

# WRITINGS OF H H SNELL

by H.H. Snell

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*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by H.H. Snell, compiled for study and devotional reading.*

8 Chapters

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## S. Fellowship, Not Independency.

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Fellowship, Not Independency. In looking a little into the subject of fellowship, there is no thought of trespassing on the truth of the believer's individual responsibility to the Lord, which is so often brought before us in scripture. On the contrary, there can be no doubt that true fellowship in the Spirit flows out of personal dependence on the Lord, and felt obligation to His claims.

It is interesting to observe that, when the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, a new and distinct character of things was produced. Among others, we read of saints being in "fellowship." This was not known before, because redemption had not been accomplished. At Pentecost believers were baptized into one body." People on earth were thus, by the gift and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, united to a Head in heaven — Head and members forming one body. Before this, they had individually been partakers of life, and were children of God. Christ was not ashamed to call them "brethren." Then, however, they were by the Holy Ghost, united to Christ, and to one another, in a divinely formed unity. All being partakers of resurrection-life in Christ, redeemed by the same blood, formed into "one body" by "one Spirit," there was now a basis and a power by which saints could act together, and continue in a fellowship, such as never could have been known before. Hence we read that believers "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." (Acts 2:42.) It is not by this implied that their individual responsibility to the Lord was lessened, for, when after this Paul addressed the elders at Ephesus, before he admonished them to care for others, he said, "Take heed to yourselves." We find also when writing to Timothy about his ministry, he says, "Take heed to thyself, keep thyself pure." This has always been the way of truth. Service must flow from personal piety. In olden time it was said, "Greater is he which ruleth his spirit, than he which taketh a city."

Christian fellowship is then the result of the gift and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, consequent on the accomplished redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. Its activities are therefore spiritual. Fellowship is free and unfettered in its operation, but gives no license to levity or pride. It is serious, and gives none occasion to the flesh. It is a divinely wrought work.

Friendly intercourse and associations even among Christians may be far short of this. It should be guarded against, especially in the present rage for confederacies of almost every kind. Gatherings of christian people may be but spurious imitations of being gathered to the person of the Son of God. To sympathise with one another because we are in Christ is connected with very different motives and objects from those which come of mere benevolent and philanthropic energies. Neither is the bestowment of gifts in a patronising way fellowship, for it gives credit and importance to the donor; but to minister as from the Lord and to the Lord, as caring for His members in sympathy with them as members of His body, is a different thing, and brings glory to God. The more we are taken up with Christ, as He is revealed to us by His word and Spirit, the clearer will be our discernment of things, and the truer will be the course we pursue. It cannot be otherwise. We do well to remember that it is easy to descend from fellowship in the Spirit to ordinary habits of human intercourse. How cutting was the rebuke of the apostle to the Corinthian saints when he

said, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" May we be kept walking in the Spirit!

Every believer is, by grace, brought into this fellowship, He is introduced into it by calling. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:9.) By fellowship we understand partnership or joint participation. Communion and fellowship are generally the same word in the original. It is really a wonderful character of blessing and privilege, and for present exercise and enjoyment. The apostle John begins his first epistle by the presentation of the person of Christ, "that which was from the beginning." He explains that he did it in order "that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Brought as we are, in Him, to God who is light, and where the blood assures us of perfect cleansing, we walk in the light as He is in the light. By the Spirit we enter, in measure, into the Father's thought and estimate of His beloved Son — His glorious person, offices, and accomplished work — His joy and rest in Him; as well as the Father's love, purposes, and ways toward His children. We enter too, in our measure, into the Son's love to the Father, as well as His perfect love to us. We thankfully consider Him in His obedience unto death, His rejection, His triumphant work and glorification. We delight to think of His loving care, as Head, for every member of His body, and to have fellowship with Him in His varied ministries for their edification. We look off unto Him the glorified Son of man with adoring praise and thanksgiving. Thus, in some feeble degree, we can say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." The apostle does not say, Our fellowship ought to be, but "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." This is fellowship indeed. Walking in the light (not as some say, up to our light, but) as He is in the light, we enjoy it together, "We have fellowship one with another." It is true that fellowship may be interrupted by sin, but then the advocacy of Him who is the righteous One, based upon His work of propitiation, produces in us by the Spirit self-judgment, and the confession of our sins; and, by the application of the word, we know such cleansing as restores our souls again to this blessed fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. We are called then unto this fellowship, sustained in it by divine power, and restored, when we have got away through sin, by the advocacy of Jesus Christ, and the washing of the word. Nothing less than our knowing the Father, and our holy association in love with Him, could suit His gracious heart. He has made us children, and given us the Holy Ghost that we might participate in His thoughts and joys. This is our present happiness, and it is made known to us that our joy may be full. (1 John 1:4.) And could the Holy Ghost give us lower thoughts and feelings than those which are according to the Father and the Son? Impossible. We may be feeble in our apprehensions of them, or the Spirit may be so grieved and hindered by us that we do not enter into them, but this is a different matter. "The communion of the Holy Ghost" we are entitled to know now, as much as "the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God." Wondrous fellowship. (See 2 Corinthians 13:14.)

While the truth of our individual responsibility to the Lord cannot be too firmly held, yet nothing can be more contrary to the Lord's mind than independency. The idea is fatal to the manifestation of the true activities of the church of God. It is opposed to keeping the Spirit's unity, and it ignores the practical action of one body and one Spirit. Independency is the refusal of the communion of saints which is wrought by the Holy Ghost. At the Lord's table fellowship is particularly expressed. (1 Corinthians 10:16-21.) The cross brings before us the ground of fellowship, and this is, doubtless, why it is here, not the body and blood of the Lord, but the blood and body of Christ, and why we

have the cross mentioned before the bread. The blood is the basis of this divine order of fellowship, and known only to those who know the peace-speaking power of that blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins. It sets us before God on the ground of thanksgiving and praise. Hence we read, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" It is fellowship. "We bless." Though our histories may be all different, we were all sinners, we all needed atonement; but now, through the accomplished work of Jesus, all are set on the ground of worship and thanksgiving to God. While thus consciously brought on the ground of peace made, and the title to glory given, we bless God, we thank Him together, we worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus. The weak in faith and the strong, the elder and the younger, find here a common ground of fellowship and praise. "Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" Oh the blessedness of this divinely established fellowship! By the one loaf on the table, the character of our fellowship is set forth. It is the membership of one body. It is unlike anything that has preceded the calling out of the church, or that will follow it, for there are not many bodies, but "one body." True, in eating we "discern the Lord's body," we feed on Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, which we also, members of one body, in breaking and eating the same loaf express as our fellowship, or joint participation, in Him: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because we, being many, are one bread [loaf], one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread [or loaf]." Thus every time we surround the Lord's table, and so remember Him, we express both the ground and the character of a divinely-wrought fellowship upon an accomplished redemption, and through the gift of the Holy Ghost. The principle of independency is the complete denial of this, whether looked at as the act of one person, or of several confederated together, on some other ground than the practical acknowledgment of one body and one Spirit, while holding the Head.

It is well to remember that the precious truth of one body formed and energised by one Spirit is not merely to be expressed on certain occasions, but is that which should mould and fashion all our ways in relation to Christ and His members. We need every member of the body, and each member needs us, for we are bound up together in mutual care and activity for each other's good. We are members one of another. While each is dependent on the Head, and is never right unless right with Him, yet it is through the various members that the Head acts for the edification of the whole body. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." (1 Corinthians 12:14-22.) Nothing then can be more clearly taught than the distinct place of service which is assigned to each member of the body, so that no one member can do the work of another, but all are needed. While each too is entirely dependent on the Head, the body is edified by that which every joint supplies. Nothing then can possibly be more at variance with the truth of God than the principle of independency. Nothing can more effectually deny the true way of edification in love. It dishonours Christ, grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit, and turns the soul, from the authority of the word and dependence on the Lord, to some form or other of

denominationalism. The importance of saints being practically established in this divine order of fellowship so weighed on the heart of the apostle Paul, that when he knew that saints were defective concerning it, it caused him great anxiety. This was the condition of the Colossian believers. He had learned from Epaphras of their conversion and of their love in the Spirit, and he rejoiced at their steadfastness in the faith, and their orderly walk; but they were not practically established in the truth of holding the Head, and thus were more engaged as individuals, than knit together in the endeavour to keep the Spirit's unity. Paul was deeply exercised about this. He was in an agony. When he writes (for he had never seen them) he says, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God." (Colossians 2:1-2.) This he knew was God's will. It is that which the Spirit has formed. We are not called on therefore to make a unity, but to "keep" what God has wrought. We are to endeavour to keep the Spirit's unity in the bond of peace, one body and one Spirit, and with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2-4.) Nothing less than this could satisfy the heart of the apostle, because he was assured it was the character of things which God by His Spirit was now working. No individual state can compensate for lack of this. Hence, while the apostle could thank God for the faith and love of these Colossian saints, and could be with them in spirit, joying and beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, yet He had no rest concerning them, but was in great conflict and prayer, that their hearts might be so established in the mystery of God; that they might know the comfort of fellowship in being knit together in love, and the practical acknowledgment of it. (Colossians 2:1-2.) This, and the other scriptures we have referred to, show how contrary to the Lord's mind is practical independency in a member of the body of Christ, and how impossible it is to enter upon the present character of blessing which God gives, when there is not the endeavour to keep the Spirit's unity. Nor can the ruin of the church, looked at in its place of responsibility on earth, its almost endless divisions, and increasing confusion, be rightly pleaded as a reason for acting on the principle of isolation, and individual loneliness, much less for the formation of human confederacies and associations not according to the Lord's mind. For God has given us the Holy Ghost, and revealed in His word, that He has formed a unity of all believers in Christ. "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body." This unity we are enjoined to keep. This unity is as true as ever for all the members of the body of Christ, before the eye of God; though, as to its manifestation before men, where is it to be seen? Alas! how very opposite it is to this divine character. Still, the principles of God for our guidance during the interval of our Lord's absence have not been changed because of man's failure. The injunction that we should, with all lowliness, be "endeavouring to keep the Spirit's unity in the bond of peace" has never been abrogated. The faithful are to act on it as much as ever. It is simply a question of carrying out the will of God. If one true Christian can only find another to act with him on the ground of "one body and one Spirit," these two persons would be so far carrying out the will of God, even if there were no other persons in the world so doing. It is not setting up the church again, nor reconstructing what has been practically broken in pieces; but, while owning humbly its departure and ruin, such take the place of acknowledged weakness, and cast themselves on the mercy and faithfulness of the Lord. They are obedient to His word who is holy and true, and, however few they may be, they stand for the true character of the church of God — "one body and one Spirit." Such know that God is faithful, His word as true as ever, His Spirit abiding, and that the

Lord Jesus is still in the midst of two or three, when gathered together to His name. They know Him as Head of the body, the Sender of the Holy Ghost, the Son over His own house, and soon coming to take us unto Himself. Of course if others are found acting on these truths in other places, all such companies of saints become practically one; they rightly own that the only ecclesiastical association which God has set up on earth is "one body" united to Christ the Head in heaven, formed and energised by "one Spirit." This is true all over the earth. God looks down from heaven and beholds this "one body," formed by "one Spirit," however man may have defaced its manifestation by endless divisions, and untrue associations. This only is the divinely-ordered character of fellowship, consequent on an accomplished redemption, and the gift and indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Gifts indeed have been bestowed by Christ the Head in glory, and for what purpose? We are told they are for the edification of the body, and that the body is edified by that which every joint supplies. Sign-gifts were necessary at first, such as miracles and tongues, as witness of the power of God to them that believe not. But these soon passed away. Apostles and prophets, the spiritual founders of the assembly, also passed away. They were the foundation stones of the building, and we may still be edified by their writings. But are there not evangelists, teachers and pastors? Can anything be more distinctly seen on earth now than servants of the Lord Jesus, having spiritual ability for evangelizing, teaching the children of God, and shepherding the flock? (See Ephesians 4:11-13.)

It must not, however, be supposed that fellowship is limited to the privileges and blessings we enjoy when assembled together, for it extends itself into the various details of the state and circumstances of every member of the body. Thus, "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26.) We are all exhorted to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, as also "to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep," to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" and that those "taught in the word should communicate to the teacher in all good things." (See 1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2; Galatians 6:6.)

Moreover, we are instructed that "To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:8). Hence, it becomes more helpful to seek under certain circumstances the counsel and fellowship of such. Some members of the body being specially gifted with wisdom and knowledge, we not only honour the Lord in seeking their counsel when necessary, but in this small degree we carry out, in a practical sense, the precious truths of "one body," and "one Spirit," because such gifts are given for the profit of the whole body. Perhaps no one point is more apparent among saints than that their failures are often traceable to their independent action, when they might, in the fellowship of the Spirit, have happily availed themselves of the counsel of discreet and honoured members of the body. We know how habitually Paul seems to have cultivated the fellowship of his brethren, and invited the help of saints by their prayers. It may be that many in our day, who see clearly the practical ground of assembly action, have never thought seriously of their obligations to Christ in these details. Some may need awakening on this point, and to have their consciences exercised as to whether we do not often fall into the selfishness of independency, instead of practically owning the use which the Lord would have us make of the different members of the body?

It is impossible that any member of the body can walk healthfully alone. When any choose to do so, it is because there is something wrong in the state of their souls; for we are members one of another, and can no more do without each other's service, than one member of the human body can dispense with the assistance of the others. Those who have cultivated this fellowship have proved its blessedness. Nothing, surely, can more completely deny the ground of the church of God, than the habit of going on in the various details of life, outside the public gathering together of the saints, independently of the other members of the body. Such a state of things is to be deplored, not only as dishonouring to the Lord, but as damaging to souls. It is, however, to be feared, that many, who have sat at the Lord's table for a course of years, have known but little, or nothing, of this practical fellowship in the Spirit. Such things ought not to be. When saints of old were in primitive freshness and fervour, when "great grace was upon them all," we know how lovingly the fellowship extended itself, even to the things of this life. We read, They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common . . . neither was there any among them that lacked . . . and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:31-37.) In making this quotation, and applying its instruction to ourselves, we have no thought of reconstructing the church on earth, or of imagining that Pentecostal days will ever be acted over again, but rather that we might learn from the divine record what we are to understand by fellowship, and what characterised it as practised in the apostle's days, before the assembly lost its manifested oneness; when faith and love were in freshness and activity, and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven was not grieved and quenched as He is now. Our place certainly is to confess the ruin of the church as a corporate witness on earth by our sin, to cleave to the Lord, to call upon His name, thankfully owning all that we can discern to be of Himself, and refusing all human imitations. We rejoice that we still have the Lord in the midst of two or three gathered together to His name. Besides, through abundant mercy, we have the presence of the Holy Ghost, the unalterable word of the Lord, and have to do with the only wise God, who is faithful and cannot deny Himself. As a people we have only "a little strength," and taking the place of confessed weakness, we are bound as much as ever, in faithfulness to our loving Lord, to "depart from iniquity," to be obedient to His word, and with all lowliness "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (2 Timothy 2:19-22.) And have not many proved it to be the place of God's presence and blessing? When souls have really to do with the Lord, everything goes on well; without it, nothing is right. The question at this time is not so much one of usefulness as of faithfulness, not as to the extent of activity, but of reality; not quantity of service, but quality. May we seek only to please God! Where there is the knowledge of divine truth, a single eye, and a subject will, there will be acting for His glory. H. H. Snell.

## S. In Christ, and the Flesh in Us.

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In Christ, and the Flesh in Us.

"I know a man in Christ." 2 Corinthians 12:2.

Such is the Christian. Through infinite grace he is no longer before God in his sins and in the flesh, but in Christ Jesus. He was "without Christ," he is "in Christ," he will be "like Christ." A Christian, then, is not one who hopes to be, but one who is, in Christ. A man may be much reformed, and not in Christ. He may be earnestly taken up with religiousness, yet not in Christ. He may even be convicted, yet not converted. Those who stop short of Christ are still in their sins. To be in Christ is to be the workmanship of God — a new creation. Such have died with Christ, and are alive to God in Christ. It is an entirely new condition and standing. All is of God. The old things have passed away; all things have become new. Whatever, therefore, a man may think of himself, whatever changes may have been wrought in his outward deportment, or however esteemed he may be by others, he has no authority for calling himself a Christian, if he is not "in Christ." Nor is it correct to say that those who are in Christ were always in Christ, as some have asserted, because they confound purpose and redemption. We are told that "we were all by nature children of wrath, even as others." The apostle seems gladly to acknowledge that he knew some who had been brought into this marvellous character of blessing prior to himself. He says, "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen . . . who also were in Christ before me." (Romans 16:7.) As to the purpose of God, we know that all those who compose the church of God were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is also clear that redemption, though accomplished more than eighteen hundred years ago, is only the present blessing of those who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, and believed in the Son of God. Before that we were afar off; "but now, in Christ Jesus, we, who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Of such, too, it is truly written, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 1:11; Ephesians 1:13.) No one, then, can be spoken of in a scriptural sense as in Christ Jesus, before he has received Him who "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" as his Saviour. Before he was made alive (quickened) he was dead in trespasses and in sins — in the flesh; but, through a divinely-wrought faith in the Son of God, he has received eternal life, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He is associated with Christ in life, and by the Holy Ghost he is one with Him. This, too, he is entitled to know and to rejoice in, as Jesus said, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John 14:20.) In the apostles' days persons were accredited as being "in Christ," and they were spoken of, and written to, as such. For instance, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is addressed "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus;" and the letter to the Philippians, "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi," thus showing that saints in those days were ordinarily recognised as "in Christ Jesus." The truth is that the epistles describe men as either "in the flesh," or as "in Christ Jesus." The natural man, however cultivated or refined, however outwardly religious and benevolent, is nevertheless "in the flesh," as to his state before God. He is in the first Adam, and dead in sins. He needs spiritual life. This is why the gospel

presents no thought as to mending or improving men in the flesh; on the contrary, it speaks of redemption, that is, taking out of a state of guilt and condemnation, and bringing into a position of blessing and nearness to God. For, however polished and amiable people appear, we are assured that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" — the will is in opposition to God. Thus man naturally, however refined and generous, is only "a corrupt tree, which cannot bring forth good fruit." Neither law nor terrors, commandments nor judgments, make him fit for God. His whole history shows the opposition of his will to God's will, and exhibits the truth of the divine sentence, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:8.) A verdict sweeping indeed but most just, and unmistakably plain and conclusive. Such is man! He "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 Corinthians 2:14.)

Under these circumstances, as before observed, God has not proposed to mend the corrupt nature, but, in His infinite grace, has brought in redemption, in Christ, and through His blood. In this way we have deliverance from guilt, condemnation, and the dominion of sin, and are before God on an entirely new standing in life and righteousness. The sense of guilt has been cleared, in divine grace, by the death and blood-shedding of Jesus once for all; who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, suffered for sins, and died for our sins under the judgment of God. Thus all our need, as to sins and guilt, has been fully met in righteousness, and all who believe are justified by His blood, justified from all things. Instead, then, of guilt we have a purged conscience, for we know that all is now clear between us and God. Our sins and iniquities He will remember no more. Instead of imputing sins, He accounts us righteous, so that we have "no more conscience of sins," are no longer guilty, but justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It is God who justifies. We are also delivered from condemnation, because, when law was unable to produce good in us, on account of the unclean and corrupt qualities of our nature, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin, condemned our old evil nature — "sin in the flesh." Thus our old man, with its sinful passions and lusts, has been crucified with Christ; we have died with Him, who, in such wondrous grace, was made sin for us; who became our Substitute, and bore that condemnation which was due to us. The whole condemning power of God on account of sin having been poured upon Jesus, there is no condemnation left for us. Hence we are assured, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But sin is the master of man naturally — it has dominion over him. Sin reigns unto death. He is the slave of sin, and cannot free himself. But God, in His grace, has set the believer free. He has died unto Christ, his Substitute. Neither sin nor law can have anything to say to a dead man. He that is dead is set free, or justified, from sin. You cannot charge a dead man with lust. Being then set free from sin, and become an object of divine favour, it is said of such, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." We are delivered, and brought to God. We are become servants to God. What an unutterable difference between being a slave of sin and a servant to God! We are alive to God in Christ, that "henceforth we should live, not to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again." His death has brought us deliverance as well as peace. By it we have been for ever freed from guilt, condemnation, and the dominion of sin. Blessed indeed it is to grasp these precious realities!

We must not, however, forget that God has not only wrought, in His exceeding grace, to save us from wrath, but has acted agreeably to His own goodness and nature. Nothing less could suit Him

than that we should be before Him in love, in conscious nearness and relationship in eternal glory. He is therefore bringing many sons to glory. Jesus once suffered for sins that He might bring us to God. Redemption is God's way of bringing us to Himself; the wisdom, work, and results are all for His glory, as well as for our eternal blessing. It was necessary, therefore, that the whole question of sin should be settled in righteousness, for the glory of God, as well as to meet our need. Atonement was for God; it fully answered the just demands of His throne. In this way God has been glorified, and we have been cleansed, delivered, and brought to God as purged worshippers.

God has also given us life — a risen and eternal life. It is His own gracious gift. Blessed be God! We read, "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is life in Him who is risen from among the dead, and given to us as a present possession, to be known in activity and power in our souls. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11-12.) Christ, then, is our life, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death." Christ lives in us, and we are in Him. We are, then, associated with Christ in life — a risen and eternal life. Hence we are addressed as "risen with Christ," and consequently exhorted to "set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right' hand of God. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The believer has passed out of death and into life. This transition scripture fully recognises. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. We have also received the gift of the Holy Ghost. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The believer, therefore, is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit — he is in Christ; he has died out of his old Adam standing in the death of Jesus, and has been quickened, raised up, and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He has been brought out, and brought in. Hence scripture speaks of us as "accepted in the Beloved," "complete in him," "preserved in Christ Jesus," and "sanctified in Christ Jesus." We are a new creation in Him who is Head of all principality and power, are always before God in Christ, in all His acceptability and nearness, and loved by the Father as He loves the Son. This is where redemption has brought us, where divine perfect love has set us, so that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. We have died unto sin, died with Christ, and are alive unto God in Him. Having received remission of sins, we are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, joined to the Lord — one spirit. This is a man in Christ. "We were in the flesh," but having died with Christ, and risen with Him, we have eternal life in Him, and are united to Him by the Spirit.

1878 104 Oh, the marvellous depths and heights of divine grace! Its depths in embracing us when in our sins and guilt, exposed to the wrath of God, and its heights in bringing us to God in Christ for everlasting blessing. And so truly does scripture teach the reality of this translation from being in Adam to our present standing in Christ, that we are now spoken of as "not in the flesh," "not of the world," "not under law," but "in the Spirit," and "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The important question for us is, How far have we received these truths into our hearts? How far have we mixed faith with the truth of God concerning what He has wrought in Christ? The practical point is, Do we habitually take our place when consciously dealing with God as in Christ? Those who have not received this truth may be trying to work themselves into nearness to God and be always disappointed, instead of taking in simple faith the nearness and acceptance in Christ which His own grace has given us. Those who are working and redoubling

their efforts to get near, only prove that they have not yet entered upon the place in Christ in which divine grace has set them. Those who by faith take possession of it do rejoice therein, and rest in God's presence. Such are never so happy as when inside the veil, where the Lord Jesus is. They worship God, and in measure enter into the wondrous truth of fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. But though the believer is not in the flesh, he sorrowfully finds that the flesh is in him. He learns through humbling experiences to say, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He does not say, "In me dwells no good," because he has a new life, and the Holy Ghost in him; but he says, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing;" for, though delivered from the Adam standing, he still has the Adam nature — the flesh, with its passions and lusts — that evil principle which is ready to serve the law of sin. He has, in fact, two natures: the old nature, "that which is born of the flesh, which is flesh;" and the new life, or new nature, "that which is born of the Spirit, which is spirit." The new nature which is born of the Spirit is strengthened by the Holy Ghost which indwells us; so that, while the flesh lusts against the Spirit, the Spirit is against the flesh in such antagonistic power, that we cannot do the things which we otherwise would. The delivered soul knows that he is the subject of the actings of these two opposing natures, and his conclusion is, "so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." (Romans 7:25.) The great trouble of every believer is not so much what he has done as what he is. It is the painful consciousness of having this evil nature — pride, self-will, and lust cropping up within, even if it does not come out. And the more his desire to live for the glory of God, the greater his sorrow at the garment being spotted by the flesh. This is his greatest enemy, his constant opponent, that upon which Satan and the world can act, and which neither time nor circumstances can improve, so desperately wicked is it, and deceitful above all things. The more we are occupied with it, the weaker we are toward it, because it becomes an object in the stead of Christ. The secret of power over it is to know that it has been crucified with Christ because of its incurable badness — to reckon it dead — to disallow its cravings, and to find all our springs of comfort and strength in Christ glorified — to "reckon ourselves to have died indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:6-11.) In the heavenly glory we shall not need so to "reckon," for we shall be completely and for ever delivered from it. But to so reckon now is because "the flesh" is still in us. Yet it is equally our privilege to say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I [that is, not the old nature], but Christ [my new life] liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh [that is, in this mortal body], I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) This is christian life. To be occupied with what the flesh is in its various activities and deceitful workings, is not to be reckoning it dead; to be regarding it as an antagonistic force to be overcome, is to reckon it living; but to be holding it dead in the death of Christ, as judicially put to death in Christ our substitute, and to find all our resources in Christ risen and glorified, is to reckon ourselves to have died indeed unto sin, and to be alive unto God in our Lord Jesus Christ. In this way we have power over ourselves, and can daily bring forth fruit unto God. The way of faith is always to look at things from God's standpoint, to take sides with Him who regards our old man as having been judicially set aside for ever in the death of Christ, and who always sees us complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

It is quite true that we are the objects of the continual care and discipline of the Father of spirits. If we walk after the flesh, instead of after the Spirit, this may call for His loving rebuke and chastening; but that in no way interferes with the precious truth of our continual acceptance and

standing in Christ, by whose one offering we have been perfected for ever. The fact is that, through grace, we "are not in the flesh, but in Christ," yet the flesh is in us; but our part is to reckon it as having been, before God and to faith, judicially put to death in Christ crucified, 'and thus to be so constantly occupied with the triumphant Son of God, as to find all our resources, all our strength, all our springs, in Him. Nor does age, experience, or change of circumstances improve the flesh. It is wholly unimproveable, though its desires and habits, in youth and old age, in affluence or poverty, may show themselves differently. Its principles of lust and wilfulness remain the same. Paul had been in the third heaven, and heard unutterable things, which it is not possible for mortal man to speak. Was the flesh improved in him by such a wondrous change and experience? We are told that he needed "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him," lest he should be exalted because of the exceeding greatness of the revelations. Now surely, when in the glory, we shall not need such a thorn, neither did he when in the third heaven, but afterwards; when among men, there was such tendency to the pride and lust of the flesh being stirred up, that a messenger of Satan was needed to act upon him, as a preventive, of fleshly conduct. So deeply distressing and humiliating was this "thorn," that he three times besought the Lord to take it away; but this could not be done, that the servant might not be exalted above measure. Instead of removing it, the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." His path, therefore, for the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage was to go forward, having no confidence in the flesh, but boasting in his weakness, that the power of Christ might rest upon him; for, said he, when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10.)

How vastly different was the experience of this honoured servant of the Lord when in the third heaven, and when buffeted by Satan on earth! But was he not equally secure in Christ, when filled with anguish or irritation through the "thorn in the flesh," as when hearing the unutterable communications of paradise? Surely his standing before God in Christ was in no way altered by this remarkable change of circumstances and experience. And it is very important to observe this. For have not most believers their bright times and their dark times? Did not Israel taste the bitterness of Marah, and then realise the delightful change of Elim's palm-trees and wells of water? And do not most of God's children know what it is, on some occasions, to be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and at other times to be in heaviness and distress, having the heart lacerated with the sorrows of the way? But are we not as secure and blessed in Christ, when in the trying path of humiliation and anguish, as when we are so happy in the Lord, so near, that it is only the thinnest film which appears to intercept our vision of Himself, and His own glory seems to shine down upon us? Surely it is always true that "ye are complete in him, who is the Head of all principality and power," and that no change of circumstance or experience, whether dark or bright, can in any degree shake our security and standing "in Him;" though it is quite true we may lose the enjoyment of this, if we are taken up with experience, or anything else, in the place of Christ. How wise, then, it is for the believer to abide in the Lord Jesus, to be occupied with Him; for then we have always blessing. "We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18.) So clearly does scripture recognise "the flesh," with all its evil capabilities, even in those who are born of God, that they are enjoined to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, and as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter 1:23; 1 Peter 2:1-2.) Here we find persons who are horn again instructed

how they can grow in grace, etc., and charged not to let these dreadful workings of the old man come out. Again, because we are "risen with Christ," and hope to reign "with him in glory," we are exhorted thus — "Mortify" (or put to death) "therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" — the vile workings of the flesh, the things which the ungodly practise, and which bring down the judgment of God upon them. "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." Observe, scripture nowhere says that we are to crucify the flesh, because our old man has been crucified with Christ, and thus we are said to "have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;" but as risen with Christ, and having a new life in Him (though still having the flesh in us), we are so to reckon ourselves dead as not to suffer these things to live in us, because we have died with Christ. Again, therefore, we are enjoined to "put off anger, wrath, malice, filthy communication out of your mouth, and lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new." (Colossians 3:1-25 : 1-12.)

Now it is clearly impossible that such injunctions should have been given to those who are born of God and risen with Christ, unless they still have "the flesh," in which is nothing good. Let us turn to another scripture on this point. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13.) This is spoken to those who are said to be "in Christ." Observe, it is not the body which is to be flagellated, or put to death, but the deeds of the body — those things which the body is capable of doing, which are in opposition to God's mind. Again, notice that the power for this is the Spirit of God; not flesh against flesh, but a new and almighty power given to us, by which we may practically keep in the place of death the workings of "the flesh." Nothing, then, can be more clearly taught in scripture than that the believer is "in Christ," who is his life, and one with Christ by the Holy Ghost; and, at the same time, that "the flesh" is in every believer. He is therefore a compound of two natures; with one, "the mind," he serves God's law; and with the other, "the flesh," sin's law. The indwelling Spirit strengthens the new nature, and keeps us occupied with Christ, our righteousness and strength, so that we may reckon ourselves to have died unto sin, and thus practically hold as dead the buddings forth of "the flesh." May the Lord graciously help us more and more in this!

It is important, however, to remember that the knowledge of having "the flesh" in us is of itself no hindrance to "our fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" but allowing it to come out practically does hinder it. We have not a bad conscience from its existence in us, because we know that the flesh, or the old man, has been judicially dealt with in the death of Christ. Neither need the believer sin. He is enjoined to sin not, and he has no excuse for sinning. "These things write I unto you that ye sin not." It is, moreover, not correct for a believer to say sin is not in him, for "if we say we have no sin" — not sins, but sin, the corrupt nature, or old man — "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." If, however, the believer does sin, or commit sins, the fruit of the Adam nature, he finds his conscience troubled, and his communion with the Father and the Son interrupted. It is a question of communion, not of salvation. Provision has graciously been made for it. Christ is our Advocate with the Father concerning it. Self-examination, self-judgment, repentance, and confession are wrought in our souls by the Spirit, and by the application of the word — "the washing of water by the word" — we become restored. The advocacy of Christ is based upon propitiation for our sins having been made, and He who takes up our cause is the perfectly righteous One. Hence it is written, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:1-2.) On confessing, we are cleansed perfectly, forgiven in righteousness, on the ground of the sacrifice once offered; so that we are told, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-10.) It is not the believer taking the place of a miserable sinner; but a believer taking the place before God of an offending naughty child, counting on the faithfulness and justice of God to forgive his sins because of the sacrifice of Christ, and to cleanse him, and thus to restore him to happy communion. This is the divine way of restoring an erring child of God. He may be the weakest and most faulty of God's children; still he is a child to whom the Lord does not impute sin, and never can be, strictly speaking, a miserable sinner, even when feeling the dreadful character of his sin, before God in confession.

Happy indeed are those who are occupied with the personal glory and excellencies, finished work, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to have always the comfort of their Father's love, and the joy of their security and completeness in Christ, and to be waiting for His coming! H. H. Snell.

## S. Jesus the Shepherd.

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Jesus the Shepherd.

John 10:1-30.

Jesus was the light of the world, but men knew Him not. They perceived not the light, for they were born spiritually blind. By nature they were incapable of discerning Him, whose glory was "as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Even the Jews, with all their privileges, did not receive Him. Still He was the light, the true light, and there was no other. What men needed was to have their eyes opened. This Jesus was able to do, even for those born blind, as the miracle in the previous chapter sets forth. The Pharisees, being offended at such grace and power, only showed by it how blind they were; but the one who could now see Him who was the light of the world boldly and perseveringly testified of Christ to them. He was blessedly conscious that his eyes had been opened, and he soon perceived in Jesus the glory of the Son of God. His parents were called as witnesses, who, as far as facts were concerned, simply confirmed his testimony; and every inquiry from the man himself only brought out firm and truthful witness of the power and grace of Christ. All this so drew forth the enmity of their hearts, that they cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus, however, soon found the one who had been cast out for His sake, and brought him into personal acquaintance and intercourse with Himself. The Shepherd knew the sheep, and this loved one knew the Shepherd's voice and would not follow a stranger; they were together now, outside the powerless forms of human religiousness and tradition. The faithful one in Israel was thus outside the camp but with Christ, and there he learned, to his heart's joy, precious instruction as to the person of Christ, and knew that He who had opened his eyes was the Sent One of God. The Lord of glory had, in the Pharisees' judgment, encroached on the sacred rites of their religion by opening the eyes of the blind on the sabbath-day. They would rather the man had remained blind than such a miracle had been wrought on that day; for take away the observance of days from religious formalists, what have they left? Besides, this act of Christ on the sabbath-day, to their minds, made little of them and of what they taught. So blind were they, that, though boasting of themselves as being Moses' disciples, they could not discern the glory of Him of whom Moses wrote; and such enmity to the Lord did they manifest, with all their religiousness, that one of their rules was that, "if any one confessed him to be the Christ, he should be excommunicated from the synagogue." (Chap. 9: 22.) Thus their religion excluded Christ (alas! how solemn) and consequently all who took sides with Christ. On this account they cast him out, where the Lord met with him, revealed Himself to him, and drew forth his heart in worship outside the Jewish fold. The Jews were thus left in darkness, and what darkness, which had excluded the light of the world! How very solemn this is! And yet we cannot fail to trace the analogy between the last days of Israel's history and the last phase of the church on earth, which is content to go on with self-gratulations at its own imaginary religious progress; while it has virtually put Christ outside, but where He presents Himself as waiting to give His companionship and blessing to any individual who will open the door to Him. (Revelation 3:17-20.) The Jews had not heeded the Shepherd's voice. They saw no beauty in Him But Jesus is at home with the cast-out one, who delights in his

new-found Saviour and Friend; and the one who had been unwavering and truthful in his witness to the Pharisees now cleaves to the Son of God in the spirit of an earnest worshipper.

All this brought from the lips of Jesus the conscience-searching words which follow, as well as His own blessed testimony to the characteristics of the good Shepherd, looked at both in contrast with false professors, as well as what He is intrinsically in Himself. Deeply moved as the Lord must have been by the circumstances of this scene, He could not forbear saying, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." (Chap. 9: 39.) True, the Lord had not come to judge the world, but to save; but being "the light of the world," it could not but make manifest the moral qualities of those around Him. Thus the one who was born blind receives sight — the one who saw not sees; and that those who thought they saw (like Nicodemus, for instance, when he came to Jesus by night) might be convicted of their own natural and religious blindness — thus those who saw would be made blind. No doubt the Lord alluded to the Pharisees in this latter class; and it seemed to arouse them, for when they heard these words, "they said unto him, Are we blind also?" To which He replied, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin;" that is, if they took their true position before God as utterly helpless and needy, He would make the sin-forgiving Saviour blessedly known to their souls; but taking the ground of their own competency to judge and teach divine things, it was the most positive proof of their being still in their sins — "but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." (Chap. 9: 41.) The fact is the light of the world was there, and they preferred their own darkness rather than have the light of life. But the Lord does not stop there. He goes on to expose the hollow pretensions of the professed shepherds of Israel. Self-appointed, and having obtained their official position by their own efforts of climbing up some other way, they morally were only thieves and robbers. The voice of such was therefore strange to the sheep, as we have just seen in the one who had proved the Saviour's love. These were some of the features of those who professed to be shepherds of Israel. The true Shepherd, of whom Moses and the prophets had spoken — the One whom God had sent — we may observe in the first place, entered into the sheepfold by the door. He brought all the credentials of the Shepherd and Stone of Israel. (Genesis 49:24.) The woman's Seed, the Seed of Abraham and of David born in Bethlehem, the virgin's Son, the Child born, and Son given, meek and lowly and yet called Immanuel, He was joyfully received by Jehovah's faithful remnant, such as Simeon and Anna, who were waiting for redemption in Israel. Bringing also afterwards, as He did, the qualities of the true Messiah, according to the testimony of prophets, He was manifested as Jehovah's Shepherd, the true Shepherd of the sheep, to whom the porter opened, and He entered in by the door. (Chap. 10: 1, 2.)

Secondly, He called His own sheep by name, whether His true apostles or teachers, men, women or children, they were called individually by Him. Those therefore who were of faith, true to God and cast out by false shepherds, became objects of His care and companionship. His way with the man to whom He had given sight in the previous chapter is a sample of this. He addressed him personally, saying, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

Thirdly, He led them out, as we learn from the end of verse 3. He did not bless them, or save them, and lead them back to the Jewish fold; on the contrary, He led them, and blessed them, outside of its national religiousness, which shows that the Jewish nation was in an incurably bad state, not only corrupt and leprous but so dark as to be unable to discover "the light of the world," when He so brightly shone upon them, It was therefore not a question of mending the old garment, or of

healing a corrupt nation, notwithstanding its rigid attention to outward observances, for it was so full of rottenness and death, as to compel the Good Shepherd to lead His own outside in companionship with Himself, the rejected One. An important principle to notice, that, when God's people corporately depart from Himself as the source of all their blessing, and from His word as their sole authority, the place of a faithful one is to be outside with Christ. This was His way of leading, and it is still His will that we should "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Hebrews 13:13.)

Fourthly, He goes before His sheep. He does not drive them before Him, but He draws them after Him by going before them. Christ was, and still is, despised and rejected of men, and the path of the sheep is to be with Him. If He were cast out of the synagogue, those who confessed Him were cast out also; but the sheep — the faithful in Israel — knew His voice, followed Him, and refused the voice of strangers.

All this the Pharisees heard, but could not understand. If John 6:7 : showed the formal and dead state of the nation in professing to celebrate the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, while rejecting the true bread from heaven, and the living Fountain of all joy and blessing, chapter 9: shows at least the blind and degraded condition of the professed shepherds and guides of the people. But the Lord proceeds, fifthly, and now speaks of Himself as the door of the sheep, that is, that He alone is the way of admission into God's favour and blessing. Many teachers and guides had been in Israel before Him, and, however popular and esteemed among the people they might have been, the solemn fact is, that "the sheep did not hear them." (Vers. 7, 8.) But now He is the door, and open wide, so that any one may enter in and be saved — thus enter into God's presence by faith in Him, and know intercourse with Him, and come out into His service and find blessing and refreshment — "go in and out, and find pasture." (Ver. 9.) Thus Jesus not only entered by the door, but is the door of the sheep, the door for any man to enter in and be saved. The way is thus cleared for now entering more fully on the characteristics of the Good Shepherd; and this the Lord sets before us by contrasting Him with the thief and the hireling, as also by plainly declaring His own moral excellences and ways. As to the thief, he came to steal, to kill, and to destroy. His object was to benefit himself, and that by covetous and dishonest means, and by inflicting suffering and loss on the sheep; whereas the Good Shepherd came to save, to give life, and that more abundantly: all through the priceless cost of laying down His own life for the sheep. The hireling also serves for wages, but has no real love for the sheep, no concern for their welfare, and only thinks of his own gain, so that in time of danger, when he sees the wolf coming, having no claims higher than self-interest, he runs away, leaving the sheep in the enemy's cruel hands; and though he cannot devour the lambs and sheep of Christ, yet he can and will scatter them. On the contrary, Jehovah's Shepherd knows His sheep, loves them, died for them, to redeem them to God, rescue them for ever from death and Satan, and have them with Himself in everlasting glory and blessing. The Good Shepherd then knows His sheep, and they know Him; He calls them, and they hear His voice. He goes before, and leads them, and they follow Him. He is the door by which they entered in and are saved. He delivered them from the wrath to come by His death on the cross. He gives them eternal life — risen life now in Himself. He keeps them so secure, that they can never perish, nor be plucked out of His hand or His Father's hand. Wondrous grace! How widely all these ways of divine love stand in contrast with the thoughts of men! No marvel that the Saviour should have said, "All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers." The Lord, as

we have seen, met with a solitary "sheep" here and there, and He led such out from the Jewish "sheepfold;" but He said He had other sheep not of that fold (evidently referring to those to be called out from among the Gentiles), which He intended to bring by hearing His voice, and then there would be one flock (not "fold," it is a different word in the original), and one Shepherd. (Ver. 16.) This no doubt the Lord is doing now by His gospel, so that before Him His sheep are not now looked at as in folds here and there, but as "one flock," all under the guardian care and blessing of "one shepherd." All Jewish believers, and all Gentile believers, at this time are brought into the same character of association and blessing, born of, taught by, and indwelt by the same Spirit, forming one flock — God's assembly. Hence Paul, in addressing the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, says, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God. For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:28-29.) Peter also, exhorting elders, says, "Shepherd [or feed] the flock of God which is among you . . . being ensamples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2.)

Having thus glanced at some of the moral glories of Jesus the Shepherd, we may now look a little at what scripture teaches us of the official glories of this Good and Great and Chief Shepherd of the sheep. As we have noticed, it was "the good Shepherd's" part to lay down His life for the sheep. Nothing less could express His love, nothing less supply our need, nothing less meet the claims of divine righteousness; and so infinitely acceptable was this wondrous act to the Father that He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." (Ver. 17.) What goodness and mercy, while we were sinners, helpless and lost, that Christ died for us and brought eternal glory to God Wondrous glory, which will shed its unfading lustre on the new heavens and new earth throughout all eternity!

He is also spoken of as "the great Shepherd of the sheep," in being raised from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant; in which not only the value of his one offering in perfecting for ever them that are sanctified was publicly declared, but He triumphed over death and Satan. And in Him who is raised from the dead God has given us life — risen life — life more abundantly than could have been given to man before. But in the One who has ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, His glorious office of Shepherd is still active on our behalf. Now He is known as the "Chief Shepherd," because He has many under-shepherds, to whom He has given grace and qualification to shepherd the flock, to feed and tend them during His absence. He is the "Chief Shepherd," and Peter, who was an under-shepherd, speaks of Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

It is He who sought us when, like sheep gone astray, we wandered in wilfulness and pride over the dark mountains of sin and folly, and, having found us, exercised His own matchless grace and power in securing us for ever for Himself. He went after us when we were lost, and having found us, laid us upon His shoulders, and took us home rejoicing. The Shepherd rejoiced, and the Father rejoiced, because the lost one had been received safe and sound, for "there is joy in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth;" but when by-and-by He presents us before the presence of His glory, it will be with exceeding joy. The sheep, then, are the objects of the Shepherd's care. He feeds our souls. By His Spirit and word of truth, either with or without other instrumentality, He does comfort and bless us. He has given gifts, having sent down the Holy Ghost, for the blessing and edification of His people. Real care for His flock is the special

proof of love to the Lord Himself, as He said to Peter, when he confessed his love and attachment to Him, "Feed my lambs!" "Shepherd my sheep!" "Feed my sheep!" Not one of the flock is overlooked by the "Chief Shepherd;" every circumstance and peculiarity of each is duly regarded by Him. The weak are supported and encouraged; the little ones kept near His heart; all fed and guarded by the all-seeing and unchangeably loving Shepherd. As the prophet said, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isaiah 40:11.)

We are admonished to beware lest any man rob us; but looking to the "Chief Shepherd," and owning thankfully the under-shepherds of His giving, and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, content to be guided by Him, we shall be assuredly led into green pastures beside the still waters, and find rest and blessing there. He restores our souls, and renews our strength, for "he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." He will never fail nor forsake us; He leads in paths of righteousness for His name's sake, though it may be in the midst of paths of judgment; and all through the valley of the shadow of death we have nothing to fear: His rod and staff will comfort us. He knows how to feed and cheer us, and bless us with an overflowing cup in the presence of our enemies; and, as He is faithful and true, looking to Him our Shepherd, we may well sing, "I shall not want," but "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever." It surely then becomes us to go onward, rejoicing in Him, whose love to us knows neither measure nor end. And if it be said of David that "he fed the people according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them according to the skilfulness of his hands," how fully and perfectly it can be so said of David's Lord, who, though now in the glory, takes account of every hair of our heads, and is never unmindful of the smallest need of any sheep of His pasture How sweet to think of the unwearied activities of this tender and gracious Shepherd, so patient with us, so forbearing, so pitiful and wise! Happy indeed are those who are subject to His guidance and instruction; for such not only grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but they learn that wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Precious Shepherd! ever mindful of Thy poor sheep.  
H. H. Snell.

## S. Remarks on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

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Remarks on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Two questions present themselves at the threshold of this epistle, Who was the writer? and to whom was it addressed? A great deal has been written in reply to these questions, and various conclusions have been arrived at, but most of them with little certainty or profit. That Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, was the inspired penman there seems little room to doubt, and the suppression of his name is not without profitable significance. The only apostle mentioned in the epistle is Christ Himself. The work of Paul's apostleship was, as we know, specially among the Gentiles, while Peter's line was particularly to the circumcision. The absence of Paul's name, therefore, in writing to Hebrews would show his tender consideration for them, lest he should hinder blessing by seeming to press his apostolic ministry upon those whose feelings and prejudices might check them from readily receiving his instruction, or give the appearance of trespassing upon another apostle's line of things. Moreover, the general scope and style of the epistle, the earnest way in which the doctrines of the personal glory of the Son of God, His accomplished redemption and everlasting priesthood are contended for, the well-known affectionate allusion to "our brother Timothy," the touching way in which he solicits their prayers for his own restoration to them, strikingly give it throughout a Pauline character. That it was addressed to Hebrews who had taken up the profession of Christianity seems plain enough; few of them, however, might have been competent to discern the vast contrast between the principles of Judaism and Christianity; and some of them were evidently disposed to relinquish the substance (Christ), and go back again to a ritual of typical things. Still, the allusion in the opening words to "the fathers" and "the prophets;" the way in which he mentions the many and oft-repeated sacrifices which could never take away sins; the copious references to an earthly order of priesthood, a worldly sanctuary, separating veil, and other details of tabernacle service, exclude the idea of the epistle having been written to those who were of Gentile origin, or that it could be immediately adapted to any but such as had been educated in "the Jews' religion" of carnal ordinances and distance from God.

There seems, therefore, to be strong reasons for supposing that Paul was the writer, and that the epistle was addressed to Hebrew professing Christians. We have also no difficulty in understanding why Paul's name does not appear in it, and why it has not been presented to us like other epistles, which plainly signify who the writers are, and to whom they are addressed. The value of this precious epistle to the souls of God's children can scarcely be over-estimated.

It is well to observe that this epistle begins at once with "God." It is God who has spoken unto us in the Son. This characterizes divine ministry. It is always from above downward — from God to man. All human religiousness, and legality of every kind, incline from earth to heaven — from man to God; as one of our own poets has said, "We look from nature up to nature's God;" but few expressions could be more opposed to the true character of divine teaching. It is "God," then, who speaks to us, and that in His Son, who did by Himself, without any aid whatever, but excluding all

else make purgation of sins, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. It is God who is the source of all our blessings: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

We find also that the first epistle of John begins by at once bringing Christ before us, without any introduction whatever. The first words are, "That which was from the beginning," etc. It is the person of Christ — "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" — the Son of God. This is God's way of meeting us, speaking to us, and blessing us. He calls our attention to the person and work of the Son.

Neither of these epistles is written to an assembly, as many others were, but we gather from both epistles that the souls addressed were in a critical condition, though the dangers to which they were exposed were not in both instances the same; and yet, be it observed, whatever be the failure or need of the soul, the person and worth and work of Christ are all-sufficient. It is the infinite glory and eternal Godhead of the Son which gave such eternal efficacy to His work. The smallest taint or imperfection ascribed to His person is like removing the keystone of an arch, when the whole of what remains inevitably falls to pieces. No doubt this is why in so many scriptures the Holy Ghost so repeatedly sets before us the eternal excellencies and glory of Jesus the Son of God.

Those addressed in this epistle, as I have said, were manifestly in a low estate of soul. Some seem to have been ready to give up the truth of Christianity, and return to Judaism; and such are most solemnly warned. From the first the adversaries of the truth sought to undermine the glory of Christ, and the infinite value of His accomplished work, by a return to ordinances and otherwise attempting to mix up two essentially different elements, Judaism and Christianity. The natural man always prefers ritualism to Christ, because the former appeals to the senses, intoxicates the mind, and gives importance to man in the flesh; while vital Christianity calls forth the exercise and life of faith upon the Son, gives glory to God, draws our hearts to the Father in dependence and spiritual worship, and has no confidence in the flesh.

Among other precious lessons we gather from this epistle, is, that the divine method of raising and restoring souls from a low condition is by setting Christ before them, which reminds us of the lines

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"What think ye of Christ?" is the test To try both your state and your scheme:

You cannot be right in the rest, Unless you think rightly of Him."

We also learn from this epistle that souls need Christ, not in one or two aspects merely, but in every variety of aspect in which He is graciously revealed in scripture. And it is important to see this, because it keeps us always in the spirit of inquiry, and desire for further knowledge of Himself, and His work, offices, and ways; instead of setting down content with any feeble measure of His goodness and grace which we may have been taught. In this letter to the Hebrews, we find that nearly every chapter gives us a different aspect of Christ for our heart's contemplation and blessing. If the Godhead of the Son shines forth with eternal brightness in the first chapter, His spotless manhood attracts us in the second; while in the third we are taught to consider Him not only as the "Apostle," the sent One who came down, and the "High Priest" who went up, but also as "Son over his own house." The fourth chapter teaches us that He who has passed through the heavens is "Jesus the Son of God," a sympathizing High Priest. In the fifth chapter, the Spirit

conducts our minds back to contemplate His sufferings in the days of His flesh, crying to Him who was able to save Him out of death, the Son thus learning obedience from the things that He suffered; we are instructed also that His priesthood is perpetual — "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec." In the sixth chapter, He is set before us as having gone inside the veil as our "Forerunner." No doubt He is called the Forerunner because other runners are following, and soon to be there with Him. In Hebrews 7:1-28 :, the priesthood of the Son of God is declared to be everlasting, unchangeable, made with an oath; that He is now an interceding priest, and though performing Aaronic functions, yet is He a blessing priest after the Melchizedec order, who, according to the scripture record, comes before us without beginning of days, or end of life. In the next chapter (Hebrews 8:1-13 :), we see Him a sitting priest, in the highest place of dignity and power. In the ninth chapter, He is contemplated as having gone into heaven itself by His own blood, appearing there for us before the face of God, and to them that look for Him coming the second time, without any question of sin, for salvation. We see in the tenth chapter the infinite value of His one offering giving us remission of sins, a purged conscience, sanctifying or separating us to God, perfecting us for ever, with liberty to enter into the holiest of all by His blood, who is now inside the veil, sitting in perpetuity on God's right hand, and coming again in "a little while." The eleventh chapter shows us the reality of the path of faith, and that it is connected with "the reproach of Christ." In the twelfth chapter, we have Jesus who endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of the throne of God, as the object for our heart's sustainment and blessing while we are running the race set before us; and the last chapter presents to us, Him who suffered without the gate, and by whose blood we are sanctified, and who, as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, was brought again from among the dead in the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant by the God of peace.

Thus we find, in this hasty run through this epistle, how many and varied are the aspects in which the person, work, and offices of the Son of God are set before us; thus meeting the various questions that an exercised mind might suggest, as well as richly feeding the soul, meeting every requirement of the conscience, and attracting the heart from self, and worldly religiousness, and Jewish principles, to fix it stedfastly on Christ Himself. How blessed it is thus to find all our rest and peace in Him! How gracious and tender is this sweet ministry of the Holy Ghost to raise drooping and declining souls, by presenting Christ as the perfect and all-sufficient One for our hearts! Do we not thus feel ourselves attracted to Christ? Does He not thus become increasingly precious to us?

But, further, there have always been two great hindrances to souls having a firm grasp and enjoyment of Christ: one through giving men, faithful and honoured servants of God though they may be, an undue place of importance, so as to obscure our blessed Master from our view; and the other in allowing ordinances to come between our souls and the Lord. Both are evidently treated of in this epistle. With regard to eminent servants of God, who could a Jew think of that so commanded his respect as Moses? Even in the days of our Lord, when the people were far sunk in apostasy, they prided themselves in being "Moses' disciples." True, he was "faithful in all his house," but when brought beside the Son of God, the glory of the man is entirely eclipsed. We are told that "this One [Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who builded the house has more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God." (Observe here the testimony to the Godhead of Christ.) "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be

spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we," etc. (Heb. 3: 8-6.) Thus the greatness of Moses vanishes before the infinite glory of the person of the Son of God. The Jews also thought most highly of Joshua, who brought them into the land, and of David, their king, who was a man after God's own heart: but neither of them could bring them into rest; for if Joshua had given them rest, David would not afterward have spoken of rest as future. "There remaineth therefore a rest [or a sabbatism] to the people of God." This their true Messiah will yet give them when He reigns before His ancients gloriously. Thus Joshua and David sink down before the majesty of the Son of God. (Hebrews 4:1-16 :)

Aaron, too, was greatly extolled by the people of Israel among their honoured ancestry, but he was a man "compassed with infirmity," had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins, and could not continue by reason of death; but of the Son of God it is said, "Thou art a priest for ever." (Hebrews 5:1-14) Thus Aaron, with all his official glory and the magnificence of sacerdotal garments, crumbles into dust before the eternal brightness of Him whom the Jewish high priest so faintly shadowed forth. But among all the list of worthies a Jew boasted of, none held so high a place of reputation and esteem among them as Abraham, who has been called "the friend of God." To the last it was the boast of Jews that they were the seed of Abraham. They said so to the Lord. But while He allowed that they were "Abraham's seed," they little apprehended His cutting rebuke, when He said unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." (John 8:37-39.) They greatly venerated the father of the faithful, and we can easily understand how the proud heart of man would naturally boast of such a lineal descent. But in Hebrews 7:1-28, the writer shows that in the fact of Abraham's paying tithes to Melchizedec, and receiving blessing from him, he thus owned one greater than himself, and that this king of Salem (and of righteousness) whom he thus honoured was only a type of our ever-blessing Priest, Jesus, the Son of God. Thus the greatness of the patriarch Abraham passes away before the glory of the Son who is consecrated for evermore.

Again, after looking at the remarkable exercises of faith of patriarchs and other Old Testament saints in Hebrews 11:1-40 ;, we are admonished to look away from this cloud of witnesses to Him who trod the path of faith perfectly, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy was set before him endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2.) In the last chapter, the leaders who had watched over them and were gone before are to be remembered as men whose faith was to be followed, and its issue considered; but immediately they are directed from them to Him who is "the same yesterday, today, and for ever." All these instances serve to teach us over and over again, "line upon line, and precept upon precept," that when the Lord has His rightful place in our souls, no servant, however honoured, could displace Him, nor would any faithful servant but be esteemed for the Lord's sake according to the grace of God wrought in him and by him. But about this we need to watch and guard our hearts, for there can be no sure progress, or true service rendered, when the Lord Jesus is not everything to us.

Now let us look at ordinances. No believing student of scripture can fail to discern much that is attractive and interesting in the ritual of a former dispensation, which, I need scarcely say, is the only ritual which scripture recognizes; though it no doubt yet points to a future time of blessing, when God's earthly people will be established by Him in their long-looked-for inheritance. The tabernacle boards covered with gold, and resting upon silver sockets, the altar of burnt-offering,

the laver, golden altar, candlestick, and table; the ark, with its golden mercy-seat, and cherubim at either end; the variously wrought curtains, and veil of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen of cunning work, with cherubim; the various coverings of the tent; the high priest's garments of glory and beauty, with their many jewels and golden chains, could not have failed to charm the natural man with their elegance, richness, and symmetrical arrangement. And when, after this, centuries had passed, and wilderness wanderings had long ceased, to find the same gorgeous ritual set up again on a more elaborate and costly scale, under divine instruction, with its sacrifices and priesthood, upon a more lasting basis, might easily account for the feelings of a Jew, untaught by the Spirit of God, giving to it a substantial, instead of shadowy, import, and regarding these things with superstitious awe, because they know not the precious and unfading realities which these typical lessons set forth. We now know that these things were shadows of Christ, though not the very image, and in varied ways, like finger-posts, pointed to His person, work, offices, and excellencies. So that as soon as He came into the world, "gold, myrrh, and frankincense" were laid by God's messengers at His blessed feet; and, when nearing Calvary to offer Himself without spot to God, as the antitype to which these magnificent types culminated, He declared that this costly temple built with hands would be so completely razed to the ground, that one stone should not be left upon another; but, though their house would be thus left unto them desolate, He lovingly pointed to another house made without hands — the Father's house — to which He was going to prepare a place for them, and come again to take them there.

Again, we find that when our adorable Lord bowed His head in death upon the shameful tree, and said, "It is finished," the beautiful veil of separation in the temple was "rent in twain from the top to the bottom," thus showing that in virtue of the One sacrifice for sins there was no longer any hindrance to man going straight into the very presence of God, through that new and living way, the rent veil, that is to say, His flesh. The shadowy veil and other types were thus done away in Christ. This ancient ritual (and there is no modern ritual in scripture) was then a shadow of good things to come, having their fulfilment partly known now, especially as far as sacrifice and priesthood and entrance into the holiest are concerned, and partly to be known by Israel in millennial times, when as a nation they will have their promises and blessings made good to them on the ground of Christ's redemption-work, when, according to the prophecies of Ezekiel and other scriptures, feasts of "new moons," "sabbaths," "offerings and whole burnt-offerings," will have their true accomplishment in Israel's land for the glory and praise of God.

Before closing this brief glance at some of the characteristics of this beautiful epistle, it may be well to notice that much blessed instruction is also brought before us in the way of contrast. Thus the divine glory of the Son is blessedly contrasted with angels — the highest class of created intelligences that were known to men. When He, the risen, glorified Man, sat down on the right hand of God, He took a place by so much better than the angels, as He inherits a name more excellent than they; for though angels may be spoken of as "sons of God" by creation, yet they could never call God Father like the Son. Angels are made subject to the Son, and worship Him, and they are also ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, but it has never been said to them, what could be said only of the ascended Son, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Again, the habitable world which is to come is not to be subjected to angels, but to Him of whom, as Son of man, it is said, "Thou hast put all things under his feet."

Law and grace are also remarkably contrasted in this epistle. We are told that the law made nothing perfect, and that God had no pleasure in those sacrifices which were offered by the law; but the grace of God, by the one offering of Christ, has sanctified and perfected us for ever. Blessed contrast indeed! At the giving of the law the people came to the mount that might be touched and was on fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." But how vastly different is the sweet voice of the gospel from all this! By the grace of God "we are come unto mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, the universal gathering; and to the assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and to God, judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than Abel." (Hebrews 12:18-24.) How wide the contrast here drawn! While law demands, terrifies, and repels; divine grace attracts, gives freely, blesses, and makes its unworthy objects happy in God's own presence.

How important, then, it is to hold fast grace! The law made nothing perfect, not even as pertaining to the conscience, but by the one offering of Christ we have no longer an annual remembrance of sins, but remission of sins, a purged conscience, and we are perfected for ever. We have then, by divine grace, through Him who was the "Surety of a better testament," "better promises," "better hope," "better resurrection," and "in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Thus the Eternal Son is the author of "eternal salvation," hath "obtained for us eternal redemption," and will introduce us into an "eternal inheritance." The contrast in priesthood is also very striking. The Aaronic high priest was compassed with infirmity, needed a sacrifice for himself, was always a standing priest, could never sit down, because he could never present to God a finished work; whereas the holy, harmless, undefiled Son of God, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down, and that for ever or in perpetuity, on the right hand of God, having nothing more to do for atonement for sins, but "from henceforth expecting, till His enemies be made his footstool."

What an object for our heart's contemplation and delight is presented to us in the Son on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens! And what rest too, seeing He is there as our Forerunner! What liberty also He has so mercifully brought us into! How it fills our hearts with joy and gladness, and bows us with adoring gratitude and worship before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. H. H. Snell.

## S. The Gospel of God.

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The Gospel of God. In the opening verses of the epistle to the saints at Rome, the gospel is spoken of as God's gospel — God's power unto salvation. It is that in which the righteousness of God is revealed. All is of God; and we are told what the gospel is about, what it reveals, what its power, and on whom its marvellous blessings are conferred. God is the source of all our blessings, and all is made ours on the principle of faith. We observe that Paul was an apostle by calling, and separated unto the work of the gospel by the sovereign acting of the Holy Ghost. He tells us he had received grace. Those too, in Rome, to whom he wrote, were saints by calling, beloved of God, called of Jesus Christ. All these ways were entirely of grace, and completely opposed to the principle of law. The real value and point of the glad tidings of God, however, can only be rightly estimated by the consideration of the alarming fact, stated in connection with these verses, that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness" (Romans 1:18), which shows that God's terrible judgment against all that is contrary to Himself is coming upon men from heaven. It is not a local or partial intervention of God's anger, but "against all ungodliness." Divine wrath then is coining, and happy are those who like the Thessalonians can say they are "delivered from the wrath to come." But let us not fail to notice, that wrath is revealed from heaven, not only against all that is hostile to God, but against all those who, while holding fast the letter of the truth, are practising unrighteous ways. In the days of our Lord the Jews were the holders of the truth. All the truth of God known in the world was with them. The oracles of God had been committed unto them; but alas! what grievous unrighteousness was among them, culminating in preferring a robber to Christ, and spitting upon and crucifying the Saviour whom God had sent. In our day Christendom holds the truth — professes to be for Christ in contradistinction to Mahometanism, Judaism, and idolatry; but the prophetic delineation of the last days is being rapidly fulfilled, that men would be "covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers . . . lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Timothy 3:1-5.) What is this but holding the truth in unrighteousness? And on such may we not expect that the heaviest blow of the wrath of God will speedily fall? Are we not told that God will judicially send "men strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: because they received not the love of the truth, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness?" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12.) However the solemn and arousing fact remains unmistakably clear that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness." It is in connection with this alarming warning that the glad tidings of God are sent forth.

Firstly, it is well to observe that the gospel is "the gospel of God" — God's message to man; a ministry that makes no demands on man, but communicates glad tidings, which can make him happy (sinner though he may be), and at rest in God's infinitely holy presence. In the gospel God speaks, and it becomes man to hearken. If a prophet in olden times said, "Hear and your soul shall live," the blessed Master was wont to say, "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life," and an apostle could write that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

It was then "the gospel of God "that Paul preached; and these glad tidings he was ready to minister in Rome by the will of God. It appears that up to that time no apostle had visited Rome. The gospel had effectually reached souls in that city by other instrumentality. Many there had evidently received it as the word of God, inasmuch as their "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." But there seems to have been something wanting in them, as to their grounding in "the righteousness of God "— the prominent subject of the epistle — so that Paul expressed himself as ready to preach to them at Rome as well as to others. He opens the epistle, therefore, with the foundation principles of the gospel; first of all asserting that it is "the gospel of God;" not like the law which demanded righteousness and love from the creature, but God manifesting Himself in the activity of His own grace for man's eternal salvation and blessing.

Secondly, let us not fail to notice what the glad tidings of God are about. We are told they are "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Whatever may be its effects, its source is from God, and the subject of it the Son of God — David's Son and David's Lord — who was raised from the dead. The gospel of God then sets before us the person and work of His Son, who was essentially and eternally divine, and yet perfect man. And only such a Saviour could meet our need, or answer the just claims of the Majesty on high. To redeem us He must be a sinless, spotless, perfect Man, for, had there been the least flaw attachable to Him, He would have had to be judged for it, and therefore unfit to be a substitute for us. But, blessed be God, He was the "holy thing" as born of Mary; and after thirty years of trial and temptation in a path of sorrow and grief, the heavens opened over Him, and a voice from the excellent glory declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Beside this, because of His perfect spotlessness, the Holy Ghost came down and abode upon Him. This could not have been, had there been in Him the least taint of imperfection. When the Holy Ghost indwells in a believer now, it is in virtue of his having received remission of sins through faith in the Lord Jesus, for the Holy Ghost could not take up His abode in any one not cleansed from sin. The Holy Ghost then coming down and abiding on the Son of God, was another infallible proof of the perfect spotlessness of His person. But while we needed a Saviour who was perfect Man, that He might, as our Substitute, bear our sins in His own body on the tree, and be made sin for us, it was also necessary that He should be a person having such capacities and attributes, that He could bear God's eternal judgment of sin, and be able to satisfy all the demands of infinite holiness and righteousness. All this He could do because He was Son of God, and also Son of David — God and man — in His own Sacred person. By His one offering on the cross then He discharged all the claims of divine righteousness as to our sin and guilt, and in it glorified God. The "gospel of God," therefore, must be concerning His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and raised up from among the dead. Thus He was made somewhat inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death, in which He once for all so fully atoned for sin, that He was raised from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness, and was in this way declared to be the Son of God with power. The gospel is therefore concerning the person and the work of the Son of God.

Thirdly, in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God on the principle of faith. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (or, on the principle of faith unto faith), as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17.) No doubt it was the gospel of the grace of God of which Paul testified; but we are told that in it is the righteousness of God revealed. We know that God in His acting cannot sacrifice righteousness to love, nor love to righteousness, but

works all His counsels according to the unchanging character of His own nature. Thus He magnifies the law, vindicates all the claims of justice, and yet in richest grace justifies the ungodly who believe. Hence we read that "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 5:21.) In the gospel then it is not righteousness demanded from man, not legal righteousness enforced, but God's righteousness revealed; not God requiring righteousness from man in the way of works, but God bringing righteousness to man suited to Himself on the principle of faith. It is then not human righteousness, not the righteousness of the law, but "the righteousness of God "which the gospel reveals. It is righteousness wholly apart from law. It is a righteousness suited to the nature of God, and we participate in it by faith. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." (Romans 3:21-22.) This scripture then speaks clearly of another righteousness than the one connected with law, and also that the law and the prophets gave testimony to it. Hence we find in the ceremonial law, as it is called, the burnt offering showed that the worshipper was accepted in its sweet savour — "It shall be accepted for him;" and the prophet Habakkuk, as we have quoted, declared that "the just shall live by faith," showing that life and acceptance in another were contemplated by the law and the prophets, not on the principle of law-keeping, but on the principle of faith. David also, who lived under the law, wrote of the blessedness of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans 4:6-8.) Again, we find some hundreds of years before the law was given, that Abram was accounted righteous on the principle of faith. We read that "he believed in Jehovah, and he counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:6.) Abel also, by his "more excellent sacrifice obtained witness that he was righteous;" and we find also, that "Noah became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." It is unquestionable then that a righteousness which was of God, and wholly apart from law, was reckoned to believers long before the law was given, that it was gloried in by the faithful who lived under the law, and that it is now revealed in the gospel toward all and upon all them that "believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:23-25.)

Another point which scripture brings before us is God's righteousness in forgiving the sins of those who believed before the sacrifice of Christ. God, having now set forth Christ as a propitiation (mercy-seat) through faith in His blood, declares His righteousness in passing by the sins of Old Testament saints. His forbearance had been shown at the time, but now His righteousness in having done so is declared; for the atoning work of Christ, though then not accomplished, must have been always present to the eye of God. (See Romans 3:25-26.) And further, when Jesus was bearing our sins on the tree, we know that God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. There was unsparingly poured out upon Him all that justice could inflict in the condemnation of sin. Though He was the righteous One, yet He endured all the righteous vengeance due to sin in His own self on the cross, and completely drained the cup of wrath, so that He could say, "It is finished." Thus in His death the wages of sin was fully dealt out, for He died for our sins according to the scriptures. He died unto sin once. All the demands of righteousness were fully met, and peace was made. There righteousness and peace kissed each other. How then was it possible that He should be holden of death? The debt having been justly cancelled, how could the prisoner be longer detained? The Saviour having made a just atonement for our sins, and having satisfied

divine justice and glorified God, was it not a righteous thing that He should be raised from among the dead? And having been raised according to the Spirit of holiness, was He not marked out Son of God in power? Having brought eternal glory to God in the stupendous work of the cross, was it not a righteous thing that He should be exalted and glorified? Hence we hear Him saying, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John 13:31-32.) And again, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:4-5.) This demand we know was granted, and we are sure that He was righteously entitled to be glorified as Man. Hence we read elsewhere, "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore [that is, on account of His so glorifying God in His death on the cross] God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:8-11.) Thus not only is the Man Christ Jesus righteously raised from the dead, exalted to the right hand of God, and has received a name that is above every name (there being made Lord and Christ), but He is righteously entitled to Lordship over heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings — universal dominion, not only by reason of His personal glory as the Son, but because of the infinite worth of the work of the cross. Hence, when He takes unto Himself His great power and reigns, He will do so as righteously entitled to it in virtue of His obedience to death, even the death of the cross. He will then judge both the living and the dead, and put all enemies under His feet; for to this end Christ hath died and risen again that He might rule over both dead and living. But more than this. It is because, in marvellous grace, Christ died for our sins under the righteous judgment of God that we have remission — that God can and does in righteousness forgive us. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;" for we have forgiveness through the blood. How could God in righteousness condemn our sins in the person of His own Son, and afterwards condemn them on us? Impossible. The idea would accuse God of injustice. But, blessed be His name in virtue of the atoning work He justifies us — "Being now justified by his blood." Is it not due to Christ, just to Him, when blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, that God should forgive us and manifest the full outflow of His love in justifying the believer from all things? This we know He does. O, how forcible and assuring are the words, "It is God that justifieth!" Instead of God condemning us, He now justifies us, and declares that He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Precious words of comfort! And yet further, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him"— Christ Himself our righteousness. When the father fell upon the neck of the repentant prodigal, and imprinted on his cheek the kiss of love, he said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." It was the best robe. There could be nothing superior to it. It was the highest possible character of fitness for the father's presence. But the illustration fails to convey the full blessedness of the righteousness, which every believer now is in Christ, for He is not only graced for the Father's presence, but his acceptance is in Another — the Beloved — so that we are become "the righteousness of God in him." It is due to Christ, that in virtue of His God-glorifying work of obedience we should be accounted righteous in Him — the Lord our righteousness — according to the eternal purpose. God in His grace has therefore made Him to be unto us "righteousness," and this on the principle of faith. We are not then ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to

establish our own righteousness, but have gladly submitted ourselves unto the righteousness of God. Having found all our righteousness as filthy rags, and all hope of righteousness by law-keeping having come to an end, we are rejoiced to find that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans 10:4.)

Thus "the righteousness of God "revealed in the gospel is presenting in widest contrast with "the righteousness of the law," and is entirely apart from it. It flows to us from the sovereign love of God through the accomplished work of His Son, and is upon all them that believe. How sweet it is to know that Christ glorified is our righteousness, that through matchless grace we are the righteousness of God in Him. Christ then is our subsisting righteousness in God's presence. What rest of heart this gives! What boldness too in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world! Who can condemn whom God justifies? How these truths melt our hearts, and draw us out in worship and thanksgiving! What comfort too they give in darkest circumstances! It is no marvel that so many have found the true expression of their souls in such lines as these:

"Without one thought that's good to plead, Oh, what could shield me from despair? But this: "Though I am vile indeed. The Lord my righteousness is there."

Fourthly, the gospel is God's power unto salvation. (Romans 10:16.) We say, with reverence, that in no other way could God's power be put forth to save sinners, for apart from the accomplished work of the person of the Son, He can only judge sinners, and must be against sinners; but in the death and blood-shedding of Jesus God shows that He hates sin but loves sinners, and is able to save the worst of sinners. The apostle Paul therefore gloried in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. It brings salvation to Jew and Gentile on the principle of faith, though in point of order it was preached to the Jew first.

Observe then that the gospel is preached for salvation, not to improve man in the flesh but to save him; not to help the efforts of nature religiously, but to bring him to God; for the obedience of faith not of all nations, but among all nations; it is not therefore preached to better the world, nor to convert the world, but it is the power of God unto salvation to individuals, to everyone that believes. Now the power of God unto salvation is very specific in its meaning, a large expression; for while the freeness of the grace of God is shown in its blessing to every one that believes, fulness is set forth in not stopping short in its blessing of planting the saved one bodily in the presence of God in heavenly glory. We know that we are "called unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus," and that "he suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter 5:10; 1 Peter 3:18.) Not but that it is quite correct now to speak of believers as "saved," for we have the salvation of our souls now by faith, as scripture says, "Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." But we wait for salvation in its full sense, "The redemption of our body," "the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," when in spiritual bodies, suited to heavenly and eternal glory, and conformed to the image of the Son, we shall be in full possession and enjoyment of this great salvation. The gospel then is the power of God unto salvation, because in the cross of Christ the foundation was laid in righteousness for its accomplishment, according to the eternal purpose and grace of God, to give life and righteousness in Christ Jesus to every one that believeth. We have therefore, by the power of God in the gospel, deliverance from the wrath to come, remission of sins, present possession of eternal life, justification by the

blood of Christ, peace with God, sonship, the gift of the Holy Ghost, hope of glory and much more. As the Father has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light, we must wait for God's Son from heaven, for then we shall know the full power of God to us in this great salvation. Our hope then is glory. We do not hope for righteousness, for, as we have seen, the gospel reveals that Christ is our righteousness; but we hope for that to which righteousness established in the accomplished work of Jesus entitles us, even glory. "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." (Galatians 5:5.) "We look for the Saviour who shall change this body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Php 3:20-21.) Then "salvation" will be fully consummated; and in this sense we can say, "Now is our salvation nearer [not surer] than when we believed;" because, as time rolls on, it hastens the blissful period of our Lord's return. Well has an apostle called it, "this great salvation." It will not then be only salvation from the guilt and dominion of sin, the salvation of the soul, and deliverance from the wrath to come; but salvation from this old creation and its belongings, from a body of frailty and infirmity, changed in a moment, and bodily translated into the presence of God and the Lamb for ever. Then, in uncreated light, we shall see His face; then we shall realise fully what we now apprehend so feebly, and sound forth so faintly, that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." H. H. Snell.

## S. The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

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The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

All Christians are agreed that the death of Christ is the basis of all our blessings. Of this there can be no doubt, for "without shedding of blood is no remission." Without the death of Christ we could never be with Him — "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." He could not then, but in virtue of the death of the cross, have us in glory with Him. But, while all our present and eternal blessings are founded on the death and blood-shedding of Jesus the Son of God, scripture points us again and again to Christ risen and ascended, as the One in whom we stand, and on fully blessed and accepted. The use so often made of the apostle's resolve "not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," as if he meant that he confined his preaching to the fact that Christ died for sinners, is very far wide of the truth. As a matter of certainty we know that he preached much more than this. The truth is that in Corinth, where human wisdom was so much extolled, and human righteousness so ardently contended for by Jews, the apostle determined, that instead of regarding either, he would continually have a crucified Saviour before him and minister Him. For he saw in the rejected and crucified Son of God the worthlessness both of human wisdom and human righteousness. He beheld also in the cross, the divine estimate of man in the flesh. Whether it be a question of man's righteousness or wisdom, he saw both alike laid low there by the righteous judgment of God. In the crucified Saviour he knew that God had entirely and judicially set aside man in the flesh, as scripture says, "our old man is crucified with him." The crucified Son of God must therefore be the abiding witness that the "wisdom" of the one, and the "righteousness" of the other, had equally rejected Him who is "the wisdom of God and the power of God," and ever also constantly sets forth that man had there been judged by God as utterly unfit for Him, so that "no flesh should glory in his presence." The apostle then was forbidden by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to have any confidence in the pretended good qualities of the natural man. So that when he entered Corinth he determined neither to recognize the boasted wisdom of the Gentile, nor the pretended righteousness of the Jew; for he had a crucified Saviour before him, the Holy One of God, hated and rejected by both. He would be occupied with the cross not only as manifesting God's love to man, but as setting forth God's verdict on the thorough depravity and incurableness of man in the flesh. To imagine that the apostle only preached the death of Christ, foundation as it is of all our blessings, would be contrary to the fact; for we know how largely his ministry entered into the resurrection, ascension, glorification, and coming of Christ, and many details also concerning each of these glorious truths.

It is a brief consideration of what scripture teaches about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, which, as the Lord may help, is now to engage our attention. It is the all-important truth of the gospel. We read of the apostles being enveloped in mist and perplexity, because "as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."

Notwithstanding the present extensive amount of Bible knowledge, and acquaintance with the facts and literal details of scripture, it may however be truly said that the children of God are

suffering much through "lack of knowledge." As in the last days of Israel's history the prophet had dolefully to exclaim, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6), it may now be truly said that God's people are immense losers through lack of knowledge of Christ. For who now delights to tell of the comfort, joy, victory, and blessings they enjoy, from having to do with Christ risen, ascended, and coming? The highest blessing many appear to think that they can know here is the present forgiveness of sins, and the consequence is they become associated and entangled with much that is contrary to the Lord's mind, and injurious to their own souls; which those that have a better acquaintance with Christ avoid, because they perceive another path set forth by the scriptures to the true friends of the Lord Jesus. As we have seen, the error of the disciples was ignorance of the scriptures as to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Their hearts were true and fervent, but they were sad, and looking in the wrong direction for comfort, because they knew not the scripture "that he must rise again from the dead." They knew not that "it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise. from the dead the third day." The consequence was that they were looking into the sepulchre, and were sadly disappointed because they found not the body of the Lord Jesus, instead of rejoicing in the reality of His mighty victory. They knew not that it was absolutely necessary that He must rise again from the dead. Had His body remained in the sepulchre, what assurance could we have had of His having redeemed us? Nay, more, had He been holden of death, we should have had no Saviour and no salvation. The resurrection of Christ is therefore the fundamental truth of the gospel. To take away the truth of the Lord's resurrection is to remove the keystone of the arch of divine truth — to leave the soul without hope. Hence we find Peter, after this disappointment at the sepulchre, blessing God for having "begotten us again unto a lively [or, living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:8.) When some sought to persuade the saints of Corinth that there was no resurrection of the dead, the apostle at once refers to the resurrection of Christ, and asserts that, if he is not raised from the dead, then we have no gospel, no comfort, no salvation. He says, if Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, we are false witnesses, ye are yet in your sins, all who have believed are perished, and we are of all men most miserable. Thus the fundamental truth of the gospel is asserted in connection with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and our resurrection too is affirmed because there is one Man who has passed through death and become the firstfruits of them that slept. In looking through the Acts, when the Lord's servants were so much under the guidance and power of the Holy Ghost, we cannot fail to be struck with the prominence the apostles gave to the truth of the Lord's resurrection. In the first chapter of that book before the Holy Ghost came, when exercised about the choice of an apostle, Peter insists that one must be a witness with us of His resurrection. And the sermon on the day of Pentecost not only insists on the guilt of the Jews in slaying Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, but it also sets forth His resurrection from the dead, and declares that He is now in glory made Lord and Christ, the true object of faith, and the giver of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 3:1-26 : Peter again addressing the guilty Jews says, "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son [servant] Jesus, and sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." In Acts 4:1-37 : we find that the people were grieved, and persecuted the apostles, because "they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the (lead;" and when Peter addressed them about the miracle he had wrought on the lame man, he said, "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole." In the same chapter after waiting upon God in united prayer we are told, among other manifestations of divine mercy, "With great power gave the apostles witness

of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." In Acts 5:1-42 Peter witnesses again to the people, that "the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." In Acts 7:1-60 : Stephen says that he sees heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." In Acts 10:1-48 : when Peter preaches to the household of Cornelius, speaking of the Jews, he says, "Whom they slew and hanged upon a tree, him God raised up the third day and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." In the account of Paul's famous sermon at Antioch, he again and again insists upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. After alluding to the rulers of Jerusalem who desired Pilate that He should be slain, he said, "they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre, but God raised him, from the dead, and he was seen many days." He also says, God hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in Psalms 2:1-12 ;, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." [?] Again he tells his hearers at Antioch that "he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption." He further adds that "he whom God raised again saw no corruption." After this when preaching at Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-34 :) Paul "reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead;" and his great offence to the Thessalonians seems to have been saying "that there is another king, one Jesus." At Athens, also, we are told that some thought Paul was a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection, and others mocked when they heard of the resurrection of the dead. In Paul's first speech of defence at Jerusalem, he says, "of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (Acts 22:6); and before Felix, he not only asserts that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, but repeats what he had said on a former occasion, "touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day." So prominently was the doctrine of the resurrection set forth by Paul, that when Festus takes upon himself to explain Paul's case, he says, "his accusers had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and if one Jesus which was dead whom Paul affirmed to be alive." (Acts 25:19.) Before king Agrippa also he says that he witnessed "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead," etc. (Acts 26:23.)

All these quotations plainly show, when the Holy Ghost was acting in mighty power with the apostles, that they not only preached the death of Christ, but that the precious truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was largely set forth in their ministry; and the more we consider the subject by the testimony of scripture, the more convinced we shall be not only that the resurrection is the fundamental truth of the gospel, but that those souls must be in a defective state who are always, as they say, at the foot of the cross. That ministry of the word too falls far short of the Lord's mind, which does not enter upon the resurrection of Christ, and the glorious doctrines of divine teaching associated with it. The truth is that, if Christ be not raised from the dead, then death has gained the victory over Him, the grave has closed upon Him, Satan has triumphed, and we have no living Saviour and no salvation. The subject therefore is of vital importance. But, blessed be God, Christ is risen from the dead! He is alive again, and that for evermore, and has the keys of hades and of death; He has obtained the victory for us, and is become the firstfruits of them that slept. The apostle Paul tells us that the gospel which he preached was that which he 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." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4.)

But it may be inquired, where in the Old Testament scriptures, to which we presume the apostle here referred, are we taught that Christ would rise again from the dead on the third day? The resurrection of Christ was plainly foretold by David in Psalms 16:1-11 ;, which was quoted both by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and by Paul at Antioch, to prove the fulfilment of scripture in His rising again from the dead. They argued that David did not then speak of himself; for, though a prophet, he was buried and saw corruption; but that He whom God raised up saw no corruption. In death His soul was not left in hades, the place of departed spirits, neither did His body see corruption; but He entered upon resurrection, the path of life, and ascended to the right hand of God. The words are, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalms 16:10-11.) Thus the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was plainly foretold, and the instruction is clear that Messiah would not only rise again from the dead, but be exalted to the "right hand of the majesty on high." But with regard to the third day in scripture, which would seem often significant of resurrection, we are not so plainly instructed; and yet to the spiritual mind little doubt can remain but that the third day would be the day of Christ's rising from the dead. Abraham seeing the place afar off for the sacrifice of Isaac on the third day (Genesis 22:4) makes it more than probable that Isaac was loosed from the altar on the third day. But this is not clear enough to be relied on as positive evidence on the point. Our Lord Himself referred to Jonah as a type, when He said, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40.) Here we have the clearest instruction that the Old Testament record of Jonah did typically set forth the resurrection of Christ, forasmuch as Jonah, after this, was vomited out by the fish on dry land. The third day is also stamped with the divine mark of resurrection by the prophet Hosea — "After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." (Chap. 6: 2.) Again, we find in reference to the peace offering, that "the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire," that is, that it shall be entirely for God on the third day. (Leviticus 6:17.) But the third day was also most remarkably and divinely stamped at creation. Before that day the waters of death covered everything; but on that day the waters receded, and out of the dry land sprang forth living fruitful things. "The earth brought forth grass, the herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind." And we are twice told in this day, and on this day only, that "God saw that it was good." And what could this be for but to teach us that the third day, the day of life springing out of death, was good not only as to creation, but also as to resurrection? Thus, without question, the Old Testament scriptures did mark the third day as specially connected with resurrection. We refer only to another ancient type, to show that the resurrection of our blessed Lord "the firstfruits of them that slept," would be on the first day of the week; for the sheaf of firstfruits to be accepted for the people was to be waved before Jehovah on the morrow after the sabbath. "Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you, on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." (Leviticus 23:10-11.) From all these scriptures we cannot fail to enter somewhat into the apostle's meaning when he said that Christ "rose again the third day, according to the scriptures;" and we can also perceive the serious mistake, and consequent perturbation of the minds of the disciples, because "as yet they knew not the scripture, that he

must rise again from the dead." But how great their joy was when they saw their risen Lord, and could understand something of the mighty victory which He had accomplished for them! The apostle however asserts the fact that "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then the end." (1 Corinthians 15:20-24.) And here we do well to notice, 1st, That the resurrection of Christ is the divine demonstration of the person of the Son of God, the foundation truth of Christianity; for "he was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4.) It also confirmed the truth of His own testimony to His personal glory, when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them." (John 2:19-22.) The apostle Paul also quoted Psalms 2:1-12 : to show that it was the person of the Son of God that was raised again from the dead. He said, "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is written in Psalms 2:1-12 :, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts 13:33.)

2nd, The resurrection of the Lord Jesus overcame death, and showed that though He died for the ungodly as an offering for sin, yet having laid down His life and lain in the sepulchre till the third day (thus showing the reality of His death), it could detain Him no longer. "It was not possible that he should be holden of death," for He was "the life," "the Prince of life," and "he saw no corruption." That great and terrible foe, which we have because we are sinners, Christ triumphed over in His resurrection from the dead. It is because of this that it is not now absolutely necessary that we shall die. Instead of this, we are told that "we shall not all sleep," but some of us will be "alive and remain to the coming of the Lord," and then, instead of dying, we shall be changed in a moment, our mortal bodies will put on immortality, and we shall be for ever like the Lord and with the Lord. Thus the Lord vanquished death in His resurrection from among the dead.

3rd, He triumphed over the grave. Covered as the mouth of the sepulchre was with a great stone, and a seal set upon it, guarded too with soldiers, all could not prevent the Son of God rising out of it. And be it observed that this the greatest victory ever obtained was wrought noiselessly. No flourish of trumpets announced this wondrous triumph. The sepulchre was left in perfect order, the linen clothes carefully put by, and the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. The whole scene tells us of the most perfect order and quiet. Had He still been in the sepulchre, the grave would have obtained a victory over Him. But, blessed be God, it was not so; and now looking at the triumphant risen One, we can truthfully say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And know that all this victory is ours, by God's free gift in the depth of His abounding mercy; so that we can also say, "but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

4th, Satan no doubt thought when Christ was nailed to the cross, and the power of death let loose upon Him, so that He bowed His sacred head in death, and gave up the ghost, that the Lord was then made an end of and got rid of. And to the eyes of those who had said, "not this man, but Barabbas," it so appeared. Such however was not the fact. Instead of Satan, who had the power of death, triumphing over Jesus, Jesus triumphed over him. He rose victoriously out of death, and not only destroyed death, but him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The blessed Son of

God thus raised from the dead spoiled principalities and authorities, made a show of them publicly, leading them in triumph by it. He led captivity captive, ascended into glory, received gifts for men, and is henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

5th, The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is also God's public attestation to His finished work upon the tree. If in the cry "It is finished," it is implied that every thing had been then accomplished according to the purpose and grace of God, every type fulfilled, every scripture obeyed, all the stern demands of justice satisfied, righteously established, and all the claims of holiness met, so that nothing more remained to be done, all was fully responded to by God in raising Him from the dead. If it had been possible that one sin which He bore had been unjudged, He could not have been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. But now we do see Him crowned with glory and honour who had been numbered with the transgressors and forsaken by God. We now behold Him righteously welcomed to the place of highest exaltation, instead of being abandoned in unsparing wrath because our sins were upon Him. Thus His being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father is the best possible proof that in bearing our sins He had perfectly satisfied God. He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him." The resurrection of Christ therefore is the undeniable proof of His finished work, that sin had been fully judged, and God glorified.

6th, Christ having triumphed over death, and gone up the path of life, He has made a new and living way for us. When He poured out His soul unto death upon the cross, we are told that "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Thus a new and living way was consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. But, after this, He rose from the dead and entered into heaven itself by His own blood. He rose from the dead as the "firstfruits" because others are to rise from among the dead; and He went into heaven as the forerunner, because other runners are to follow. What never-ending blessedness God has given us in a risen victorious Saviour! Well may we sing —

"His be the Victor's name, Who fought the fight alone;

Triumphant saints no honour claim: His conquest was His own. By weakness and defeat He won the meed and crown;

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

He hell in hell laid low;

Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;

Bow'd to the grave, destroy'd it so, And death by dying slew.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain!

Slain in His victory; Who lived, who died, who lives again, For thee, His church, for thee!"

7th, In Christ risen, we see Him who was dead alive again and that for evermore, and know that God has, in the riches of His grace, given us life in Him. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" — a new life surely, risen life, life in One who is beyond death, the mighty conqueror of Satan, death, and the grave. He who is now in the very glory of God is then our life.

Hence we are spoken of as "risen with Christ," having been quickened together, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What a marvellous blessing to be thus associated in life with One who has risen triumphantly out of death, and sat down on the right hand of God! What liberty as well as gladness it gives us! How natural therefore it is because of this, that we should be enjoined to seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, to set our mind on things above, and not on things on the earth. And these surely must be the exercises of risen-life in us, for its associations are above, its proper element is where Christ sitteth. Were this more practically the case with us, how familiar should we be with the things which are above; and how careful we should be not to be occupied with earthly things beyond our necessary duties! We should enjoy "the holiest of all" as our proper dwelling-place. "The throne of grace" would assure us of continual access with confidence, while reading continually our title to glory in "the blood of sprinkling." The risen and ascended Man in the glory would be the constant object that attracts, commands, and satisfies our hearts. We should be joyfully contemplating Him as our life, righteousness, peace, and hope. His various offices too on our behalf in the glory, as our "High Priest," "Advocate," "Washer of our feet," "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls," are enough to fill us with overflowing consolation and refreshment. While holding the Head, from whom all blessings flow to every member of the body, we should be in communion with Him in His present work on earth. Contemplating Him also as "Head of all principality and power," we are reminded by the Spirit that, if He is above every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come, we are complete in Him. These and many more lines of precious instruction must occupy our souls, if we are seeking the things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Many saints are already with the Lord, "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Like us they are looking forward to His coming, when He, who rose so victoriously over death, will apply His resurrection power to our bodies, and then all who are in Christ, whether dead in Christ or alive and remain, will be brought together in resurrection-life and glory to be "for ever with the Lord." H. H. Snell.

## S. The Son.

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### The Son.

"God . . . hath in these last days spoken to us in [the person of the] Son." Hebrews 1:2. The question by which our Lord put the Pharisees to silence, so that "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions," was concerning the mystery of His sacred person. Though they knew that Messiah would be the Son of David, they were completely confounded when asked how the Christ could be both David's Lord and David's son. And still, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" are the vital questions on which hangs the eternal destiny of man. It must therefore be of all importance to learn from scripture what is revealed concerning Him; for types have prefigured Him, prophets have heralded Him, one more than it prophet was His forerunner, a multitude of the heavenly host hailed His entrance into this world, and apostles have delightfully dwelt on the glory of His person, the everlasting blessedness of His atoning work, the offices He now so perfectly sustains, and on His coming again. May we then ponder the sacred writings which testify of THE SON with that reverence and subjection which become those who delight to hearken to God's testimony of Him!

"We know that the Son of God is come." The Word which was with God, and was God, became flesh, and dwelt among us: and God, whom no man has seen, has been declared by the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. The divine moral glory so shone in Him, that Spirit-taught witnesses tell us, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." In olden times, the thorough sinlessness of this peerless One was continually set forth by the imperative requirement, that each victim sacrificed should be "without blemish and without spot," and His inimitable moral excellencies were borne witness to in the sweet perfume of the burning incense; while various offerings typically expressed His perfect purity, His entire devotedness, as well as the savour of rest God always found in Him, both in life and in death. The laying down of the victim's life, the shedding and sprinkling of the blood, the entrance of the high priest inside the veil once every year, not without blood and incense, all pointed to Him, whose blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, and in virtue of whose one offering the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, thus removing every hindrance to the believer's going at once into the presence of God. Of the sacred person of THE SON, as also of His sufferings, and the glories which follow, ancient prophets have sweetly spoken by the Holy Ghost. The promised Seed — the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the virgin's Child — has been manifested according to their word, in the mysterious person of Immanuel. The babe of Judah's prophet has been born, and the Son given, whose name is the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace; who will ere long establish His kingdom with judgment and justice "upon the throne of David." According to others, Israel's Ruler has come out of Bethlehem, "whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting." (Micah 5:2.) The true Shepherd, the Fellow of the Lord of hosts, has been smitten, and the sheep have been scattered. (Zechariah 13:7.) The Anti-type of Isaac has been offered up, and raised again. The blood of the true paschal Lamb has been shed, and a way made for us through death and judgment into the very presence of God. It is no marvel, then, that

His forerunner should have been divinely taught that He was "the Son of God," should have announced Him to be "the Lamb of God," and declared that He who came after him into the world was really before Him — for THE SON was before all things — and that His shoes' latchet he was unworthy to unloose.

Prophets also foretold that He — the Son, Messiah — would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, sold for thirty pieces of silver, His sacred hands and feet pierced; that His garments would be parted by the soldiers among them, and lots cast upon His vesture. They also declared that He would be numbered with the transgressors, and bear the sins of many, that it would please Jehovah to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief; that the cry of His distress would be, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That though He would be made an offering for sin, and pour out His soul unto death, making His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; yet the prophet sweetly announced that His soul would not be left in hell [hades], neither His flesh see corruption, but that, having been shown the path of life, He would go back to Him in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Jehovah therefore said to the mighty Conqueror over death, Satan, and the grave, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." For this we know He waits, of whom it has been said, The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment," and that He will sit" upon David's throne," and "reign before his ancients gloriously." From this brief glance at the Old Testament prophets, we see that they spake of Him, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:6-11.)

It is no wonder, then, that a multitude of the heavenly host should introduce THE SON into this world with "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men" (Luke 2:14), or that the apostles should so dwell on the glory and perfections of His sacred person, and be inspired to make Him known to others as the object for unchanging delight. One of these divinely-taught writers says, "We have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John 1:1-2.) Another writes of the divine glory of the Son to the Colossians, as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from among the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For in him all the fulness was pleased to dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross," etc. (Colossians 1:15-20.) What a precious cluster of glories is here presented for our contemplation!

Again, in the Hebrews we are told that "God hath in these last days" — after all the varied testimony of prophets — "spoken to us in [the person of the] Son" (chap. 1: 1); and we propose

now to look a little, with the Lord's help, at what is recorded for our blessing concerning Him in the earlier chapters of this epistle. Before, however, proceeding farther, it may be well to press upon the reader the importance of making the word of God as much as possible our vocabulary when speaking of the unfathomable mystery of THE SON, and in all simplicity of faith receiving what God has declared of Him for our intelligence and blessing, instead of drawing deductions, reasoning out conclusions, or allowing ourselves to think or speak of Him according to human phraseology, and thus unconsciously glide into serious error. We may be certain that "no man knoweth THE SON but the Father," and that enough has been revealed of Him in scripture for our instruction and comfort. In Hebrews 1:2 ;, THE SON is remarkably brought before us; in chapter 1: as to His eternal Godhead, and in chapter 2: as to His manhood. Yet not exclusively so in either chapter, for how could this blessed One, who is both God and man in one person, be divided? Perhaps there has not been a more fruitful source of error than the attempt to do this. In both these chapters, however, scriptures are quoted which specially refer to Him as Messiah. In the first He is also presented as the purger of sins, and then as sitting down on the right hand of God; both which wonderful acts He did being man, yet as no one less than God could do. In the second we see that He took part in the children's flesh and blood, takes not hold of angels but of Abraham's seed, that He is the sanctifier, and the One who, under the title of Son of man, will put all things under His feet. Thus we find that when the Holy Ghost brings before us the eternal Godhead of THE SON, He also reminds us that He is man; and when He specially presents Him to us as man, He shows us that the Child born — the Messiah — is the mighty God. How could He be Maker of all things, Heir of all things, Upholder of all things, and how could He put all things under His feet, except He were verily and truly God? And how could He partake in flesh and blood, be the purger of sins, taste death for everything, and sit upon the throne of David, without being verily and truly man — the woman's Seed, Son of Abraham, and Son of David, according to the flesh? Hence scripture says, "It is Christ that died," that "the Son of man" was lifted up, and that God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." It was the glory of His person which gave such eternal value to His work; whereas, among men, it is the dignity of the work which gives honour to the person. In Hebrews 1:1-14 : THE SON is looked at as "from everlasting to everlasting." (Psalms 90:2.) He is therefore infinitely above angels — the highest class of created intelligence that man knows; for He had a more excellent name, was emphatically called by Jehovah, "My Son," and He called God, "Father." The Son as man is now exalted to the Father's throne, the One to whom angels, and principalities, and powers are made subject; and the world to come will not be put under angels, but under Him to whom it was said, "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool." THE SON, then, is infinitely above angels, who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall inherit salvation. That Holy Thing that is born of Mary is called the Son of God, but being also eternally divine in His own person, He is no less than the effulgence of God's glory, and the exact expression of His substance. He is therefore before all things, and greater than all things, for all things were created by Him, and by Him all things subsist. In the first twelve verses of this chapter, THE SON is, as we have said, particularly looked at in His Godhead character. He is truly "the First and the Last." Not only did He most truthfully say, "Before Abraham was I am," but He was before anything was which is made, for it is said of Him, "by whom also he made the worlds." We read elsewhere also that He had glory with the Father before the world was, and, father and son being relative terms, we find here His eternal Sonship most plainly revealed. (Hebrews 1:2; John 17:5.) Moreover we are also taught that the Father's counsel and purpose,

and His love to us, were in the Son before creation — "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love." (Ephesians 1:4.) THE SON, then, is eternally divine. We are instructed by an inspired prophet that one attribute of Godhead is Creator. "To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number . . . Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding." (Isaiah 40:26-28.) He, then, who created all things is Jehovah. We have, therefore, in this first aspect of the sacred person of THE SON, the clearest possible proof of His being "from everlasting."

Secondly, He is brought before us as the One who did by Himself make purification of sins, and set Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Hebrews 1:3.) As man had sinned, man must bear the penalty of divine justice for sin; and since by man came death, by man cause also the resurrection of the dead; but who could satisfy the infinite claims of God's justice? or drink up the cup of His eternal condemnation of sin, but one who was divine Himself? Who else could glorify God about our sins, could put them away for ever, and cleanse us by His own blood, but He who had eternal attributes — the Son sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world? Again, who but He could step from the sepulchre to the throne of God, and take His rightful place there? It is not here the aspect of His resurrection as being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, most precious as that view is; but it is THE SON, who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, lay in the grave till the third day (thus giving the most decided proof of His actual death), rose again from among the dead in the glory of His own eternal excellency, and took His place on heaven's throne, to which He was righteously entitled — "who . . . when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:3.) Blessed be God, there He is, the ascended, glorified Man, and made both Lord and Christ. Thus, in verses 2, 3 of this chapter, we find THE SON is looked at before time, or from everlasting, as the One by whom everything was made; and in time purging sins by Himself, and then sitting down in the highest place of power and glory at God's right hand.

Thirdly, there THE SON still sits; but He is coming again, and then He will be the object of the worship of angels, even as now in heaven angels, and authorities, and powers made subject to Him. Hence we read, "And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." (Hebrews 1:6.) It need scarcely be said that worship could not be rendered by angelic beings which surround the throne of God to any one who was less than God. To no creature, however blessed by God, or endued with divine power, could such honour be rightly accorded; the idea would be sinful in the extreme. Angels know who the Son is, and that He died for man on the cross; they announced His entrance into the world when born in Bethlehem, they afterward tracked His solitary and perfect path, and ministered unto Him; and when He comes to the world in glory, they will accompany Him in His power. Whatever may be the measure of the intelligence of angels, it is quite clear that they knew to whom worship rightly belongs; for when John was once and again so overcome with the bright shining of an angel, and the wonderful things made known to him, that he "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed him these things," it was at once refused. Instead of the angel accepting the homage, he rebuked the erring apostle, saying, "See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-servant, and

[the fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:9-10.) Angels, then, who clearly know that God is the true object of worship, will take their happy place of rendering worship to THE SON when He comes as the Firstborn into the world, and in this they will be of one accord, for it is said, "Let all the angels of God worship him."

Fourthly, then His rightful place on earth will be the throne, for He comes not to suffer, but to reign. As the true David, He will occupy His own throne, for all things are to be subdued by Him unto Himself, before He delivers up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father, "when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Corinthians 15:24-25.) He will establish, too, His ancient people in their hoped-for earthly glory, when all the promises shall be made good to them. And who but one who is God could take possession of all things, and subdue all things to Himself? We read, therefore, "But unto THE SON he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Hebrews 1:8-9.) Thus, in millennial glory, when THE SON — the Messiah — takes His kingly place of power, and reigns before His ancients gloriously, our attention is again called to contemplate Him in His eternal Godhead. Fellows, or companions, He will doubtless have; but here, as in all things, He must have the pre-eminence. It is unquestionably the millennial times in which we here behold THE SON; for it is characterised by righteousness, according to the scripture, "A king shall reign in righteousness." Now God is preaching grace, and bearing with this evil world in marvellous patience and long-suffering, but when THE SON sits on His own throne, He will wield the sceptre of righteousness, for, as we have observed, righteousness will characterise His kingdom, not grace. It will be manifest that He loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and, because He is eternally divine, will be able to subdue all things unto Himself. Then He "will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1 Timothy 4:15-16.)

Fifthly, as the eternal Godhead of THE SON has been looked at "from everlasting," before the worlds were made, He is also brought before us as "to everlasting," when heaven and earth shall have passed away. Now He is upholding all things, and by Him all things consist; but when, according to the divine counsels, this old creation shall have fulfilled its course, and have for ever passed away, THE SON will still be known in all His unchanging freshness and glory. He by whom all things were made will lay aside, as a garment, what is perishable and has waxen old. We read, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (Hebrews 1:10-12.) Can there be a clearer testimony to the eternal Godhead of the Son? Who else could have brought everything that is made into existence? or who but He who is Almighty could fold up and lay aside this vast universe, and yet Himself remain in all His infinite and unchanging attributes? Most truly did He say in the days of His flesh, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." What man, what angel, what creature, could truthfully utter such an authoritative sentence? Well might His hearers have

been sometimes astonished, and have exclaimed that "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Thus has it been our happy privilege to trace in this inspired word THE SON eternally divine before all worlds, then as the Maker of all things, then as purging sins, rising victoriously over death, and taking His rightful place on the Father's throne. We have also been contemplating Him as the One whom angels universally will worship when He comes into the world in power and glory, to reign as King of kings, sitting on His own throne; and, lastly, when time shall cease, and this old creation pass away, we have been instructed that His eternal attributes will shine out in all their divine and unchanging glory and freshness. Well indeed has it been added "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today and for ever." The Word by whom all things were made became flesh and dwelt among us. But He who is divine is also Son of man — God was manifested in the flesh. God sent forth His Son made of a woman. Jesus Christ has come in flesh. He, who being in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was found here in fashion as a man, and took a servant's form. He ate and drank, suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness. He slept, He walked, He prayed, preached and taught. He resisted and overcame Satan in temptation. He groaned and was troubled, He wept, He was grieved for the hardness of men's hearts, and looked round about on them with anger. He so lovingly entered into the sufferings of those around, He cast out devils, healed all manner of sickness with His word, that it was said by the prophet, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He was then verily man, born of woman, though without sin, and in every respect perfect, spotless, holy, harmless, and undefiled. THE SON however did not become incarnate in order to make Himself one with us, but that He might die for our sins, and rising again make us one with Himself. It is of all importance to see this clearly; for how could the holy One unite Himself with fallen and sinful man, who justly merited the wrath of God? THE Son, therefore, had a solitary path through this world. By reason of His essential holiness and perfect purity He could not be otherwise than "separate from sinners," however much He went about doing good. There could not possibly, therefore, be union between us and Himself, until our sins had been judged, in His holy person on the cross, and we were righteously cleansed. This the Lord most clearly taught. Referring to Himself, He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24.) For this we know the Father sent the Son. He came to die, for He came to save. In no other way could the righteous demands of God, or the necessities of our case, be met; for man had sinned, and the penalty of death had come in by sin. He, therefore, took part in the children's flesh and blood, that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He takes not hold of angels, but He takes hold of the seed of Abraham, for Messiah was the promised seed of Abraham, and also of David of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for ever. (Romans 9:5.) Thus Christ is both God and Man. His life here, however, was one of suffering. He was truly "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He came for the suffering of death. He suffered having been tempted, which must have been deep distress to His infinitely holy soul. He suffered, that, as the Captain or Leader of our salvation, He might be made perfect through sufferings. He not only knew every step of the way and every circumstance connected with us, as Omniscient, but He passed through everything that was needed to make Him fit for the office of Leader of our salvation. Though He were a Son and thus could command all to obey Him, yet He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. His perfectness was

in obeying in every respect in circumstances most adverse and painful. His love, subjection, obedience, and faith — all was perfect. And having been perfected, and a man glorified at God's right hand, He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. (Hebrews 5:8-9.) Ah! who can tell the variety and depth of the sufferings of our precious Lord!

He suffered from man for righteousness' sake — was hated without a cause, despised, and rejected. He suffered from Satan in temptation and bruising — "thou shalt bruise his heel." He suffered (alas how deeply!) by reason of His wondrous love for His own nation, from God's governmental dealings because of their sin, for "in all their afflictions he was afflicted;" and He suffered from God atoningly for sins, the just for the unjust (how unfathomable to us!), when He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God only knows the love and sorrow that met there. It was "the death of the cross." But His was a victorious death; and, as it has been said, He death by dying slew. He saw no corruption. His soul was not left in hades. He rose from the dead, for it was not possible that He should be holden of death. He went through death, and annulled death and him that had the power of death. Thus He triumphed over death and Satan and the grave. The Son of man is therefore a risen victorious Saviour. When John was overcome with a sight of the glorified Son of man that he fell at His feet as dead, He graciously comforted His servant by assuring him that, though He was dead, He is now for evermore a living Person, and holding in triumph the keys of death and hades. "He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of death and of hell [hades]." (Revelation 1:17-18.) Thus the Son of man has triumphed. Death could not detain Him. He rose from among the dead. His was certainly a victorious death.

"By man came death," we know, and here we see, "by man came also the resurrection of the dead," (1 Corinthians 15:21.) Hence we find that after Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself alive again by many infallible proofs, being seen of His disciples, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He appeared in their midst, showed them His hands and His side, gave commandments, breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" and expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself. When some who saw Him were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit, He fully demonstrated to them the reality of His own actual and bodily resurrection from among the dead. He said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet." (Luke 24:37-40.) Moreover, "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and while he blessed them, was parted from them and carried up into heaven;" and they watched Him ascending higher and higher, until a cloud received Him out of their sight; and while they stedfastly looked toward heaven, hoping to catch another glimpse of their precious Saviour, heavenly messengers stood by them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11.) Nothing can more fully prove the reality of the resurrection of the man Christ Jesus from among the dead. This was victory indeed.

And, as we have just seen, He has ascended. We now "see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour." (Ver. 9.) We remember that He was in death, but we see Him glorified at the right hand of

God. A man in glory: what a precious object for our hearts! "He who descended first into the lower parts of the earth is ascended above all heavens, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come." (Ephesians 4:2; Ephesians 4:10; and Ephesians 1:21.) There He is highly exalted — a glorified Man. There Stephen when he looked stedfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55-56.) There we now have to do with Him. There too we know Him in new relationships. "He is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Vers. 11-13.) We know too that it was after His triumphant resurrection, He said to Mary, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." The One, therefore, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour.

Now He is before the face of God as our High Priest. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God." (Ver. 17.) After having made atonement for the sins of the people by the sacrifice of Himself, He sat down on the right hand of God. There the glorified Son of man in heaven carries on His never-failing office of High Priest for us, after the Aaronic functions, but according to the Melchizedec order. He is not one that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but is merciful and faithful, able to succour us in temptation, help in every time of need, and bring us right through our pilgrimage to the end, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us. He who is of the seed of David according to the flesh, and Son of God, has passed through the heavens, and is our faithful, unchanging, and sympathizing High Priest; and, when He comes the second time and takes His Messiah throne, He will be, according to the prophetic word, "a priest upon his throne" — both king and priest on earth. (Zechariah 11:13.)

He is, however, soon coming to reign, "for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto THE SON; that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him . . . he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." (John 5:22-27.) Again we read that God "will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all in that he hath raised him from among the dead." (Acts 17:31.) The Son being now at the right hand of God is "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Man is yet to be set over the works of God's hands. Man (not angels) is yet to subdue all things unto Himself. "For unto angels hath he not put in subjection the (habitable) world to come;" but quoting from Psalms 8:1-9 : and applying it to Jesus, the Son of man, he says, "But one in a certain place, testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him? thou madest him a little lower than the angels [applied to Jesus in Hebrews 2:9.] Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." (Vers. 5-8.) Thus we see that the Son who made the worlds, who became incarnate, who was tempted, who suffered and died, was victorious over death and Satan; and who ascended into the heavens, sat down on the right hand of God, and entered upon His priestly functions, is yet to come forth and take His rightful place over all things, execute all

judgment, and subdue all things unto Himself. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." No doubt one chief reason why the glory and perfections of the sacred person of THE SON are thus so fully brought out in the first and second chapters of the Hebrews is to set forth the infinite value of the one sacrifice, and the perfectness of His priestly office, for there must necessarily be an everlasting efficacy connected with all that He did. Hence, as to the offering, we read, "By one offering he hath perfected for ever [or, in perpetuity] them that are sanctified;" and, as concerning priesthood, we are told, There were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: and "every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever [or in perpetuity] sat down on the right hand of God." (Hebrews 7:23; Hebrews 12:14.) Thus, through the infinite efficacy of the one offering, the worshippers, instead of having to do with many sacrifices which could not take away sins, are once purged, and have no more conscience of sins, so that the Holy Ghost can indwell them and unite them to Christ in the heavens; such have also liberty to draw near to God — to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, where our High Priest is, and where His blood ever speaks. Instead therefore of there being now "a remembrance of sins," we remember Him, who has by His one offering for ever put away sin. Hence, though sin is in us, we have no sin on us; for we are cleansed, sanctified and perfected for ever by the will of God through one offering; and God has said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Christ being now in heaven is the clearest proof that our sins have been borne, suffered for, and are gone for ever. We have, therefore, "no more conscience of sins." How rich and abundant is the grace of God to us in Christ!

If, then, in virtue of the accomplished work of THE SON, the conscience is purged, the veil is rent, and He is gone into heaven itself by His own blood, we, as purged worshippers, necessarily have access to God with confidence; our hearts are attracted to where He now is, so that we run the race set before us according to His word; and we also take that position here which is suited to His mind. Hence the believer is looked at in the closing chapter of this Epistle as a happy worshipper, an earnest runner, and a faithful bearer of the reproach of Christ. He is a worshipper inside the veil, where Jesus is, a runner of a race looking stedfastly unto Jesus, and outside the camp with a rejected Jesus bearing His reproach. The liberty of access for the worshipper is here contrasted with the way of approach, while the first tabernacle was standing, according to the only ritual divinely-instituted but now done away in Christ. It was characterised by distance from God, for the veil excluded them. It was not rent — the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; so that they never knew what it was to be in the presence of God, as purged worshippers. The priesthood too was of an earthly and successional order, confined to an earthly line of things (not heavenly) as between the people and God. It was a changeable priesthood, and often interrupted by death. There was also "a worldly sanctuary" — a place of worship on earth, a material building, which was truly, and the only one ever recognised as, the house of God. Such was the Jewish order of things. Whereas Christianity tells us of distance having been removed by the veil being rent from the top to the bottom, when Jesus died upon the cross, so that the worshipper comes now with boldness into the holiest of all. The order of priesthood is heavenly and eternal, all believers being made priests, and Jesus the Son of God being the unchangeable High Priest. Worship therefore is not now connected with a building on earth, but with the holiest of all above, "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man." Because the Lord's people are His

house, there is now no building on earth, which can be truthfully designated a house of God. (See Hebrews 3:6.) It was therefore said by our adorable Lord, "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20.) To attach the idea of a sanctuary now to any building on earth is then so far to abandon christian ground, and to go back to the Jews' religion; which is not only dishonouring to the Lord, but far more damaging to souls than many imagine; because it throws them at a distance from God, and necessitates their requiring a humanly-ordered priesthood to come between themselves and God. This the natural man likes, because it gives importance to men; while he rebels at the thoughts of divine grace, and refuses the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. But, blessed be God, we have remission of sins, and we have boldness to enter where He is. Hence we are welcomed with "Come boldly to the throne of grace." Do we know what it is to be inside the veil, in the sweet consciousness of God's "perfect love" and in the enjoyment of "perfect peace," while our hearts at the same time are going out to the Father in worship and thanksgiving? It need scarcely be said that this is not the sinner drawing near in order to be cleansed, but the worshipper entering in with boldness, because he is cleansed, and has "no more conscience of sins." Hence it is written, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:22.) Our Lord referred to this remarkable change in the character of worship. He said to the woman of Samaria, "Believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father . . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24.) Worship then must be "in spirit;" suited to the nature of God, and "in truth," or according to God's own revelation of His mind. Happy indeed are those who thus worship the Father! At the same time the believer is deeply conscious he is in a world where Jesus was but is not, and is running on to where He is. The spiritual worshipper is also then a devoted runner, and in so doing he is exhorted to drop every weight which impedes his course, to lay aside unbelief in all its delusive forms — that easily besetting sin — and to run the race set before him. (Hebrews 12:1-3.) He is encouraged to run, not to loiter, nor to seek a resting place, where the faithful Forerunner had none; but to follow on in the race with patient persevering faith. Not with spasmodic or desultory efforts, but with patience; not looking to men, however well they may have been reported for their faith: but to keep the eye steadily on Him who has run the race perfectly, who knows every step of the way, every impediment and temptation, and is now sitting on the throne of God. We are then to run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus (or looking stedfastly on Jesus) where He now is. Thus turning from every other object, and fixing the eye of our heart on Him, the Leader and Completer (not of our faith, but) of faith, we must look stedfastly and dependently on Him who has trodden the path of faith perfectly from the beginning to the end; for all our resources are in Him. We are enjoined also to "consider him," whose path was beset so painfully with opposition and trial; for when we well consider Him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against Himself, we become so cheered and strengthened that we do not grow weary and faint in our minds. The blessed Lord had joy in prospect, and so we have the bright hope of being with Him, and like Him for ever. We are told that "for the joy which was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The Forerunner is for us entered within the veil, and we are to run the race with patience looking unto Him.

We are also to bear the reproach of Christ. We cannot now be associated with a worldly system of religion on earth, for the veil is rent. He suffered without the gate, and we are exhorted to go forth unto Him without the camp. Our place then here is to suffer with Christ in His rejection. God hath highly exalted Him, and has made Him the central object of His counsels; Christ must therefore be the true and only centre for the faithful here. False religiousness is as displeasing to the Lord as irreligiousness itself. Yet there is a way for faith in the darkest times. The Lord has interests still on earth of deepest moment to Him. He cannot bear what is evil. It is only the more hateful to Him, when His holy name is used to accredit it; though ecclesiastical evil is often the last thing which arouses the conscience. Still the word to the faithful is "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity," and "go forth unto Him without the camp." This brings its "reproach," but it is the path of blessing. To turn away from what is not according to His truth, "and to go forth unto him without the camp" is clearly His will concerning us. It may entail painful severances; but to be out to the Lord, and "with those who call on his name out of a pure heart," is the divinely ordered path; and that is enough for a true heart. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." (Hebrews 13:11-13.) It has been rightly said that a worldly religion, which forms a system in which the world can walk, and in which the religious element is adapted to man on earth, is the denial of Christianity. May we know increasingly the blessedness of being inside the veil as purged worshippers, outside the camp with Christ in faithfulness to His name, and patient runners of the race which ere long will bring us into His presence for ever: "for yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Hebrews 10:37.) When the Lord presents Himself as "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," it is immediately said "and the Spirit and the bride say Come"! so we may be assured it is the apprehension of His blessed person that will keep fresh in our soul the hope of His coming — the earnest desire of seeing His face. H. H. Snell.

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