You have a little patience," was the reply; "and I will have some conversation with them immediately." The wife at once confessed that she had now faith in Jesus, and knew that her sins were washed away by His precious blood. There was much fervor and emotion in her confession. Taking hold of the daughter by the hand, the preacher said to her, "Well—, and what do you think about these things? We know they are very good for old people, but perhaps you don't care for them yet." "But I am sure I do, sir. I do believe in Jesus too." Remembering what the father had said, he was seemingly doubtful, and told her there was no good in imitating her father and mother; that she must believe in Jesus for herself. This brought forth renewed and earnest confession, with tears. "I know," she exclaimed, "I have faith, for I felt it coming into my heart when you were speaking." All seemed reality. It was a heart-touching scene. Both mother and daughter were weeping; and others, too, felt a relief in shedding tears of joy over such a display of the wondrous grace of God. But, in the midst of their new joys, the parents said, "We have another, a married daughter, and she must be brought in too."

Owing to distance and other circumstances, it was Lord's day evening, the 30th, before they could arrange to get the married daughter and her husband to hear the gospel. The afternoon and evening were very wet; but it did not damp the zeal of our truly earnest brother. The father, with the Christian brother who first brought him to hear the gospel, the daughter, and her husband, were there in good time, though they had a long distance to come. But it proved an evening to them, never, never to be forgotten. The gracious Lord heard and answered the prayers of the father and his friend. It appears that soon after the discourse was commenced, the daughter and her husband were both awakened. The daughter wept greatly. Immediately after the usual service, there is a prayer meeting, they all remained. Much earnest prayer was offered up for them. Before leaving, they were plainly and affectionately spoken to; and, though they could not say that they were saved, they did say, that, as guilty sinners, they had fled to Jesus as their only hope and they knew He would not reject them, for He never turned any away, who came to Him for mercy. But the anxious father could not rest satisfied until he knew that they were happy. He found his way to them on the following Monday evening. And, glory be to God, he found his son-in-law happy, and rejoicing in the Lord. The Holy Ghost had so revealed Jesus to him, on his way home from the meeting, that he had clapped his hands, exclaiming, "I see it all now, I see it all now." The daughter, he found, quietly resting on Jesus. The father's heart was satisfied. He could only praise the Lord and worship Him. It was all grace. The Lord had done marvelous things. The following Lord's day, November the 6th, the whole family, with their original friend, were present in the evening. All were now resting and happy in Jesus. When the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to the soul, it must be happy. O, to have Him more and more revealed to our hearts, in all His divine fullness!

May the above narrative of God's wondrous grace, to this entire family, in these last and closing days, stir up and encourage the hearts of many to confide in Him about their unbelieving, yet near and dear relatives.

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:37.)

The night is far spent, and the day is at hand:

No sign to be look'd for; the Star's in the sky;

Rejoice then, ye saints, 'tis your Lord's own command;

Rejoice, for the coming of Jesus draws nigh.

What a day will that be when the Saviour appears!

How welcome to those who have shared in His cross!

A crown incorruptible then will be theirs,

A rich compensation for suffering and loss.

What is loss in this world when compared to that day,

To the glory that then will from heaven be reveal'd?

"The Saviour is coming," His people may say;

"The Lord whom we look for, our Sun and our Shield."

Oneness with Christ

The security of a believer consists in this, that he is one with Christ; and his peace, his joy, his fruitfulness, are all proportioned to the clearness with which he sees, and the constancy with which he realizes this. Now, it is by faith we know, by faith we realize, this all-important fact. God's word declares it to be a fact; and God's word is that in which faith rests. Faith simply credits, or receives as true, whatever God has spoken, however contrary it may appear to be to reason, to sense, to experience, to frames, feelings, doubts, and fears. Faith hearkens not to these; it regards not fears or doubts, frames or feelings; it considers not experience, sense, or reason; it simply hearkens to God's voice, speaking to us in God's word. What that word says—what God Himself thus declares—faith receives: and God declares in His word that the believer is one with Christ. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. 6:17.) "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13.

It is not merely that Christ is full of grace, and that the guiltiest are welcome to His embraces. This is true, blessed be His name! It was true when He was here in humiliation. It is not merely, that, now He is exalted, we have the assurance that the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him; that whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. All this is true, and is revealed in the word of God for the comfort and encouragement of any poor, doubting, fearing, trembling soul,—saint or sinner,—who may read these pages. His own words assure us, and apply equally whether He speaks on earth or speaks from heaven, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." All this is precious encouragement to the weakest, the vilest, the most desponding, to look to Christ, to come to Christ, to cling to Christ. But God's word further gives us God's judgment of those who do so look, or come, or cling. It tells us in what light He looks on such—what He reckons or accounts them to be. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Rom. 4:5, 6. "Now it was not written for his (Abraham's) sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 4:23, 25-5:1.

But even this is not the whole. The word of God instructs us, that the very weakest believer, the one who most feebly and tremblingly clings to Christ, is one with the Christ to whom he clings. It gives us to understand that the faith by which he does thus cling to Christ is the first pulsation, as it were, of Christ's own life in his soul. It speaks of the exceeding greatness of God's power, towards those who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. It declares how "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." It speaks to believers as "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen

with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. And you, it says, “being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Mark, it is through the faith of the operation of God, that we are risen with Christ. The life we thus possess is a life we possess in common with Christ—risen with Him. God raised Him from the dead—the faith by which we cling to Him is a faith of the operation of God—and it is through this faith that we are risen with Christ. He died for sins—our sins; we were dead in sins. God raised Him; God has quickened us, who have this faith of His operation; and the life we thus possess we possess with Christ—in common with Him. “You being dead in your sins, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” In what a position are we thus placed! One with Christ—partakers with Him of the same life—He being our life, as it says, “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear” —how perfect our acceptance, how complete our security! We are “in Christ.” As the hand or the foot is included in the man, so is the believer included “in Christ.” And it is thus we inherit all our blessings. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” We are “made the righteousness of God in him.” We are “accepted in the beloved.” We “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Can any charge be laid against Him? Then, and not till then, it may against the believer, who is part of him! Such is the nature and completeness of the believer’s justification, standing, and acceptance before God. The faith, by which as a poor sinner he clings to Christ, is itself the first breathing or pulsation of a new life, which is, in fact, Christ’s own life—a life which he now possesses in common with Christ. How then can the sins which he has committed be laid to his charge? Memory may recall them: Satan may seek to terrify him by placing them all in array before him. The question is, Can they be laid to Christ’s charge? The believer is, as to his life, a part of Christ. He has become such by virtue of Christ having put away all these sins— “quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” If Christ had not put away my sins, I could not have been made a sharer of His life. If I am a believer I do share His life, and so am assured that all my sins are put away, all my trespasses forgiven. If they cannot be laid to Christ’s charge, they cannot be laid to mine; for I, as a believer, am part of Christ, as a man’s eye or ear is a part of a man. The same life animates eye, ear, hand, and all the other members of the body. The same life animates Christ and the believer. They are one. Blessed be God for such a settlement of this whole question.

Only Believe

My dear young Friend,

.....If only simple faith were in exercise, there could be no difficulty. Trouble of soul arises from mixing faith and feelings, and that is just what you are doing. It is a common mistake. You acknowledge, that "as a guilt", lost sinner, you are looking to Jesus as your Saviour; that you do believe in Him, but you want to feel it more within yourself: you own that you are not happy." No, and you never can be happy, so long as you are looking partly to Jesus, and partly to yourself. You must learn to look only to Jesus, and to have faith in the Word of God, as to what Christ has done for us. Then you will have peace and rest on the ground of His precious blood shed for us, and He, Himself, will be the abundant joy of your heart.

Will you look at Eph. 1:7, and let us go over it together? "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Now, you will observe, that here it is said, "We," believers, have redemption and forgiveness now. These blessings are our present possession in Christ. "In whom," mark, "we have" not we hope to have, but, "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Nothing can be plainer: "only believe." In Christ, all who truly believe in Him as their Saviour, have, at this present moment, "eternal redemption," full and everlasting forgiveness.

Now, look at the way in which these blessings are secured to us. "His blood"—the precious blood of Jesus, and that alone. And if you think of the standard, by which they are measured, your heart must be at rest forever, "according to the riches of his grace." We are blessed according to the value of the blood of Jesus, and the riches of God's grace.

Take another passage: (Rom. 5:1) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, again, the same form of expression is used, "we have." It is a present reality to faith. "We have peace with God." The believer can truly say, "I know that my peace is made with God, and that nothing can ever disturb it. It rests on the eternal efficacy of the blood of Jesus, by which my sins were all put away on the cross. He "made peace by the blood of his cross." (Col. 1:20.) Again, we read, that He, Christ Himself, is our peace, and "My peace I give unto you." (Eph. 2:14; John 14:27.) From these texts it is quite clear, that Christ and His people stand on the same ground, before God, as to this great blessing, PEACE. Christ Himself is their peace. Well, we know that He can never lose His peace, therefore, they can never lose theirs. True, I admit, they may lose the enjoyment of it, and they may fail, practically, to exhibit it; but they can never lose the thing itself. This is a point in which many make a great mistake, who speak of peace as if it were a mere feeling—a certain state of mind. Now, we can understand a person feeling peaceful in his own mind, but the mind may soon change, and where is the peace then? No: there is much more than a mere feeling of the mind in the expression "Peace with God." The finished work of Christ is the alone foundation of true, settled, solid peace in the sight of God. The believer is set in the presence of God, in virtue of that finished work, without his sins. He is at home and happy there.

Christ died: then I am clean;

“Not a spot within.”—

God’s mercy and love!

“Not a cloud above.”

’Tis the Spirit, thro’ faith, thus triumphs o’er sin;

“Not a cloud above”— “not a spot within.”

Ever, most affectionately, yours,

Paul's Preaching at Antioch

Acts 13

As Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue at Antioch, they were invited, after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, to give the people a word of exhortation. Paul had readiness to address them in his heart, for he carried and represented the gospel of God, that system of divine active love that is ever waiting on sinners. But when out of the abundance of such a heart his mouth speaks, it is in such a way as the synagogue could not have expected. He does not make the people his subject, giving them exhortations as out of the law or the prophets, but he makes God and His acts his subjects, out of the historical books. He details a series of divine acts from the day of the Exodus, to the resurrection of Jesus, (acts of grace, every one of them) in which God had been rising up in the supremacy of His own love and power over all the various sad and evil condition of Israel, whether such had been brought on them by themselves, or by their enemies, through their own folly and wickedness, or by the hand of them that hated them.

He deals with facts, such facts as displayed God in grace, and humbled man. He brings God into the synagogue, and makes Him the great object of notice to the soul. And this, let me say, is God's own way in the Gospel. He makes room for Himself, as I may express it, in both our hearts and our consciences. He breaks us to pieces, leaving us without a word to say for ourselves, exposed, convicted, and condemned, that He may introduce His own salvation to the conscience and to the heart; that the one may find peace made by Himself for it, and the other be forever drinking of a love that flows to everlasting, as it has been flowing from everlasting.

This story of grace, which Paul reads in the synagogue at Antioch, brings out various actings of God's hand in behalf of His people. After choosing the fathers, He had of old delivered Israel out of Egypt in spite of Egypt's strength and enmity. He had then carried them through the wilderness for the space of forty years, well supplying all their need, in spite of their manners, and their murmurings. Then, He had beaten down the nations of Canaan before their face, and divided their lands among them. He had, after that, raised up a long line of Judges or deliverers for them, to deliver them out of the hand of those oppressors, whom their own folly and faithlessness had armed against them. And still further, He had given them David, a man of His own choice, to be their shepherd, after they had proved the bitterness of the days of Saul, who had been the man of their choice. Thus, in so many ways, and for a long time, had He magnified His grace, and continued in it, unwearied by their need, changeful as it was, and unhindered by their faithlessness, persevering, and rebellious, as it was.

With this tale of grace Paul fills the synagogue at Antioch. But there was still another chapter in that story. Jesus the Messiah had been given to the nation, refused and crucified by the nation, but by God raised up and given again to them; and, in the name of this crucified and risen Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is now preached, and Israel called on to accept it.

Now, this was a tale of the constancy and variousness of the grace of God. Israel is seen to have enjoyed a series of accomplished blessings at the hand of God. Redemption, support, victory, deliverance, and a kingdom, all had been theirs, in spite of the strength of enemies, and of their own unfaithfulness; and now, added to these, there was provision for the forgiveness of all their sins.

And, blessed to tell it. this crowning mercy, the forgiveness of sins, which Paul now preached, was a blessing as sure as any, established by as sure an arm, and made theirs by as clear a title. It was set upon the resurrection of Jesus. Redemption, and inheritance, and deliverance, and the like, had been, each and all in their day, infallible, and each and all in their turn and time enjoyed by Israel. And all had stood on solid ground, and in good warranty. The rod of Moses, adapted by the God of all power and might, was equal to work redemption, and Israel enjoyed redemption. The presence of God had supplied the camp, and the sword of the Lord in the hand of Joshua had conquered and divided the land. Judges could deliver from all oppressors, since the Lord of heaven and earth had raised them up; and the man after God's own heart had guided the flock of God with integrity and skillfulness. And now "the forgiveness of sins" takes its place among these blessings, for Jesus in resurrection in like infallibility can secure and dispense it. The manna from heaven had no more virtue to feed the camp morning by morning—and who could question that?—than the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has to publish the forgiveness of sins to all that believe. Death is the wages of sin, and cannot be put away, but by sin being put away. To get rid of death we must get rid of sin. But Jesus had risen. He was alive from the dead and on the ground of such a fact as that, of such accomplished victory as His resurrection bespeaks, the forgiveness of sins is as infallibly named, as surely and boldly published, as redemption was wrought by the rod of Moses, or victory and the division of the land by the sword of the Lord, and of Joshua.

Forgiveness of sins thus takes its place among the sure and accomplished blessings of grace. We can account for it, as simply as for any of those wrought out of old for Israel by Jehovah. We can see why sins may now be forgiven, as once we saw why Pharaoh's host lay dead on the sea-shore. Jehovah looked from the cloud then, and that was enough; Jesus is risen from the dead now, having been made sin for us, and that is enough. The danger is in despising—as the apostle closes his preaching, "behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." This was the apostle's exhortation.

The law and the prophets had been read in the synagogue, as we noticed, and the apostles were invited to give the people a word of exhortation. But Paul read to the synagogue from the history of Israel. He stated facts, God's facts, such as told what He had done for His people, and thus what He was to them. And his exhortation is, not to despise those acts of grace. The resurrection is one of those acts. Jesus had died to sin. Sin and Jesus were in collision on the cross, or rather, Jesus owned the claim and fruit of sin there, and answered it, and bore it. Sin was never, we may say, in so intense a sense, the sting of death as then; nor was death ever, in so solemn a judgment, paid as the wages of sin. But armed as it was in that hour of its power, it was slain. The enmity was slain. Sin was put away. The veil of the Temple was rent, and the graves of the saints were opened. "Made sin, He sin o'erthrew." The claims of God in judgment upon sin were all vindicated, and he that had the power of death was destroyed. So that we may well say, with our apostle, looking at the death and resurrection of Jesus, "by this man is preached unto you the forgiveness

of sins.”

This preaching at Antioch, thus, gives us a sweet witness how grace has been abounding in the ways of God from the beginning hitherto. But for further confirmation of our souls in God, let me observe, that both holiness and grace have had their several witnesses from the beginning; for God cannot but be just, while He is a Justifier; and the stability and rest of our consciences before Him come from this, that “truth” and “mercy,” “righteousness” and “peace,” together dispense salvation to us. God is never more holy than when forgiving sins, as has been long since said.

The ordinance of clean and unclean told of God’s holiness from the beginning, separating Him from the fallen and defiled creation. This ordinance, we know, is recognized so early as Gen. 8; His promise had already witnessed His grace, and that we get in Gen. 3. And so all through, that He is a Just God and a Saviour, has been His memorial here. He has ever had His two witnesses in this world of corruption and of misery, a witness to His holiness, and a witness to His grace and goodness. And the cross has redeemed all these pledges; for clean and unclean were distinguished there, and separated forever, and yet the forgiveness of sins was secured; and the soul ruined of old by the serpent is delivered forever.

Thus Paul brings God into the synagogue. The rulers would have had the people exhorted, but the Spirit in the apostle will have God revealed—revealed too, as is His way, by His own acts—that simplest, surest, most blessed way of revealing Him—the way in which “the wayfaring man” may not err, in which a child need not mistake the lesson. It is not by treatises or discourses, but by acts, that God makes himself known to us. We might miss our lesson, had the former been his method—but His method is such that the simpler we are, the surer we shall reach Him and find Him, and know Him. And Paul thus deals with the synagogue at Antioch. He brings God in, Christ in, and that too in the divine way, in the light and revelation of His doings in the midst of us and for us. The law and the prophets had already been in the synagogue, as Moses and Elias were on the holy hill. But the voice from the exalted glory would draw Peter away from Moses and Elias, and fix him on Jesus, saying “this is my beloved Son, hear Him,” when Peter would have made equal tabernacles for Moses and Elias; and so here, Paul will leave the law and the prophets, and fix the assembly on God and His Christ.

And what was thus done in the synagogue at Antioch, is not only, thus, like what had been already done on the holy hill, but it is after the manner of the divine wisdom in all dispensations from the beginning, that the Christ of God should be the great object of faith, and the one great issue and result of all the education and learning of our souls—that we should be brought to Him, and then left with Him.

The Perfect Man

The Lord Jesus Christ was the only perfect man that ever trod this earth. He was all perfect—perfect in thought, perfect in word, perfect in action. In Him every moral quality met in divine and, therefore, perfect proportion. No one feature preponderated. In Him were exquisitely blended a majesty which overawed, and a gentleness which gave perfect ease, in His presence. The scribes and the pharisees met His withering rebuke, while the poor Samaritan and “the woman that was a sinner found themselves unaccountably, yet irresistibly, attached to Him. No one feature displaced another, for all was in fair and comely proportion. This may be traced in every scene of his perfect life. He could say in reference to five thousand hungry people, “Give ye them to eat;” and when they were filled, He could say “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.” The benevolence and the economy are both perfect, and neither interferes with the other. Each shine in its own proper sphere. He could not send unsatisfied hunger away; neither could he suffer a single fragment of God’s creatures to be wasted. He would meet, with a full and liberal hand, the need of the human family, and, when that was done, He would carefully treasure up every atom. The self-same hand that was widely open to every form of human need, was firmly closed against all prodigality. There was nothing niggardly nor yet extravagant in the character of the perfect, the heavenly man.

What a lesson for us! How often with us, does benevolence resolve itself into an unwarrantable profusion! And, on the other hand, how often is our economy marred by the exhibition of a miserly spirit! At times, too, our niggard hearts refuse to open themselves to the full extent of the need which presents itself before us, while, at other times, we squander, through a wanton extravagance, that which might satisfy many a needy fellow creature. Oh, my reader, let us carefully study the divine picture set before us in “the life of the Man Christ Jesus.” How refreshing and strengthening to “the inward man” to be occupied with Him who was perfect in all His ways, and who “in all things must have the pre-eminence.”

MSS. of “Notes on Leviticus.”

The Pharisee and the Publican

(Luke 18:9-14.)

We are all, by nature, very unwilling to look our true condition straight in the face. “We do not like to hear the whole truth about self. We are disposed to dabble upon the surface. We shrink from penetrating the depths. We fear to reach the bottom of our condition. We would fain make out that we are not quite so bad as we really are. In a word, man is ignorant of himself, and he has no desire to be otherwise. This, if he knew but all, is a serious loss to him. For a man to think otherwise of himself than that he is a lost sinner, is a most melancholy mistake, for that is precisely what he is. He is, in himself, hopelessly lost. He may be amiable, moral, upright, and even religious, as we say; but he is lost. He was born thus. He came into this world, a poor, helpless, naked, needy, worthless, lost thing, so far as his natural condition is concerned. This is what he was—this is what he is, by nature.

Such being the truth, as to man, how strange that any should be found “trusting in themselves that they are righteous! Yet thus it has been, in every age. Thus it is, now; and thus it will be. Thus it was with the pharisee, in the parable before us. Let us look closely at his case.

“Two men went up to the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.” The truth of God reduces everything to its simplest possible elements. It takes no account of the distinctions which prevail amongst men. Hence it speaks, here, of “two men—two sons of fallen Adam—two sinners. Before God there was no difference in their natural condition. They were both “lost.” True, one was a lost Pharisee, and the other a lost publican; but they were both lost. The Word of God declares, “there is no difference and that, too, upon a double ground. 1st, “for all have sinned.” (Rom. 3:23.) 2nd, “for the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him. (Rom. 10:12.) It is well to see this. The mind is apt to get confused by the endless distinctions, names, grades, and shades of character, which obtain around us. They are all to be reduced to “two,” namely, those who trust in self and those who trust in Christ. Thus it stands. The writer and the reader of these lines stand represented, at this moment, by either of the two; and the sooner the true state of the case is made known to the heart and conscience, the better.

Now, there is one feature of character which invariably marks the self-trusters, and it is this: they have only a one-sided view of their condition. This feature is very prominent in the picture before us—a picture, be it remembered, drawn by the pencil of the Master Himself. “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee,” observe, it was “with himself.” Pharisaism knows nothing of communion. There is an icy individuality about it. Its platform is self-constructed, and, as a consequence, self-occupied. There is no room upon it for anyone but self. And let us ask, for what does the Pharisee thank God? Is it for the ten thousand mercies of His liberal hand? Is it for the knowledge of redemption through the visitation of the day-spring from on high? Is it for His long-suffering goodness toward a poor un worthy sinner? Alas! no; the Pharisee knows nothing of such grounds of thanksgiving—He say, “I thank thee that I” He does not say, “I thank thee that thou.” It was “I” and not “thou,” with him. This makes a very serious difference indeed. The true

ground of thanksgiving is that the soul has made some gladsome discovery about God—that it has drunk in some precious revelation of His nature and character—that it has received the soul-saving knowledge of redemption by the blood of the Lamb. But a Pharisee knows not, wants not, seeks not aught of this kind.

For what, then, does a Pharisee thank God? It is deeply interesting! He says, “I thank thee that I am not.” How strange! He does not say, “I thank thee that I am.” He had never looked at or thought of what he was. Had his eyes ever been opened to see what he was, he could no longer be a self-truster. Self-knowledge destroys self-confidence. There is nothing in a man’s nature, condition, or character, for which he could presume to give thanks, if only he could see himself as God sees him. It may be all very well so long as a man is merely looking at what he is not; but only let him be brought to see what he is, and the entire scene will be changed.

Now, we always find that when God deals with the soul, He reveals what a man is, and not what he is not. When the brightness of Jehovah’s glory shone upon the prophet Isaiah, what did it reveal? Was it what he was not? No; but what he was; and hence, we do not find Isaiah saying “I thank thee that I am not as other men.” Quite the opposite. He says, “woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.” How did he learn this? Surely not by looking at his neighbors. This would never have revealed his positive condition. How, then, did he learn what he was? “Mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.” (Isa. 6:1-8.) Thus it was with Job, when he said, “now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself.” (Job 42:6.) Thus it was with Peter, when he “fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8.) He does not say, “I thank thee that I am not as bad as James or John.” Ah! no; men never say or think these things, when they find themselves in the presence of God. Job could boast himself when “God’s candle shined upon his head;” but he abhorred himself when God shined into his heart. (Comp. Job 29 with chap, 42.)

Thus it is that God’s truth ever acts on the heart and conscience. It reveals what a man is. Thus it will be before the great white throne “when the books will be opened.” Men will not be occupied with what they are not, but what they are. Nothing can be more worthless than to be looking at my negative condition. I may proceed to any imaginable length, saying, “I am not this—I am not that—I am not the other for, after all, the question must be asked and answered, “WHAT AM I?” I am, assuredly, something; and it is with that something, whatever it is, that God must deal, either in grace, now, or in judgment, by and by—either to meet it with the blood of the Lamb, at this moment, or consign it to the lake of fire, forever. True, I may not be “as other men but it is very evident I am not what I ought to be; and, hence, if I trust in myself, I am trusting in that which is what it ought not to be, and I must perish eternally. This is plain enough. So long as I am merely comparing myself with “other men;” I may have some ground for boasting, for there is not a criminal, at this moment, in all the cells of Newgate, who could not find another criminal whom he might think more guilty than himself. The question, however, is not, are there others worse than I? but am I what I ought to be? Header, have you ever retired into the solitude of the presence of the Almighty and there put the question, pointedly, and solemnly, to your own heart, “WHAT AM I?” If not, do it, now, I beseech you. Depend upon it, if you put this question, honestly, you will get back, from the depths of your moral being, this one reply— “A LOST SINNER!” And what does a lost sinner want? salvation! Not a half-salvation—not a hope of salvation—not a doubtful salvation; but a full, free, present, personal, perfect and everlasting salvation. This is what the sinner needs—this

is what the gospel reveals—this is what the publican found.

The Pharisee did not want this salvation. Why? because he did not know what he was. He was occupied with what he was not. He was comparing himself with “other men.” He was measuring himself by an imperfect rule, and could not get a true answer. Until a man has reached the truth about himself, he does not want God’s salvation. He can manage for himself. The Pharisee thought that fasting twice in the seven days, and giving a tenth of his possessions would be a sufficient answer to all God’s claims. If he had any thought, at all, as to his sins, he imagined that fasting and tithes could cancel them. Fatal delusion! soul-destroying error! alas! what countless myriads have split upon this rock! Reader, keep clear of it. See that you are, note, resting as a lost sinner, in the perfect atonement offered, on Calvary, over eighteen centuries ago. There the work was finished in which the sinner can find settled and everlasting rest.

Let us, now, turn to the publican. “And the publican standing afar off.” This was taking his proper place, as a sinner. “Ye who sometimes were far off.” (Eph. 1:13.) He felt he had no right, in himself, to “draw nigh.” He knew the truth as to his positive condition. He was not occupied with what he was not. “He would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven.” So far from thinking he had any right to be in heaven, he would not even dare to look toward it. “But smote upon his breast.” As much as to say “here—deep in this bosom of mine, lies the source of all the evil, the root of the malady, the ancient seat of my sore disease.” “He smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” “We have already remarked that there is an icy individuality about Pharisaism. We have now to remark that there is an intense individuality about true conviction. This shines in the publican’s act of “smiting on his breast;” and it sounds in the little word “me.”

The publican, then, saw and felt what he was. And what was the result? Were two fastings and a tithe an answer to his condition? Could they blot out his sins, or justify him in the sight of God? By no means. There was one thing, and but one, in the whole universe on which he could fall back, and that was the propitiating-atoning-reconciling sacrifice of Christ. I earnestly desire to put the English reader in full possession of the force and value of the publican’s expression “be merciful.” Any one knowing Greek will see it at a glance. It is not often we trouble the readers of “Things New and Old” with anything about Greek. Indeed, we are too happy in the possession of our precious and unrivaled English translation—the authorized version of the Holy Scriptures, to admit of our lightly touching a single syllable.

However, we must, in common justice to the reader, inform him that the word used by the publican contains in it the rich and precious thought of atonement, propitiation or reconciliation. It is a totally different word from that used by the blind man, at verse 38 of Luke 18, though to the English reader, it would seem to be the same. The publican’s word is from the same root as “propitiation!” (Rom. 3:25. 1 John 2:2.) It is part of the very same verb which is rendered “make reconciliation.” (Heb. 2:17.) These facts will suffice to unfold the perfect beauty, the divine accuracy, the evangelic fullness of this most interesting parable. The blind man wanted pity for his blindness. The publican wanted atonement for his sins. He knew that he was “far off” and he wanted to be “brought nigh,” and naught but BLOOD could do that. He felt that nothing but blood could propitiate divine Justice or reconcile a sinner to heaven’s offended Majesty. In one word, he fell back upon the glorious doctrine of the blood, in which every sinner who knows what he is, must find rest for his guilty conscience. A Pharisee may find rest in fastings and tithes. A convicted sinner can only find rest in

the blood of the Lamb. And, blessed be God, there is a perfect rest there—a rest so perfect that it needs no addition. Jesus has offered a full atonement. He has made reconciliation. “God hath set Him forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, in the remission of sins that are past, (i.e. sins committed in former times, but remitted through the divine forbearance) and to declare His righteousness, at this present time, that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:25, 26.)

It was on this foundation the publican took his stand. It was not, by any means, with him, a question of coming before God, in the credit of his prayers, as some would teach us. He had no more confidence in his prayers than in fastings or tithes. He simply took refuge in “the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.” All this is fully involved in the beautiful word which he uses. No doubt, we may cry to God, we may pray without ceasing. It is the believer’s highest and sweetest privilege to pray to his heavenly Father, continually. But the publican did not come before God depending upon prayers, but upon blood. The blood of Jesus is the resting place for all who stand on the same platform with the publican. Fastings, tithes, and prayers are the resting-place for all who occupy the same platform with the Pharisee. The publican took his stand just where Abel, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul took theirs, namely, on the finished work of Christ.

And what was the result? It was precisely what might be expected. “This man went down to his house JUSTIFIED.” Observe, he went down, not merely pardoned or forgiven; but “justified”—made righteous. “He,” like Abel, “obtained witness that he was righteous.” (Heb. 11:4.) There was nothing against him. The atonement of Christ, in which he took refuge, made him a perfectly justified man. He had nothing to do with it. Jesus is the propitiation. Fastings could not propitiate—tithes could not propitiate—prayers could not propitiate, but the precious blood of Christ can propitiate; and all who believe in that “are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:39.) Such is the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ, that all who put their trust in it, are looked at by God, as perfectly righteous. Being a perfect work, it makes all who confide in it perfect, likewise. The sacrifices under the law could not make any one perfect as to his conscience, because they were not themselves perfect; but Christ’s sacrifice is perfect, and therefore it can give a perfectly purged conscience. (Heb. 9 and 10.)

Hence, therefore, anyone who professes to be depending upon Christ, and yet has not peace, is not perfectly justified, is denying the value of Christ’s blood. This is the true state of the case. Has Christ finished His work, or has He not? Has He perfectly put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself? Has He left part of His work undone? Has He left something to be added thereto? Is there not a divine atonement in His blood? Has not Jehovah declared, “I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM?” To these inquiries, the Word affords but one reply. Well, then, ought not everyone who, like the publican, depends upon the blood, be assured that he, like the publican is “justified?” Unquestionably. Let my reader put the two words together, and see the striking connection. The publican says, “make reconciliation for me a sinner.” Christ says, “this man went down to his house justified.” The publican put the entire work, of making reconciliation, into God’s hands, and God gave him the full benefit, and pronounced him a justified man. The publican, as a sinner, met God, as a Saviour, and the entire question was settled, once and forever. Thus it is in every case. The reason why people do not see the simplicity of God’s way of salvation, is because they are occupied with what they are not, rather than with what they are, it is as I am that God meets me, in

the cross. He has made provision for all the guilt that He Himself knows to be upon me, and all the sin that He knows to be in me. The belief of this must give settled peace. The more I grow in the knowledge of the extent and depth of my guilt and ruin, the more I grow in the knowledge of the extent and depth of the atonement. I never can see my guilt as God sees it; but He has put it away according to His own sense of it, and He tells me He has done so, and when I believe this, I have sweet peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1.)

I would only observe, in conclusion, that the word "rather," in verse 14, is introduced, and tends to obscure the truth of the entire passage. We are not to suppose that there is any comparison as to the measure of justification. By no means. The simple truth is that the publican was perfectly justified, but the Pharisee was not justified at all. And why? Because the publican put his trust in divinely-made atonement, while the Pharisee put his trust in fastings and tithes. The former rested in the blood; the latter rested in his own doings. In short, we have before us Abel and Cain, over again. "There is nothing new under the sun." There were the two classes in the fourth of Genesis—there were the two classes in the eighteenth of Luke; and there are the two classes, now.

Reader, to which of the two do you, now, belong? Are you trusting in yourself that you are righteous? or are you divinely "justified" by simple faith in the precious blood of Christ? Which? Oh! which? Remember, if you see yourself to be a lost sinner, and that your trust is in the blood, you are as justified as that blood can make you. The question no longer is, what kind of a sinner are you? but what kind of a Saviour is Jesus? May God give you to see this!

Philip Findeth Nathanael

(John 1:45.)

There is a lovely, unshackled simplicity and naturalness in the way of the Spirit, in John's gospel. The divine life is seen acting in the most marked independence of everything like human rules and regulations; and yet all is in the most striking and beautiful moral order. What, for instance, can be more simple or natural than the expression, "Philip findeth Nathanael?" There is nothing official, nothing mechanical, nothing of routine work here. But yet, there is beautiful moral order. It is the energy of the implanted divine life, manifesting itself in its own genuine simplicity and native force. It is the living power of grace in the heart, expressing itself after its own peculiar fashion.

"Philip findeth Nathanael." But, we must bear in mind, that, ere Philip found Nathanael, he had found Christ. He was able to say, in all assurance and confidence, "we have found him." He does not say, "we are seeking him and hope to find him; come and help us in the good work of searching." This may be all well enough. It is, surely, well for those who want to find, to go and seek. But Philip was beyond this. His earnest searching had issued in a joyous finding, as is always the case; and having found Christ, he goes and finds Nathanael. As, in the last chapter of Revelation, the soul, having heard, from above, the precious word "come," immediately turns to the scene around, and repeats the "come." So it was with Philip; having found Christ for himself, he goes in search of a fellow sinner to bring him into the enjoyment of the same blessedness.

Now, it is well to see that there is nothing official in this. No doubt, office has its own place and its own value. But there is nothing of office in "Philip finding Nathanael." It is the power of life and not the functions of office. It is the outflow of the stream of grace from an overflowing heart, made happy by a newly discovered object. And why insist on this? Simply to answer the pleadings of an indolent heart, which would take refuge behind the claims of official authority, while failing to manifest the energy of divine life. A man may say, "I have no gift, no call, no office." Yes, but have you no life? You may not be called to stand before assembled thousands—often a very slippery place—but can you not find a Nathanael? Is there no one into whose ear you can drop those thrilling words, "I have found him? Is there no friend, neighbor, or relative, to whom you can say, "come?" You do not need to possess the gifts of a Paul, a Luther, a Whitfield, or a Chalmers, in order to say, "come." What you really want, is a heart filled to overflowing with the joy of a newly found treasure. This is what we all want. If there were more Philips to seek there would be more Nathanaels found. If everyone would just do as Philip did, how blessedly would the work of evangelization go on! This is the way it should be; and this is the way it would be, if persons were able to say with unclouded confidence, "we have found him." It is the hesitancy as to this—it is the lack of holy confidence in the record of God—the absence of settled assurance as to the fullness and efficacy of the atonement, and its personal application, that produces such unwillingness and incapacity to testify of Christ to others. In a word, before ever Philip can find Nathanael, he must find Christ. The two findings go together. I must find my own way to the feet of the Saviour, before I can conduct my fellow sinner thither. It is one thing to talk about religion, and another thing to be

able to say, "I have found Christ." This latter is the secret of all successful evangelization. For a man to set about preaching Christ to others, ere he has found Him for himself, is a most frightful delusion—yea, it is positive folly and wickedness. There is no one in such an awfully dangerous position as a Christless preacher—a Christless talker about religion.

Reader, allow me to make a direct, solemn, personal appeal to your heart and conscience. How is it with your precious soul, at this moment? Can you say, with Philip, "I have found Christ?" Are you happy in the Saviour's love? Have you found pardon and peace in His atoning blood? If you can answer in the affirmative, if you can say "yes, thank God;" then, I ask, are you searching for "Nathanael?" Are you doing what you can to spread the knowledge of Jesus? Think, I pray you of the beautiful moral order of Philip's history. It contains, in its brief compass, a volume of precious instruction. "The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.....Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.....COME AND SEE."

(John 1:43-46.)

The Plucked Brand

Zech. 3

When the soul has been truly awakened by the voice of God, and the conscience exercised as to its state before Him, the great question then is, How can I meet God? I have been offending Him, and living without Him all my life; how can I stand before Him? Oh! how can I ever be fit to dwell in His holy presence? These questions, all important to every lost sinner, are fully answered in the scene before us.

“And he showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Here, Joshua represents Jerusalem,—the Jewish people. But they are guilty and polluted. He “was clothed with filthy garments,” a true type of every sinner’s condition before God. “There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” His “filthy garments,” like the rags of the far country, bear witness to his guilt and pollution. But as he is, he stands before God. And now, what will He do with him? What can He do with such a guilty one? Will He cast him out? Will He say, “O, he is blacker than I thought he was; how can I make him whiter than the snow? Oh, no! blessed be His name! He will cast out his sins, but not himself. None who so came, ever was cast out, and none ever shall. He has given His word, that “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” On no account—on no consideration will He “cast out.” It is His will to save. But Satan is “standing at his right hand to resist him.” Mark the place he takes, “his right hand.” He seeks to resist his deliverance; to terrify, degrade, and paralyze him. If he could, he would have him thrown back into the fire, out of which, God in His boundless mercy had plucked him. But the Lord speaks for the poor trembling sinner. “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.....is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” He throws His shield around him, who can touch him? He has been plucked as a brand out of the fire, by the mighty arm of God’s salvation, and all the powers of hell are as nothing; they cannot reach him now. God is everything to him, He spreads the wing of His protection over him, and he is safe forever. Oh! what a refuge for the soul! and it is open to all, “whosoever will, let him come.” May every unsaved sinner who reads this paper, flee at once. Stay not, I pray thee, until thou hast finished it. Thy need is urgent—thy danger is great—Satan is at thy right hand, watching to deceive thy soul, and hold thee in his fearful grasp. Flee, Oh! flee at once for thy life,—thy soul’s eternal life! The door stands wide open night and day, and the voice of Jesus still says, “Come unto me—I will give you rest.”

Thus we learn, that the presence of God, is the only place of safety and blessing for a guilty soul. It is the only place where we can get rid of our sins—our filthy garments; and it is the only hiding place from the dreadful enemy of souls. How could Joshua have answered Satan? How could he have resisted him? He was guilty, polluted, and unfit for the divine presence. Had he been dealt with as he deserved, the lake of fire would have been his portion forever. God alone could meet his need, and silence the accuser.

The Lord now takes Joshua's case entirely into His own hands, and answers for him in every matter. Joshua opens not his mouth. What could he say? He was guilty, and as such, he was cast upon the grace of God. Divine mercy was his only resource. And now, God acts towards him according to what He is in Himself. His own love directs Him, and He meets all his need in the riches of His own grace. "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him." His sins which were many are all forgiven, not one is left. They are put away according to the demands of holiness, and the perfectness of the work of the cross. God cannot look on sin; it is unbearable to His nature; but He can put it away, blessed be His name, and this is the first thing He does for the soul that is before Him. "Take away the filthy garments from him." What can Satan now say? He is silenced forever. Sin, the armor in which he trusted, is put away. And now, sin gone, the soul saved, and Satan silenced, the God of mercy, with grace and love ineffable, speaks directly to the sinner himself. "And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." Oh! what tender compassion for a troubled soul, and what a solid ground of peace these words are! What can be more solid, sure, or unchangeable than the word of God? "BEHOLD, I HAVE CAUSED THINE INIQUITY TO PASS FROM THEE." Oh! troubled soul, look again at these blessed words. Think on whose they are! He can never deceive; and be assured, that this is God's way in grace with every soul that is really cast on what He is. They are fitted and intended to give you immediate peace in His holy presence. Can you ever doubt more, with such an assurance before you? Surely not! It is God who says it, and that is enough. Such are His ways in grace to every soul that believes in Jesus. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:12, 13.

And now that the filthy garments are gone, Joshua is clothed with raiment of God's own providing. The best robe is put upon him. "I will clothe thee with change of raiment." God not only speaks for Joshua, but He acts for him. Joshua now stands before the Lord, not in "filthy garments," but in divine righteousness. So will it be with Israel in the latter day. The Lord will undertake the cause of His beloved people, and stand up for them against every adversary. He will cleanse them from all their defilements, and clothe them in garments of salvation. It is in His heart to bless them, and they shall be blessed. "Even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" But He cannot clothe a guilty people with a robe of glory; therefore, His way is, first to cleanse, and then to clothe. This is God's way of dealing with all them that believe. Our filthy garments are displaced by the spotless robe of righteousness. Our sins being washed away in the blood of Jesus, we are clothed in the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:21, Rom. 3:19-26.

But this is not all. The Lord is acting in grace, and He blesses like Himself. He makes Joshua a priest before Him. Not only is he cleansed, and clothed, but mitered. And I said, "Let them set a fair miter upon his head. So, they set a fair miter upon his head." Blessed type of Israel, when, as "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation," they, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, will serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their life. (Exod. 19; Luke 1) True worship is the overflowing of the heart. When we know that our sins are all forgiven, and that we stand before God in divine righteousness, and are accepted in the beloved, the heart is not only full, but overflowing. In such a condition we can only praise, adore, and worship God in whom are all our springs. Every desire of the heart has been satisfied, and every wish met, so that we can

only give thanks to the Lord for all His mercies.

We have now come to the end of the first division of this interesting chapter, including ver. 1-5. It naturally divides itself into three. The first, as we have seen, unfolds God's ways in wondrous grace, with a guilty sinner. He acts from Himself. The second division (ver. 6, 7) shows us the responsibility of those who are the subjects of such grace. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts: and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Grace leads to godliness, and is the only power of a holy walk with God. (Titus 2:11-15.)

In the third division (verses 8-10) we have the hope of glory. Joshua being brought into the place of blessed nearness to God, and happy fellowship with Him, the bright hope of glory is fully and distinctly set before him. "Behold, I will bring forth my servant, THE BRANCH." Jesus, who was once the lowly rod from, the stem of Jesse, shall, in that long looked-for day of glory, come forth, as the BRANCH of the Lord, beautiful and glorious. "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne." "And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, the offspring and the issue, all the vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons." (Isa. 22:24.) But He is not only the BRANCH on which all the glory hangs; He is the sure foundation on which it all rests. "For, behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes; Behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree." He will be the sure foundation-stone of Israel's blessing in the latter day, and of all blessing and glory throughout the whole millennial scene. The "seven eyes" denote the perfect intelligence of Him who rules over all.

Thus the Lord, in wondrous love, translates the believer in Jesus, from the depths of ruin and misery, to the heights of glory and blessedness. There is no middle ground, no resting place between. He finds him as a brand in the fire, rescues him from it, and sets him in His own presence "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." O, what an exchange! from the depths of the darksome pit, to the lofty summits of light and glory! from being a child of wrath and an heir of hell, to be a child of God and an heir of heaven! from being black as a smoking brand, to be whiter than the snow, and fitted for the paradise of God! From being in the place of utter distance, to be brought near to the throne of God, as a worshipping high priest; crowned with "a fair miter," and clothed in "garments of glory and beauty." And what makes all this wondrous blessing so deeply valuable and comforting to the heart, is the assurance that God Himself does all Joshua says nothing, and does nothing. He has got to the end of himself, and begun with God, and so leaves all to Him.

The wanderer no more will roam,

The lost one to the fold hath come,

The prodigal is welcomed home,

O Lamb of God, through Thee

Though clothed in rags, by sin defiled,

The father did embrace his child;
And I am pardon'd, reconciled,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!
It is the Father's joy to bless,
His love has found for me a dress,
A robe of spotless righteousness,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!
And now my famish'd soul is fed,
A feast of love for me is spread,
I feed upon the children's bread,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!
And when I in Thy likeness shine,
The glory and the praise be Thine,
That everlasting joy is mine,
O Lamb of God, in Thee!

The Power of Prayer

1. The New Testament abounds in convincing proofs of the power of prayer. Almost all the great events recorded in its sacred pages stand connected with prayer.

1. The baptism and anointing of our blessed Lord are presented, in immediate connection with prayer. "Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21, 22.) What a scene! The divine, the heavenly, the perfect Man, down here, on this earth, in the place of dependence, the attitude of prayer; and, then, the opened heaven and the descending Spirit, together with heaven's audible expression of delight in that blessed One who had just come up out of the waters of Jordan, to take His place as a dependent, self-emptying, prayerful Man, on this earth! Truly, this was a scene into which angels might well desire to look.

2. The glorious event of the transfiguration is presented to us in connection with prayer. "It came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." (Luke 9:28, 29.) Now, it is not said that "he went up into a mountain to be transfigured." No; but "he went up into a mountain pray." It was to pour out His soul in prayer that the blessed One ascended to the solitary mount. And, be it carefully noted, by the Christian reader, that the solitary mount of prayer became "the holy mount" of transfiguration, where the glorious majesty of the emptied, humbled, praying Man was displayed, and where "he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (2 Pet. 1:17.)

3. The appointment of the twelve apostles is recorded in connection with prayer. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples. And of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." (Luke 6:12; 13) The mission of those who were to carry the glad tidings of the kingdom throughout the cities and villages of the land of Israel, was a matter of solemn moment, and the Lord Jesus, though being "God over all, blessed forever," yet having taken the place of a truly dependent Man, spent a whole night in prayer to God, with special reference, doubtless, to the appointment, mission, and ministry of those twelve messengers. He did everything in absolute dependence upon God. He thought, spoke, and acted, in the atmosphere of prayer. What a lesson for us! He is our great Exemplar. In this, as in all besides, "He left us an example, that we should follow his steps." (1 Pet. 2:21.)

4. When, by the fall of Judas Iscariot, a breach was made in the number of the twelve, that breach was filled up in immediate connection with prayer. "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." (Acts 1:23, 24.) The One who had originally appointed the twelve, knew all about the breach, why it was made, and

how to fill it up. Dependence upon Him is our true place. It is thus alone we get wisdom and strength. We can never fail, never falter, never err, never wander, never come short, never get ensnared, if only we abide in the holy attitude of self-emptied dependence.

5. The descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, is presented in immediate connection with prayer. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." (Acts 1:14. 2:1.) The disciples were in the attitude of united waiting upon God, when the Holy Ghost came down in Pentecostal power; and, afterward, the mighty and overawing manifestation of His presence stands connected, immediately, with prayer. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31.)

6. When persecution raged against the Church of God, and the enemy had rudely laid his hand upon one of the pillars, the disciples betook themselves to their well-known, oft-proved stronghold. "Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing (or instant and earnest prayer was made) of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12:5.) What was the result? Just what it must ever be, when faith pours its need into the ear of Omnipotence, "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.... When they were passed the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord; and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him." What were iron chains or iron gates to Him who made the world? Just nothing. He could have laid Herod's prison in ruins in a moment, and brought His servant forth, in answer to the prayer of faith.

7. Finally, the mission of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles is presented to us in connection with prayer. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them forth." (Acts 13:3.) What was the result? When these honored servants of Christ returned to the church by whose prayers they had been commended to God, "they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." (Acts 14:27.)

2. Thus, from the gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the apostles, we have deduced seven striking examples of the importance, the prominence, and the mighty power of prayer. We shall now bring forward a number of encouragements and exhortations to engage in that holy exercise.

1. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 28:19.) What an encouragement is here. Even two disciples—the smallest plurality, agreeing together to pray, can get anything they ask for! Amazing truth! Do we believe it? Do we avail ourselves of it?

2. "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask, in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22.) Here again, we have unlimited resources placed at the disposal of believing prayer. The simple prayer of faith can get us "all things." Do we believe this? Do we avail ourselves of it?

3. "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that

knocketh it shall be opened.” (Luke 11:9, 10) What ample encouragement is here! Do we believe it? Do we avail ourselves of it?

4. “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.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full.” (John 16:23, 24) Could we desire aught beyond this? Faith, using the name of Jesus, is assured of getting “whatsoever” it asks. O, reader, do we believe this? Do we avail ourselves of it?

5. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Eph. 6:18.) The man who has on “the whole armor of God” will be able to pray “for all saints.” Such an one will not be occupied so much about himself as about others. He will think about the people of God and the work of God.

6. “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6, 7.) Here, one’s own need and difficulty are fully provided for. Believing prayer is the unfailing resource, in everything.

7. “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.” (Col. 4:2, 3.) “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all have not faith.” (2 Thess. 3:1, 2.) In these quotations, the progress of the gospel is more especially pressed upon the faithful, as a proper subject of earnest prayer and intercession.

Having, thus, placed before the reader so many examples of the importance, the prominence, and the power of prayer; and also having furnished him with so many encouragements and exhortations to engage in this most hallowed exercise, we shall, now, close with a precious clause from the epistle of James, namely, “let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.”

My God! is any hour so sweet,
From blush of morn to evening star,
As that which calls me to Thy feet—
The hour of prayer.
Blest is that tranquil hour of morn,
And blest that hour of solemn eve,
When, on the wings of faith up-borne,
The world I leave.
For then a day-spring shines on me,

Brighter than morn's ethereal glow;
And richer dews descend from
Thee Than earth can know.
Lord, till I reach that blissful shore,
No privilege so dear shall be,
As thus my inmost soul to pour
In prayer to Thee.

Regeneration: What Is It? Part 1

There are few subjects which have given rise to more difficulty and perplexity than that of regeneration, or the new birth. Very many who are, themselves, the subjects of this new birth are at a loss to know what it is, and filled with doubt as to whether they have ever really experienced it. Many there are who, were they to clothe their desires in words, would say, "Oh! that I knew for certain, that I had passed from death unto life. If only I were sure that I was born again, I should be happy indeed." Thus are they harassed with doubts and fears, from day to day, and from year to year. Sometimes they are full of hope that the great change has passed upon them; but, anon, something springs up within them which leads them to think their former hopes were a delusion. Judging from feeling and experience, rather than from the plain teaching of the word of God, they are, of necessity, plunged in uncertainty and confusion as to the whole matter.

Now, I would desire to enter, in company with my reader, upon an examination, in the light of scripture, of this most interesting subject. It is to be feared that very much of the misapprehension which prevails in reference thereto, arises from the habit of preaching regeneration and its fruits instead of Christ. The effect is put before the cause, and this must always produce derangement of thought.

Let us, then, proceed to consider this question. What is regeneration? How is it produced? What are its results?

1. And, first, what is regeneration? Very many look upon it as a change of the old nature, produced, no doubt, by the influence of the Spirit of God. This change is gradual in its operation, and proceeds, from stage to stage, until the old nature is completely brought under. This view of the subject involves two errors, namely, first, an error as to the real condition of our old nature; and, secondly, as to the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost. It denies the hopeless ruin of nature; and represents the Holy Ghost more as an influence than as a Person.

As to our true state by nature, the word of God presents it as one of total and irrecoverable ruin. Let us adduce the proofs. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" (Gen. 6:5.) The words "every"—"only" and "continually" set aside every idea of a redeeming feature in man's condition before God. Again, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psalm 14:2, 3.) Here, again, the expressions "all"—"none"—"no, not one"—preclude the idea of a single redeeming quality, in man's condition, as judged in the presence of God. Having thus drawn a proof from Moses and one from the Psalms, let us take one or two from the prophets. "Why should ye be stricken anymore? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." (Isa. 1:5, 6.) "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." (Isa. 40:6.) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can

know it?" (Jer. 17:9.)

The above will suffice from the Old Testament. Let us, now, turn to the New. "Jesus did not commit himself, because he knew all. and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." (John 2:24, 25.) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." (John 3:6.) Read, also, Rom. 3:9-19. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7.) "Having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12.) These quotations might be multiplied, but there is no need. Sufficient proof has been adduced to show forth the true condition of nature. It is "lost" "guilty"— "alienated"—without strength" — "evil only" — "evil continually."

How, then, we may lawfully inquire, can that which is spoken of in such a way, ever be changed or improved? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" "That which is crooked cannot be made straight." The fact is, the more closely we examine the word of God, the more we shall see that it is not the divine method to improve a fallen, ruined thing, but to bring in something entirely new. It is precisely thus in reference to man's natural condition. God is not seeking to improve it. The gospel does not propose as its object, to better man's nature but to give him a new one. It seeks not to put a new piece upon an old garment, but to impart a new garment altogether. The law looked for something in man, but never got it. Ordinances were given, but man used them to shut out God. The gospel, on the contrary, shows us Christ magnifying the law and making it honorable; it shows Him dying on the cross, and nailing ordinances thereto; it shows Him rising from the tomb, and taking His seat as a Conqueror, at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; and, finally, it declares that all who believe in His name are partakers of His risen life, and are one with Him. (See, carefully, the following passages. John 20:31; Acts 13:39; Rom. 6:4-11; Eph. 2:1-6; 3:13-18; Col. 2:10-15.)

It is of the very last importance to be clear and sound as to this. If I am led to believe that regeneration is a certain change in my old nature, and that this change is gradual in its operation, then, as a necessary consequence, I shall be filled with continual anxiety and apprehension, doubt and fear, depression and gloom, when I discover, as I surely will, that nature is nature, and will be naught else but nature to the end of the chapter. No influence or operation of the Holy Ghost can ever make the flesh spiritual. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and can never be aught else but "flesh;" and "all flesh is as grass"—as withered grass. The flesh is presented in scripture not as a thing to be improved, but as a thing which God counts as "dead," and which we are called to "mortify"—subdue and deny, in all its thoughts and ways. In the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, we see the end of everything pertaining to our old nature. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. 5:24.) He does not say, "they that are Christ's are improving, or trying to improve the flesh." No; but they have crucified it. It is utterly unimprovable. How can they do this? By the energy of the Holy Ghost, acting, not on the old nature, but in the new, and enabling them to keep the old nature where the cross has put it, namely, in the place of death. God expects nothing from the flesh; neither should we. He looks upon it as dead; so should we. He has put it out of sight, and we should keep it so. The flesh should not be allowed to show itself. God does not own it. It has no existence, before Him. True, it is in us, but God gives us the precious privilege of viewing and treating it as dead. His word to us is, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:11.)

This is an immense relief to the heart that has struggled for years, in the hopeless business of trying to improve nature. It is an immense relief, moreover, to the conscience which has been seeking a foundation for its peace, in the gradual improvement of a totally unimprovable thing. Finally, it is an immense relief to any soul that may, for years, have been earnestly breathing after holiness, but has looked upon holiness as consisting in the improvement of that which hates holiness and loves sin. To each and all of such, it is infinitely precious and important to understand the real nature of regeneration. NO one who has not experienced it can conceive the intensity of anguish, and the bitterness of the disappointment, which a soul feels, who, vainly expecting some improvement in nature, finds, after years of struggling, that nature is nature still. And just in proportion to the anguish and disappointment, will be the joy of discovering that God is not looking for any improvement in nature—that He sees it as dead, and us as alive in Christ—one with Him, and accepted in Him, forever. To be led into a clear and full apprehension of this, is divine emancipation to the conscience, and true elevation for the whole moral being.

Let us, then, see, clearly, what regeneration is. It is a new birth—the imparting of a new life—the implantation of a new nature—the formation of a new man. The old nature remains, in all its distinctness; and the new nature is introduced, in all its distinctness. This new nature has its own habits, its own desires, its own tendencies, its own affections. All these are spiritual, heavenly, divine. Its aspirations are all upward. It is ever breathing after the heavenly source from which it has emanated. As in nature, water always finds its own level, so in grace, the new, the divine nature always tends towards its own proper source. Thus regeneration is to the soul what the birth of Isaac was to the household of Abraham. (Gen. 21) Ishmael remained the same Ishmael; but Isaac was introduced. So the old nature remains the same; but the new is introduced. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” It partakes of the nature of its source. A child partakes of the nature of its parents; and the believer is made “a partaker of the divine nature.” (2 Pet. 1:4.) “Of his own will begat he us.” (Jas. 1)

In a word, then, regeneration is God’s own work, from first to last. God is the Operator, man is the happy, privileged subject. His co-operation is not sought in a work which must ever bear the impress of one Almighty hand. God was alone in creation—alone in redemption—and He must be alone in the mysterious and glorious work of regeneration. We shall, if the Lord will, consider the two remaining points of our subject in a future article.

Regeneration: What Is It? Part 2

Having, in a former paper, endeavored to show, from various passages of scripture, that regeneration, or the new birth, is not a change of man's fallen nature, but the imparting of a new—a divine nature, we shall now, in dependence upon the blessed Spirit's teaching, proceed to consider how the new birth is produced—how the new nature is communicated. This is a point of immense importance, inasmuch as it places the word of God before us as the grand instrument which the Holy Ghost uses in quickening dead souls. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and by the word of the Lord are dead souls called into new life. The word of the Lord is creative and regenerating. It called worlds into existence; it calls sinners from death to life. The same voice which, of old, said, "let there be light," must, in every instance, say, "let there be life."

If my reader will turn to the third chapter of John's gospel, he will find, in our Lord's interview with Nicodemus, much precious instruction in reference to the mode in which regeneration is produced. Nicodemus held a very high place in what would be termed the religious world. He was "a man of the Pharisees"— "a ruler of the Jews"— "a master of Israel." He could hardly have occupied a more elevated or influential position. But yet, it is very evident that this highly privileged man was ill at ease. Despite of all his religious advantages, his heart felt a restless craving after something which neither his Pharisaism, nor yet the entire system of Judaism could supply. It is quite possible he might not have been able to define what he wanted; but he wanted something, else he never would have "come to Jesus by night." It was evident that the Father was drawing him, by a resistless, though most gentle hand, to the Son; and the way He took of drawing him was by producing a sense of need which nothing around him could satisfy. This is a very common case. Some are drawn to Jesus by a deep sense of guilt; some by a deep sense of need. Nicodemus, obviously, belongs to the latter class. His position was such as to preclude the idea of anything like gross immorality, and, hence, it would not, in his case, be so much guilt on his conscience, as a void in his heart. But it comes to the same, in the end. The guilty conscience and the craving heart must both be brought to Jesus, for He alone can perfectly meet both the one and the other. He can remove, by His precious sacrifice, every stain from the conscience; and He can fill up, by His peerless Person, every blank in the heart. The conscience which has been purged by the blood of Jesus, is perfectly clean; and the heart which is filled with the Person of Jesus, is perfectly satisfied.

However, Nicodemus had, like many beside, to unlearn a great deal, ere he could really grasp the knowledge of Jesus. He had to lay aside a cumbrous mass of religious machinery, ere he could apprehend the divine simplicity of God's plan of salvation. He had to descend from the lofty heights of Rabbinical learning and traditionary religion, and learn the alphabet of the gospel, in the school of Christ. This was very humiliating to "a man of the Pharisees" — "a ruler of the Jews" — "a master of Israel." There is nothing of which man is so tenacious as his religion and his learning; and, in the case of Nicodemus, it must have sounded passing strange upon his ear when "a teacher come from God" declared to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Being by birth a Jew, and, as such, entitled to all the

privileges of a son of Abraham, it must have involved him in strange perplexity, to be told that he must be born again—that he must be the subject of a new birth, in order to see the kingdom of God. This was a total setting aside of all his privileges and distinctions. It called him down, at once, from the very highest to the very “lowest step of the ladder.” A Pharisee, a ruler, a master, was not one whit nearer to, or fitter for, this heavenly kingdom, than the most disreputable of the children of men. This was deeply humbling. If he could carry all his advantages and distinctions with him, so as to have them placed to his credit in this new kingdom, it would be something. This would secure for him a position in the kingdom of God far above that of a harlot or a publican. But, then, to be told that he must be born again, left him nothing to glory in. This, I repeat, was deeply humbling to a learned, religious, and influential man.

But it was puzzling as well as humbling. “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” Surely not. There would be no more gained by a second natural birth than by a first. If a natural man could enter, ten thousand times, into his mother’s womb and be born, he would be naught but a natural man, after all; for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” Be what you will with flesh—with nature, and you cannot alter or improve it. Nothing could change flesh into spirit. You may exalt it to the rank of a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a master of Israel—and you could hardly make it higher, but it will be flesh, notwithstanding. If this were more generally and clearly apprehended, it would prove the saving of fruitless labor to hundreds. Flesh is of no value whatever. In itself, it is but withered grass; and as to its most pious endeavors, its religious advantages and attainments, its works of righteousness, they have been pronounced by the pen of Inspiration to be “as filthy rags.” (Isa. 64:6.)

But, let us see the mode in which our blessed Lord replies to the “how?” of Nicodemus. It is peculiarly interesting. “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:5-8.) Here, we are distinctly taught that regeneration, or the new birth, is produced by “water and the Spirit.” A man must be born of water and of the Spirit, ere he can see the kingdom of God, or enter into its profound and heavenly mysteries. The keenest mortal vision cannot “see” the kingdom of God, nor the most gigantic human intellect “enter” into the deep secrets thereof. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14.) “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

It may be, however, that many are at a loss to know what is meant by being “born of water.” Certainly, the expression has been made the ground of very much discussion and controversy. It is only by comparing scripture with scripture that we can ascertain the real sense of any particular passage. It is a special mercy for the unlettered Christian—the humble student of the inspired volume, that he need not travel outside the covers of that volume, in order to interpret any passage contained therein.

What, then, is the meaning of being “born of water?” We must reply to this question by quoting two or three passages from the word. In the opening of John’s gospel, we read, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (chap. 1:11-13.) From this passage, we learn that everyone who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is born again—born of God. This is the plain sense of the passage. All who, by the power of God the Holy Ghost, believe on God the Son, are born of God the Father. The source of the testimony is divine; the object of the testimony is divine; the power of receiving the testimony is divine; the entire work of regeneration is divine. Hence, instead of being occupied with myself and inquiring, like Nicodemus, how can I be born again? I have simply to cast myself, by faith, on Jesus, and thus I am born again. All who put their trust in Christ, have gotten a new life, are regenerated.

Again, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come—into judgment; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” (John 6:47.) “But these 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.) All these passages go to prove that the only way in which we can get this new and everlasting life is by simply receiving the record concerning Christ. All who believe that record, have this new, this eternal life. Mark, it is not those who merely say they believe, but those who actually do believe, according to the sense of the word in the foregoing passages. There is life-giving power in the Christ whom the Word reveals, and in the Word which reveals Him. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” And, then, lest ignorance should marvel, or skepticism sneer at the idea of dead souls hearing, it is added, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:25, 28, 29.) The Lord Christ can make dead souls, as well as dead bodies, hear His quickening voice. It is by His mighty voice that life can be communicated to either body or soul. If the infidel or the skeptic reasons, and objects, it is simply because he makes his own vain mind the standard of what ought to be, and, thus, entirely shuts out God. This is the climax of folly.

But the reader may feel disposed to inquire, “What has all this to do with the meaning of the word of water” in John 3:5? “It has to do with it, inasmuch as it shows that the new birth is produced, the new life communicated by the voice of Christ, which is, really, the word of God, as we read, in the first chapter of James, “of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” (v. 18.) So also, in first Peter, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” (chap. 1:23.) In both these passages, the word is expressly set forth as the instrument by which the new birth is produced. James declares that we are begotten “by the word of truth;” and Peter declares that we are “born again by the word of God.” If, then, our Lord speaks of being “born of water,” it is obvious that He represents the Word under the significant figure of “water” a figure which “a master of Israel” might have understood, had he only studied, aright, Ezek. 36; 25-27.

There is a beautiful passage in the epistle to the Ephesians in which the word is presented under the figure of water. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (chap. 5:25, 26.) So also, in the epistle to Titus: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (chap. 3:5-7.)

From all these quotations, we learn that the word of God is the grand instrument of which the Holy Ghost makes use in calling dead souls into life. This truth is confirmed, in a peculiarly interesting manner, by our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, for, instead of replying to the repeated inquiry, "how can these things be?" He sets this "master of Israel" down to learn the simple lesson taught by "the brazen serpent." The bitten Israelite, of old, was to be healed by simply looking at the serpent of brass on the pole. The dead sinner, now, is to get life by simply looking at Jesus, on the cross, and Jesus on the throne. The Israelite was not told to look at his wound, though it was the sense of his wound that made him look. The dead sinner is not told to look at his sins, though it is the sense of his sins that will make him look. One look at the serpent healed the Israelite; one look at Jesus quickens the dead sinner. The former had not to look a second time to be healed; the latter had not to look a second time to get life. It was not the way he looked, but the object he looked at, that healed the Israelite; it is not the way he looks, but the object he looks at, that saves the sinner. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Such was the precious lesson which Nicodemus was called to learn—such the reply to his "how?" If a man begins to reason about the new birth, he must be confounded; but if he believes in Jesus, he is born again. Man's reason can never understand the new birth; but the word of God produces it. Many are astray as to this. They are occupied with the process of regeneration, instead of the word which regenerates. Thus are they perplexed and confounded. They are looking at self, instead of at Christ; and as there is an inseparable connection between the object at which we look and the effect of looking at it, we can easily see what must be the effect of looking in upon oneself. What would an Israelite have gained by looking at his wound? Nothing. What did he gain by looking at the serpent? Health. What does a sinner gain, by looking at himself? Nothing. What does he gain by looking to Jesus? "Everlasting life."

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Regeneration: What Is It? Part 3

We come, now, to consider, in the third and last place, the results of regeneration—a point of the deepest interest. Who can estimate aright the glorious results of being a child of God? Who can unfold those affections which belong to that high and hallowed relationship in which the soul is placed by being born again? Who can fully explain that precious fellowship which the child of God is privileged to enjoy with his heavenly Father? “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:1-3.) “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:14-17.)

It is most important to understand the distinction between life and peace. The former is the result of being linked with Christ’s Person; the latter is the result of His work. “He that hath the Son, hath life.” (1 John 5:12.) But, “being justified by faith we have peace?” (Rom. 5:1.) “Having made peace through the blood of his cross.” (Col. 1:20.) The very moment a man receives into his heart the simple truth of the gospel, he becomes a child of God. The truth which he receives is the “incorruptible seed” of “the divine nature.” (1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Pet. 1:4.) Many are not aware of all that is involved in thus simply receiving the truth of the gospel. As in nature, the child of a nobleman may not know the varied results of the relationship, so is it, likewise, in grace. I may be ignorant both as to the relationship and its results; but I am in it, notwithstanding: and being in it, I have the affections which belong to it, and I ought to cultivate them, and allow them to entwine themselves artlessly around their proper object, even Him who has begotten me by the word of truth. (Jas. 1:18.) It is my privilege to enjoy the full flow of parental affection emanating from the bosom of God, and to reciprocate that affection, through the power of the in-dwelling Spirit. “Now are we the sons of God.” He has made us such. He has attached this rare and marvelous privilege to the simple belief of the truth. (John 1:12.) We do not reach this position “by works of righteousness which we have done” or could do; but simply “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7.) We are “called sons,” and “made heirs;” and all this, simply by the belief of the truth of the gospel, which is God’s “incorruptible seed.”

Take the case of the very vilest sinner who, up to this moment, has been living a life of gross wickedness. Let that person receive into his heart the pure gospel of God, let him heartily believe “that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;” and he there, then, and thus, becomes a child of

God, a thoroughly saved, perfectly justified, and divinely accepted person. In receiving into his heart the simple record concerning Christ, he has received new life. Christ is the truth and the life, and when we receive the truth we receive Christ; and, when we receive Christ, we receive life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3:36.) When does he get this life? The very moment he believes. "Believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:31.) The truth concerning Christ is the seed of eternal life, and when that truth is believed, life is communicated.

Observe, this is what the word of God declares. It is a matter of divine testimony, not merely of human feeling. We do not get life by feeling something in ourselves, but by believing something about Christ; and that something we have on the authority of God's eternal Word—"the holy scriptures." It is well to understand this. Many are looking in, for evidences of the new life, instead of looking out at the object which imparts the life. It is quite true that, "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;" (1 John 5:10,) but, be it remembered, it is "the witness" of a life which is received by "believing on the Son of God," not by looking in upon oneself; and the more undividedly I am occupied with Christ, the more distinct and satisfactory will be "the witness" in myself. If I make the witness my object, I shall be plunged in doubt and uncertainty; but if I make Christ my object, I have the witness in all its divine integrity and power. There is special need of clearness as to this, because of the strong tendency of our hearts to make something within the ground of our peace and contentment, instead of building, absolutely and exclusively, upon Christ. The more simply we cling to Christ, apart from all beside, the more peaceful and happy we shall be; but directly we take the eye off Him, we become unhinged and unhappy.

In a word, then, my reader should seek to understand, with scriptural accuracy, the distinction between life and peace. The former is the result of the connection with Christ's Person; the latter is the result of believing in his finished work. We very frequently meet with quickened souls who are in sad trouble and disquietude as to their acceptance with God. They really do believe on the name of the Son of God, and, believing, they have life; but from not seeing the fullness of the work of Christ, as to their sins, they are troubled in conscience, they have no mental repose. Take an illustration. If you place a hundred weight upon the bosom of a dead man, he does not, feel it. Place another, and another, and another, he is wholly unconscious. Why? Because there is no life. Let us suppose, for a moment, the entrance in of life, and what will be the result? A most distressing sensation occasioned by the terrible weight upon the bosom. What then will be needful in order to the full enjoyment of the life which has been imparted? Clearly, the removal of the burden. It is somewhat thus with the sinner who receives life by believing on the Person of the Son of God. So long as he was in a state of spiritual death, he had no spiritual sensations, he was unconscious of any weight pressing upon him. But the entrance in of spiritual life, has imparted spiritual sensibilities, and he now feels a burden pressing upon his heart and conscience which he knows not exactly how to get rid of. He sees not as yet all that is involved in believing on the name of the only begotten Son of God. He does not see that Christ is, at once, his righteousness and his life. He needs a simple view of the finished atonement of Christ, whereby all his sins were plunged in the waters of eternal oblivion, and he himself introduced into the full favor of God. It is this, and this alone, that can remove the heavy burden off the heart, and impart that profound mental repose which nothing can ever disturb.

If I think of God as a Judge, and myself as a sinner, I need the blood of the cross to bring me into His presence, in the way of righteousness. I must fully understand that every claim which God, the

righteous Judge, had upon me, a guilty sinner, has been divinely answered, and eternally settled by “the precious blood of Christ.” This gives my soul peace. I see that, through that blood, God can be “just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. 3:29.) I learn that, in the cross, God has been glorified about my sins; yea, that the whole question of sin was fully gone into and perfectly settled between God and Christ, amid the deep and awful solitudes of Calvary. Thus my load is taken off; my weight removed; my guilt canceled; I can breathe freely; I have perfect peace; there is literally nothing against me; I am as free as the blood of Christ can make me. The Judge has declared Himself satisfied as to sin, by raising the sinner’s Surety from the dead, and placing Him at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

But, then, there comes another thing, of immense value. I not only see myself as a guilty sinner provided with a way of access to God, as a righteous Judge; but I see God, in pursuance of His eternal counsels of electing love, begetting me through the word of truth, making me His child, adopting me into His family, and setting me before Him in such a way as that I can enjoy communion with Him as my Father, in the midst of all the tender endearments of the divine family circle. This is, obviously, another phase of the believer’s position and character. It is no longer a question of his coming to God, in the full and settled consciousness that every just claim has been met. This, in itself, is ineffably precious to every sin-burdened heart. But there is far more than this. God is my Father, and I am His child. He has a Father’s heart, and I can count on the tender affections of that heart, in the midst of all my feebleness and need. He loves me, not because of what I am enabled to do, but because I am His child.

Look at yonder tottering babe, the object of ceaseless care and solicitude, wholly unable to promote his father’s interests in any one way, yet so loved by the father that he would not exchange him for ten thousand worlds; and if it be thus with an earthly father, what must it be with our heavenly Father? He loves us, not for aught that we are able to do, but because we are His children. He has begotten us, of His own will, by the word of truth. (Jas. 1:18.) We could no more earn a place in the heart of the Father, than we could satisfy the claims of the righteous Judge. All is of free grace. The Father has begotten us; and the Judge has found a ransom. (Job 33:24.) We are debtors to grace for both the one and the other.

But, be it remembered, while we are wholly unable to earn, by our works, a place in the Father’s heart, or to satisfy the claims of the righteous Judge, we are, nevertheless, responsible to “believe the record which God has given of his Son.” (1 John 5:9-11.) I say this lest, by any means, my reader should be one of those who entrench themselves behind the dogmas of a one-sided theology, while refusing to believe the plain testimony of God. Many there are—intelligent people, too—who, when the gospel of the grace of God is pressed upon their acceptance, are ready to reply, “I cannot believe unless God gives me power to do so; nor shall I ever be endowed with that power, unless I am one of the elect. If I belong to the favored number, I must be saved—if not, I can’t.

This is a thoroughly one-sided theology; and not only so, but its one side is turned the wrong way; yea, it is so turned as to wear the form of an absurd but most dangerous fatalism, which completely destroys man’s responsibility, and casts dishonor upon God’s moral administration. It sends man forth upon a wild career of reckless folly, and makes God the author of the sinner’s unbelief. This is, in good truth, to add insult to injury. It is, first, to make God a liar, and then charge

Him with being the cause of it. It is to reject His proffered love, and blame Him for the rejection. This is, in reality, the most daring wickedness, though based, as I have said, upon a one-sided theology.

Now, does anyone imagine that an argument so flimsy will hold good, for a single moment, in the presence of the king of terrors, or before the judgment seat of Christ? Is there a soul throughout the gloomy regions of the lost that would ever think of charging God with being the author of its eternal perdition? Ah! no; it is only on earth that people argue thus. Such arguments are never breathed in hell. When men get to hell they blame themselves. In heaven, they praise the Lamb. All who are lost will have to thank self; all who are saved will have to thank God. It is when the impenitent soul has passed through the narrow archway of time into the boundless ocean of eternity, that it will enter into the full depth and power of those solemn words, "I would, but ye would not."

In truth, human responsibility is as distinctly taught in the word of God as is divine sovereignty. Man finds it impossible to frame a system of divinity which will give each truth its proper place; but he is not called upon to frame systems, but to believe a plain record, and be saved thereby. God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30.) The command to repent is based upon a revelation of divine love, so bright, so clear, so full, so free, so powerful, that none can escape its action save those who refuse to hear and obey the word—the deluded victims of a fatalism which will not admit that God can give expression to His affections, or the human heart be melted down under the influence of a perfect love.

Having said thus much by way of caution, to any who may be in danger of falling under the power of the above line of argument, I shall proceed to unfold, a little further, the results of regeneration, as seen in the matter of the discipline of the Father's house.

As the children of God, we are admitted to all the privileges of His house, and, in point of fact, the discipline of the house is as much a privilege as anything else. It is on the ground of the relationship in which God has set us, that He acts in discipline toward us. A father disciplines his children because they are his. If I see a strange child doing wrong, I am not called upon to chasten him. I am not in the relationship of a father to him, and, as a consequence, I neither know the affections nor the responsibilities of that relationship. I must be in a relationship in order to know the affections which belong to it. Now, as our Father, God, in His great grace and faithfulness, looks after us, in all our ways, He will not suffer aught upon us, or about us, which would be unworthy of Him, and subversive of our real peace and blessedness. "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. 12:9, 10.) Thus, the discipline is a positive privilege, inasmuch as it is a proof of our Father's care, and has for its object, our participation in the divine holiness.

But, then, we must ever bear in mind that the discipline of our Father's hand is to be interpreted in the light of our Father's countenance, and the deep mysteries of His moral government to be contemplated through the medium of His tender love. If we lose sight of this, we shall be sure to get into a spirit of bondage, as respects ourselves, and a spirit of judgment as respects others, both of which are in direct opposition to the spirit of Christ. All our Father's dealings with us are in

perfect love. When He furnishes us with bread, it is in love; and when He takes down the rod, it is in love also. "God is love." It may frequently happen that we are at a loss to know the why and the wherefore of some special dispensation of our Father's hand. It seems dark and inexplicable. The mist, which enwraps our spirits is so thick and heavy, as to prevent our catching the bright and cheering beams from our Father's countenance. This is a trying moment— a solemn crisis, in the soul's history. We are in great danger of losing the sense of divine love, through inability to understand the profound secrets of divine government. Satan, too, is sure to be busy at such a time. He will fly his fiery darts, and throw in his dark and diabolical suggestions. Thus, between the filthy reasonings which spring up within, and the horrible suggestions which come from without, the soul is in danger of losing its balance, and of getting away from the precious attitude of artless repose in divine love, let the divine government be what it may.

Thus much, with reference to our own souls, while under any special visitation of the hand of God. The effect as to others is equally bad. How often may we have detected ourselves in the habit of cherishing a spirit of judgment, in reference to a child of God whom we found in circumstances of trial, either of "mind, body, or estate?" This should be carefully guarded against. We ought not to imagine that every visitation of the hand of God must necessarily be on account of some special sin in the person. This would be an entirely false principle. The dealings of God are preventive as well as corrective.

Take a case in point. My child may be in the room with me, enjoying all the sweet intimacies which belong to our relationship. A person enters who, I know, will utter things which I do not wish my child to hear. I, therefore, without assigning any reason, tell my child to go to his room. Now, if he has not the fullest confidence in my love, he may entertain all manner of false notions about my act. He may reason about the why and wherefore, to such a degree as almost to question my affection. However, directly the visitor takes his leave, I call the child into my presence and explain the whole matter to him; and, in the renewed experience of father's love, he gets rid of the unhappy suspicions of a few dark moments.

Thus it is often with our poor hearts, in the matter of the divine dealings both with ourselves and others. We reason when we ought to repose; we doubt when we ought to depend. Confidence in our Father's love is the true corrective in all things.

We should ever hold fast the assurance of that changeless, infinite, and everlasting love, which has taken us up in our low and lost estate, made us "sons of God," and will never fail us, never let us go, until we enter upon the unbroken and eternal communion of our Father's house above. May that love dwell more abundantly in our hearts that so we may enter more fully into the meaning and power of regeneration— what it is— how it is produced—and what are its results. God grant it, for Christ's sake! Amen.

The Regions Beyond

(2 Cor. 10:16.)

“To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you” These words, while they set forth the large-heartedness of the self-denying and devoted apostle, do, also furnish a fine model for the evangelist, in every age. The gospel is a traveler; and the preacher of the gospel must be a traveler likewise. The divinely—qualified and divinely—sent evangelist will fix his eye upon “the world” He will embrace, in his benevolent design, the human family. From house to house; from street to street; from city to city; from province to province; from kingdom to kingdom; from continent to continent; from pole to pole. Such is the range of the good news and the publisher thereof. “The regions beyond” must ever be the grand gospel motto. No sooner has the gospel lamp cast its cheering beams over a district, than the bearer of that lamp must think of the regions beyond. Thus the work goes on. Thus the mighty tide of grace rolls, in enlightening and saving power, over a dark world which lies in “the region of the shadow of death.”

“Waft, waft, ye winds, the story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole.”

Christian reader, are you thinking of “the regions beyond you?” This expression, may, in your case, mean the next house, the next street, the next village, the next city, the next kingdom, or the next continent. The application is for your own heart to ponder, but, say, are you thinking of the regions beyond you?” I do not want you. to abandon your present post, at all; or, at least, not until you are fully persuaded that your work, at that post, is done. But, remember, the gospel plow should never stand still. “Onward” is the motto of every true evangelist. Let the shepherds abide by the flocks; but let the evangelists betake themselves hither and thither, to gather the sheep. Let them sound the gospel trumpet, far and wide, o’er the dark mountains of this world, to gather together the elect of God. This is the design of the gospel. This should be the object of the evangelist, as he sighs after “the regions beyond.” When Caesar beheld, from the coast of Gaul, the white cliffs of Britain, he earnestly longed to carry his arms thither. The evangelist, on the other hand, whose heart beats in unison with the heart of Jesus, as he casts his eye over the map of the world, longs to carry the gospel of peace into regions which have heretofore been wrapped in midnight gloom, covered with the dark mantle of superstition, or blasted beneath the withering influences of “a form of godliness without the power.”

It would, I believe, be a profitable question for many of us to put to ourselves, how far we are discharging our holy responsibilities to “the regions beyond.” I believe the Christian who is not cultivating and manifesting an evangelistic spirit, is in a truly deplorable condition. I believe, too, that the assembly which is not cultivating and manifesting an evangelistic spirit is in a dead state.

One of the truest marks of spiritual growth and prosperity, whether in an individual, or in an assembly, is earnest anxiety after the conversion of souls. This anxiety will swell the bosom with most generous emotions; yea, it will break forth, in copious streams of benevolent exertion, ever flowing toward “the regions beyond.” It is hard to believe that “the word of Christ” is “dwelling richly” in any one who is not making some effort to impart that word to his fellow sinners. It matters not what may be the amount of the effort; it may be to drop a few words in the ear of a friend, to give a tract, to pen a note, to breathe a prayer. But one thing is certain, namely, that a healthy vigorous Christian will be an evangelistic—a teller of good news—one whose sympathies, desires, and energies, are ever going forth toward “the regions beyond.” “I must preach the gospel to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.” Such was the language of the true Evangelist.

It is very doubtful whether many of the servants of Christ have not erred in allowing themselves, through one influence or another, to become too much localized—too much tied to one place. They have dropped into routine work—into a round of stated preaching, in the same place, and, in many cases, have paralyzed themselves and paralyzed their hearers also. I speak not, now, of the labors of the pastor, the elder, or the teacher, which must, of course, be carried on in the midst of those who are the proper subjects of such labors. I refer more particularly, to the evangelist. Such an one should never suffer himself to become localized. The world is his sphere— “the regions beyond,” his motto—to gather out God’s elect, his object—the current of the Spirit, his line of direction. If the reader should be one whom God has called and fitted to be an evangelist, let him remember these four things, the sphere, the motto, the object, and the line of direction which all must adopt, if they would prove fruitful laborers in the gospel field.

Finally, whether the reader be an evangelist or not, I would earnestly entreat him to examine how far he is seeking to further the gospel of Christ. We really must not stand idle. Time is short! Eternity is rapidly passing on! The Master is most worthy! Souls are most precious! The season for work will soon close! Let us, then, in the name of the Lord, be up and doing. And when we have done what we can, in the regions around, let us carry the precious seed into “THE REGIONS BEYOND.”

Rejoice with Me

These touching words unfold to us the deep joy of the Lord Himself, in the matter of our salvation. This is not sufficiently seen or thought of. We are apt to forget, that God has His own especial joy in receiving back, to His bosom of love, the poor wanderer—a joy so peculiar that He can say, “rejoice with me”— “let us eat and be merry”— “it was meet that we should make merry and be glad.” He does not say, “let him eat and be merry.” This would never do. God has His own joy in redemption. This is the sweet lesson taught in Luke 15. The shepherd was glad to find his sheep. The woman was glad to find her piece of silver. The Father was glad to embrace his son. God is glad to get back the lost one. The tide of joy that rolls through the hosts above, when a sinner returns, finds its deep exhaustless source in the eternal bosom of God. “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” (Luke 15:10.) There is no one has such deep joy in the salvation of a soul, as God Himself.

The thought of this is most soul-subduing, and heart-melting. Nothing can exceed it. It gives a full, clear, and convincing answer to Satan’s lie, in the garden, and to all the dark suspicion of our hearts. Who could listen, for a moment, to those accents, “let us be merry,” issuing from the Father’s lips—the Father’s heart, and continue to doubt His perfect love? How could the prodigal have had a doubt, in his heart, when he saw that there was not one in all the house so glad to get him back as the Father Himself? Surely, the words “let us be merry” must have fallen upon his heart with peculiar power. He could never have presumed to hope for such a reception. To be let in, at all— to be made an hired servant—to get any place in the house, would have fully equaled his highest expectation. But oh! to hear the Father say, “let us be merry!” This truly, was beyond all human thought. Yet these were the Father’s veritable words. It was really true that He was glad to get back the poor undeserving spendthrift. He could not tell why; but so it was. The Father had embraced and kissed him, even in his rags. Without a single upbraiding word, He had received him to His bosom. At the very moment when he was full of doubt as to whether he would be let in, at all, he found the Father on his neck. And, as if to crown all, and banish every trace of doubt and every shadow of fear, he hears the Father’s cry, “Let us eat and be merry.”

Reader, pause and think of all this. Think deeply of it. Remember, God is glad to get back to Himself the very vilest of the vile. A returning sinner makes God happy. Wondrous thought! profound mystery of love! A poor sinner can minister to the joy of God! Oh! who can cherish a doubt or harbor a fear, in the presence of such grace? May the sense of it fill my reader’s heart with sweetest confidence and peace!

Riches and Poverty: 2 Corinthians 8:9

He reigned in heaven, and angels stood
In silent awe before His throne,
Where rays of glory, like a flood
Of ambient luster o'er Him shone:
And heaven's eternal arches rang,
Filled with the echo of His name,
Where thousand times ten thousand sang
With ceaseless joy and glad acclaim;
While ranks of shining seraphim
Struck their bright harps of praise to Him.
He came on earth, the Son of man,
He laid His wondrous glory by—
Who in that human face might scan
Trace of that power that ruled the sky?
Few were His hours of rest and brief;
His lips refused the cup of mirth,
A man of sorrows and of grief,
He bore the destiny of earth,
A day of toil, a night of prayer,
He taught His wearied frame to bear.
He lived in heaven, the King of kings,
The God of hosts, the Lord of all;
And angels spread their glorious wings,
Prompt to obey His every call:
And joy unmingled, unsubdued,
Unknown, ineffable delight,

Fell o'er the blessed throng who stood
Before His footstool day and night;
No eye hath seen, no ear hath heard,
The bliss of heaven's eternal Lord.
He bore on earth a dreary lot,
His holy heart with anguish torn;
He came, His own received Him not,
He drank the dregs of shame and scorn.
Forsaken in His bitterest hour,
His chosen followers left His side:
Can this be He? the God of power!
Despised, rejected, crucified!
A crown of mockery on His head,
And those He loved and trusted, fled!
Yea, this is He, and this is love,
Love unimagined and unknown;
He left His Father's joys above,
Turned from His kingdom and His throne
Yea, cast aside His holy crown,
A weary wayfarer became;
Bore e'en Jehovah's bitter frown,
Endured the cross, despised the shame,
Then conquered hell and burst the grave,
And rose omnipotent to save.

The Sea Bird

I've watch'd the sea bird calmly glide
Unruffled o'er the ocean tide;
Unscared she heard the waters roar
In foaming breakers on the shore.
Fearless of ill, herself she gave
To rise upon the lifting wave,
Or sink, to be awhile unseen—
The undulating swells between—
Till, as the evening shadows grew,
Noiseless, unheard, aloft she flew;
While, soaring to her rock-built nest,
A sunbeam lighted on her breast,
A moment glitter'd in mine eye,
Then quickly vanish'd through the sky.
While by the pebbly beach I stood,
That sea-bird, on the waving flood,
Pictured to my enraptured eye,
A soul at peace with God:—Now high,
Now low, upon the gulf of life,
Raised or depress'd, in peace or strife,
Calmly she kens the changeful wave,
She dreads no storm—she fears no grave:
To her, the world's tumultuous roar,
Dies like the echo on the shore.
“Father,” she cries, “ Thy pleasure all fulfill,
“I gladly yield me to thy sovereign will;

“Let earthly joys, let comforts ebb or rise,
“Tranquil on thee, my God, my soul relies.”

Then, as advance the shades of night,
Long-plumed, she takes her heavenward flight;
But, as she mounts, I see her fling
A beam of glory from her wing—
A moment—to my aching sight
Lost in the boundless fields of light!

The Shadow of the Apple Tree

“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.” (Cant. 2:3, 4.)

The attitude of soul set forth in this lovely passage, is one of perfect repose and complacency. It is not the attitude of one who has found a partial rest, rest for a day, a month, or a year. The soul that has really found rest in Christ, has found a rest which is divine in its character, and eternal in its duration. “I sat down.” Precious attitude! There is no more toil for the sinner. Plenty of toil for the saint—plenty of toil for the servant. There is no more labor in the brick-kilns of Pharaoh, but abundance of labor in the vineyard of Christ. The believer’s labor comes after rest, not before it.

And, observe, it is “under His shadow.” It is not under the shadow of my doings, my feelings, my frames, my experiences. Neither is it the shadow of ordinances, however valuable; nor of doctrines, however true; nor of institutions, however important. All these things have their proper place, and their proper value; but we had better not venture to sit down under their shadow; for, if we do, they will prove no better than Jonah’s gourd which sprang up in a night, and perished in a night. No, my reader, it must be Christ Himself—Christ only—Christ always. It must be “I,” my very self, “sat down,” found my sweet repose and resting place, my shade and satisfaction, “under His shadow.” Then all is right—right now—right forever.

And, let me ask, how much shade does a soul enjoy that is resting simply in Christ? Just as much as Christ can afford. If I sit down under the shadow of a tree or a rock, I enjoy just that amount of shade which the tree or the rock can yield me. So, when the soul reposes, by faith, in the shadow of Christ, the whole question is, how much shade can He furnish? Faith knows the answer.

Dear reader, are you enjoying “the shadow of the apple tree?” Are you plucking its mellow fruit, which hangs in rich clusters around you? Is that fruit “sweet to your taste?” Are you allowing Jesus to conduct you into “His banqueting house?” Do you find His banner over you to be love? Be assured of it, it is in His banqueting house, and under His shadow, that the soul can prosper, and there alone. May you prove this, in your own happy experience, day by day. May Christ be indeed your enjoyed portion. May you feed upon Him with ever growing desire. May you taste more of the living freshness of His grace, and be thus led on, in zeal, energy, and personal devotedness, until you are called to take your place beside the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, to go no more out forever.

“Behold the Rose of Sharon here,

The Lily which the valleys bear;

Behold the tree of life that gives

Refreshing fruit and healing leaves.

Amongst the thorn so lilies shine;
Amongst wild gourds the noble vine;
So in mine eyes my Saviour proves,
Amidst a thousand meaner loves.
Beneath His cooling shade I sat,
To shield me from the burning heat;
Of heavenly fruit He spreads a feast,
To feed mine eyes, and please my taste,
Kindly He brought me to the place
Where stands the banquet of His grace,
He saw me faint, and o'er my head
The banner of His love He spread.
With living bread and gen'rous wine
He cheers this sinking heart of mine,
And offering His own heart to me,
He shows His thoughts how kind they be."

It is the happy privilege of the believer to be continually in the shade, and yet never out of the sunshine.

A Splendid Triumph

(John 20:1-17.)

The disciples at the sepulcher see the trophies of a recent victory obtained there, and yet a victory gained in all beautiful divine simplicity and power. There was no confusion, no symptom that a struggle had been sustained, but every witness that a victory had been won. The sepulcher was empty, and the clothes that had bound the dead body lay there, not in disorder, but wrapped together in their due place, the clothes that had been about the head distinguished above the rest.

Death had been conquered and the grave spoiled, but by One who had got an easy victory; for He had already destroyed him that had the power of death at Calvary, "by death destroyed him that had the power of death," (Heb. 2) and the rifling of the grave was perfect and glorious, but it was accomplished as without a struggle.

The angels are there, but they are there in full intelligence of all that had happened. They sit at the place where the body had lain, in worshipping admiration of what Jesus had accomplished. Mary is there, but she is there ignorant of it all, but in deep personal affection to Christ. She knows not of His victory and resurrection, but she feels that He is dearer to her than the whole creation of God.

Such ones meet and meet as the best of friends; angels and Mary, the bright intelligences of heaven and the loving heart of an accepted sinner of the earth. Jesus is their common object, and that is enough, though in point of attainment they are so distant from each other; the angels so full of light, Mary too much still in ignorance.

But favored woman as she was, she is soon called to change her company, and even to improve it, though it was so good. She leaves the angels for the Lord of angels, and on his glorious lips hears her own name in well-known accents; for there is nothing too high, nothing too intimate for that heart that loves Jesus as hers did. Her former companions had kindly soothed her grief. But her Lord cheers her spirit and conducts her to know Him in higher, purer, and more loving scenes than even her heart had ever conceived. He lets her know that He was on His way to heaven, there to be with the God and Father of the Christ and the saints, of Jesus and his brethren.

What victory, what spoils of victory, and what prints of victory are here! Heath and hell are conquered and made a show of, the very bonds which signified their power made a show of in the place of the warfare; and then, those who had loved Him that had gone down to the battle, are made to share more splendid glorious fruit of His toil than their fondest hearts had ever even desired.

With believing minds may we trace this victory of the Son of God, and with happy hearts gather up and feed on the fruit of it!

Things New and Old

The Lord uses this form of words at the close of Matt. 13 when he had been, in the ears of either the multitude or His disciples, anticipating the kingdom of heaven under new conditions.

The kingdom of heaven, that is, the rule of the God of heaven among, or over, the people of the earth, was no new thing. Daniel had already told us of a day when the God of heaven should set up His kingdom, all nations and languages, and people serving him. The Prophets, generally, I might say, anticipated the day of the scepter of Messiah, when the king of Israel shall be the God of the whole earth. But the kingdom of heaven, in such conditions as the Lord had been presenting it in that chapter, was altogether a new thing, foreign to all the thoughts and intimations of the Prophets. The name and word of Him who had ascended the heavens, preached and known abroad in all the world, while Israel was nationally under judgment, this was a new thing in the treasures of divine wisdom. Blindness of eye and hardness of heart, executed upon Israel as the righteous answer of God to them, who, when He called in grace and in healing, had no answer for Him; and upon this, the truth of God and the energies of His Spirit, found abroad in “the field,” which is “the world,” this was new, unknown, untold, by any of the prophets—at the very least, under such conditions as the Lord had been here anticipating.

But new things never gainsay old. This could not be. “The scripture cannot be broken.” The former things of the Prophets may open to let in other counsels of God, and thus there may be enlargement; but there is no canceling. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance—so that all that has been promised to Israel shall be realized. The light may shine brighter and brighter to the perfect day—so that the supplies and additions which we get from the new testament scriptures, may be a precious filling up of the intimations or revelations of the old.

“In vetere Testamento, novum latet— In novo Testamento vetum patet.”

A striking and just sentence.

I would now give a few instances of what I mean.

From Psalm 8 we learn of three conditions attaching to “the Son of man” in His wondrous, blessed history— humiliation, coronation, and dominion. These conditions are commented upon in Heb. 2 and each of them given a deep and extended sense.

The humiliation of “the Son of Man” is declared to be for “the suffering of death,” so that, in the grace of God, sinners might be reconciled, and the creation itself brought back to God as a ransomed, redeemed thing. The coronation of this same Son of Man” is what the Apostle says we now see. His dominion over the works of God’s hand is what, he further tells us, we wait to see.

This commentary in the new Testament sets off the word of the old Testament in fresh and bright and marvelous fullness. The intimations of the old were faint indeed giving us only the three conditions themselves in their simple nakedness—the divine purposes in these conditions are disclosed in the new scriptures.

This same Psalm is taken up also in 1 Corinthians 15. The Psalm had told us, that all things were to be put under the foot of the Son of man, such as the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea. But 1 Cor. 15 tells us, that among the “all things” thus to be put in subjection, is “death” itself, as well as “all rule, and all authority and power.” And there was a great beauty and fitness in introducing “death” among the “all things” which were to be put in subjection to the Son of man, because the whole chapter was upon the resurrection; and the resurrection is the Lord’s victory over death, a victory which He achieved when He rose Himself, and which He will share with His saints in the day of their resurrection.

And further. This same chapter, 1 Cor. 15 also tells us that this state of universal lordship in the hand of Christ will be given up in due season, and that God will be then “all in all.” This was another of the “new things.” Of this mystery, this secret in the storehouse of divine counsels, we knew nothing till apostles had taken up, in their day, the wondrous tale which prophets had begun to tell us.

Thus, without annulling a single jot or tittle of the word, we get a rich influx of light. Apostles, like scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven, bring in the new things to shine with the old. They fill out what had been left as sketches in outline.

But I will make one further inquiry, upon the ground of these two scriptures, Psalm 8 and 1 Cor. 15. The prophet in the Psalm tells us that, while the Son of man exercises His dominion on the earth, the Lord Himself has set His glory above the heavens. I ask, on the authority of what the Apostle in the Epistle tells us, will not the risen saints, who are to be translated and glorified with Christ and like Christ, form part of that glory which is thus set above the heavens, when it is displayed in the day of the power of the Son of man? I only, however, ask this.

But to pass on to one further passage.

In Psalm 110 we see the Lord seated on high at the right hand of Jehovah, under promise that His enemies shall be made His footstool. The New Testament abundantly confirms this, not disturbing it in the least. (See Matt. 22; Acts 2; Heb. 10)

But besides, it greatly enlarges our view of this same ascended Lord. It tells us, that He is there, in the ascended place, as One that is resting after the toil of the life of faith.” (Heb. 12:2.)

It tells us, that He is there, as the Son having returned to the Father. (John 14:28.)

It tells us that He is there, as in a sanctuary, the High Priest of our profession, ever living to make intercession for us. (Rom. 8:34.)

It tells us that He is there, as Conqueror, having triumphed over him that had the power of death, and having led captivity captive. (Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15)

It tells us that He is there, as our Forerunner, as One who is preparing mansions for us there in the Father’s house. (John 14:2.)

Glorious enlargement of the mind, this is, as we by faith look up to the place of the ascended Jesus! Faith apprehends and realizes these things. We may therefore have to say, faith is but a feeble thing in our souls. Let us own this, and be humbled; but still let us say, faith realizes truths

as well as apprehends them. As we read of the Patriarchs, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."

I allude to this in the midst of these thoughts on these scriptures, that our souls may be kept lowly, in the sense of the blessed way in which faith deals with these great things. It embraces them as well as apprehends them.

And truly the things of scripture are great things. For to return for another moment to what we are meditating on, the conditions of our ascended Lord, we may suggest this further; that whether the words, "till I make thine enemies thy footstool," imply destruction or submission, whether they intend that the Lord's enemies shall perish in the brightness of the day of His judgments, or be brought into willing subjection in the blessedness of the day of His glory, whichever of those things they may purpose to convey to us, or if they would convey both, still the risen glorified saints are to be with Him. For scripture teaches us, that they are to be with Him, both in the act of judgment or destruction, (Rev. 11:27; 19:14,) and also in the place of government, when the millennial earth is to own His scepter and lordship. (Matt. 19:28, &c, &c.)

Here again is enlargement. His saints are to be with the Lord, in the day whether of His judgments or His dominion; and for such ends they have surely passed through the moment contemplated in 1 Cor. 15:51, and in 1 Thess. 4:17. They have surely risen, and met Him in the air. Does not this, therefore, teach us, that the eyes of the saints are to be out towards that moment? Can either of these great prophetic actions, judgment or government, the exercise of the sword or of the scepter, the act of cleansing the kingdom of offenses, or of ordering the kingdom in righteousness, be accomplished by Him, till His saints are with Him? The wondrous, brighter light of New Testament revelations, shining full upon such a word as this in the Old Testament prophecies, "till I make thine enemies thy footstool," warrants our putting these questions, and encourages us, beloved, to take up that beautiful Thessalonian attitude, "Waiting for the Son from heaven." O for power to do so, unhindered by the spirit of this world!

"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."

The Touch of Faith

Who is that, who, amid the throng,
So benignly walks along,
Love beaming in his face?
'Tis Christ the Lord who hastens by,
For one, in yonder house, doth lie,
Who needs His healing grace.
One, too, there is amid that crowd,
Beneath the weight of suffering bowed,
Unknown to all beside.
For twelve long years she bore her pain,
Gave all she had—could nothing gain.
Till Jesus she espied.
But when she sees Him drawing near,
How bounds her heart with hope and cheer,
Resolved the crowd to brave.
“If I but touch His garment’s hem,”
She thinks, “I shall lack nothing then.”
That touch of faith she gave.
Immediately her pains depart!
What joy, what comfort fills her heart!
She would not have it known.
She little dreamed that feeble touch
Had cheered her Saviour’s heart as much
As it had healed her own.
He felt the virtue flowing o’er,
That He was trusted, which was more

Than aught she ere could do.
And could He let the healed one go,
Without a word, a look, to show
That He had loved her too?
He does not heed the callous press,
He longs to hear her lips confess
How He had made her whole.
And thus He gives her sweet release,
“Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.”
He now has saved her soul.
And is not Jesus now the same
As when that lowly woman came
To have her pain removed?
Since He ascended to His throne
How many a touch unseen, unknown,
His healing power has proved!
Yes, still the streams of virtue flow,
To cleanse the sin, to cure the woe,
It needs not but to touch.
And now as then the sufferer feels
How truly, perfectly, it heals—
And Christ is cheered as much.

The Two Mines

Lines found among the papers of a young man who recently
fell asleep in Jesus. He had been to the gold diggings,
where he realized a large amount, of which he was
afterward robbed. The hardships he endured, at the
mines, brought on an illness, in the progress of which,
the Lord revealed himself to his precious soul.

I once deemed that contentment was bought with gold,
And I went to the land where the rich tide roll'd,
And I eagerly sought 'mid disease and death,
To grasp it; nor feared I the withering breath
Of the damp chilling mine,
When I saw it shine.

Nay, I laughed when I thought of what wealth was mine.

But it fled—and it left no diseased and worn;

And I grieved 'mid a night which might know no morn.

But I was not deserted; for Jesus came

His suff'ring blood-bought-one from Satan to claim.

And He opened the mine

Of His love divine,

And His word bade its gems round my heart to shine.

Oh! how softly He whispered, "'tis mine to roll

The mountain of sin off thy laboring soul."

How full was her freedom, relieved of her load!

And He gave me a name, 'twas— "a son of God."

And He said, "In its mine"

Leave earth's gold to shine.

“The riches of grace are eternally thine.”

The Vision of the Almighty

(Read Numb. 23 and 24.)

In these remarkable chapters, we are called, as it were, to pause and hearken, while Jehovah tells out, in the ear of the enemy, what He thinks about His people. Balak, the King of Moab, terrified by the sight of “all that Israel had done to the Amorites,” hires Balaam to curse them, but the Lord makes use of the tongue of the covetous prophet, in order to tell out His thoughts about Israel. He will not allow anyone to curse His people. He may have to deal with them, in secret, about many things; but He will not suffer another to move his tongue against them.

This is a grand point. It matters not what the enemy may think about God’s people, or what they may think about themselves, or what they may think about one another; the real question is, what does God think about them? He knows, exactly, all that concerns them—all that they are—all that they have done—all that is in them. Everything stands clearly revealed to His all-penetrating eye. The deepest secrets of the heart, of the nature, and of the life, are all known to Him. Neither angels, men, nor devils, know us as God knows us. Hence, it is not with “the vision” of angels, or “the vision” of men, or “the vision” of devils, we have to do, but, with “the vision of the Almighty.”

This gives sweet peace to the heart. God sees us, thinks of us, speaks of us, and acts towards us, according to what He Himself has made us, and wrought for us—according to the perfection of His own work. Thus it is we appear “in the vision of the Almighty”—thus are we seen “from the top of the rocks.” When God looks at His people, He beholds in them His own workmanship; and it is to the glory of His holy name, and to the praise of His salvation, that not a blemish should be seen on those who are His—those whom He, in sovereign grace, has made His own. His character, His name, and the perfection of His work, are all involved in the condition and standing of those with whom He has linked Himself. Hence, the moment any enemy or accuser enters the scene, Jehovah places Himself in front, to receive and answer the accusation; and His answer is always founded, not upon what His people are in themselves, but upon what He has made them, through the perfection of His own work. His glory is linked with them, and, in vindicating them, He maintains His own glory. He places Himself between them and every accusing tongue. His glory demands that they should be presented in all the comeliness which He has put upon them. If the enemy comes to curse and accuse, Jehovah answers him by pouring forth the rich current of His everlasting complacency in those whom He has chosen for Himself, and whom He has made fit to be before Him, forever.

It is upon this ground that the Bridegroom, in contemplating the bride, in the Canticles, declares to her, “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” (chap. 4:7.) She, in looking at herself, could only exclaim, “I am black.” (chap. 1:5, 6.) So also, in John 13 the Lord Jesus looks at His disciples, and pronounces them “clean every whit;” although, in a few hours afterward, one of them was to curse and swear that he did not know Him. The bride, in the Canticles, and the disciples, in John 13 are both viewed “in the vision of the Almighty”—both beheld, “from the top of the rocks.” This accounts for the beautiful words “all fair”—“clean every whit.” Were they to be looked at

from any other point of view, the words should have been “all foul”— “clean never a whit.” So vast is the difference between what we are in ourselves, and what we are in Christ!

This tranquillizing, purifying, and elevating truth shines, with uncommon luster, in Balaam’s four parables. Humanly speaking, we never should have had such a glorious view of Israel, as seen in “the vision of the Almighty”— “from the top of the rocks”—by one “having his eyes open,” had not Balak sought to curse them. Jehovah can very speedily open a man’s eyes to the true state of the case, in reference to the condition of His people. He claims the privilege of setting forth His thoughts about them. Balak and Balaam with “all the princes of Moab” may assemble to hear Israel cursed and defied—they may “build seven altars”—they may “offer a bullock and a lamb on every altar”—Balak’s gold and silver may glitter before the covetous gaze of the false prophet, but not all the powers of earth and hell combined, in their dark and terrible array, can evoke a single breath of curse or accusation, against the Israel of God. As well might the enemy have sought to point out a single flaw in that fair creation which the Lord God had pronounced “very good,” as fasten an accusation upon the redeemed of the Lord. Oh! no; they shine in all the comeliness which He has put upon them, and all that is needed, in order to see them thus, is to mount to “the top of the rocks”—to have “the eyes open,” so that we may see them “in the vision of the Almighty.”

Having given, thus, a general view of the contents of these remarkable chapters, I will briefly present to my reader the special point contained in each of the four parables. He will find, in the entire subject, a rich mine of instruction.

1. In the first of Balaam’s parables, we have the absolute separation of Israel, distinctly set forth. “How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: and, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” Here, we have Israel singled out to be a separated and peculiar people—a people who, according to the divine thought about them, were never, at any time, on any ground, or for any object whatsoever, to be mingled with or reckoned amongst the nations. “The people shall dwell alone” Let the reader ponder this, deeply, both in its application to the literal seed of Abraham, and also to the true Israel of God. Immense practical results flow out of this great principle— results which we do not attempt to unfold in an article like the present. We merely ask the intelligent reader to follow this point as it is traced for him in the word. “The people shall dwell alone.”

2. But, if Jehovah, in His great grace, be pleased to link Himself with a people—if He call them out to be a separate people, in the world—to “dwell alone,” and shine for Him in the midst of those who are still “sitting in darkness and the shadow of death,” He can only have them in such a condition as suits Himself. He must make them such as He would have them to be—such as shall be to the praise of His great and glorious name. Hence, in the second parable, the prophet is made to tell out, not merely the negative, but the positive condition of the people. “And he took up his parable and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless,

and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them. God brought them out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, what hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." (Num. 23:19-24.)

Here, we find ourselves on truly elevated ground. This is, in truth, "the top of the rocks"—the pure air of "the hills," where the people of God are seen only in "the vision of the Almighty." In this parable, Israel's blessedness and security are made to depend, not on themselves, but upon the truth and faithfulness of Jehovah. "God is not a man, that he should lie: neither the son of man that he should repent." This puts Israel upon safe ground. God must be true to Himself. Is there any power that can possibly prevent Him from fulfilling His word and oath? Surely not. "He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it." In the previous parable, it was, "God hath not cursed" Here, it is, "he hath blessed." There is very manifest advance. As Balak conducts the money-loving prophet from place to place, Jehovah takes occasion to bring out fresh features of beauty in His people. Thus, it is not merely that they are a separated people, dwelling alone; but they are a justified people, having the Lord their God with them, and the shout of a King among them. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." The enemy may say "There is iniquity there, all the while." Yes, but who can make Jehovah behold it, when He Himself has been pleased to blot it all out, as a thick cloud, for His name's sake? If He has cast it behind His back, who can bring it before His face? "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? "God sees His people so thoroughly delivered from all that could be against them, that He can take up His abode in their midst, and cause His voice to be heard amongst them. Well, therefore, may we exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" It is not "What hath Israel wrought!" Balak and Balaam would have found plenty to do in the way of cursing, had Israel's work been in question. The Lord be praised, it is on what He hath wrought that His people stand, and, therefore, their foundation is as imperishable as the very throne of God.

3. In the third parable, we have another step in advance. The Lord's people are not merely separated and justified, they are actually "comely" and "goodly" in His sight. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations, his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." (chap. 24:5-9.) Thus, it was better and better for Israel—worse and worse for Balak. He had not merely to stand by and hear Israel "blessed," but to hear himself "cursed," for seeking to curse them.

But let my reader specially mark the rich grace which shines in this parable. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" If one had gone down to examine those tents and tabernacles in "the vision" of man, they would have appeared "black as the tents of Kedar." But, as

looked at in “the vision of the Almighty,” they were “goodly,” and whoever did not see them as such, needed to have “his eyes open.” If I am looking at the people of God “from the top of the rocks,” I shall see them as God sees them, and that is, as clothed with all the comeliness of Christ—complete in Him—accepted in the Beloved. This is what will enable me to get on with them, to walk with them, to have fellowship with them, to rise above their points and angles, blots and “blemishes, failures and infirmities. If I do not contemplate them from this lofty ground, I shall be sure to fix my eye upon some little point or other which will completely mar my communion and alienate my affections. In Israel’s case, we see, in the very next chapter, what terrible evil they fell into. Did this alter Jehovah’s judgment? Surely not. He is not “the son of man that he should repent.” He judged and chastened them for their evil, because He is holy, and can never sanction, in His people, aught that is contrary to His nature; but He could never reverse His judgment. He knew all about them. He knew what they were, and what they would do; but yet, He said, “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!” Was this making light of their evil? The thought were blasphemy. He could chasten them for their sins; but when an enemy comes forth to curse or accuse, He stands in front of His people and says, “I see no iniquity”—“How goodly are their tents!” Precious, adorable grace! May we drink more deeply of it, and manifest its purifying, elevating influence!

4. In the fourth and last parable, we reach, as it were, the very loftiest crag of “the rocks,” from whence we can discern the beams of the glory gilding the horizon. “And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, which heard the words of God, and know the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty....I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.” (chap, 24:15-17.) This gives great completeness to the entire scene. The topstone is here laid upon the magnificent superstructure. The thoughtful reader of these sublime parables must be very sensible that, as he reads, he is mounting upwards. In the opening parable, the people are seen in separation “dwelling alone;” and then as Balak continues to shift the corrupt and covetous prophet from place to place, with the fond hope that the glittering pile may yet evoke the desired curse, we find ourselves conducted from height to height, until, at length, we stand upon the very summit and survey the plains of glory, in all their length and breadth, stretchings away far beyond the limits of mortal vision. “We hear the lion’s roar. We see him pouncing, in crushing power, upon all his enemies. The star of Jacob rises to set no more. The true David seizes the scepter and ascends the throne. Israel is preeminent in the earth, and all his enemies covered with shame and everlasting contempt.

Christian reader, may we abide, in spirit, on “the top of the rocks” may we ever have “our eyes open”—may we “hear the words of God, and know the knowledge of the Most High,” and may we only see “the vision of the Almighty.”

We See Jesus

(Heb. 2:9.)

It is very instructive to observe that in reading the Gospels, we find presented to us, not a system of doctrines, but a living Person, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.) In the simple, but vivid and exquisitely beautiful narratives of the evangelists, He lives and moves before us. We hear His words of grace, and see His acts of love. The disciples were drawn to Himself, and were occupied with Him. They were ignorant of much truth, but they knew Him who is Truth incarnate, and who was then manifested as the living Truth and Grace, come down among men. Thus Peter says for himself and the rest (John 6:68, 69,) "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Even so is it now. True, the Lord Jesus has "died for our sins;" but He is "risen again." "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." The eye of faith fixes itself, not on a dead Christ, but on a risen, living, glorified Saviour.

The constant effort of Satan is, to draw away our thoughts and our hearts from Christ. How easy it is to have the mind engaged about ordinances, doctrines, or even our service for Christ, instead of cultivating direct fellowship with Christ Himself. The casket is thought of, more than the jewel; the drapery is observed, more than the figure. Yet the true blessing of the soul is ever found, in steadily contemplating with the eye of faith, the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

About seven years since, a room was opened in the village of C.....for the preaching of the Gospel, and exposition of the Scriptures. Among those whom the Lord inclined to attend was J. B. The simple unfolding of the word of God, was a new thing to her; but the event proved that the Lord used it to open in her mind a new line of thought, and that she found in it a rich blessing. After a time, she united in fellowship with the Lord's people, at the Lord's table; but, from distance, or bodily infirmity, she could not attend very regularly. Soon, however, her last sickness came upon her; and then it was that she opened her mind more fully, and was enabled to exhibit the grace she had received. On one occasion she said, "Before I heard the word unfolded, I knew doctrine; but then, I found the Lord." There was the secret of her strength. She could delight herself in Him, who died, and rose, and is glorified, and will come again. Her sufferings were very great, but her peace of mind was complete, and her patient submission to the will of God, never failed.

More recently, the Lord opened her heart to embrace "that blessed hope," the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, to take the church to himself, and to reign over Israel, and over the earth. Amidst her suffering, she sought instruction in that cheering and reviving truth, concerning Him whom she had found.

Dear reader, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Canst thou look up to Him and say, "My Saviour, my Lord, and my God?" If not, hear Him saying to thee now, "Look and live." Pardon and remission of sins are found in His most precious blood-shedding; and if thou committest thyself wholly to Him, He will be thy living Righteousness, and glorious High Priest, in the presence of God above.

Dear Christian reader, Art thou living by faith on Jesus, the Son of God, the unfailing food and life of thy soul? Art thou seeking daily, constant communion with Him? Is thy heart saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, O thou bright and morning star?" Amen, "even so come, Lord Jesus."

What Think Ye of Christ?

(Notes of a discourse on Matt. 22:42.)

This is a solemn question for the heart, dear friends. It is Christ's own question. The Sadducees, and the Pharisees, had been asking Him questions. It was now His time to ask one. And, oh! how pointed, personal, and important it is! "What think ye of Christ?" Everything connected with the soul's condition before God, and the solemn realities of eternity, are involved in the answer, It comes direct home to the heart. The Jews, in place of receiving Him as "David's Son, and David's Lord," were reasoning, questioning, and speculating upon abstract points. In place of embracing Him with joyful hearts as their true Messiah, and great Deliverer, they were seeking how they might betray and crucify Him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:11, 12.)

The question, beloved friends, as addressed to us, this evening, is a deeply solemn one. It is addressed to us by God Himself, and we must give an answer. And oh! how solemn! your eternal happiness or misery hangs upon it. Oh! answer to God, my friends, and may you be enabled, from the heart to say, "He is all my salvation, and all my desire." It is not, observe, "what think ye, of this, or of that denomination?" or "how much do you know about Christ, educationally, or intellectually," but, what are your thoughts of Himself? Are your hearts drawn to Him? Will your consciences not let you get away from Him? I know most of you could answer me almost any question I could ask, about Christ, in His twofold character, as "David's Son, and David's Lord;" but mere intellectual accuracy will never satisfy the loving heart of Jesus. He wants a place in your hearts, and not in your heads merely. He is worthy—ininitely worthy, of the chief place in all our hearts.

Let me speak to you, dear friends, closely, pointedly, and affectionately, on this subject. And may the true state of your hearts towards Christ, be fully revealed this evening, in the light of God's presence. All depends on the state of the affections towards Him. Thousands in our day, are occupying the place of Christians, who have nothing more than mere head knowledge of Him, and outward conformity to the rules of their place of meeting. But will this save the precious soul? Will this satisfy the mind of God? Will this meet the desires of the heart of Jesus? Oh, no, beloved friends! "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." (1 Cor. 16:22.) Oh! how many, think you, would this searching word condemn, and lay eternally low, beneath the awful Anathema of Almighty God? There must be heart work to please Him. All is heart work with God, and if it be not heart work with you, it is good for nothing. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7.) And "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10)

Well, now, my dear friends, let us look at this vital subject, a little more in detail; and gladly will I travel with you, step by step, from the darkness of nature, to the bright regions of truth and eternal

day, pointing out, as we go along, the wonders of redeeming love.

And, first, let me ask you, as in God's holy presence, "What think ye of Christ" as the SENT ONE? Do you see in the lowly Jesus, the manifestation of God's love to you? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" and again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." " For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (John 3:16; 5:24. Luke 6:10.) Do you then, as "lost," "perishing" sinners, see in Him, the one sent of God to seek and to save you? Can you make a personal application of God's love in Jesus to your own soul? You are not making the proper use of Christ unless you do. For God so loved the world—ruined, rebel sinners in the world—that He sent His Son to seek and to save them, and whosoever believeth in Him, is immediately, and eternally saved. Oh! can you now say, in the light of these scriptures, I believe He came to save "lost," "perishing" sinners, and that is just what I am, so that I see from the testimony of God Himself, that He came to seek and to save me? Now, is this what you think of Christ as the sent one of God? Well, this is faith—true faith—because your thoughts of Christ are according to the testimony of God. This is essential to genuine faith. Because it gives the heart confidence in God Himself, and this is the character of true faith. When I see the blessed Jesus in the Gospels, as the expression of God's love to the lost, how can I, as a lost one, doubt His love to me? Was there ever such an expression of love as this, and all this love to me? It fills the poor heart with confidence in Himself, so that it can draw near in the assurance of His love, and hear Him preaching peace, by Jesus Christ, to the weary soul.

But oh! what a dreadful thing is unbelief! How cruel! how wicked! It gives the lie direct to the God of truth. It dashes from the hand of love, the cup of eternal blessing. It shuts the door of mercy in the sinner's face, and turns the flowing stream of life into the stagnant waters of death.

Beloved friends, let all such unbelief be withered up, this evening, in the presence of such burning love. Believe God's word! He says He loves you, and so loved you as to send His Son to die for you. Can you for a moment doubt it? "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"—this is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." What think ye of Him? Is He, to you, the chiefest among ten thousand—yea, altogether lovely? Oh! then, make a direct, personal application of Jesus to your hearts, as the sent one of God, and be happy in His changeless love.

Secondly. "What think ye of Christ" as the CRUCIFIED ONE? What are your thoughts of Him, as suffering and dying on the cross? Do you see Him there, suffering for your sins, and dying to put them all away? Passages of Scripture bearing on this point are so numerous, that the difficulty is in the selection, but take the following: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (Rom. 5:8. 1 Cor. 15:3, 4.) Here, we learn, that the love of God towards us, as sinners, shines conspicuously in the cross of His dear Son; and that all Scripture bears witness to the precious truth that Christ suffered for sins, that He died for sinners. Now, what are you and I, in the sight of God? Are we not sinners—utterly lost sinners? Why, we are nothing else. If we are on this ground, through firm faith in the word of God, then the whole truth of Scripture as to the work of Christ on the cross, is true and applicable to us. We may

gaze upon that suffering One there, and say in truth “He loved me, and gave Himself for me!” Nothing can be plainer than this, beloved friends. I read, in God’s word, that “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Am I not warranted then, being a sinner, on the direct authority of that word, to believe to say— “He loved me, and gave Himself for me?” Most assuredly I am! And no enemy can ever rob me of this glorious—glorious truth, but the unbelief of my own heart. God says it, and it must be true—true to every poor sinner in this world, who believes this word, and takes this ground.

Oh! what blessed-heart stirring-soul transporting views of the crucified One this truth gives the sinner. When the question is asked, “What think ye of Christ” as the crucified one? Faith’s ready answer is, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” It was love that brought Him down,—that led Him to the cross; where, by the shedding of His precious blood, all my sins were forever put away.” Now, my beloved friends, let me plainly ask you, Is this what ye think of Christ on the cross? or, are some of you still saying, “I know that I am a guilty, condemned sinner, and that Christ died on the cross; but I cannot say—I cannot believe, that He died for me.” Well, this state of mind may be connected with a good deal of tenderness, and earnestness, but we must treat it as a wrong state of mind, and as plain, positive unbelief. God says, in plain terms, Christ died for sinners. Now, if I say, That is just what I am, but I cannot believe that He died for me, I contradict the word of God, and as John says, “make Him a liar.” “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” (Rom. 5:6, 1 Pet. 3:18.) What can be plainer, beloved friends? Acknowledge to God, that this is your condition—that you are ungodly, and unjust before Him, and believe, on the authority of these holy scriptures, that Christ, in His great love, once suffered for your sins, and put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. Then will you join the Church in heaven, and the Church on earth in their new eternal song, “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen.” (Rev. 1:5, 6.)

Thirdly. “What think ye of Christ” as the GLORIFIED ONE? Do you think of Him as a perfect man in glory? As “David’s Son,” and at the same time as “David’s Lord,” “God over all, blessed for evermore.” Do you think of Him as the tender and compassionate Jesus? as ready to forgive and bless as when He was down here? We read that, “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” (Heb. 1:3.) He who was once on the cross, is now on the throne for us. But He is the same Jesus still; scenes and circumstances are changed, but He is not changed, He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” (Heb. 13:8.) In the past, the present, and the future, Jesus is the same. What an unspeakable mercy this is, beloved friends! Change who will, or what will, our Jesus changeth not! What confidence this gives the heart. To know Him on the cross, is peace of conscience; to know Him on the throne, is peace of heart.

All who came to Him when He was down here, under a sense of their need, instantly received blessing, according to the grace and love of His own heart. He sent none away without having first met their need. Individuals came to Him, and were blest; others were brought by their friends, and they were blest. None were ever told, either that He could not, or would not bless them. Streams of healing, restoring, refreshing, saving grace, flowed from His heart of love, as from their native fountain. But what is to me, the most touching in all those scenes of blessing, is the mothers bringing their little children to Him, that He might lay His hands on them and bless them. And when

His disciples would have hindered them, "He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,... And he took them up in His arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." (Mark 10:13-16.) Oh! what a touching scene this is. The Lord Jesus, the God of heaven and earth, stooping, in perfect grace, taking little children into His arms and blessing them. Oh! how well fitted is such grace, to strengthen our faith, and to encourage our hearts, with regard to the spiritual blessing of our dear children. He is the same now as He was then, and we must just do what the mothers in Israel did, namely, bring our children to Him in the arms of our faith. Bring them all, every one; His grace is boundless; and let us come in the full assurance of faith, nothing doubting. The children that were brought to Him then were blessed. Let us believe that the children that are brought to Him now shall be blessed. Then, it was seen, because He was on the earth; now, it must be believed, because He is in Heaven. Is there an instance of one coming, or being brought to Him, either in faith or need, that was not blessed? Not one! What we want, is more faith in Him, and more waiting on Him.

And, now, oh! my dear fellow sinners, what are your present thoughts of Jesus, now in heavenly glory? Are not your hearts drawn to Him, as with the cords of love? Rest assured that He sees the very first uplifting of the heart to Him, and though amidst the glory, He will meet you in the richest, fullest blessing, the moment your hearts are really turned to Him.

"A little while," and He who is now the glorified one will be the coming one, and the reigning one. Oh! embrace the heavenly Saviour now! He is saying to every one of you this evening, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." Oh! believe the glad tidings of His love, delay not to flee to the arms of His mercy, flee to Himself as your refuge, and then you will be ready to greet Him at His coming, with a joyous welcome, and enter into the joy of your Lord, and share with Him His throne, and crown, and glory. "Worlds without end. Amen.

The Word of God

THE book of Leviticus may be termed, “the priests’ guide book.” This is very much its character. It is full of principles for the guidance of such as desire to live in the enjoyment of priestly nearness to God. Had Israel gone on with Jehovah, according to the grace in which He had brought them out of the land of Egypt, they should have been to Him “a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.” (Exod. 19:6.) This, however, they failed to do. They put themselves at a distance. They got under law, and failed to keep it. Hence, Jehovah had to take up a certain tribe, and from that tribe a certain family, and from that family a certain man, and to him and to his house, was granted the high privilege of drawing nigh as priests unto God.

Now, the privileges of such a position were immense, but it had its heavy responsibilities, likewise. There would be the ever-recurring demand for the exercise of a discerning mind. “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for He is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.” (Mal. 2:7.) The priest was not only to bear the judgment of the congregation before the Lord, but also to expound the ordinances of the Lord to the congregation. He was to be the ever-ready medium of communication between Jehovah and the assembly. He was not merely to know the mind of God, for himself, but to be able also to interpret that mind to the people. All this would demand, of necessity, constant watching, constant waiting, constant hanging over the page of inspiration, that he might drink in to his very soul, all the precepts, the judgments, the statutes, the laws, the commandments, and the ordinances of the God of Israel, so as to be able to instruct the congregation, in reference to “those things which ought to be done.”

There was no room left for the play of fancy, the working of imagination, the introduction of man’s plausible inferences, or the cunning devices of human expediency. Everything was laid down, with the divine precision and commanding authority of a “thus saith the Lord.” Minute and elaborate as was the detail of sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, nothing was left for man’s brain to originate. He was not even permitted to decide upon the kind of sacrifice to be offered, upon any given occasion nor yet as to the mode in which such sacrifice was to be presented. Jehovah took care of everything. Neither the congregation nor the priest had any authority, whatsoever, to decree, enact, or suggest as much as a single item throughout all the vast array of ordinances in the Mosaic economy. The word of the Lord settled all. Man had only to obey. This, to an obedient heart, was nothing short of an unspeakable mercy. It is quite impossible to over estimate the privilege of being permitted to betake oneself to the oracles of God, and there find the most ample guidance as to all the details of one’s path and service, day by day. All that we need is a broken will, a mortified mind, a single eye. The divine guide book is as full as we can possibly desire. We want no more. To imagine that aught is left for man’s wisdom to supply, must be regarded as a flagrant insult offered to the sacred canon. No one can read the book of Leviticus, and not be struck with the extraordinary painstaking on the part of Israel’s God to furnish His people with the most minute instruction upon every point connected with His service and worship. The most cursory reader of the book might, at least, bear away with him this touching and interesting lesson.

And truly if ever there was a time when this self-same lesson needed to be read out in the ears of the professing church, this is the time. On all hands, the divine sufficiency of holy scripture is called in question. In some cases, this is openly and deliberately done. In others, it is with less frankness hinted, insinuated, implied, and inferred. The Christian mariner is told, directly, or indirectly, that the divine chart is insufficient for all the intricate details of his voyage—that such changes have taken place in the ocean of life since that chart was made, that, in many cases, it is entirely deficient for the purposes of modern navigation. He is told that the currents, tides, coasts, strands, and shores of that ocean are quite different, now, from what they were some centuries ago; and that, as a necessary consequence, he must have recourse to the aids which modern navigation supplies, in order to make up for the deficiencies in the old chart, which is, as a matter of course, admitted to have been perfect at the time it was made.

Now, I earnestly desire that the Christian reader should be able, with clearness and decision, to meet this grievous dishonor done to the precious volume of inspiration, every line of which comes to him fresh from his Father's bosom, through the pen of God the Holy Ghost. I desire that he should meet it, whether it comes before him in the shape of a bold and blasphemous statement, or a learned and plausible inference. Whatever garb it wears, it owes its origin to the enemy of Christ, the enemy of the Bible, the enemy of the soul. If, indeed, the word of God be not sufficient, then where are we, or whither shall we turn? to whom shall we betake ourselves for aid, if our Father's book be in any respect defective? God says that His book can "furnish us thoroughly to all good works." (2 Tim. 3:17.) Man says, No; there are many things about which the Bible is silent, which, nevertheless, we need to know. So who am I to believe? God or man? Our reply to anyone who questions the divine sufficiency of scripture, is just this, "Either you are not 'a man of God!' or else that for which you want a warrant is not 'a good work.'" This is plain. No one can possibly think otherwise, with his eye resting on 2 Tim. 3:17.

Oh, for a deeper sense of the fullness, majesty, and authority of the word of God! We very much need to be braced up, on this point. We want such a deep, bold, vigorous, influential, and abiding sense of the supreme authority of the divine canon, and of its absolute completeness for every age, every clime, every position, every department, personal, social, and ecclesiastical, as shall enable us to withstand every attempt of the enemy to depreciate the value of that inestimable treasure. May our hearts enter more into the spirit of those words of the Psalmist, "Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever." (Psalm 119:160.)

From the M.S. of "Notes on the book of Leviticus." (chap. 11)

A Word to a Troubled Conscience

My dear young Friend, I was not sorry to hear of your distress of soul. It must soon give place to peace and joy. Many, alas! are not distressed enough, who have good reason to be so; but Satan succeeds in keeping their eyes so firmly bandaged, that the light is effectually shut out, and they see not their danger. Have you ever thought of that solemn passage in 2 Cor. 4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Here, you will observe, the gospel is compared unto "light," which is self-evident, yet they see it not, though it is shining around them, because of the blinding of Satan, the god of this world. I am always thankful to hear of persons being concerned about the safety of their souls. I know what the issue will be. It is, generally speaking, the pathway to perfect and eternal repose. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind, that our distress, however great, forms no part of the ground of our acceptance, or in any way recommends us to, or fits us for, the presence of God. The work of Christ is the only ground of acceptance.

Your perplexities, my dear friend, like that of many others, flow from the common mistake of looking to yourself, and being occupied with what is going on there. From what you say, I should judge, that your distress arises from the presence, not the "absence," of God's Holy Spirit I dare say you will be surprised at my saying so, as you think and speak so much about the "teaching" and "enlightening" of the Holy Spirit. It is perfectly true, that He is "the Comforter," and that without His teaching, we should remain in ignorance of divine things; and without his enlightening, we should remain in darkness. Still, I hardly think you rightly understand the true character, and effects, of the presence of the Spirit in the soul. By His light and teaching, you get the knowledge, not merely of good and evil, but the knowledge of the difference between the two. This is conscience before God, namely, the knowledge of the difference between good and evil. Now, when the conscience gets occupied with the evil in place of the good, or, in other words, with self, in place of Christ, it must be in trouble. And the aim of the enemy will always be, to get the eye turned in upon self, in place of up to Christ, the true object of faith.

There is a great difference, between what we may call the testimony of God as to what we are before Him, in Christ, and the testimony of the Spirit as to what we are in ourselves. Both, of course, are perfectly true, and each is important in its own place. But I shall try and explain what I mean: and first, as to the testimony of God.

1. He testifies as to what we are in His presence, through the efficacy of the work of Christ for us. He sees the believer as that work has made him, and not as he thinks of himself, judging from his own feelings. For anyone to say that the believer is not perfect in the sight of God, would be to deny His word, and cast an indignity on the sacrifice of Christ. In virtue of that blessed work, every believer, the least as well as the greatest, is placed in the holy presence of God, without a single spot or stain, and so fitted to be there forever. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (2 Pet. 3:18.) Now, mark the expression, that he

might bring us to God. That means, to the knowledge of God—to the favor, the friendship, the presence, and the enjoyment, of God forever. “The just one” took our place, that we might get His. He having once suffered and died for our sins, we now stand before God as complete and perfect as the work of our divine Substitute can make us. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14.) When this all-important truth is understood, and kept before the soul, its distress and troubles all vanish, and it is filled with the peace and rest of God. To a newly converted soul, this is indeed an immensely important point. I am most anxious to have your attention fully drawn to it; for I know that the testimony of your own experience, to which you are so prone to look, will just be the opposite of God’s.

2. The feelings and experience of the believer himself, through the work of the Holy Spirit in him, are exactly the opposite of peace and rest. “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Gal. 5:17.) The presence of the Spirit in the soul, produces conflict. He discovers sin there, and many things that are unlike Christ, and contrary to the word of God; things, which, of course, we should seek to mortify. But if, before we know that Christ has put them away, these things occupy us, our distress may be very great. And if the conscience is kept lively, its anguish will continue until we see the completeness of our forgiveness, justification, and acceptance, through faith in the precious blood of Jesus. Now, my dear friend, such a discovery of the true character and utter worthlessness of the flesh, ought to make us very humble, but it ought not to fill us with doubt and despair. For, be assured, all the evil which the Spirit reveals, has been put away by the cross of Christ, out of God’s sight forever. And that which He has put away can never be brought up against you. When this blessed truth is seen, instead of being cast down, and questioning your forgiveness and salvation, you will, every day, be learning more and more of the fullness, perfectness, and blessedness of Jesus and His finished work, and your own good-for-nothingness. You will be taught, not to think less of sin, but more of Christ.

But now, what is the Spirit’s testimony to Christ, and to his finished work on our behalf? Does He not testify, by His presence in the believer’s soul, that He who was on the cross, is now on the throne for us, and that He left all our sins behind Him in the grave? Blessed truth! our sins are all put away, and we are one with Christ in glory, through the presence, power, and indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us. “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.” We have eternal life in Him. The great thing is to get the eye off self, to “have no confidence in the flesh,” and to be wholly occupied with a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ at God’s right hand.

We have a striking illustration of the flesh and the spirit, in the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac. The true character of Ishmael was manifested by the presence of Isaac. We hear nothing of the naughtiness of the former, until after the latter was born. But the bond-woman and her son were to be cast out, for the son of the bondwoman could not be heir with the son of the free woman. (Gen. 21 Gal. 4) This was grievous to the heart of Abraham. It was a hard struggle with nature to cast them out. But Isaac was the sole heir of his father Abraham. The mere child of nature can never be heir to a single promise. Christ is the heir of every promise, and we are joint heirs with Him. But, blessed be God, we are, by faith, His children, and His heirs too, in the full credit of Christ Himself. For, “if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:17.) When thus we have learned to be done with the pretensions of nature, and occupied with the rights and titles of Christ, our struggling, labor, and trouble of conscience will be at an end.

Depend upon it, my dear friend, this is the cause of all your distress. We struggle hard, to take, at least, a part of self into heaven with us. But no! God says it must be cast out. The "strait gate" is only wide enough for Christ to pass through, and the "narrow way" is only broad enough for Him to walk in. So we must be content to leave self outside, and enter, simply, in Christ. But oh! many a long, hard, and weary struggle we have, before we are convinced that self can never get through.

Let your mind dwell much on the word of God as to your position, standing, and acceptance in Christ. Surely it is enough, when God Himself testifies as to your cleanness in His sight, through the precious blood of His own beloved Son. You will now see the point I desire to press on your consideration, viz. the testimony of Scripture as to what we are in the presence of God, compared with our own experience.

Take one example more. When Moses speaks of the Children of Israel as they were in his sight, what does he say? "Thou art a stiffnecked people..... from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came into this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord." (Deut. 9:6, 7.) What a testimony! and from God's own witness in the midst of the people. But what does God say about this same people? "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverse-ness in Israel." (Numb. 23:21.) Amazing truth! What a testimony from the Holy One of Israel! But how, you may ask, can both statements be true? Moses states what the people were in their nature and practical ways: God declares what they are in His sight, in virtue of the blood of atonement. Observe, God does not say, there is no iniquity in Jacob, but that "he hath not beheld it." There was plenty there, sure enough, but, typically, they were a redeemed people, and under the shelter of the blood of the lamb. And the Lord had said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." He could not see both the iniquity and the blood that was shed to wash it away. His eye rested on the blood of the Lamb, and not on the iniquity of the people. He looked at them "from the top of the rocks:" Moses, from the plains below. But, nevertheless, when God dealt with them in government, it was another thing. Then He chastened them for their iniquity and perverseness. When Christ had accomplished the work of redemption, according to the glory of God, we hear Him saying, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (John 17) He brings the redeemed ones back, and lays them on the heart of the Father, who now receives them as children, watches over and disciplines them; but it is as a father with the children, He sees no sin on them. The Son has fitted them for the bosom of the "Holy Father," and then He says they are "CLEAN EVERY WHIT."

May your weary soul now know the sweet repose—the perfect, eternal rest, which the bosom of the Father gives. Ever, most faithfully and affectionately, yours in Jesus,

Worldliness: What Is It?

Some time ago, I addressed the following questions to a Christian friend. A part of his answer I shall subjoin, as I think it may prove both agreeable and instructive to some of my readers. My questions were as follows: "To prevent giving needless offense I avoid, on Christian principle, vulgarity of manner and inelegance of speech, bad grammar, &c. But to avoid inelegance, either in word or deed, is almost the same thing as seeking elegance; am I not then on the borders of that which St. Paul, or rather the Spirit in him, condemns in 1 Cor. 2:1, when he disclaims "excellency of speech?" "I had also asked some questions in reference to Leviticus 10 and 1 John 2:15, 16. In connection with the last passage I had asked, " Where would you say worldliness begins?" His answer was as follows:

"As to elegance of speech, if sought, I judge it is an evil. The apostle did not so enter in among those he sought, or taught. I speak according to the habit formed by my education, and God may choose one cultivated in mind to give him access among those who are persons of cultivated understandings. If I found that a particular manner of speech were a stumbling-block. I should avoid it as a matter of charity, but I don't think a Christian would seek elegance of language. Faith would so far stand in the power of man. In Lev. 10 I don't see the world, but that the stimulus of natural joy is not suited to one going into the presence of God in the way of worship-what dissipates and distracts the heart in relation to a saint's service. As regards 1 John 2:16, it is plain. All that is in the world has been raised up, to please the eye or fleshly feeling, and the love of grandeur where Satan reigns, and where Christ was crucified, not to please the Father; the ornaments that please Him are spiritual. A person may have life, but he has not the sense of the comeliness of the Father's house, if he takes pleasure in such things. Carnal, worldly ornament is moral degradation. It shows that the foolish and distempered heart finds its pleasure in things, in which one accustomed to the communion of the Father, and to see with His eye, and to know with His heart, would not find pleasure.

Besides, it is a world which has its power led up against His Son Jesus. Can I desire to be great in appearance there, if His love is in my heart? It is at once judged by the heart that walks in intercourse with that better world where the Father's delight sheds itself around, and where Jesus' every true glory is. Worldliness begins, wherever Christ is not the motive and rule of what I do, in the necessary details of life; because Christ accompanies us there as grace and light, as well as lighting us from above. It is a different thing, the manna and the old corn of the land, but Christ is both. I must be clothed and have a house, but if I deck my person, it is the flesh and folly, not Christ; if I do it at all, the degree may be more or less, the principle judges it. If I furnish, my house, I must have tables and chairs, as a necessity of the ordinary path of life. Christ will be still my rule.

He bends graciously to my necessities. He does not cultivate folly. I shall seek what meets my necessity with thankfulness. If I seek to please the world and meet its eye, worldliness begins. The measure of judgment in this may, of course, be different according to the degree of spiritual progress. The principle is simple. If I love vanity myself, clearly it is not Christ; if I dress, or furnish

to meet the world's eye, it is worldliness. Had I a sick wife, I should get the easiest chair possible. God delights in tenderness, but that is not the world. When the world and its fine looks are out of the heart, it is not very difficult to act.

As regards the poetry of hymns, if it is the moral idea which makes the poetry, I delight in it. If it is imagery, it is out of place, and spoils it as a hymn.

“Sweet was the hour, O Lord, to thee, is genuine poetry. So also “By Sychar’s lonely well,” because it is the moral idea of the relationship of God’s heart with the poor woman, brought out vividly, and even the word “lonely” presents Christ as He really was. It is only presenting vividly the truth of the Spirit. If I seek to clothe it, so that it is not the simple truth, it is out of place, it is wine brought into the sanctuary. And there are hymns, which express even individual sentiments, which, though true, are not suited for the worship of an assembly; because it is not properly Christ set forth, but clothed with my sentiments, which are quite in place sometimes, but do not rise to the height of divine worship. Christ, after all, all that lasts eternally, for beauty or aught else.

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