

WRITINGS OF R DUNCANSON

by R. Duncanson

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by R. Duncanson, compiled for study and devotional reading.

32 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00.00. Duncanson, R. - Library
2. S. Faithfulness in a Day of Ruin.
3. S. A Few Thoughts on Joh_14:1-31.
4. S. A Few Thoughts on Joh_16:1-33.
5. S. A Few Thoughts on Joh_8:1-59.
6. S. A Meditation on Joh_15:1-27.
7. S. God's Will for the Blessing of His Own.
8. S. Life Indeed
9. S. Moses' Love for Israel.
10. S. My Father Worketh Hitherto, and I Work
11. S. Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles.
12. S. Reasons for the Father's Love
13. S. Reconciliation and the Mystery of God.
14. S. Remnant Features
15. S. Salient Features in John's Gospel.
16. S. Sonship.
17. S. The Call of Saul of Tarsus.
18. S. The Call of Saul of Tarsus.
19. S. The Coming of the Spirit.
20. S. The Father's Love Revealed in the Son.
21. S. The Father's Love.
22. S. The Father's Love.
23. S. The Father's Love.
24. S. The Glories of the Son.
25. S. The Glory of the Son.
26. S. The Path of Faith.
27. S. The Prayer in Eph_3:1-21.
28. S. The Rejection of the Testimony of the Son of God.
29. S. The Witness of the Spirit in Stephen.
30. S. The Witness of the Spirit in Stephen.
31. S. This Same Jesus
32. S. Truth for the Last Days.

00.00. Duncanson, R. - Library

Duncanson, R. - Library

A Few Thoughts on John 8:1-59.

A Few Thoughts on John 14:1-31.

A Few Thoughts on John 16:1-33.

A Meditation on John 15:1-27.

God's Will for the Blessing of His Own.

Life Indeed

Moses' Love for Israel.

My Father Worketh Hitherto, and I Work

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles.

Reasons for the Father's Love

Reconciliation and the Mystery of God.

Remnant Features

Salient Features in John's Gospel.

Sonship.

The Coming of the Spirit.

The Father's Love.

The Father's Love Revealed in the Son.

The Glories of the Son.

The Glory of the Son.

The Path of Faith.

The Prayer in Ephesians 3:1-21.

The Rejection of the Testimony of the Son of God.

This Same Jesus

Truth for the Last Days.

S. Faithfulness in a Day of Ruin.

Faithfulness in a Day of Ruin.

We are living in a day of ruin and departure from those precious things that our God would have us to enjoy. But we can only enjoy them if we walk in the path God has marked out for us. In 2 Timothy 1:1-18, we have the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind; three essentials to maintain us in this evil day. But in ver. 8 we are exhorted not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Faithfulness to the Lord's testimony may bring reproach, hatred and all the bitter feelings of which the flesh is capable; but when we know that we have been called with an holy calling, according to God's purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, how great is the consolation and encouragement. All has now come to light in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; death is annulled, and incorruptibility has been brought to light in the Gospel. God's great victory is seen in the resurrection of Christ; and no one can overthrow that foundation on which God has laid a new order of things in association with Christ for evermore.

R. Duncanson.

S. A Few Thoughts on Joh_14:1-31.

A Few Thoughts on John 14:1-31. In this chapter the Lord is inside with His own intimating to them His departure to be with the Father. Laying aside His garments He takes the attitude of a servant in washing the disciples' feet, teaching them that moral suitability must be theirs if they are to have part with Him in the place into which He was about to enter. Then in John 14:1-31 He opens out to them the Father's House, the place from whence He came, and where He has ever the joy and delight of the Father's affections. All that the Father is is treasured in the affections of the Son, and all that the Son is is enshrined in the Father's heart. As Man, the Son is about to enter that scene of holy delight and joy, and He tells His own that His great joy will be to have them with Him there.

He opens out to them in John 14:6 what He is, showing that if we approach the Father it must be through the Son. Paul speaking also of this says, "Through Him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:18). He is also the Truth, the divine revelation of all that the Father is in grace. In Him alone shines out all the holy love and affections of the Father, creating in our hearts a response to all that He is, thus securing worshippers for Himself. The Father is also revealed in the words of the Son which bring out the details of those blessed communications made known to His own; His works giving the outward expression of the revelation in power. How our souls adore as we contemplate the patient way in which our God has been pleased to make Himself known.

John 14:12 is the continuation of that revelation in His own because He has gone to the Father; while John 14:15 shows that we are to be marked by love and obedience during His absence. The life that was manifested in the Son, and that in keeping His Father's commandments, is to be manifested in us, through keeping His commandments. His Name was ever available before the Father for that rich supply of grace through which the Father is glorified in the Son; in the manifestation of the features of Christ in His own. At the request of the Son, in sending the Comforter, the Father makes full provision for maintaining all the interests of Christ. But the Comforter is also the Spirit of Truth, and brings out the moral characteristics seen down here in the Son. Dwelling in us the Spirit maintains in us the power of what is divine; and as being with us He carries out everything for God in separation from all that is of the world. He would not leave His own orphans in the world, and in resurrection He sees them again, taking His place in their midst, bringing joy and gladness to their hearts. It is as beyond death that we live with Him, in a life that death cannot touch, in a life that gives pleasure to the eye and heart of the Father. The present knowledge of the Son dwelling in the affections of the Father, and our dwelling in His, opens out to us that circle of divine affections which we shall for ever enjoy. The Son is also in us to bring out in manifestation His own moral features. From John 14:21 we have what is individual, "He that hath my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me." The keeping of His commandments is the proof of our love to Him. All that was so blessedly manifested in Him is to come out in His own; the life that was in Him, the grace that so richly cared for them, and the love with which He deeply loved them. As these things are kept by us we are blessedly compensated in being loved by the Father, and being loved by the Son. What a precious portion for us! Then again the obedient one

has the secret spiritual manifestation which sustains Him in power that will carry him triumphantly through all here until the end. John, in the Isle of Patmos, would enjoy all the blessedness of this manifestation, giving him a rich taste of all that was divine. In John 14:23 we come to the keeping of His word, that testimony so blessedly set forth in John 8:1-59 by the Sent One of the Father, a testimony that presented to man the wealth of the Father's grace, but which he refused and set at naught in his hatred to God. God was not speaking from the mount that might be touched, but in grace that man might be brought near to Him. This is the word that the overcomer keeps, which when cherished in the heart enriches the spirit, and causes responsive affection to the Father and the Son. The Spirit has also been given that all the precious ministry of Jesus might be retained and recorded, so that those who would be brought in through the word of the disciples might through it enter into and enjoy all the varied glories, beauties, and moral excellencies of the blessed Person who gave continual delight and joy to God the Father. The closing verses of this wonderful chapter show us the Prince of this world finding no response when he comes to the Son. What a great moral triumph over the originator of all evil in this world. The Son's love to the Father is manifested in His going to the cross, in accepting every-thing from the Father's hand, and in bowing in lowly submission to His will, so that all the counsels of divine love should be brought to light for the joy and pleasure of the Father.

R. Duncanson.

S. A Few Thoughts on Joh_16:1-33.

A Few Thoughts on John 16:1-33. In John 16:1-33 we have further divine communications from the Son in relation to the path of the disciples through this world. Like the man who confessed Jesus in John 9:1-41 they would be put out of the synagogues; and in their blind, religious zeal, and hatred of the Name of Jesus, the Jews would even put them to death. This was fulfilled in the martyrdom of Stephen and James the brother of John; and also in the activities of Saul of Tarsus, who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord until, in mercy, the Lord intervened to secure him as a vessel to bring the light of the knowledge of God to the Gentiles. It was ignorance of the Father and the Son that caused the Jews so to act, even as Paul confessed, "I did it ignorantly, in unbelief" (1 Timothy 1:13).

Thus forewarned, the disciples would remember when the time came, that the Lord knew all about what they were passing through. He had not told them these things when first they came to Him, but on account of His impending departure it was necessary to tell them what lay ahead. From the beginning He had sheltered them from the hatred of the world: every assault being against His own Person. As the Master of every situation He met and overthrew every form of opposition; the open attacks with the wiles and seductions of the enemy. The path marked out in love for His own was the path that He Himself had trodden; and now He tells them, when sorrow was filling their hearts, that it was expedient for Him to go away in order to send them the Comforter, whose gracious support they would have during His absence. As regards the world, the Spirit would bring demonstration to it of sin, righteousness and judgment. The refusal of the Son of God in unbelief marks the world in which the Son of God was, and in which the Spirit now dwells in believers. Righteousness is connected with the Son in the presence of the Father: righteousness fully demonstrated, yea accomplished in His work on the cross, and vindicated in His entering the presence of His Father, where, alone, and hidden from every eye (saving as seen by faith) His Father finds the deepest satisfaction in Him and in all that He has wrought for His glory and pleasure. If the prince of this world is judged, the world of which he is prince is judged with him. How can the world escape the divine judgment when it has followed Satan to cast out the Son of God? The Lord had many things to communicate to His loved ones, but they were as yet unable to bear them: the Spirit however would guide them into all the truth as being fully conversant with all the mind of God. He would not speak as the source of His communications, but as telling out what He heard, thus witnessing to all connected with the Son in the Father's presence, and showing the wide range of the glories that shall shine out in undimmed lustre in Him Who is Head over all things, the glorified Son of Man. How the Spirit delights to present the glory of Jesus, to receive of His and show it unto us. In that day He will not be seen as the lowly Nazarene, but having all authority and power He shall command the homage of every creature in the wide universe. Exulting in these wonderful communications of the Spirit of God, the disciples would gladly suffer the persecution foretold by the Lord, counting it all joy, and conscious too that it worked for them in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory. But there is also the present glory of the Son as centre of all the Father's counsels, His headship of the body; His headship too of every principality

and authority. Then there are the things of the Father, which are brought out for us in John's epistle; and brought out that we might be in communion with the Father and the Son, enjoying the eternal life that is ours in the Son, and knowing the blessedness of being children of God. In a little while they would not behold Him, for He was to enter into death; but it would only be for a little while, for in resurrection He would be with them again. While explaining this to them the Lord evidently dwells on what was immediately before the disciples; but it may be that the words used by the disciples, and recorded by the Spirit carry the thought somewhat further. Might there not be included the time of His session at the right hand of God? During this little while of His absence from us He is with the Father, but soon. He will come again to take us to be for ever with Him, and then we shall see Him as He is.

Having come out of death the Lord gives to His own a joy that the world cannot take from them (see John 15:11); and in the day of their joy, though He was absent from them, they would receive from the Father whatever they asked in the Name of the Son. This divine certainty of receiving what they asked would give them fulness of joy. While with them He had spoken to them in proverbs, but in resurrection He would declare unto them the Father's Name, bringing them into relationship and intimacy with the Father; meanwhile assuring them of the Father's love for them, because they loved Him, the Son, and because they believed that He came forth from God. The word for love here is stronger than the usual word: it is used in John 5:20, and in John 20:2. It gave the Father joy and delight that the disciples were attached to Jesus and had faith in His Son, having received His testimony, while the world refused the fact that He came from God. At the close of the chapter the Lord indicates that in the moment of His final rejection His own would be severely tested and they would be scattered, each to his own. Left alone, so far as the disciples were concerned, He would not be alone, because He would still have the companionship of the Father. Nothing could interrupt the communion that ever existed between the Son and the Father whom He came to reveal, whose grace he had made known in its wondrous depths, and whose counsels He had richly brought to light. In the final word the Lord exhorts His own, for the moment of His absence from them, to be of good cheer. Tribulation would be theirs from the world: in Him, Who overcame the world, they would have peace. What a triumph for our hearts to contemplate. He knows no defeat; He has vanquished every foe, and has entered victoriously into the Father's House.

R. Duncanson. The Lord is Himself gone before He has marked out the path that we tread:

It's as sure as the love we adore, We have nothing to fear nor to dread.

S. A Few Thoughts on Joh_8:1-59.

A Few Thoughts on John 8:1-59. Our hearts are touched as we read the last verse of John 7:1-53 and John 8:1. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, had said "Does our law judge a man before it have first heard from himself, and know what he does?" and this had broken up the meeting of the council; "And every one went to His home, but Jesus went to the mount of Olives." The Son of the Father is in the world as a lonely stranger, rejected by His own from the outset, and misunderstood by His disciples. The failure of the disciples to understand Him is seen in His dealings with one of Samaria's erring daughters. There, in John 4:1-54, He brought the light to bear upon her conscience and revealed Himself to her, so that she might judge her ruin and her shame and receive into her soul the living water, and become a worshipper of the Father in spirit and in truth. "The disciples asked Him saying, Rabbi, eat. But He said to them, I have food to eat which ye do not know. The disciples therefore said to one another. Has anyone brought Him anything to eat." They did not understand that His food was to do the Father's will and to finish His work: they could not enter into this that His Father's glory was ever before Him. His retirement to the mount of Olives bespeaks the loneliness of the Son of God, but also His unbroken communion with the Father. It was thus that He enjoyed the special refreshment, renewed strength and the Father's support, by which on the morrow He would render His final testimony to His own people, the Jews. Entering into the temple, early in the morning, all the people come to Him, and He sat down and taught them. The poor were ever ready to listen to His rich divine unfoldings, which were the joy of His own heart, but the scribes and the Pharisees were ever plotting against Him, trying to catch Him in His words, and finding fault with His works of grace and power. They bring to Him a woman, taken in adultery, saying, "Teacher . . . in the law Moses has commanded us to stone such; thou therefore, what sayest thou?" But Jesus, having stooped down, wrote with His finger on the ground. He was writing in His path through this world the story of the love of God, and this is indicated in His action here; writing with the finger of humanity, for the Word had become flesh, not the commandments of the law which God had written on the tables of stone, but the Father's commandment, which for His own was life eternal (John 12:49-50).

Lifting Himself up the Lord says to them "Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone at her." Their persistent asking but brings from the Son of God the out-shining of the light; a light that manifested divine grace to the poor sinner and brought conviction to the accusers. It was true that Moses had spoken of judgment for sin, but this could not hinder the outshining of the Father's grace. But even in the giving of the law had not Israel sinned before the tables were brought into their midst? Did God intervene in unsparing judgment? True there was judgment, but judgment mingled with mercy, else not one of those in the camp of Israel would have been left alive. And was not the adulteress but a picture of Israel? The Lord had to say they were "A wicked and adulterous generation" (Matthew 12:39); and it was to them He had brought the grace of God. He had not come to judge them, but to save; and His attitude to the woman was just the attitude of God to the adulterous nation. But there was not one among them without sin, so there was no one to carry out the judgment of the law against the sinner. He was without sin, but He had not come to

execute the judgment of the law. Not one could stand the light that shone in the Person of the Son: they had come to plead against the sinner, but like their fathers in the wilderness they are exposed as sinners, and being convicted flee from the presence of the light.

After answering, the Lord again stooped and wrote on the ground; no doubt recalling the second writing of the law, which was given with the declaration of God's mercy and longsuffering (Exodus 34:1-7). Without this mercy all Israel must have perished: so here the poor sinner is spared, and retained in the presence of the Lord Jesus to learn of the ministry of grace of Him who had not come to condemn but to forgive.

"Again therefore Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world; he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). He will not confine Himself within the narrow limits of Judaism, but presents Himself as the light of the world, so that in Him life is made available for every man. He is the source of life for "In Him was life," and He is also the giver; and He is the object of all who avail themselves of the light, so that they should not walk in darkness. Poor, puny man, with his boasted intelligence, charges the Son of God with bearing record of Himself; and this but brings out further light on the greatness of His Person. It is true that He had not come to bear witness to Himself; His mission was to speak of the Father who had sent Him; but even if He bore witness to Himself it was a true witness, for He knew what they did not know, from whence He came and whither He was going. He could speak with divine certainty, knowing that He came from the Father and was returning to the Father. How simple the words, but how rich the unfoldings; He had come to tell them of the Father, of His grace and love, and of the divine affection that was the deep joy of His own heart and into which He would lead His own. (May our hearts take in more of these wonderful unfoldings which the Son delighted to make known!) Not only was His witness true, but His judgment was true, a judgment in which He was not alone, for the Father was with Him in it. How different their judgments in the flesh! He has the constant companionship of the Father, He is not alone (John 8:29; John 16:32); He has the continual joy and support of the Father's company. What a meditation for our hearts; to contemplate the joy of divine Persons who are the source and manifestation of the eternal life that is ours to enjoy. The Father being with Him, and He being the manifestation of the Father, is the proof that His word is true. In John 8:21 Jesus says "I go my way, and whither I go, ye cannot come." He was about to enter into death to secure all that lay in the Father's will for His own glory and for the blessing of His own; and having accomplished that will in death He would enter into the Father's presence to be glorified, the answer to His perfect obedience in life and death. As for the Jews, having rejected the Son, they would look in vain for their Messiah, and would die in their sins; this being the destiny of all who refuse the presentation of the Person of the Son of God. But Jesus not only tells of their destiny, He points out to them the sphere to which they belong, saying, "Ye are from beneath." All the depth of moral darkness was theirs, and this shut them out from the wonderful revelation that shone out in Him Who is from above, from the dwelling place of all light, glory and blessedness. He had come to attract men to Himself that they might taste all the joys of that heavenly scene, and be in the joy of His company for ever. The Jews belonged to this world to which Jesus did not belong; He had no part in the religious system in which the will of man was predominant, and where there was the display of all man's wickedness, enmity and hatred, in his dread opposition to Him Who had come from the Father's world to tell out the Father's grace.

There can be no doubt that this chapter gives us the rejection of the testimony of the Son of God. They ask Him in John 8:25 "Who art Thou?" and He answers "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." From the outset of His testimony He had spoken to them of His Father. He was the eternal Word, the full expression of all the mind of God; He was the only-begotten Son Who ever dwells in the bosom of the Father; and the Father dwelt in Him, manifesting in Him His works and His words. What an object of adoration and worship; and how highly privileged we are to thus contemplate the greatness and glory of the Son, and to know that we have been enriched from the Father's resources, manifested in Him. He had many things to say and judge of those who refused His testimony, yea the Father's testimony in Him: but He was there to vindicate the Father as true, even if they refused what He spoke to them of the Father. But they did not understand that He was speaking of the Father: such was their state of darkness.

Anticipating His rejection, the Lord speaks of His death, saying, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man. then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things," John 8:28. The Father was His constant companion, for He always sought to please Him. In past dispensations, men of God sought to please God, but every one was marked by failure; but this blessed Person was perfection in all His ways, His service being marked by constant activity and energy, and with a divine fragrance that the Father only could appreciate. As Jesus spake these words, many believed on Him; but all must be divinely tested, so He says "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:30-32). In natural pride they boast that Abraham was their father, and that they were never in bondage to any, manifesting that they never had realised their bondage to sin. Only the Son could give them freedom from such a bondage, and bring them into true, divine liberty. They were naturally Abraham's seed, but in spiritual things nature has no place; indeed they are found here seeking to kill the Son of God. When natural pride finds no place for itself in what is divine it manifests its hatred in bitter opposition. Therefore Jesus refuses their claim as children of Abraham, they were not spiritually of his generation, for they did not do his works; nor were they the children of God, as they claimed, else would they have loved the Son of God, present among them. They stand before Him., convicted; having refused all that He set forth in testimony from the Father; they are manifested as having the devil for their father. In the midst of this company Jesus stands alone in His perfections, the pure, spotless, undefiled, Son of the Father's love, none able to convince Him of sin. How very solemn the dishonour poured out upon the holy Son of God; how wonderful the grace that meets all in meekness and with truth, truth that sets Him forth in all the greatness of His Person, as only seeking the Father's glory, yet able to keep His own from seeing and tasting death; the great I AM, Who existed before Abraham. Not content with rejecting His testimony, denying His personal relationship with the Father, and saying that He was a Samaritan and had a devil, they take up stones to cast at Him. Such is man: thoroughly exposed in the light of Christ's Person and testimony; the brighter the light, the richer the grace, the more the awful depths of man's moral depravity, spiritual wickedness, and hatred to all that is divine, are manifested.

R. Duncanson. No robed Pharisee could stand Before the Saviour's face:

Upon the soil His holy hand Was writing words of grace.

S. A Meditation on Joh_15:1-27.

A Meditation on John 15:1-27. In this chapter the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as the true vine, the source of all vitality and spiritual power to the branches. The eleven disciples, to whom He spoke, were the branches, for it was while He was on earth that the blessed Lord was the true vine. They were connected with Him that they might bring forth the fruit that would give joy and delight to the Father's heart. This could only be through their abiding in Jesus, through dependence and communion with Him. Nothing from the natural heart could bring pleasure to God, only that which is derived from His own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 15:6 shows that there is responsibility, for of Judas and such it is written, "Unless any one abide in me he is cast out as the branch, and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Judas had been long in the company of the Lord, but he abode not in Him; to the very end he was unmoved by the grace and love so richly bestowed, and came to a dreadful end. As abiding in Him, and His words abiding in us (John 15:7), whatsoever we should ask would be granted. His words give the direction in which we could be here for the Father's will and pleasure; and these controlling all our thoughts and affections, would lead us to ask what would produce what would glorify the Father. Hence we read, "In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and ye shall become disciples of mine." How great is the privilege of the believer of being in this world to bring glory to the Father, and to be a true disciple of the Lord Jesus; following in the steps of Him Who constantly brought glory to the Father's name.

During the absence of the Lord Jesus, we are to continue in His love, a love whose character and measure are seen in the love of the Father to the Son in Manhood. Only as abiding in such love can we respond to the Father as He desires. But we are to keep the commandments of the Lord; commandments of which He Himself was the expression in His life on earth. It is not like the demand to keep the ten commandments, which held out life to those who kept them; but having communicated His own life to us, He has given us also the power to manifest in love towards one another, the same love that He expressed towards us. We have also His joy, that by which He carried out all for the Father's pleasure; and having this our joy will indeed be full. To bring His own into closest intimacy with Him, He was laying down His life for them; and to them as His friends He would communicate all the things that He had heard from the Father. How He delights in the company of His own, and desires the real confidence of our hearts, so that we may be truly here as those in whom His own blessed features can be manifested. We are His by sovereign choice: we did not choose Him; He chose us that we should bear fruit, and that that fruit should remain. This fruit is surely the divine product of His love in us, that which is ever pleasurable to the Father.

All these communications have been given in relation to the place of testimony. In this path He marks out the sufferings through which His own will pass during His absence. The world would pour upon the disciples of Jesus the same hatred that was shown to their Master, and mete out to them the same persecution; and all because they hated the Son and the Father. The presence of the Son fully exposed the true character of the world. The light in which the Father was seen in the

Person of the Son also exposed the utter wickedness of the world, leaving the leaders of the world with no cloak for their sin; their true moral condition completely revealed.

He now speaks to His own of the Spirit Who would come and bring witness of His present place with the Father, presenting Him to them as a glorified Man at God's right hand, above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. We see this manifested to Stephen, who saw Jesus in the centre of the glory of God; and we have the results of that moment of witness in Saul of Tarsus, who was taken up by God to bring out the Gospel of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The disciples, who had companied with Him here, were to be witnesses of His humiliation, death and resurrection; and this is recorded for us in the Acts. Their witness was carried out in power and through suffering, but they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. We have also their witness brought out in the 1st Epistle of John, left on record for His own, who should remain until His coming, that they might walk in the light and enjoyment of that which abides.

R. Duncanson.

S. God's Will for the Blessing of His Own.

God's Will for the Blessing of His Own. In Colossians 1:1-29 we find the beloved apostle Paul praying for the saints in relation to the will of God. He sought that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This shows us what the moral condition of every Christian should be. We can never walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing without this moral condition. The subject of the will of God is a vast one, and to enter into it we must first of all understand what was wrought out in the death of Christ. That blessed One had come into Manhood to enter into the sufferings of death that God might be glorified in relation to sin, and because of what Christ has done God is able to justify all who believe in Jesus. Not only that, beloved, but God has raised Jesus from the dead, and in His resurrection divine power has been displayed, and it is in Christ risen from the dead that we are justified. Every bit of fear is taken from our hearts; we have peace with God, and we boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have been reconciled to God. The cross has brought to an end before God all that we were as in the flesh, in order that we might be able to take account of ourselves as in Christ. Having learned these great truths, we can enter into God's mind for us. The will of God can be viewed in many ways; we can think of it in relation to His people of Old, or can view it in relation to His Son who carried it out perfectly, or we can consider it in relation to the work of the Father in making us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. How wonderful to think that it was in the Father's will to deliver us from the authority of darkness, and to translate us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. And this is what He has done: He has brought us to where we can be engaged with the Son of His love, who was ever the object of His affections.

It is the Father's will to have us in the Son before His face, redeemed from all that we were, having redemption in the Son, and occupied with the Son in the glories of His Person. In Manhood, the Son is the image of the invisible God, and the Firstborn of all the creation, but these things belong to Him as Man because He is God. What lay in the depths of the heart of God has been told out in His own Son, who stepped into this present world to bring to light all the will of God for the blessing of His own.

R. Duncanson.

S. Life Indeed

Life Indeed.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). In this verse of Scripture the act of eating is mentioned. There is nothing imaginary or mystical about eating, and when we eat a definite action is performed; we have taken something in, and in taking it we possess it in the truest sense of the word; we appropriate the thing eaten in the fullest measure, so that it becomes part and parcel of ourselves. Moreover, eating is a very individual matter, as one cannot eat for another: each must do it for himself if nourishment is to be derived.

There is an oft recurring phrase in our conversation: — "There is an exception to every rule." In this beautiful verse of Scripture, spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ we have a rule and an exception. The RULE is that as ordinary men and women, poor sinful mortals, we have no life in us. Here are the words of the Son of God, "Verily, verily I say unto you . . . ye have no life in you." Ponder these very solemn words, dear Reader. This rule includes each one of us, for every child born into the world, starts out on life's journey without divine life. Listen again to the words of Jesus, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Here is the EXCEPTION: those who have eaten the flesh of the Son of Man drunk His blood no longer remain in their hopeless state of moral and spiritual death, away from God, but have His life in them.

Eating and drinking are the strongest terms of APPROPRIATION, so that in eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood we appropriate His death for ourselves, by living faith, a faith that brings what belongs to that death into the deep recesses of the heart. Look at Ephesians 3:17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," and again in 1 Peter 3:15, "Set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts" (R.V.). As we lay hold on Christ by faith, whether in death or in life (for He is risen from the dead) we take Him into our hearts, making Him our very own, so that He becomes part of ourselves.

What are we to learn from "The flesh of the Son of Man," and from "His blood?" The Holy Spirit, in John 1:1-51 speaks thus of Him, "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh." Before angels, before worlds, before time, before men, the Son was in the eternal beginning, but in one act, the Son of God has taken a mighty stoop from Godhead glory into Manhood. Here then, His flesh speaks of His humanity, His down-stooping grace. His blood as apart from His flesh surely speaks of His death; and it was with death in view He became flesh; an absolute necessity if God was to be glorified in relation to sin.

We discern in His flesh and His blood that which meets the intrinsic holiness of God, and that which meets our state and our guilt as dead and guilty before Him; and feeding thus upon His death we partake of LIFE, eternal life, and enter into the wonderful love made manifest in that wondrous death.

Andrew Duncanson.

Power from on High.

Christianity subsists in the power of God. The greatest man upon earth can communicate nothing. No man however great ever brought to Christ any natural quality that could be used in the service of Christ . . . Power from on high is the only power that can accomplish anything for God.

J. B.

S. Moses' Love for Israel.

Moses' Love for Israel.

It is very interesting to see how deeply attached Moses was to God's earthly people. As their chosen leader, it was given to him to lead them out of Egypt towards the land that God had promised to their fathers. Spite of Israel's rebellious ways and ingratitude, his love for them remained the same: he had the marks of a true servant of God. In the Epistle to the Corinthians we find the Apostle Paul tested in the same way; yet his love remained unchanged towards the saints of God, even as he said, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." During the time Moses was on the mount with God, receiving the commandments for the people, poor Israel was speaking against God's chosen leader, saying, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Instead of tracing all the way that God in mercy had led them, and recalling the divine power that had delivered them from Egypt and Pharaoh's bondage, and thinking of all God's care and provision during their journey; they forget God, speak against His servant, turn to idolatry, and give themselves up to the gratification of the flesh. How little had they entered into God's purpose for them, or appreciated all He had done for them! How grievous was Aaron's failure, in stripping the people of their ornaments, to make a calf for the people to worship, as turning their backs on God! Had Aaron been in the full light of God's purpose, he would have maintained the people for God during the absence of Moses. Is not this where many have made shipwreck? God's purpose must be kept ever before us, maintained in spiritual energy and divine affections, in communion with God, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith.

God communicated to Moses Israel's departure from Him, even before he left His presence on the mount; and spoke of His intention of consuming the people. This was a great trial for Moses, yet he manifested his great love for Israel in speaking to God of His purpose respecting them; and how He had brought them forth from Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand; and recalls the promise God had made to their fathers. God delights in intercession, and repents of the evil He thought to do unto the people.

Descending from the mount with the two tables of stone in his hands, containing God's commandments, Moses hears the noise of singing; and drawing near to the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing. His holy, righteous anger waxed hot; and with divinely given wisdom he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount. It was indeed great wisdom, and mercy, too; but for that act, the whole of the people must have perished there in the righteous judgment of God. Although God's thought for His people is blessing, He cannot overlook their failure. There must needs be great heart-searching and self-judgment. Israel's fleshly merriment soon brings their greatest sorrow. The calf is ground to powder, and they must needs drink the fruit of their sin; and shorn of their adornment they must stand exposed before their God. These things have been written for our learning, and it behoves each one of us to walk softly and in humility of mind before our God. Here lies our true safety, for only as we walk before God in self-judgment,

and with chastened spirit, can we be maintained in the light of His purpose.

Moses, dear man of God, bows in contrition of spirit before Him, pleading that Israel belonged to God, and that He alone is capable of bringing them into the land of promise. There are many lessons to be learnt from Moses, to encourage us in this evil day. May we therefore endeavour to maintain that which God has so graciously given to us with the same fidelity and affection manifested in Moses! R. Duncanson.

What is Heaven? This is not the place for rest, but for watchfulness — watchfulness over every thought. But what is heaven? It is where I can let my heart flow out. That is an immense comfort! But here I must have my loins girded — my heart and every affection kept in order by the word of God. J. N. Darby.

S. My Father Worketh Hitherto, and I Work

"My Father Worketh Hitherto, and I Work."

(Revised notes of an address on John 5:14-30.)

How wonderful it is to think that the Son of the Father's bosom, Who alone knew its divine secrets, has become Man to tell out what God is, and to bring us into the knowledge of God and the purposes of His love. God's eternal thoughts were closed up in a scene into which man could not enter, so that they could not be spoken of by a Moses or by any of the prophets of old, but "The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In John 3:1-36 of this Gospel, the Son of God not only speaks of "earthly things," the things concerning the kingdom of God, but also of "heavenly things," the things concerning eternal life (John 3:12). He was the expression of that eternal life, the life that was with the Father in eternity, and had come to make it known, and to die upon the cross, so that those who believed in Him might have life eternal. In John 4:1-54, the Son speaks to the Samaritan woman about the worship of the Father, telling her that God did not seek the worship of Gerizim or Jerusalem, but the worship of those who should worship Him "in spirit and in truth." This worship for the Father could only be secured through the revelation of the Father in the Person of the Son, and in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God through Whom the divine life would be imparted to those who came to the Son.

John 5:1-47 shows us, in the impotent man, the helplessness of man under law. Angelic ministry could give occasional relief to those who could avail themselves of it, but the Son of God came in grace to manifest a divine power that could make men superior to their circumstances. The Father had been working hitherto; now the Son was present in this world to bring to light what God had been doing, and to work in richest grace, and in sovereign love, in relation to the deep secrets that had lain hidden in the bosom of the Father.

If the Son was working, it was not independently of the Father, for He says in John 5:19, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." When the rest of God was broken by the entry of sin into this world, the Father commenced to work in view of another world into which sin would never enter. In unison with the Father, the Son had come to be a workman in this world, working as the loved One of the Father, "For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these that ye may marvel."

Right down the ages the Son was the witness of all that the Father had wrought, and what the Son had just done in healing the impotent man was a work of the Father wrought by the Son. But there would be greater works than these that had already been manifested: the opening of the eyes of the man that was born blind was one of them, but resurrection and quickening are specially mentioned, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5:21). The resurrection of Lazarus was the earnest of what was to come, for the day will assuredly come when, at the bidding of the Son, "All that are in the graves

shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). Meanwhile, the quickening voice of the Son of God is heard in the souls of men; those who hear His word, and believe in Him Who sent Him, have eternal life; and the dead, who hear His voice, receive divine life in their souls.

All judgment too has been committed to the Son, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." The Son had come as Man into the world for the Father's glory, and the Father will take care of the honour of the One Who has glorified Him. Men have rejected the Son, and have put Him on a cross, but His glory and honour are secure in the Father's keeping. All men will yet be brought to the feet of the Son; those who have believed on Him gladly worship Him; those who have refused to honour Him in life will be compelled to bow before Him when He sits upon the judgment seat.

How great was the work of the Son of God in Manhood, yet He says, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). He was so thoroughly engaged with the Father's will that His works were in perfect unison with what the Father had been doing; and all His judgments were in the light of what the Father desired, Who had sent Him. What a wonderful contemplation this is for our hearts! We see the Son, a divine Person in Manhood, occupied only with the will of the Father, so that all His thoughts, works and judgments are in perfect consonance with that will.

R. Duncanson.

S. Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles.

(Revised notes of an address.) Scriptures read Colossians 1:23-29; Colossians 2:1-3. The Epistle to the Colossians brings specially before us the greatness of the Person of Christ. Ephesians is more occupied with the place and blessings into which God has brought us in the riches of His grace, but here it is the glory of the blessed Son of God. Because of the danger at Colosse, where the enemy was endeavouring to draw the hearts of the saints away from Christ and to let go the reality of His Headship, the Apostle Paul, according to the wisdom and discernment given to him by God, presented to them the Son of the Father's love in His pre-eminence. How precious it is beloved, to be thus occupied with Him who is the nursling of the Father's love, who glorified God in all His pathway through this world, and who now sits down at the Father's right hand above.

Once we were under the authority of darkness, but in the sovereign work of the Father we have been delivered from it, and we have been brought into the sphere where love is predominant. Here it is that we learn God's thoughts of love, while awaiting the moment of entering the Father's presence, where we shall have our portion with the saints in light, having already the fitness for it in the work of the Father's grace. It is very precious that the Apostle begins with the relationship of the Son to the Father when opening out the wide range of His glories before us. And it is to this great Person, the Son of the Father's love, the Head of the body, that we have been united. If the truth of this is maintained in our souls we shall be preserved from the dangers to which the Colossian saints were prone. Here we are in the place of responsibility, and there must be the maintenance of what the Gospel has brought to us.

Colossians 1:23. The hope of the Gospel is what lies before us in the place to which God has called us, and where we soon shall be in company with His Son. Israel's hopes were earthly, but the hope that has been brought to us is heavenly, as we read in Colossians 1:5. The Christian has all his blessings with Christ in another world, and the Apostle brings this before the Colossian saints so as to have them occupied with Christ in heaven. Paul was specially called to be minister of this Gospel, and it entailed great sufferings for him; but he can say, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you." All this suffering was for the Colossians, but it was also for us, that the Gospel with all its blessings and heavenly hope might be brought to us. How wonderful it is that he can rejoice in all the great suffering he passed through, but it was because of the great privilege given to him to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ — for His body's sake, which is the church." We know that Christ suffered on the cross, securing the redemption that gives us the forgiveness of sins, so that we might be brought to heavenly glory. Here we learn of Paul's sufferings to bring to the saints the truth of the church as the body of Christ, and all about Christ as the Head of the body. When on the way to Damascus he was laid hold of by Christ, who said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" This was the first intimation of the saints on earth being united to Christ as Head of the body.

Colossians 1:26-27. This great mystery, of which the Apostle was minister, had been hid from ages and generations, but now God desired to make known to His saints all the riches of the glory it contained. It is indeed blessed to know Christ as the Head of the body, and to know that He now dwells in the affections of His saints down here. Every feature of this great truth is given to us in testimony from God in the present dispensation. It tells us of Him who loves to dwell in us, who engages our hearts that our praises, adoration and worship might ascend to the Father. These things could only outflow through Him who dwells in the midst of His own. In John 20:1-31, when Christ came into the midst of His disciples, He showed them His hands and His side. Now He dwells among His own, and He is the hope of glory. At the present time, the Spirit of God is educating us, bringing before us the greatness of Christ in all His pre-eminence, and in all that He is for the pleasure of the Father.

Colossians 1:28-29. All the enemies of God and of His truth were set against the Apostle because of the wonderful testimony that he bore. Nothing less than presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus was before him; it was not enough to rescue men from the judgment of God; he desired every one to be brought to maturity in the truth of God. He had no strength of his own for this; but the mighty power of God, working in him mightily, enabled him to meet and overcome all the antagonism and all the opposition, so as to fulfil the commission given to him among the Gentiles. In Colossians 2:1 we see how the Apostle brings the sufferings through which he passed before the Colossian saints. All his conflicts were for them, for the saints of Laodicea, who were nearest to them, but also for as many as had not seen him face to face. If the truth regarding Christ as the Head of the body was to reach us, it must be through great conflict and suffering for the one who brought it, for all the power of the enemy would have prevented it coming to us, if that had been possible. How we should value the truth that cost the Apostle so much! We should not hold the truth lightly that has been brought through depths of suffering that we shall never pass through.

Colossians 2:2. What a blessed thing it is beloved, to see saints of God comforted and encouraged by the presentation of these things that relate to the glory of Christ. Here, the Apostle desires to encourage the saints to go in for the great truths he had brought before them, by telling them of what it cost him to bring the truth to them. He would have them knit together in love, in the power of the divine nature, and so together enter into the truth God had brought before them. If we are knit together in divine love, all that which is of the flesh will have no place. In the 45th Psalm, the King says, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider." As He spoke to her, He desired her beauty. There was the moral reflection in her of what He was to her, and He wanted her for Himself. Like Abraham of old, we are to get rid of all the ties that bound us to this scene, so that we might be altogether for Him.

Colossians 2:3. God desires that we should go in for the things that are abiding, for what lies outside the realm of man's knowledge, for the full-knowledge of the mystery of God. How great is this wonderful secret that lay from eternity in the heart of God! Everything was planned by God from the outset; all that He is working out now was in the divine counsel before time began. Herein are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In Ephesians we have "The mystery of His will;" what God is going to do in the coming day. God is behind all that is taking place today, and all will assuredly serve His purpose. What will it be for the Father when He sees the working out of His counsels, when the One who was despised and set aside at Calvary shall come forth wearing many crowns on His brow for a thousand years! That glory is the end for which God is working.

When that has served its purpose, then God will bring in new heavens and a new earth, where God shall be all in all; where He shall tabernacle with men; where He shall rest in His love for evermore.

R. Duncanson.

S. Reasons for the Father's Love

Reasons for the Father's Love (Revised extract of an address.)

It gives us true delight and joy to hear the blessed Son of God say in John 10:17, "Therefore doth my Father love me." Here there is a special motive for the Father's love to the Son. Earlier, in John 3:35 it is written, "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand"; and in John 5:20 it is also written, "For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." In chapter 10 the Son is in the deep consciousness of the love which the Father has for Him, and He gives the reason for it, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." His going into death was a voluntary act, for He can say, "I have power to lay it down." None but the blessed Son of God could use these words. But He could also take His life again; for He would manifest Himself in resurrection as the Son of God with power. Yet having shown His power or authority over life and death. He can add, "This commandment have I received from my Father." Having come into Manhood, He had entered into the place of obedience as Man to God, and He ever acted as subject to the will of His God and Father. He could not, and would not, act independently of the Father, ever delighting in the accomplishing of His will, even if it meant His going into death. And this voluntary surrender of Himself in love to the Father, drew out this special affection of the Father towards Him.

Then in John 16:27 the Lord Jesus makes known to His own, "For the Father Himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me." How precious it is beloved, to know that there has been wrought in your heart and mine an affection for this blessed One who has come to make known to us the Father. The Son, who lay from eternity in the bosom of the Father is the only One competent to tell out the secrets of the Father's heart. He has revealed the counsels of the Father's love, telling out the depths of that infinite and boundless, eternal love, that we might know it, and be able to respond to it.

What else could we do but love the Son knowing through Him the secrets of the Father's heart. And yet this very response from our poor hearts to the love made known in Jesus draws out the affection of the Father for us. We might therefore say that we have given the Father a reason for loving us, because we love His Son. This is quite a different aspect of divine love from that in 1 John 4:9-10. There it is the sovereign love of God, even as it is written, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son the propitiation for our sins."

R. Duncanson.

S. Reconciliation and the Mystery of God.

Reconciliation and the Mystery of God.

How blessed it is to contemplate the work of reconciliation, to see that the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross that we might be brought home to God for His pleasure. Nothing but the death of God's Son could accomplish this; the cross was a divine necessity if God was to have us in His own presence for His joy and satisfaction. As having been brought to God, and as knowing Him through what He has done, it is our joy to boast in the God who has brought us near in grace through Jesus. But God has wrought in grace towards us for His own pleasure, bringing us near to Himself where He can disclose to us the secrets of His heart. And what a great secret is the truth of the mystery! Christ has not only died for us, but he indwells us, and that not only individually, but corporately as his assembly. In Colossians, we read, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Christ indwells His own, but is in their midst to direct and control, and to lead our hearts into all that God has secured for us through His death. In the coming day He will be found in the midst of His earthly people, Israel; but today Christ's place is not with an earthly people, but in the midst of a heavenly company that He has redeemed to God by His precious blood, and who are united to Him as having His own life. This great secret is also spoken of as the mystery of God. How great this secret must be when it can be said of it "In which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." There is no other secret like this one; and to think that God has made it known to us that we might enter into the thoughts of His own heart, and in doing so acquire the treasures that can never be lost.

R. Duncanson.

S. Remnant Features

Remnant Features. In these last days it surely behoves us to cling tenaciously to the word of God, and to search therein for the divine principles that will carry us on to the end in the path of the will of God. At the end of every dispensation there is departure from God's will, and human wisdom displaces the commandments of God. The book of Malachi reveals a remnant, seeking to maintain in moral suitability that which is of God. While bringing home to them their grave departure, God assures the people of His love for them, saying, "I have loved you." Malachi 1:2. When they return answer to God, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" He reminds them of what He had done to Esau, the man after the flesh.

Such was the condition of the priests that the Lord charges them with despising His Name, by offering polluted bread upon His altar, by saying "The table of the Lord is contemptible;" Malachi 1:7 and in offering the blind, the lame, and the sick in sacrifice. None would close the doors of the Lord's house, or kindle the fire upon His altar, for naught; so that it is not to be wondered at that He declared that He found no pleasure in them. Spite of all this God will honour His Name, and there is coming a day when from the rising until the setting of the sun, His Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense and a pure offering shall be offered to His Name.

Yet in Israel there was a remnant that loved the Lord and feared Him. The remnant possessed the features which so pleased the Lord, and which He recalls as having formerly marked Levi. How beautiful the language used by the Lord to bespeak His delight in the piety once marking His chosen priests! "My covenant was with him of life and peace . . . the law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity and did turn many away from iniquity." Such are the moral characteristics of those who walk in love and in communion with God.

Judah was united to the world in an unholy alliance; and the people wearied the Lord with their words, saying that the Lord delighted in those practising evil; and doubting the concern of the God of judgment. God was robbed of His tithes and offerings; the words of the people were stout against the Lord; the proud were called happy, and evildoers were exalted. It was in the midst of such gross departure from the path of God's will that the little remnant was found. This remnant was marked by the fear of the Lord, and by speaking one to another, as thinking upon His Name. The Name upon which the remnant thought was the Name the priests despised; the Name that will yet be great among the Gentiles. That Name has indeed covered itself with glory; every moral beauty shines forth in it; and its glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Of the company concerned with His Name, the Lord says, "They shall be mine . . . in that day when I make up my jewels." Jewels are precious, and each shines forth with its own peculiar reflection of the glory of the sun. What a day that shall be, when the saints display the brightness of the glory of Christ, each in the heavenly lustre which praises the workmanship of God.

Another dark day was that recorded in Luke 1:1-80, when few were found in the fear of the Lord. Yet there were some in whom the work of God was manifest; to whom the word of God was

precious; and who waited patiently and faithfully for the coming of the Lord. To such the revelation of God was given. Although the house of David was evidently in poor circumstances, there were hearts like Mary's ready to respond to the divine communications. Mary had found favour with God, and the angel communicated to her the wonderful tidings that she was the vessel, chosen of God, to conceive and bring forth the child Jesus, Who was to be great, and to be called the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. To these amazing unfoldings, Mary, in the pious simplicity of faith says, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." In Luke 2:1-52 the work of God in the hearts of Simeon and Anna is revealed, even as it had been in the hearts of Zacharias and Elizabeth a little while before. Of Zacharias and his wife it is recorded, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Simeon is marked as "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him;" while Anna is a prophetess, "which departed not from the temple, hut served God with fastings and prayers night and day." These beautiful features are similar to those marking the remnant in the days of Malachi. The simple obedience to the commandments of God found in the parents of John the Baptist; the simplicity of faith displayed by Mary; the devotion and patience seen in Simeon; and the prayerfulness and intelligent conversation of Anna, are features that mark the company walking in the fear of the Lord for His pleasure. Simeon's heart is filled with satisfaction at the sight of Jesus, and his lips pour forth a rich tribute of praise in the power of the Spirit of God by Whom he had come into the temple. Seeing in the child the salvation of God, he is ready to depart; as he rests in Him Who will assuredly give effect to the purpose and counsel of God, and bring everything back to God for His eternal joy and pleasure. Anna is attracted and attached to the house of God; she was interested only in the interests of God; so that when the King suddenly comes to His temple, she finds Him there; and is therefore able to speak of Him to all who looked for redemption in Israel. Do we really admire and covet the beautiful features seen in this devoted little remnant? If these are the traits that give pleasure to God, we do well to seek them! The close of the greatest dispensation fast approaches; the dispensation in which there has been unfolded all the counsel of God. The truth of the Headship of Christ and all connected with it, the circle of the Father's affections, and other precious revelations have been given to us; and we have the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit to enjoy in power these wonderful things. But it is a day of declension and ruin, when the knowledge of these great truths is being lost. If we desire to be for God in the midst of the ruin, we shall find His instructions for us in His word. The Philadelphians in Revelation 3:8-10, show us the features of the company which has Christ's approval. They have a little strength, keep His word, and do not deny His Name. A little strength surely tells that they have not a great public place before the eye of the world, but on the contrary they walk in obscurity under the eye of The Holy and The True. Keeping His word, they walk in simple obedience to His commandments, valuing all the great truths given to the saints in this dispensation, and ordering their walk and ways in the light of them. They do not deny the Name of the Holy and the True, but seek to maintain all His interests in moral suitability to it; allowing nothing unholy and nothing untrue to attach itself to what belongs to Him. Moreover, they keep the word of His patience; suffering with Him in the place of reproach and dishonour, awaiting the day when He shall come, to have their happiness and part along with Him.

Beloved reader, these precious traits, gathered from the remnants of God's devoted saints, are surely written for our instruction and encouragement, that we might with them order our lives in these last days for the pleasure and glory of God. Robert Duncanson.

S. Salient Features in John's Gospel.

Salient Features in John's Gospel.

Notes of an address by R. Duncanson, No. 1.

Scriptures read, John 3:35; John 5:20-26; John 12:27-28; John 13:3.

These Scriptures bring the Lord Jesus before us in the relationship of Son to the Father, and in the Son there exists a system of divine affections of which He is the centre. We have read, "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand." This sets forth the complacent love of the Father in Him Who ever was the object of His pleasure. In eternity He was the constant delight of the Father's heart; the object of His love; and though here found in Manhood still retains the same relationship and the same place of affection. To manifest how great His love for the Son is, He gave all things into His hand. The measure of the gift is the measure of the love. Nothing has been left out of the Son's hand for the love of the Father to the Son is infinite, boundless and eternal. In John 5:20 the expression recurs with this addition, "And showeth Him all things that He Himself doeth." Here in the intimacy of love the Son is perfectly conversant with all the Father's work. From the very outset the Father had been working: now the Son says, "I work." The work of the Son was in unison with the work of the Father, since He had come to do the Father's will and to finish His work. The character of that work is brought out in John 9:1-41, where, in relation to the opening of the blind man's eyes, He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." (John 9:4). But the Son is not only manifesting divine power as seen in many cases in this Gospel, He is the source of life: for "as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself." He not only quickens, but He raises the dead; and while these things evince His equality with the Father, it is blessed to see that He receives these things as Man and as Son from the Father as an expression of the Father's love. The death and resurrection of the Lord are brought before us in John 12:27-28. Anticipating the dread hour of death His holy soul is troubled, and in His sorrow He turns to the Father, saying, "Father save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour." What that hour meant to Him could only be known to the Father, and so it is to the Father that He turns. In deepest devotedness to the Father and in subjection to His will as ever delighting in it, though it made Him a Man of Sorrows, He submitted Himself to all that that hour meant to maintain the Father's glory and secure all that lay in the Father's counsels. If in verse 27 He asks the question, "What shall I say?" He answers it Himself in verse 28, "Father glorify Thy Name." He would not say "Father save me from this hour," for then the Name of the Father would not have been glorified in the cross. Is it any wonder that the Father's voice is heard replying "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The Father's Name had been glorified in the raising of Lazarus, but the Father would glorify it again in raising Jesus from the dead. In the resurrection of the Son the Father has established a circle of divine affections into which those who have been given to the Son by the Father have been brought.

John 13:1-38. unfolds how we are maintained in relation to this circle of divine affections. The Lord Jesus lays aside His garments and takes the place of a servant that He might wash the disciples' feet. What a wonderful stoop for such a glorious Person! He would ever have us in closest intimacy with Himself, hence the need for such a service. All the defilement contracted in our pathway here must be removed that no shade of reserve might remain upon our spirits in relation to Him. May the Lord give us to enjoy more deeply, part with Him, in this blessed sphere of affections in which He dwells and into which He has brought us.

Salient Features in John's Gospel. 2

John 3:1-36 and John 5:1-47 show the Lord Jesus to be the object of the Father's love; and in John 13:1-38 we see the circle of divine affections established in relation to resurrection, and the Lord serving His own to maintain them in moral suitability to Himself so that they might have part with Him in that circle. The Scripture read introduces us to the Home of Love. He Who had come from the Father is about to return to the Father, and because of this sorrow filled the hearts of His own. To comfort them, the Lord opens out before them the truth of the Father's House. Although He would be absent from them, He was to be the object of their hearts in the Father's House, and He desired that they would have the same confidence in Him as they had in God. While hidden from them, He would still find pleasure in them; and His going to the Father's House was to prepare a place for them. All that they were to Him He treasured with fond affection, and nothing would part them from Him, for in His own presence in the Father's House they would soon dwell. For this, He would soon return and take them to be forever with Himself. What a joy it will be for His heart when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied!

Next, we come to the source of love. Everything originated with the Father, and it was His purpose that the Son should not be alone, but that others should share in His place of affection and glory. This is most touching and bows the heart in worship! In verse 8 Philip says, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." This brings from the Lord such a wonderful unfolding, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In the Person of Jesus, all that the Father is in life, nature, disposition and affection has been made known. His whole pathway expressed the Father's grace to sinners and revealed that the resources of the Father had been opened for the blessing of men. Every act of the Son, every movement in that life of perfect love and obedience and His every attitude Godward and manward proved that He was in the Father and the Father in Him. But the Father was not only revealed in what Jesus was Personally, and in His activities of grace, but also in the words He spoke, He said, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49-50). We see Him sitting at Sychar's well, wearied with His journey, pouring into the ears of that poor degraded Samaritan the words of the Father. But the Father was also made known in all His works of power, as opening the eyes of the blind man in John 9:1-41, and in raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11:1-57. Therefore in three ways is the Father revealed in the Son. (1) In all that the Son was in His Person. (2) In the words spoken by the Son. (3) In the works wrought by the Son. In verse 20 we learn that the Holy Spirit has been given so that we might know the present place of the Son. The Son is in the Father, and we can look up to heaven and by the Spirit see the Son in the bosom of the Father. As we learn of the Son's place in divine affections we learn our own place in Him. This is our present place and portion. We are in Him before the

Father's face to rejoice in the circle of divine love and favour into which we have been brought, and until the moment comes when we shall enter with Him the Father's House, He is in us down here that we might set forth in testimony and that under the Father's eye for His pleasure, the beauties of the Son. May we therefore ponder more constantly the Home of Love to which we soon shall be brought with Jesus; and as we do so worship the Father the source of love in the power of the Spirit; and in result be found here in the enjoyment of that love reproducing the moral features of Jesus.

Salient Features in John's Gospel. 3 In John 12:1-50 we have the hour of the Lord's death and resurrection, in chapter 13 the hour of His ascension noticed, while in John 17:1-26 it is the hour of His glory. Turning His eyes to the Father He says, "Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee." Having glorified the Father upon the earth by the maintenance of all that was due to His holy Name, and having finished the work which the Father had given Him to do that a basis might be laid to give effect to the Father's eternal counsels, He takes His new position as Man in the glory that from thence He might glorify the Father. As receiving authority over all flesh, He communicates the blessing of eternal life to those given to Him by the Father: a life consisting of the knowledge of the only true God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Sent One. Verse 5 presents the essential Godhead glory of the Son; what He had with the Father before the foundation of the world. Here we have the privilege to listen to the voice of the Son speaking to the Father of the place of relationship and equality that were His with the Father before the world was. In these sweet and blessed communications there are depths beyond our feeble apprehension, but with adoring hearts, as we listen to the words of the Eternal Son, we wonder and we worship. In 5: 21-24 we have the prayer of the Son for those who should be brought into the Christian circle by the preached word: and this brings us, the saints of the present moment, into living touch with the very source of the affections that move our hearts. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." As brought into communion with the Father and the Son we have the privilege to come out in this world in divine testimony expressing the moral features of the Man who is in heaven. Who can tell the blessedness of the communion in divine affection subsisting between the Father and the Son? Nothing can mar or hinder the sweetness of the eternal communion belonging to that circle. In the same way we are brought into a circle where divine communion and affection subsist, and as we enjoy what is there we come out in the features of the Son to represent Him in this world. At verse 22 we are introduced to the scene where in Christ's own company we shall share His glory which displays the moral beauties of the Son. The world will then know that the Father loved the Son and that He was the Sent One of the Father, when they see the features of the Son manifest in His own. Their being there is the fruit of His work: the result of His coming into the world; so that the presence of the saints in His company is the testimony to His being here as the Sent One. But the saints having the glory of the Son are sharing His place, and this is the public manifestation that they are loved by the Father with the same love as rests upon the Son. Then in verse 24 we have the Son's expressed desire to the Father that His own should be with Him in the Father's House. After the display of the world to come has served God's purpose, and we are with the Son for ever in that unchanging scene, we shall gaze upon the Son in that peculiar glory that is His and in which none can share. This glory is the eternal answer to all His toil and suffering here; but in that glory we shall read and learn that the Son was constantly the object of the Father's love before the

world's foundation. What an object is this for our contemplation and heart's affection for the ages of ages!

S. Sonship.

Sonship. The truth of sonship is found almost exclusively in the writings of the apostle Paul. John in his Gospel speaks of sons of light (John 12:36), and says in Revelation 21:7, "I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son;" but these passages speak of the truth of sonship in a different way from Paul's writings, as we shall see. Almost invariably John speaks of the relationship of children, although the Authorised Version does not always make this clear. A glance at Romans 8:14-21 will show that Paul used both the terms sons and children in this passage, and they are different words in the original, the Spirit of God purposely distinguishing to bring out different thoughts.

Sons were marked out, in divine purpose, by the Father in the past eternity, children are born and associated with Christ in rejection (Ephesians 1:5; 1 John 3:1-2). We have been brought into sonship in Christ as blessed in Him in the heavenly places: and while down here we have the spirit of sonship whereby we cry Abba, Father (Romans 8:15). Moreover we have also the affections that belong to sons, for God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6). Faith in Christ Jesus brings us into this blessed relationship, for, says the apostle, "Ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus:" faith in Him who was known as Jesus in His path of lowly grace, faith in Christ Jesus, the glorious exalted, anointed Man at God's right hand. Very soon we shall enter into sonship in its fulness, when our bodies are glorified, brought to His image; even as we read in Romans 8:23, "Awaiting adoption, the redemption of our body." In the world to come we shall be manifested as sons in association with God's Son, the glorified Man; when the true Heir will come to claim the inheritance which he has purchased, and which He will share with His co-heirs. God will give the many brethren their part along with the Firstborn in the glory of the coming day, when our bodies are redeemed and the purchased possession is redeemed.

Now we are to walk down here in the dignity and power of the relationship into which God has brought us, in the joy and intelligence of the spirit of sonship; for we have the character of sons as being led by the Spirit of God.

We shall be sons for all eternity before the Father, rejoicing before Him in His own house, that home of divine affections, delighting in the love of the Father and the Son. And what supreme joy for the Father's heart, and for the Son, to have the many sons there; all the Father's purpose and counsels brought to full fruition. But even here the Spirit delights to engage us with the Father and the Son in that scene into which we shall so soon enter, when the desert sands are forever past. In that bright scene of cloudless light, Where sons shall be at home, With Him we'll share that glory bright, And never from Thee roam.

Let us go in for these things more and more now, and their joy will fill our poor hearts. God desires that we should even here live in the light and joy of our present blessing in Christ, and in the enjoyment of what the Spirit brings to us of our heavenly portion with Christ when we see Him face to face.

R. Duncanson.

S. The Call of Saul of Tarsus.

The Call of Saul of Tarsus.

Stephen, as the first martyr for the Lord Jesus Christ, entered triumphantly into the presence of Him for whom he died; and one of the witnesses of his death was a young man, whose name was Saul, at whose feet the witnesses laid their clothes, and who was consenting to their wicked deed. Not satisfied with the death of Stephen, Saul made havoc of the church, "entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3). No doubt thinking that he was doing God service, Saul, in religious zeal, carried his persecuting work to other parts, obtaining the authority of the high priest to bring in bonds to Jerusalem those who owned allegiance to Jesus, thus fulfilling the words spoken by the Lord to His disciples in John 16:2. How very solemn that zeal for religion should be found persecuting the servants of the One whom he professed to serve, truly manifesting ignorance of the true God, revealed in the Son. As Saul journeys to Damascus he is utterly unaware of what was to befall him, of the wonderful thoughts of God for his salvation and blessing. Little did he think, or any other who had witnessed the death of Stephen, that from among that company the Son of God would take up one to carry on the testimony given by Stephen. Stephen had witnessed to the glory of Jesus at God's right hand, and this testimony was destined to be carried abroad by a vessel chosen and fitted by Christ Himself. No doubt, even his witnessing of Stephen's death was ordered of the Lord in view of Saul's future service. Doubtless the arrow of conviction had entered his heart there, even if he was found still in opposition, kicking against the pricks.

Nearing Damascus there suddenly shone round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The light that had enabled Stephen to behold Christ's glory in heaven now shines upon his erstwhile persecutor, and the voice tells him that in persecuting Stephen and the other followers of Jesus, he was persecuting the Lord Himself. What amazement for poor Saul as he receives the revelation that the Lord that he acknowledges in heaven is the Jesus who had been here as the Man of Sorrows. It is not a voice of accusation, but a voice of tender love and grace, that breaks in upon his conscience and reaches the deep recesses of his heart. Thus is Saul stayed on his rebellious course, and secured as a trophy of divine grace, a chosen vessel for the Lord, and to be a companion of the Christ in His glory. As a chosen vessel he would witness to the light of the glory shining in the face of Jesus, and unfold the truth of the saints on earth being united to Christ in the place where Stephen saw Him. After receiving his sight and being brought by the gift of the Spirit into the joys that the Gospel had brought him, Saul is enabled to preach Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

What a wonderful change had taken place in Saul, preaching the Glad Tidings of the faith which formerly he ravaged, preaching that the crucified Nazarene was the SON OF GOD, the One in whom God is revealed in His nature, love; the One in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen. Paul in his Gospel declares Jesus to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit

of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; as the First-born among many brethren, pre-eminent among the many sons that God has called according to His purpose: as having a kingdom, the Son of the Father's love. In the Acts we can see the progress of the preaching: Peter speaking of Him as Lord and Christ, the One who has authority to command and power to carry it out: then Stephen speaks of Him as Son of Man, who will take up the universe of God where all shall be vocal with His praise; then Saul announces Him as Son of God, bringing out His surpassing moral beauties and the excellencies of His glorious Person, in whose company we shall be for evermore, outpouring our praises to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

R. Duncanson.

What powerful, mighty Voice, so near, Calls me from earth apart
Reaches with tones so still, so clear, From th' unseen world my heart?

S. The Call of Saul of Tarsus.

The Call of Saul of Tarsus.

Stephen, as the first martyr for the Lord Jesus Christ, entered triumphantly into the presence of Him for whom he died; and one of the witnesses of his death was a young man, whose name was Saul, at whose feet the witnesses laid their clothes, and who was consenting to their wicked deed. Not satisfied with the death of Stephen, Saul made havoc of the church, "entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3). No doubt thinking that he was doing God service, Saul, in religious zeal, carried his persecuting work to other parts, obtaining the authority of the high priest to bring in bonds to Jerusalem those who owned allegiance to Jesus, thus fulfilling the words spoken by the Lord to His disciples in John 16:2. How very solemn that zeal for religion should be found persecuting the servants of the One whom he professed to serve, truly manifesting ignorance of the true God, revealed in the Son. As Saul journeys to Damascus he is utterly unaware of what was to befall him, of the wonderful thoughts of God for his salvation and blessing. Little did he think, or any other who had witnessed the death of Stephen, that from among that company the Son of God would take up one to carry on the testimony given by Stephen. Stephen had witnessed to the glory of Jesus at God's right hand, and this testimony was destined to be carried abroad by a vessel chosen and fitted by Christ Himself. No doubt, even his witnessing of Stephen's death was ordered of the Lord in view of Saul's future service. Doubtless the arrow of conviction had entered his heart there, even if he was found still in opposition, kicking against the pricks.

Nearing Damascus there suddenly shone round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The light that had enabled Stephen to behold Christ's glory in heaven now shines upon his erstwhile persecutor, and the voice tells him that in persecuting Stephen and the other followers of Jesus, he was persecuting the Lord Himself. What amazement for poor Saul as he receives the revelation that the Lord that he acknowledges in heaven is the Jesus who had been here as the Man of Sorrows. It is not a voice of accusation, but a voice of tender love and grace, that breaks in upon his conscience and reaches the deep recesses of his heart. Thus is Saul stayed on his rebellious course, and secured as a trophy of divine grace, a chosen vessel for the Lord, and to be a companion of the Christ in His glory. As a chosen vessel he would witness to the light of the glory shining in the face of Jesus, and unfold the truth of the saints on earth being united to Christ in the place where Stephen saw Him. After receiving his sight and being brought by the gift of the Spirit into the joys that the Gospel had brought him, Saul is enabled to preach Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

What a wonderful change had taken place in Saul, preaching the Glad Tidings of the faith which formerly he ravaged, preaching that the crucified Nazarene was the SON OF GOD, the One in whom God is revealed in His nature, love; the One in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen. Paul in his Gospel declares Jesus to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit

of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; as the First-born among many brethren, pre-eminent among the many sons that God has called according to His purpose: as having a kingdom, the Son of the Father's love. In the Acts we can see the progress of the preaching: Peter speaking of Him as Lord and Christ, the One who has authority to command and power to carry it out: then Stephen speaks of Him as Son of Man, who will take up the universe of God where all shall be vocal with His praise; then Saul announces Him as Son of God, bringing out His surpassing moral beauties and the excellencies of His glorious Person, in whose company we shall be for evermore, outpouring our praises to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Duncanson, R.

What powerful, mighty Voice, so near, Calls me from earth apart
Reaches with tones so still, so clear, From th' unseen world my heart?

S. The Coming of the Spirit.

The Coming of the Spirit. In Acts 2:1-47, the Apostle Peter, through the Holy Spirit, brings before us the witness of the glorification of Jesus; witnessing also that He is in the Father; we in Him; and He in us. What a joy to our hearts to know that we have been brought into the circle of divine affections, where we can be at home with the Father and the Son. How this should produce in us desires and exercises that we might be maintained in moral suitability to the place God has given us, so that we might be able to contemplate Him in the rich enjoyment of that love with which He was ever loved. By the Spirit there has been formed a habitation where God can dwell; the material being prepared for it by the ministry of the Lord Jesus, when here on earth. Although David was not allowed to build God's house, he had the privilege of preparing the material for it, and of instructing Solomon regarding it. David could say, "In my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord. . . ." (1 Chronicles 22:14); "I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God" (1 Chronicles 29:2); and "Because I have set my affection to the house of my God. . . . I have prepared for the holy house" (1 Chronicles 29:3). As the true David and the true Solomon, the Lord Jesus both prepares and builds. From the house goes forth God's testimony to man, with the injunction, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

What a powerful testimony sounded forth; all heard, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. How great the contrast to Babel, where God confounded the language of men to hinder them from their purpose, so that He might scatter them. Now God meets them with a rich unfolding of His love and grace, so that they might be gathered together in one in the bonds of divine love. And what a contrast to Sinai! There, three thousand perish when the Law is given: here, three thousand are saved when the Spirit is given. We do well to marvel at the rich mercy and love of God, as we see Him, through the testimony that goes forth from His house, securing man for His own pleasure, that He might give effect to His purpose.

Whenever there is a work of God, the enemy is busy endeavouring to undermine it. And so the mockers say, "These men are full of new wine," but Peter tells how this could not be, and then points them to the Scripture which foretold the effects of the coming of the Holy Spirit, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. . . ." "What the mockers saw came within the scope of the prophecy of Joel. But the Holy Spirit came to indwell and to abide with Christ's own for ever.

Peter brings Christ before his hearers, first from Psalms 16:1-11, where His life on earth, His death, and His resurrection are clearly spoken of; then from Psalms 110:1-7, where His glory at God's right hand is foretold, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Concluding, Peter says, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." As Lord, He has universal authority, and to Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father. Connected with His title as Lord is the power to give effect to all He has set Himself to do, in securing all for the glory of God. As Christ, He is the Man of God's pleasure, the One brought up

with Him, Who was ever His delight, the centre of His counsels. And as the Christ He will give effect to all that has been spoken of Israel's Messiah, and will fulfil the promises made to Abraham regarding earthly blessing. Of this, one has said, "His Messianic claims, spurned on the part of Israel, founds the glory of God and the blessing of man in His cross. He is raised and seated, crowned with glory and honour. Now our position, portion, glory, and blessing as believers, are found in Israel's rejected King. Christ's new place as risen and glorified determines ours."

R. Duncanson.

Appreciation and Expression of Christ. My appreciation of Christ up there determines my expression of Christ down here.

J. B. Stoney.

S. The Father's Love Revealed in the Son.

The Father's Love Revealed in the Son.

How blessed it is to know that in present occupation with Christ the Spirit of God can form in us the features that were once manifested in Him down here. and that we can, in some little way, set forth these same features in testimony to Him. As the Son, the Lord Jesus brought to light the revelation of all that the Father is, but as the Son of Man He has been given the place of authority over all to secure the rights and the glory of God throughout the whole universe. Christ as Son of Man is already glorified in heaven, and has taken up everything for God, in view of the coming kingdom. By faith we can see Jesus as the exalted Man at God's right hand, and are assured from the Holy Scriptures that He will soon sweep from the universe all the lawlessness that exists today, and having accomplished all that God gave Him to do He will hand back the kingdom to Him that is God and Father so that God may be all in all. There will then be introduced a new heaven and a new earth, where God Himself will tabernacle with men. It has been God's desire from the outset to dwell with men, and His heart will be satisfied in its accomplishment in the eternal day. In that wonderful chapter, Proverbs 8:1-36, we are privileged to see this blessed One as the nursling of the Father's love, who was ever the delight of the Father's heart. Now we are in the day of the full revelation of the Father by the One who was ever before Him, and knew all the thoughts of His heart and mind. The Son became flesh that He might tabernacle with men, and dwelling among them there was manifested in Him that which had never been seen in this world before. John could say, "We have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father." How delightful was the Son to the Father, and how wonderful that men could discern the glory of the relationship in which He was with Him, a glory that belonged to the relationship in which He was as Man with God. But there was the eternal relationship that was His, "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," and as such He made the Father known.

John the Baptist speaks of Jesus as "The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," and in his testimony to the Son of God sends two of his disciples to follow Jesus. When Jesus asked them, "What seek ye?" they answered Him, "Teacher, where abidest Thou?" Where did He dwell? He dwelt in the Father's love, and He came to make that love known to men that men might dwell with Him in the joy of the Father's love.

Philip, whom Jesus called to follow Him, found Nathaniel and spoke to him of Jesus as the One of whom Moses and the prophets had written, but Nathaniel answered, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" How blessed was Philip's reply, "Come and see." What a revelation it was to Nathaniel to find that Jesus knew all about him; the light that showed Nathaniel that he was fully known to Jesus revealed Jesus to Nathaniel in His glory as "The Son of God . . . the King of Israel." Nathaniel realised that He was not only the One spoken of by Moses and the prophets, but also the promised Messiah of the second Psalm.

Nathaniel's confession of Jesus brings forth another revelation from the lips of the Son of God: He was also the Son of Man, the One spoken of in Psalms 8:1-9 : and upon whom the angels of God

would ascend and descend. He was the divine link between earth and heaven; because of Him the heavens would be opened, and men would be blessed through Him whom the angels served. As Son of Man all the authority of God is in His hand: He will secure all God's rights in this world when he reigns in righteousness, and He will have the church as His companion, His body and His bride. At the beginning of John 17:1-26 the Lord Jesus desires that He might be glorified. He had glorified the Father on earth in His life of perfect obedience, and can speak as beyond the cross where He glorified God in regard to every question that could possibly be raised. Now He desires to be glorified that He might glorify the Father in the new place He would have as Man with authority over all flesh. He asks for the glory that He had with the Father before the world was, but although this was His by right, having come into Manhood, and therefore into the place of obedience and subjection, as Man He asks for this from the hand of the Father. In this place of eternal glory He was ever the object of the Father's love, and it was because of His perfect knowledge of the Father and of His love that He could make the Father known. In John 17:26, He says, "I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it." How much He had told the disciples of the Father, revealing the grace and love connected with the Name of the Holy Father, and all that belonged to the Name of the Righteous Father. His purpose in declaring to His own the Father's Name was "That the love with which Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." How wonderful to have the present enjoyment of the Father's love in our hearts, and that the Son should have a dwelling place in our affections, "I in them." May the knowledge of these things make our hearts overflow with joy and delight, and lead our spirits to worship and adore the Father and the Son.

R. Duncanson.

S. The Father's Love.

The Father's Love.

How wonderful it is that the Son has brought to us the knowledge of the Father's love. This love is presented in John's Gospel as resting on the Son: "The Father loveth the Son, and has given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). The Son alone is competent to bring to light all that of which the Father is the source, being indeed the perfect expression of the Father, even as He said, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him . . . He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7; John 14:9). In Him there has been the manifestation of the Father's grace and the Father's love; so that the more we learn of that blessed One in whom these things were revealed, the more shall we know of the Father Himself. But we have been brought into relationship and intimacy with divine Persons, so as to be at home in communion with the Father and the Son about all that has been manifested in the Son. In John 4:1-54 Jesus speaks to the woman of Samaria about the Father, telling her too of the well of water which would be in the believer, springing up into eternal life. Here we have the Holy Spirit as the power for the worship of the Father, so that we can worship Him in spirit and in truth. Brought into the circle of divine affections, it is with deep delight that we pour out our praise and adoration to the Father and the Son. The glories of the Person of the Son are brought before us in John 5:1-47. In equality with the Father He can say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Being in intimacy with the Father, and having come into Manhood, He can say, "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (John 5:20). Ever in communion with the Father, He comes to tell out the depth of the Father's heart; speaking of the Father's words; manifesting the Father's works which were wrought because the Father dwelt in Him. In His own sovereign right the Son quickens whom He will; moreover, all judgment has been given to Him so that "All should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Being in Man-hood, the Son has life in Himself, as given of the Father; therefore can He communicate eternal life to His own, even as He says in John 10:1-42 "I give unto my sheep eternal life." The Son asks to be glorified of the Father in John 17:1-26 so that He might give eternal life to those whom the Father had given Him. He desired to bring His love ones into the present consciousness of the love wherewith He is loved: and this we now have through the Son dwelling in our hearts. Soon we shall reach the Father's House, to enter into the full blessedness of all that has been marked out for us in the Father's counsels of grace; but the Son is occupied now with bringing us through the Spirit into the present enjoyment of all the love that has been set forth in Him.

R. Duncanson.

How deep, how blest the Father's love!

Revealed in Him, His only Son, Who in His bosom lay.

E'en here its sweetness we may prove, While waiting for its deepest joys, in everlasting day.

S. The Father's Love.

The Father's Love.

(Scriptures read: John 10:17-18 : John 16:27-28; John 17:1-7; John 17:10; John 17:20-23.)

How blessed it is to see the Lord Jesus in the company of His disciples, speaking to them the loving thoughts of the Father. What heartfelt joy and delight we have in hearing the Lord say in John 10:17, "Therefore doth My Father love Me." Other Scriptures tell us of the Father's love to the Son. In John 3:35, we read, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things (to be) in His hands;" then in John 5:20, "The Father loves the Son and shows Him all things which He Himself does." Here the Son is in the deep consciousness of the Father's love, as giving the Father a special motive for loving Him. The motive is "Because I lay down my life that I may take it again." In the perfection of His love He lays down His life so that He might in resurrection take it again; and this He does in obedience to the will of the Father. In John 16:27 the Lord Jesus makes known to His own, "The Father Himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me." How precious it is, beloved, to know that there has been wrought in our hearts an affection for this blessed Person, Who has come to make the Father known; telling out the depths of His heart of love, giving us to know the secrets of His counsels, and manifesting His wondrous grace. The One Who lay in His bosom could alone unfold these precious things. Is it any wonder that we have affection for Him? And our affection for the Son has given the Father a reason for loving us. Another reason for the Father's affection for us is that we have believed that He came out from God. The Father finds delight in those who have faith in His Son; in those who believe that He came forth from eternity, from God's own presence, to accomplish His will.

It was from the Father that He came forth, and He came into the world, that down here He might carry out all that was connected with the Father's will. He had been with the Father from all eternity, ever knowing the deep affections of the Father's heart, and all that was in His mind for the blessing of His own. How wonderfully does this verse unfold the divine glory of the Son, telling to us His eternal relationship with the Father, and introducing His great mission in the world. Having accomplished all that was given Him to do by the Father, He would "leave the world and go to the Father." In John 14:1-31 He speaks of going to the Father's House to prepare a place for His own; here, He is returning to the Father as having fulfilled His mission as the Sent One of the Father. In John 17:1-26 we learn of the place that the Son will have in relation to the working out of all the Father's thoughts, as the One Whom He has glorified. We read in John 17:1, "These things Jesus spoke, and lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son." He has done with the world, having overcome it, and the time has now come for the Father to set Him down in the place of glory. The Son desires to be glorified that He might continue to glorify the Father in the scene into which He would so soon go. This He would do as having received "authority over all flesh," in resurrection glory. He will fully exercise this authority publicly, in a day that is to come; but His great desire now is to give eternal life to those that the Father has given Him.

John 17:3 reads, "And this is the eternal life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou has sent." The Father is the only true God; for God has been revealed to us as Father in the Person of the Son; and Jesus Christ has been made known to us as the Sent One of the Father. How sweet it is to think that in the joy of eternal life we have been brought into the place of intimacy, relationship, and divine affection with the Father and the Son. Only in eternal life, revealed in the Son, and now communicated to us, could we enter into this unique position and knowledge that the Son has given us.

Every step taken by that blessed One glorified God, so that He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." In John 8:1-59 He said, "I do always those things that please Him." Does not the contemplation of these things affect our hearts? We have been brought into a place of intimacy and relationship, in the joy and power of eternal life, so that we might be able to enter into what is set forth in the Son. What an object for our hearts! What an example for us, as glorifying the Father. There was never a movement or act in the life of that blessed Man but what was in simple dependence on the Father Himself. When He heard of Lazarus being sick, He waited two days, not being moved by natural affection, but by the direction of the Father's will, that He might be glorified, and to make manifest what was inherent in Him. The same dependence marked Him at the grave of Lazarus, as He prays, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me; but I knew that Thou always hearest me; but on account of the crowd who stand around I have said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." The resurrection of Lazarus was the greatest testimony to the Son as the Sent One of the Father; and how wonderfully it brought out the glory of the Father through Him, Who alone could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." In John 17:4 the Lord also says, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Earlier, in John 4:1-54 He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." He had come to secure worshippers for the Father; this was part of His work. First, He meets the woman just where she was, touching her conscience with His words; then He unfolds to her the precious truth concerning the worship of God the Father, and the effect is seen in the testimony she bears regarding Him. How blessed it is to see that blessed One gathering out from this world, a company that could worship the Father in spirit and in truth, as brought near to Him in intimacy and affection. But all that was given the Son to accomplish by the Father, He completed.

He makes an appeal to the Father in John 17:5, saying, "And now glorify Me, Thou Father, along with Thyself, with the glory which I had along with Thee before the world was." The glory that He now seeks has not in view the giving of eternal life to His own; He desires to enter into as Man the unique place that He ever had with the Father before time began. This place was rightly His, but in becoming Man He had come into the place of obedience and subjection to the Father's will, and in the perfection of His Manhood He asks for this glory from the Father. Nor does He seek to enter into this glory till He can say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have completed the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Earlier He had been speaking to the disciples about the Father, now, in John 17:6 He begins to speak to the Father about His own. How precious it is that He has unfolded to us all that the Father is, in order that we might reciprocate the love wherewith we are loved by the Father. So He says, "I have manifested Thy Name to the men Whom Thou gavest me out of the world." In divine counsel we ever belonged to the Father, and in love the Father gave us to the Son. In receiving the words of the Father from the Son, the disciples knew that the Father was the source of all the things that

were given to the Son. The Son came to carry out everything for the Father; all the wonderful things that lay in the Father's heart for the blessing of those He had given to the Son. All that we have been called to enjoy at the present moment, springs from the Father's love; He is the source of all.

John 17:10 says, "For they are Thine, (and all that is Mine is Thine and all that is Thine Mine,) and I am glorified in them." How blessed it is that we belong to the Father; but He has given us to the Son, and now the Son says, "They are Thine." What joy for us to know the place of affection we have in the heart of the Son and the heart of the Father! All the features of this blessed Man come out in the company that the Father has given Him. In a coming day, all the traits of the Son will come out in public display in those that the Father has given to Him; but even now the Father finds pleasure in beholding the features of His Son in those who are His own. It is in this way that the Son is glorified in those He loves. When we come to John 17:20 we find this blessed Person praying specially for us. John 17:6-19 were spoken of those who were with Him at that time; now He adds, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." The testimony rendered by the Apostles has come down to us in the written word, and in accepting it, we have believed through their word in the Son of God. Resulting from this testimony, the Lord desires that there should be a divine unity, "As Thou Father, art in Me and I in Thee." Herein is the secret and blessedness of the eternal life that is ours through the testimony that has come to us. We are here to express the life given to us by the Son, in all our ways, that the Father and the Son might find joy in us. We are not to have our interests in this world, but to manifest that we belong to heaven; having our part in the circle of divine affection, and taking our place in testimony for the glory of the Father.

We shall be associated, in a coming day, with a Christ Who will take up all the rights and counsels of God as the Son of His love; therefore does He say, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One" (John 17:22). There will be a divine unity in glory in that wonderful day of display. When the Son was down here, the Father was in the Son, and all that the Father said and did was through the Son; but the world refused this testimony. It is not therefore surprising that the world refuses our testimony today. In the display of the coming day, the Father will be set forth in the Son, and the Son will be set forth in the saints. The purpose of this is, "That the world may know that thou hast sent Me." What the world refused in testimony, it will have to accept in the display of that day. When the world gazes on the saints in the company of the Son, it will also know that Thou "hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." The great company of the saints glorified along with the Son is there as the fruit of His work, and is therefore the proof of the Father having sent the Son; but as being in the same glory as the Son, the world is convinced of the blessed fact that the Father loves the saints as He loves His Son.

R. Duncanson. The Father's love — so full, so free, Declared, O blessed Lord, in Thee!

O joy divine O perfect rest To ransomed hearts supremely blest!

True worshippers the Father sought, True worshippers to Him are brought! The Father's name, in love so free, Declared, Lord Jesus Christ, by Thee!

E. L. Bevir.

The Grace of God.

Grace has to do with us in our weakness, failure, sorrow, and willingly brings the needed strength, restoration, comfort, and holy joy. It is the sweet and needed companion of the days of our humiliation. Oh! what a friend, what a companion, what a portion grace is for a soul in this world; and what an unspeakable blessing to know the grace of God in truth! "The Lord will give grace and glory." Forget not this, O my soul, reckon on both; on grace now, on glory hereafter. They can never fail.

A. Miller.

S. The Father's Love.

The Father's Love.

How wonderful it is that the Son has brought to us the knowledge of the Father's love. This love is presented in John's Gospel as resting on the Son: "The Father loveth the Son, and has given all things into his hand" (John 3:35). The Son alone is competent to bring to light all that of which the Father is the source, being indeed the perfect expression of the Father, even as He said, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him . . . He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7; John 14:9). In Him there has been the manifestation of the Father's grace and the Father's love; so that the more we learn of that blessed One in whom these things were revealed, the more shall we know of the Father Himself. But we have been brought into relationship and intimacy with divine Persons, so as to be at home in communion with the Father and the Son about all that has been manifested in the Son. In John 4:1-54 Jesus speaks to the woman of Samaria about the Father, telling her too of the well of water which would be in the believer, springing up into eternal life. Here we have the Holy Spirit as the power for the worship of the Father, so that we can worship Him in spirit and in truth. Brought into the circle of divine affections, it is with deep delight that we pour out our praise and adoration to the Father and the Son. The glories of the Person of the Son are brought before us in John 5:1-47. In equality with the Father He can say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Being in intimacy with the Father, and having come into Manhood, He can say, "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (John 5:20). Ever in communion with the Father, He comes to tell out the depth of the Father's heart; speaking of the Father's words; manifesting the Father's works which were wrought because the Father dwelt in Him. In His own sovereign right the Son quickens whom He will; moreover, all judgment has been given to Him so that "All should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Being in Man-hood, the Son has life in Himself, as given of the Father; therefore can He communicate eternal life to His own, even as He says in John 10:1-42 "I give unto my sheep eternal life." The Son asks to be glorified of the Father in John 17:1-26 so that He might give eternal life to those whom the Father had given Him. He desired to bring His love ones into the present consciousness of the love wherewith He is loved: and this we now have through the Son dwelling in our hearts. Soon we shall reach the Father's House, to enter into the full blessedness of all that has been marked out for us in the Father's counsels of grace; but the Son is occupied now with bringing us through the Spirit into the present enjoyment of all the love that has been set forth in Him.

R. Duncanson.

How deep, how blest the Father's love!

Revealed in Him, His only Son, Who in His bosom lay.

E'en here its sweetness we may prove, While waiting for its deepest joys, in everlasting day.

S. The Glories of the Son.

The Glories of the Son. In the epistle to the Hebrews, the glories of the Son are brought very forcibly before us. We see the Son in Hebrews 1:1-14 as the established heir of all things. He was the heir of all things before the world began; this lay embedded in the will of God; but it has now been revealed, and we have been brought into the light of it. Everything subsists because of Him, who upholds all by the word of His power. And this is the blessed Person who is to engage our hearts! When we come to Hebrews 2:1-18, another aspect of His glory engages us. We view the same Person, come into Manhood, that He might undergo the sufferings of death; tasting death for everything, and annulling him who had the power of death.' In Hebrews 2:5 the world to come is introduced, a world where all is to come under man, but that Man, God's own dear Son. In Psalms 8:1-9, we are told that the glory of the Lord has been set above the heavens; which doubtless reveals God's purpose in Man. Here we see Jesus, who has been down into death, raised to the highest heights, and all the glory now shines refulgent in His face. What a sight meets our gaze when by faith we look up to see Him there: the One in whom righteousness, holiness, and glory have found their resting place! The poet has put it:

'Tis that look that melted Peter, 'Tis that face that Stephen saw, 'Tis that heart that wept with Mary,
Can alone from idols draw.

Draw, and win, and fill completely, Till the cup o'erflow the brim;

What have we to do with idols Who have companied with Him?

While we await the moment when He shall fill all in the world to come, we know Him as the Leader of the many sons He is taking on to glory; and for this blessed leadership, He was made perfect through sufferings. What a joy to our hearts to know that we belong to the company that is to be for God's good pleasure! The knowledge of these things should surely affect our thoughts and ways now! R. Duncanson.

S. The Glory of the Son.

The Glory of the Son. In John 17:1-26 we have the place that the Son occupies in relation to the working out of the Father's thoughts as the One whom He has glorified. The blessed Lord has done with the world, for He "Lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." He speaks as beyond the cross and all that it meant for Him: in His thoughts He is engaged with the glory of the Father in the place where He soon will be, glorified as Man before Him. While upon earth all His desire had been to do the Father's will, and to secure His pleasure; in His place of glory the same desires would fill His heart.

Power, or authority, over all flesh was His in the place of glory, and this would be used for the glorifying of the Father in the communication of eternal life to those who were the Father's gift of love to Him. In the coming day of Millennial glory, this divine authority will be exercised publicly by the Lord as Son of Man, for the subjugation of all evil, and the maintenance of the rule of righteousness.

Eternal life is now given to those who have been given to the Son that they might be brought into the joys of the knowledge of the Father and of Jesus Christ whom He sent. How blessed are the relationships, affections and privileges that belong to the eternal life the Son has communicated to us from His place on high! The joys of this life are known in communion with the Father and the Son. We do not have to wait till the Son brings us to the Father's house to enjoy the eternal life, for even here, as having the Holy Spirit, we taste the sweetness of divine love in known relationships with the Father and the Son.

Every step that the Son of God had taken on earth was for the Father's glory. In John 8:1-59 He could say, "I do always those things that please Him"; now He says, "I have glorified thee on the earth." There was never a word, action or movement of the Son but brought glory and pleasure to His Father. Simple dependence and obedience marked all His ways. The prayer at the grave of Lazarus brings out His dependence. When He heard of Lazarus being sick, He waited two days, for He was directed by His Father's will, not by natural affection. He was able to tell His disciples that the sickness of Lazarus had in view the glory of God, and His own glory as Son of God.

Jesus had come to work in this world, even as He said in John 4:1-54, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Now He says, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." His words in chapter 4 show that involved in His work was the securing of a company of worshippers for the Father, who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. For this the cross was necessary; every barrier that hindered the full blessing of His own must be taken out of the way, so that they might be brought into nearness and intimacy to enjoy the Father's love, and to worship Him as He desired. In John 17:5 the Son prays, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." The eternal glory of the Son was His in the rights of His Person, but in having come into Manhood He entered into the place of obedience and dependence, so that on returning to heaven He asks for the glory that He had laid aside to become Man. Having become Man, He will never cease to be Man; He has, like

the Hebrew servant, become a bondman forever, because of His great love. Yet as Man, He will enter into the glory, indeed has already entered into it, that was His before time began. It is the glory of the Eternal Son, which He has in the Father's presence. This is not the glory of the Son of Man which will be displayed publicly in the coming kingdom; it is a glory which will be seen by those who are brought into intimacy with the Son of God. Of this the Son speaks in verse 24, where He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." To behold this glory, the saints of God, at the desire of the Son, will be brought to where He is in the presence of the Father; yea, He will come Himself to bring us there.

R. Duncanson.

S. The Path of Faith.

The Path of Faith.

God has a path in which His own can walk for His glory, a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, nor hath the lion's whelp trodden it, the path of faith. Abraham, the father of the faithful, was called into this path, when God appeared unto him and said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." In obedience, Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went, deeply conscious that the One who had called him was able to support him in the path of His will. Any failure on Abraham's part but magnified the wisdom and goodness of God, Who was ever ready to order the circumstances to bring about his recovery. All failure results from being occupied with temporal and material things instead of with the end for which God has called us. The path of faith is the path of the just, which is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Joseph had that path to travel in order to reach that which God had revealed to him in his dreams. For him, it meant deep trials, "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him." His faithfulness and devotedness were manifest in the trying circumstances, and with him, patience had its perfect work. God wrought behind the scenes to fulfil His purpose, so that the moment of his exaltation came, and he was called to be the preserver of life for Egypt and the countries around. In Moses we have a man of faith, who chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He was trained by God at the backside of the desert for his work, and at the appointed time, he was sent forth as the great leader of Israel, to secure their liberty from Pharaoh's bondage. Faith enabled him to forsake' Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Moses' faith is manifest in his keeping the passover, Israel's in passing through the Red Sea.

Many others could be cited to show that only by faith can we be maintained in the path which glorifies God. In these days we have much to encourage us in the path of faithfulness and devotedness, for God, in His great goodness, has given us wonderful light. All the purpose of God has been revealed to us, and the Holy Spirit given to keep us in the power of it. The glory shines in the face of Jesus Christ, Who Himself is the leader and completer of the path of faith. He has reached the right hand of God, where there are pleasures for evermore. The beloved apostle Paul, who followed in fidelity that same path, could say at the close of his earthly journey, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith;" and exhorting his son Timothy said, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Timothy was to walk in the same path for the glory of God. May it be given to each reader, though in dark days and in much feebleness, to have the eye directed to that blessed Man that sits in the glory, Who alone is able to maintain us in the path of faith, till we see Him, face to face.

R. Duncanson.

S. The Prayer in Eph_3:1-21.

The Prayer in Ephesians 3:1-21.

(Revised notes of an address.) In the earlier part of Ephesians 3:1-21, the Apostle brings out the truth of the mystery, which had been hid in God, and which was now, in His wisdom, brought to light. He had created a vessel, the assembly, which was formed in the life of Christ, and in which the heavenly intelligences can see a wisdom that they had never seen before.

Having given these wonderful communications, the Apostle says, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Do we bow our knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? The Apostle is not now speaking of what God is; that comes out in Ephesians 1:1-23; he is praying to the Father. The Father brings before us the relationship in which the Lord Jesus is with Him as Son. Of the Father, "the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Every family will come under the Father in the world to come, but they are not brought into the divine relationship of sons as we are. The earthly people of God, Israel; the families of the Gentiles; and the many families of angels and men in heaven, are all ranged under the great Name of the Father, the Name by which God is now known in Christianity, revealed by the Son.

If we are to enter into the riches of the Father's glory, we must be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; and it is for this that Paul prays for the beloved saints at Ephesus. All that which is of God within us is called the "inner man," and it is this which enters into the truth of God. We have been formed in the divine nature by the Spirit of God, so that we can delight in God and respond to all that God makes known to us. Our hearts are to be the dwelling place for Christ; He is to abide in the seat of our affections, and control our thoughts and lives. It is by faith that Christ has this place; it is as we are occupied with Him in relation to all that has been brought before the saints in this Epistle, that this becomes true of us. Communion with Christ, in the place where He now is, in all His unsearchable riches, will give Him His desired place in the hearts of His own. And we are to be rooted and grounded in the divine nature; firmly attached to Christ in divine love, and growing in the love that we have learned in Him, all our springs being in what will enable us to bring forth fruit for the glory and the praise of God.

It is as we enter into the practical reality of these things that we shall be "able to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height." The heavenly City has definite measurements, but here we have what is infinite and unfathomable. We are introduced into a scene of divine glory, of which the Father is the source. In a coming day we shall be associated with Christ as the Son of God in a sphere of divine glory that can never be fathomed, and from this sphere there will outshine the riches of His glory. His glory as Son of Man will be manifested to all the earth, for His sway will be universal; His supreme power will be displayed, and as King of kings and Lord of lords, every diadem shall rest upon His brow. But the heavenly glory of the Son will far surpass the glory displayed to men on earth, and this God would have us apprehend in its breadth and length and depth and height. Then we are recalled to what is beyond the glory — the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; and this we are to know in its sweetness as Christ dwells in our

hearts by faith. As we know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, we shall become filled even unto all the fulness of God — the great resource that enables us to come out down here for the will of God. Having made such wonderful revelations as come out in the early part of the chapter, and having bowed his knees unto the Father, how blessed for us to hear the Apostle say, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." This is the mighty power that wrought in Christ when God raised Him from the dead; it is the power that has quickened us, giving us divine life, and has raised us up in association with Christ, and made us to sit in Him in the heavenly places. By the Spirit this great divine power works in us now, and will be fully displayed in us when we receive our bodies of glory.

It is of God the Father, Who works in us by His mighty resurrection power, that the Apostle says, "To Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of ages." How blessed it is beloved, that this vessel, which is the fruit of His wisdom, is to go right on into the eternal ages, and in it is to be displayed the glory of God. Christ will have His body and His bride; but here we have what the assembly is for God as the vessel in which He will tabernacle with men throughout the eternal day. What a wonderful moment this is! We are being carried forward through the work of redemption to the kingdom of the coming age, having already been brought into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Here we learn all the delightful thoughts that lie in the will of God, and of all that will so soon be brought out into display. After the day of millennial display is over, the new creation vessel that has displayed God's glory as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, will be God's tabernacle in which He will dwell for evermore. What a wonderful day that will be!

R. Duncanson.

S. The Rejection of the Testimony of the Son of God.

The Rejection of the Testimony of the Son of God.

(Revised notes of an address on John 8:19-29.)

How very solemn is the consideration of the rejection of the testimony of the Son of God by the Jews. The Lord Jesus had been speaking the words of the Father, and revealing His works of power, yet were they entirely ignorant of Him who had sent the Son into the world, so that when the Jews asked Him, "Where is thy father?" He replies, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father." Their blind unbelief had prevented them from receiving and enjoying the greatest revelation that was ever brought to men. Every moral feature of the Father had been set forth in that blessed Person who had been brought up with Him, who was the nursling of His love, and who was daily His delight before the foundation of the world. In Him the Father's grace had been shining forth, and the secrets of His bosom unfolded.

Fain would the adversaries of the Lord have seized Him, but "No man laid hands on Him; for His hour was not yet come" (John 8:20). When the hour came for Him to die, He gave His life, even as He said, "I lay down my life . . . no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18). His life was lived on account of the Father, to secure His glory in accomplishing all that was given Him to do, and when the time came for Him to leave this world, He gave His life as a voluntary offering, to lay the basis in redemption for the accomplishment of all His will. His perfect obedience was manifested in His every activity in life, and in the sacrifice of Himself in death.

Through death He would enter the Father's presence, and there the Jews could not come. As having refused Him, and the testimony that the Father had given Him, they would die in their sins. Their rejection of this heavenly testimony proved that they belonged to this world, and that morally they were from beneath; their opposition to the Son of God being manifestly inspired by the god of this world. The life that He lived, and the words that He spoke bore eloquent witness that He was from heaven. But the Jews were so blind that they could not discern who He was, nor could they tell whence He came. How different it was with the disciples! for Simon Peter had said, "Lord . . . Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and known that Thou art the holy One of God" (John 6:68-69).

Those who had companied with Jesus had seen something of the heavenly character He bore, and therefore knew that He was the holy One of God, but in ignorance the Jews enquire, "Who art thou?" So far as they were concerned, the manifestation of the heavenly life, the revelation of the Father's grace, and the wonderful testimony of the Son had been in vain. They might be very religious, zealous for the traditions of the fathers, with great pretensions as to the service and worship of God, and all the while in deadly and bitter opposition to the truth that God had sent, and to Him who brought it. His works and words plainly declared who He was from the beginning of His

public ministry, but they would not have Him.

If the light of God, come in the Person of the Son, revealed God in His great compassions, it also exposed those who rejected His testimony, so that He says, "I have many things to say and to judge of you." What could He say of those who had rejected such words and such works? They had not the life of God in them, for He was true, and had they been true, they would have received Him whom the Father had sent. As sent of the Father, the Son spoke the things which He had heard of Him, the things that brought out the features of God's nature, all His moral excellencies, and His grace for men. His ear was opened morning by morning, the dependent One, to hear the words of the Father, the words that were not only for the Jews but for the world.

Although the Jews had refused the testimony of the Son of God, knowing Him not, they would yet realise who they had rejected. This would be after He had fulfilled the type of the brazen serpent, giving Himself in love that eternal life might be the portion of all who believe in Him. The fruits of His great work on the cross, and of the testimony that He bore on earth, will yet be displayed in glory, and will manifest before the whole universe the greatness of the Son's mission as come into the world on account of the Father.

Rejected by the Jews, the Son had the deep consolation of the Father's company, even as He said, "And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." Nothing could interfere with the communion that ever existed between the Father and the Son, that which belonged to them in the relationships of the Godhead, but there was a communion that existed between the Son in Manhood and the Father, that which subsisted in relation to the carrying out of the Father's will on earth. And how blessed this communion! the Son in the perfection of obedience never seeking His own will, but only and ever the will and pleasure of the Father. Sainly men have sought to live for God in this world, but only One could say, "I do always those things that please Him."

R. Duncanson.

S. The Witness of the Spirit in Stephen.

The Witness of the Spirit in Stephen. In Acts 6:1-15, we are introduced to Stephen as chosen and ordained by the apostles to serve tables; but as one who was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, he had purchased for himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:13). So that when we find him preaching the word, none were able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Coming out in the Spirit of His Master, Stephen is seen "full of grace and power," working wonders and great signs among the people. With such a ministry, it is no wonder that he becomes the object of the enemy's assault, and that like his Master, evil men are suborned to bring false accusations against him, saying that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God. When he is brought before the council to answer to the false charges, we read, "And all who sat in the council, looking fixedly on him, saw his face as the face of an angel." No doubt the rays of the heavenly glory of Christ were shining upon Stephen, and ministering grace to his heart, to sustain him in his faithful and devoted witness to Him, in the face of all that religious evil and bitter enmity and hatred against Him whom he served. But to the onlookers, his face appeared as the face of an angel. This was God's testimony against those who accused His servant of speaking against Moses and against Him. Had not the law of Moses been given by a dispensation of angels? And where now is the angelic witness? Is it with the false witnesses; with the council; or in Stephen? This should surely have come home with conviction to the leaders of the people; but no, they have the veil over their hearts.

Answering for himself, Stephen begins with the wonderful moment, when God, the God of glory appeared to Abraham, calling him from the land of idols into the land of His purpose, where he was to walk as a stranger. Isaac and Jacob are mentioned, then the twelve patriarchs, who, envying Joseph, sold him into Egypt. But God was with Joseph, and delivered him from his afflictions, giving him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh; and exalting him into the place, where, in the ways of God, he typified Jesus as the Son of Man over all the world. The rejected one is known as the Saviour of the world, and his brethren and all the men of the world, must bow before him: beautiful type indeed, of Jesus. Moses, too who was "exceedingly lovely," and "mighty in his words and deeds," is rejected by his brethren; and spite of their rejection of him, God sends him to be a ruler and deliverer; the great leader of His earthly people. And it was Moses who had foretold of the coming of Jesus, the coming of a Prophet raised up of God, like himself.

Having brought home to them their rejection of Joseph and Moses, Stephen recalls the unfaithfulness of the people, but the faithfulness of God. But their continued history is one of rebellion and persecution of the servants of God culminating in their slaying of the Just One, of whom the prophets had spoken. They had been highly privileged in receiving the law by a ministry of angels, but how great their guilt: they had not kept it. Had not Stephen just charged them with resisting the Holy Spirit? Now they deliberately refuse the Spirit's testimony in Stephen. Hearing his witness against them, they do not repent, but being cut to the heart they gnash their teeth against him. The spirit manifested against the Son of God is manifested against His servant who witnesses to Him by the Spirit. But man's hatred turns Stephen to heaven, and being full of the

Holy Spirit, he sees there the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. What a contemplation for him! what glory, what joy fills his heart, as his eye rests complacently, and with the deepest delight, on that blessed One. Lost in the wonderment of it, he gives his closing testimony, the Spirit's testimony, to that rebellious nation, saying, "I beheld the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." He tells them of Him who will bring in universal blessing for men, and cause all that hath breath to praise the Lord.

See how Israel treats the testimony of the Spirit to a glorified Christ. Crying with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and having cast him out of the city, they stoned him. Their thoughts towards the glorified Christ were just the same as when He was among them in lowliness and meekness. They have no desire to hear of Christ's glory: they stop their ears; and loud in their protests against the witness of His glory, they are thoroughly united in their wicked desire to be rid of him. How clearly had they made their mind known, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Stephen, in the Spirit of Christ, prays for his enemies and murderers, saying "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." His heart is filled with love, deep compassion for Israel, so that like the Son of God on the cross, he intercedes. For himself, Stephen's request is "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What a marvellous triumph of grace over all the power of religious hate and wickedness: what a joy for the Lord Jesus to receive the spirit of His faithful and devoted servant. May the contemplation of Stephen speak to our hearts and consciences, so that in this evil day we may seek to be marked by the same spirit; and be lost in adoration and worship in His presence of whom the hymn writer speaks:

'Tis Jesus fills that holy place
Where glory dwells, and Thy deep love
In its own fulness (known
through grace) Rests where He lives, in heaven above.

R. Duncanson.

S. The Witness of the Spirit in Stephen.

The Witness of the Spirit in Stephen. In Acts 6:1-15, we are introduced to Stephen as chosen and ordained by the apostles to serve tables; but as one who was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, he had purchased for himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:13). So that when we find him preaching the word, none were able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Coming out in the Spirit of His Master, Stephen is seen "full of grace and power," working wonders and great signs among the people. With such a ministry, it is no wonder that he becomes the object of the enemy's assault, and that like his Master, evil men are suborned to bring false accusations against him, saying that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God. When he is brought before the council to answer to the false charges, we read, "And all who sat in the council, looking fixedly on him, saw his face as the face of an angel." No doubt the rays of the heavenly glory of Christ were shining upon Stephen, and ministering grace to his heart, to sustain him in his faithful and devoted witness to Him, in the face of all that religious evil and bitter enmity and hatred against Him whom he served. But to the onlookers, his face appeared as the face of an angel. This was God's testimony against those who accused His servant of speaking against Moses and against Him. Had not the law of Moses been given by a dispensation of angels? And where now is the angelic witness? Is it with the false witnesses; with the council; or in Stephen? This should surely have come home with conviction to the leaders of the people; but no, they have the veil over their hearts.

Answering for himself, Stephen begins with the wonderful moment, when God, the God of glory appeared to Abraham, calling him from the land of idols into the land of His purpose, where he was to walk as a stranger. Isaac and Jacob are mentioned, then the twelve patriarchs, who, envying Joseph, sold him into Egypt. But God was with Joseph, and delivered him from his afflictions, giving him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh; and exalting him into the place, where, in the ways of God, he typified Jesus as the Son of Man over all the world. The rejected one is known as the Saviour of the world, and his brethren and all the men of the world, must bow before him: beautiful type indeed, of Jesus. Moses, too who was "exceedingly lovely," and "mighty in his words and deeds," is rejected by his brethren; and spite of their rejection of him, God sends him to be a ruler and deliverer; the great leader of His earthly people. And it was Moses who had foretold of the coming of Jesus, the coming of a Prophet raised up of God, like himself.

Having brought home to them their rejection of Joseph and Moses, Stephen recalls the unfaithfulness of the people, but the faithfulness of God. But their continued history is one of rebellion and persecution of the servants of God culminating in their slaying of the Just One, of whom the prophets had spoken. They had been highly privileged in receiving the law by a ministry of angels, but how great their guilt: they had not kept it. Had not Stephen just charged them with resisting the Holy Spirit? Now they deliberately refuse the Spirit's testimony in Stephen. Hearing his witness against them, they do not repent, but being cut to the heart they gnash their teeth against him. The spirit manifested against the Son of God is manifested against His servant who witnesses to Him by the Spirit. But man's hatred turns Stephen to heaven, and being full of the

Holy Spirit, he sees there the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. What a contemplation for him! what glory, what joy fills his heart, as his eye rests complacently, and with the deepest delight, on that blessed One. Lost in the wonderment of it, he gives his closing testimony, the Spirit's testimony, to that rebellious nation, saying, "I beheld the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." He tells them of Him who will bring in universal blessing for men, and cause all that hath breath to praise the Lord.

See how Israel treats the testimony of the Spirit to a glorified Christ. Crying with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and having cast him out of the city, they stoned him. Their thoughts towards the glorified Christ were just the same as when He was among them in lowliness and meekness. They have no desire to hear of Christ's glory: they stop their ears; and loud in their protests against the witness of His glory, they are thoroughly united in their wicked desire to be rid of him. How clearly had they made their mind known, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Stephen, in the Spirit of Christ, prays for his enemies and murderers, saying "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." His heart is filled with love, deep compassion for Israel, so that like the Son of God on the cross, he intercedes. For himself, Stephen's request is "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." What a marvellous triumph of grace over all the power of religious hate and wickedness: what a joy for the Lord Jesus to receive the spirit of His faithful and devoted servant. May the contemplation of Stephen speak to our hearts and consciences, so that in this evil day we may seek to be marked by the same spirit; and be lost in adoration and worship in His presence of whom the hymn writer speaks:

'Tis Jesus fills that holy place
Where glory dwells, and Thy deep love
In its own fulness (known
through grace) Rests where He lives, in heaven above.

R. Duncanson.

S. This Same Jesus

This Same Jesus. In the Acts of the Apostles various glories of the Person of Jesus are brought before us. In Acts 1:1-26 we see Him companying with His own for forty days, speaking to them of those things pertaining to the kingdom. Then the moment of His departure comes, when He goes back to the Father, and He gives them His final instructions (Acts 1:7-8). It must have been a wonderful moment for those faithful few, as they beheld, with fixed gaze, Jesus ascending into heaven. He had been their Comforter, and had richly unfolded to them the love and affection of the Father's heart, with the grace that was to sustain them during His absence. What a lesson is here for each one of us, to test our hearts before Him. Are our eyes fixed steadfastly on Him in that place into which He has gone? If they are, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This is the Christian's true attitude, and should be ours day by day, and moment by moment. How much we should be saved from if Christ was thus continually before us; and we would be able to say in the words of the Psalmist "Thou art at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

Heavenly messengers are sent to tell His disciples where Jesus had gone, and note what they say, "Ye men of Galilee" They do not say Ye men of Jerusalem: they are addressed as the poor of the flock, the few in whom the Lord had found His joy and pleasure and belonging to the place where He loved to walk in the manifestation of the Father's grace (John 7:1). This surely touches our hearts, recalling the poverty of His own circumstances, who had nowhere to lay His head, and who, when all went to their own homes, went to the mount of Olives. Although He was heir of all things, He entered into the depths of poverty to reach us and bring us in spirit to that place where He now is. The Lord forbid that we should seek or aspire to anything in man's world, but rather should we walk as belonging to the Father's world, even as we some-times sing:

Oh fix our earnest gaze So wholly, Lord, on Thee, That, with Thy beauty occupied, We elsewhere none may see.

There is another precious thought; "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." What a prospect! He is coming again, to take His loved ones home, and to shine forth in His glory. The same Jesus, Who was here manifesting all those moral excellencies and heavenly perfections for the glory of God — the same Jesus, lowly, meek, gentle, and long-suffering, shall set up His kingdom, and the meek shall inherit the earth; and all those lovely features shall shine out in the same moral excellency and perfection. Till then, it is our privilege, to manifest in some feeble way, for the delight of the Father's heart, those same features, so that He might be glorified in us.

R. Duncanson.

S. Truth for the Last Days.

Truth for the Last Days.

2 Timothy 2:15-26.

(Revised notes of an address.) In this second epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul, at the beginning of 2 Timothy 3:1-17, warns us of the "difficult times" of the "last days," but at the commencement of the epistle he calls our attention to the "promise of life, the life which is in Christ Jesus." If the church breaks down, and what is committed to men falls into ruin in their hands, every thing that belongs to God is safe in the hands of Christ Jesus. The promise of life is in Him, and God's purpose is in Him, as is also the grace that God has given to us. This heavenly grace, given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time, has been made manifest by the appearance of the Lord Jesus in this world, and has been ministered to us through the great work accomplished on the cross. Having entered into death's dark domain, He came out triumphant in resurrection, having annulled death, and now He has "brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings" (2 Timothy 1:10). This gives us to see the condition in which the saints will soon be in heavenly glory with Christ, in a scene where there will be nothing connected with man after the flesh. Now we bear the features of Adam; all these will go when Christ comes. How blessed it is to know that the triumph of God will be manifested in this age, just before we are taken up to be with Christ for ever; those who have already passed through death will be raised, and united with those who are alive and changed, and together in company with Christ all shall enter with Him the Father's House for evermore. The truth that Paul was called to minister, Timothy, as strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, was to entrust to faithful men, such as were competent to instruct others also. This precious legacy of truth has come down to us. For long centuries, the special truths committed to Paul were unknown to the church, but last century, in the goodness of God, they were again brought before the saints of God, so that they might walk in the light of them until the end.

Occupation with Paul's doctrine would involve Timothy in conflict, so that he is exhorted to take his share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Paul had endured much in suffering for the testimony the Lord had given him, and even now, while writing, was in prison and about to suffer martyrdom for Christ's sake. But he endured all for the "sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10). Are we prepared to suffer for the maintenance of the truth of God? It is not likely that we shall be called to suffer unto bonds, as Paul suffered, or as Timothy suffered; but we may be called upon to suffer the loss of friendships, and to be evil spoken of, if we really value, and are prepared to stand for the truth. When we come to the first verse read, we have "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The Apostle exhorts Timothy in that which he practised himself as witnessed in his epistles, and in the discourses recorded for us in the Acts. If the word of God is not cut in a straight line there will be confusion, and the saints will be led astray. All around in Christendom we see the truth of God undermined, nor is there the fear of God as in earlier days.

Departure from sound doctrine leads to teachings that the Apostle calls "profane vain babblings," with which is connected "greater impiety." How very necessary sound teaching is if we would live godly lives. These two things are inseparably bound together. The names of two prominent teachers of false doctrine are given by the Apostle, as is also the special doctrine that marked their departure from the truth. They did not deny the doctrine of the resurrection, but in saying that it had taken place already they falsified the heavenly character of Christianity, and overthrew the faith of some.

Amidst all the present departure from the truth how blessed for us are the words, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure." This foundation is the settled purpose of God, what was in God's mind before time began; and all is being worked out through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of old it had been written, "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24). What God has purposed for the pleasure of His heart and for the glory of Christ will assuredly be accomplished; nothing will turn Him from it, it standeth sure. God's purpose is unfolded for us through Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians. And how blessed it is that it can be said, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." No matter how feeble in faith the believer may be, he is known to the Lord. We ought to know all the true believers that we meet, but in the mixed conditions that prevail today it is sometimes difficult to know whether a person is a real believer or not. But the Lord knows all His own, no matter where they are. He knows "The rest (remnant) in Thyatira," who are true to Him, although surrounded by false doctrines and idolatry; He knows the "Few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments," and delights to commend them, saying, "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

If the Lord knows His own, there is an obligation on their part to walk in consistency with the holiness of His Name; therefore we read, "Let every one who names the Name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity." How could any one who valued the Name of the Lord go on with such men as Hymenaeus and Philetus, or with such as held their pernicious teachings? To name the Name of the Lord is to profess fidelity to Him, and true fidelity is shown by a walk and actions consistent with our profession. In the first epistle to Timothy the Apostle speaks to his son in the faith of "The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:15). Now he speaks of "A great house" with "not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour" (2 Timothy 2:20). How very solemn it is that God's house should be likened to a great house of this description! There are those who profess the Name of Christ, but they are earthly-minded, and do not truly know Christ as Saviour; they are vessels to dishonour. "If a man therefore purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). Is it not blessed that every one who in this way answers to the mind of the Lord is a vessel to honour? Such are set apart to be for the service of the Lord in any way He pleases; vessels in which the life of the Lord Jesus can be displayed by the Holy Spirit for God's pleasure.

Having separated from the vessels of dishonour, we are to "Flee also youthful lusts" and "to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). We have to be constantly in self-judgment, refusing all that would naturally attract our poor hearts, and we are to be marked by practical righteousness, and to pursue this and the other things spoken of, with those who truly call upon the Lord; those who are real Christians, and seek

to be for His pleasure and glory amidst the awful conditions portrayed in this epistle. On every hand today we find "Foolish and unlearned questions" which "gender strifes," and these have to be avoided (2 Timothy 2:23). Servants of the Lord are not to strive as worldly men do; they are to be like Christ, "Gentle unto all;" and are to be marked by patience and are to be "apt to teach." With the word of God the true servant meets all who are opposed, and also all in need of divine instruction. Some are slow to learn, hence the need of patience in teaching. How much we need to be marked by the Spirit of Christ in all that we do in service for the Lord. This is the Spirit that marked His devoted servant Paul, and Paul desires that Timothy should be like him in this way. When we find men opposing the truth of God, let us ever remember that it does not lie in our power to put them right. God may be pleased to use us for their blessing, but it is God Who gives them repentance. We are to endeavour to instruct such from the word of God in the spirit of meekness, and to count upon God to use the word spoken. Those who oppose have been ensnared by Satan, little though they realise it, but God can use His word, spoken in meekness, to recover them, so that they may be no longer for Satan, but for the will of God.

No. 2.

2 Timothy 3:10-17; 2 Timothy 4:1-8; 2 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:18. At the beginning of 2 Timothy 3:1-17 the Apostle Paul forewarns Timothy, and ourselves, of the difficult times that lay ahead; men would be lovers of their own selves, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. They would have the form of godliness, which shows that the Apostle is speaking of the religious world. Such would deny the power of true piety, and as natural men would only have themselves before them, being occupied with lust and pleasure. From such, true believers were to turn away, and to walk in the path of God's will. Who can doubt that we are now in the days spoken of in this solemn Scripture? We are living in the closing days of the church's sojourn on earth, and the Lord is about to come. In 2 Timothy 3:10 the beloved Apostle points out what would preserve us in these last days. To him had been given a wonderful revelation of the glory of the Person of the Son of God, and of the counsels and purpose of God, and this he had been called to minister; and it is the knowledge of this ministry that will keep us in the mind of God until the end. Therefore Paul says to Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine." Timothy had been linked up very early in life with the Apostle, and in close association with him was thoroughly acquainted with the whole range of the Apostle's teaching. We cannot do without Paul's doctrine if we would be loyal to Christ. John was privileged to write of the revelation of the Father in the Person of the Son, what came out in the Son here upon earth; but Paul's teaching was in relation to the Son of God in His present place at God's right hand, and in regard to the place He will have in the coming day, according to the mystery of God's will.

Timothy was also acquainted with Paul's manner of life which was in keeping with the truth he ministered; what he said and did was the verification of his ministry. He walked in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, exercising himself always so as to have a good conscience before God and men. His purpose was to go right on to the end with the ministry that God had committed to him; his eye resting on the Son of God in heaven, for he lived by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved him, and gave Himself for him. Longsuffering, love and endurance had marked him in all the persecutions and sufferings he had been subjected to, and much of this Timothy had seen. No one can read 2 Corinthians 11:1-33 without feeling the truth of what is written here. Paul could not have endured all these privations and sufferings without the help of Christ; it was the Lord Who

had delivered him out of all, preserving him in His great power and mercy.

All who desire to live piously in Christ Jesus will have to pass through something of what Paul endured. Persecution today may take a different form; it may be refined, and without physical violence, and may come from sources least expected, but it will be none the less real. There is the danger today of being surprised at opposition and persecution for the truth's sake; we need to keep in mind the word of Peter, "Beloved take not (as) strange the fire (of persecution) which has taken place amongst you for (your) trial, as if a strange thing was happening to you" (1 Peter 4:12). The Apostle experienced the deliverance of the Lord throughout his long life of devoted service, and those who live godly in Christ Jesus can also count upon the Lord's deliverance. To live in the life of Christ, as manifesting His features, and as counting upon His grace will mean that we do not rely upon anything of the flesh for our protection or deliverance. As He was dependent upon the Father while here below, so we shall rely upon Him.

We cannot look for improvement in the last days, for the word before us is, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). This is not in heathendom, but in Christendom, and especially among those who profess to be religious. The evil spoken of is not the gross immorality that marked many of the clergy before the reformation, but deception. Souls are being deceived with fair words; they are lulled into a false sense of security with the form of piety that denies its power. Those who thus deceive are themselves deceived, being the tools of Satan. The divine safeguard against this deception for the saint of God is what Paul writes, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Timothy 3:14). Timothy was to go on in the great truths he had learned from Paul. He had learned Paul's doctrine, and had been assured of its divine character, knowing Paul as a true servant of the Lord. We have Paul's doctrine on the page of inspiration, and know it to be the revelation of God for us. Have we, like Timothy, been "fully persuaded" regarding these precious and wonderful divine communications? Do we really feel in our hearts that Paul's gospel, and the counsels of God have been given to direct us in all our ways and associations while passing through this world? It is not enough for us to have accepted this heavenly light; we are to continue in it, seeking to walk according to it at all times, and in all circumstances. But Timothy had also the knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures from his childhood, which would also protect him against the deceptions of evil men and seducers, and make him wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15). How valuable is the Old Testament to us as leading us to Christ. In Luke 24:1-53 we see the Lord Jesus expounding from the Old Testament to the two on the way to Emmaus the things concerning Himself; and later, in the same chapter, He opened "their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). How blessed it is to read the Old Testament and to find in the types, shadows and prophecies the things that have come out in this blessed Person. We see this exemplified in Psalms 45:1-17 which describes in a wonderful way the beauty of Jesus, God's king, the One Who is "fairer than the children of men." But we have all Scripture to guide us: Paul's epistles; the Old Testament writings; the Gospels and the other New Testament writings. All these have been given by divine inspiration, and all is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). In the inspired writings, the Old and New Testaments, God has set forth His mind and will; that which makes known His thoughts regarding Himself, that which tells us of His ways with men, that which unfolds His purposes and counsels,

and which presents His Son as the One in Whom there has been the perfect and full revelation of Himself; and that which marks out the path for the saints of God at all times. We need the Spirit of God to give us understanding in relation to these things, but we have not the mind and will of God for us apart from "All Scripture" which is "given by inspiration of God." When upon earth, the Lord Jesus met the enemy with "It is written;" He used the Scriptures. We need no other words to guide us, for through the Scriptures "The man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:17). In the opening of 2 Timothy 4:1-22 the Apostle charges Timothy before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His Kingdom, to preach the word. All the service that we have done for the Lord will come out in its true light and worth in the day when Christ is publicly manifested in His Kingdom, and when we shall have our part with Him in the display of His glory. This day of glory will be ushered in by divine judgment; the living on earth will be gathered before Him before He reigns in the Millennium; the dead will be judged after His millennial reign is over. Christ will reign until He puts down all authority, and all rule; and after all is done He will hand back the kingdom to God the Father so that God may become all in all. When all is accomplished, there will be no trace of sin or death; and God will rest for ever in the company of His own throughout the eternal day. With all this before him, the man of God is to "preach the word." We have to continue with God's word in the Gospel right on to the end, for it is by "the word" that God reaches the hearts and consciences of men. There is to be no slackness, but ever the sense of urgency, and no opportunity is to be missed. The sound teaching that Timothy had learned was to characterize his ministry, whether in convicting, rebuking or encouraging, and in all he was to be marked by longsuffering. The same things should mark, and will mark, the faithful servant today; he will bring the word of God to bear upon the hearts and consciences of men, and ever have before him the coming day of Christ's kingdom and glory.

Paul was enabled by the Spirit of God to look forward to the time when men would "not endure sound doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:3); the signs of such departure were already in evidence. Today, this departure is fully manifested, for the professing church will not have the sound teaching of the Apostles, given by the Spirit of God; they have, after their own natural tastes and desires, chosen their own teachers, with ears itching after novelties and all kinds of philosophies and human traditions. We need to be on our guard, taking the whole armour of God, so as to stand fast for Christ in this evil day.

How watchful God's servant must be: he must watch "in all things," for the enemy is watchful for any occasion to mar the testimony rendered to Christ. Afflictions are not sent to turn us aside, but to be endured. Timothy was not only to hand on the truths that he had learned from Paul, but he was to do evangelical work as well; thus making full proof of the special ministry that had been entrusted to him, and for which the gift of Christ had fitted him. God's Gospel is to be preached until the end; and if a servant of God cannot call himself an Evangelist, he can, according to the measure of his gift, do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry, whatever the state of things in the church.

Now, in 2 Timothy 4:6, the aged Apostle tells Timothy that he is about to be offered up; he was about to lay down his life for the truth of God, in service for the saints, and as the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had earlier spoken of his impending departure to be with Christ to the Philippians, saying, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and

rejoice with you all" (Php 2:17). He was there content to be, in his death, as it were, a drink offering, offered upon the sacrifice that they had made for Christ in providing for his needs. Again the thought of his being an offering is before him; he was already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of his release was come. How blessed for him to be released from all his tribulations, and to enter into the joy of Christ's presence.

Since Christ had first called him, Paul had "fought a good fight;" in the conflict of good against evil he had remained true to Christ, even although he had suffered the loss of all things, and was about to seal his testimony with his blood. He had not sought to be relieved from the trials of the conflict, or of the race, but having finished the race, and having kept the faith, he could rejoice that the time of his release had come. By Christ's grace he had triumphed over every difficulty, and had remained true to His beloved Lord and Master until the end. Living "by the faith of the Son of God," he could say at the very close, "I have kept the faith."

Thinking now of what lay ahead, Paul can say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Soon there will be Christ's reign in righteousness, and then shall the faithful wear the crown of righteousness, given by the righteous judge to all who have loved His appearing. Have we the confidence of Paul in relation to the coming kingdom? Are we living now in view of Christ's appearing? There are those, like Demas (2 Timothy 4:10), who love the present age; whose eyes are not upon the day of Christ's glory; they are engaged with what gives them pleasure at the present time. Paul knew that the crown of righteousness would be his; it would be right for the Lord to acknowledge in this way his life for Him; but lest we should think that this would be for himself alone he adds, "And not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." At the rapture we shall be taken away from our present circumstances and conformed to Christ's image; at the appearing everything done for Christ will come out in manifestation. In 2 Timothy 4:16 we learn that no one stood by the Apostle in his defence before the emperor; indeed, all deserted him, but in grace he desired that it might not be imputed to them. If others fail, we must seek grace to continue in faithfulness to the Lord. Like Paul, we can count upon the unfailing support of the Lord in every circumstance in which we are found for Him. What a privilege it was to stand all alone, conscious of the support of Christ, the truth of the Gospel being fully set forth before the leaders of this world in his faithful defence. The Lord was pleased to deliver him out of the lion's mouth at his first defence, but Paul knew that at his next appearance before Nero he would not be spared. Yet death itself would be the means used by the Lord to deliver him "from every evil work." What else could the forces of evil do after having slain him? And their worst act towards him would but send him into the presence of his Lord, where the Lord would preserve him for His heavenly kingdom. How blessed is the thought of the heavenly kingdom! From the heavenly side of the kingdom, where we shall enjoy all with the Son of the Father's love, the saints shall shine forth in the light of Christ. All the glory is ascribed to the Lord, and not only for the millennial day, but "for ever and ever." As His glory shines out, the whole earth as well as the heavens, will be jubilant with song; "They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this" (Psalms 22:31). The Man of Calvary is the Man Who is going to bring in everything for the glory and honour of God. In the light of this eternal glory we can well say with the Apostle — "Amen."

R. Duncanson. Should we to gain the world's applause, Or to escape its harmless frown, Refuse to countenance Thy cause, And make Thy people's lot our own, What shame would fill us in that

day, When Thou Thy glory wilt display!

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net