

The Exalted Christ (Booklet)

by F.B. Meyer

Christ is the key to understanding the Old Testament, and the Holy Ghost is essential in revealing Jesus in the Word.

Scripture: Revelation 5:4

Topics: "Understanding Scripture", "The Centrality of Christ"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the centrality of Christ in both the Old and New Testaments, illustrating how all scripture points to Him as the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. He discusses the paradoxes found in scripture, such as Christ being both the Lion and the Lamb, and how understanding these paradoxes reveals deeper truths about Jesus. Meyer encourages believers to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding the scriptures and to reflect Christ's character in their daily lives. He concludes by affirming that God's love, which surpasses knowledge, is accessible to all who seek it through faith in Christ.

Transcript

I YIELD to the persuasion of my friend, the publisher, for the publication of these Addresses and Bible Readings, delivered in succeeding years at the Mildmay Conference, though, as I review them, they seem very like the five barley loaves and two small fish of the fisher-lad.

Indulgence must also be asked for the style, which is rather more ragged than I like, because the Addresses were taken down by the shorthand writer as I spoke them. They are neither silver nor gold, but such as I have.

Mildmay has too large a claim on those of us who love evangelical truth and consecrated work to be allowed to ask twice for any help that we can give; and it is a real gratification to be able, through this little volume, to do anything for the funds of her great institutions.

"As the Author, so also the subject of the whole Bible is one. 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' The testimony of Jesus is in like manner the spirit of every portion of Holy Scripture. Whatever the letter may be, whether it be Patriarchal narrative, or Mosaic type, or Prophetic poetry, or Evangelical parable, or Apostolical argument, or Apocalyptic vision, it bears to Jesus. He is the First and Last; the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world'; the seed of the woman; the seed of Abraham; the Son of David; the Priest, the Sacrifice, the Branch, the Shepherd, the King; the Alpha and Omega; the encyclopedia of Revelation."

DEAN MC NEILE

"The great drift of the Old Testament prophecy is ' the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' (1 Peter 1:11.) Of course the prophets foretold a great many other things, but the two great outstanding topics of the Old Testament Scripture undoubtedly are these. In the mind of the living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, these were the great themes--the only great themes, as it were, to occupy the minds and hearts of those inspired."

D. E. MATHIESON,

CHRIST THE KEY TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

A BIBLE READING

"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the Book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."-- Revelation 5:4-6.

You will notice the three paradoxes of this scripture. He looked for a Lion and beheld a Lamb; for the root of David, and lo, one who was the offspring of David; for Him that had overcome, and lo! one who had apparently failed. But you will note that the scene may be taken as an illustration of the way in which our Blessed Lord took the sealed Book of the Old Testament and broke the seals of it to His disciples by the Holy Ghost. In the centre of Rome there was a milestone on which all the roads of the known world converged; and we believe that there is a path, a road, in every book and from every chapter of the Bible, converging upon Jesus Christ. Not only is this the case in the Books of the New Testament, but in those also of the Old.

Let us for a moment turn to Matthew 1., and give due importance to that white sheet, which in our Bibles intervenes between the Old and the New. Because these two Books are bound together, we sometimes forget that a lapse of four hundred years is represented by that page, yet we are certain that the Jews possessed the Old Testament, in the Greek form, two hundred years B.C. Now, in the Old that lies on one side of the valley, and in the New that lies on the other side of the valley, Jesus Christ is All. In the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is latent; in the New, He is patent. In the Old, the reference to Him is implicit; in the New, it is explicit. In the Old, we have foresight; in the New, insight. The early Church did not attempt to argue for the facts of our Saviour's life, death, and resurrection. They were acknowledged for three hundred years after Christ left our world.

The one effort of the early Church was to show that the life and the work of Jesus Christ were the Rosetta stone which opened the hieroglyphics of the Old Testament Scripture. It has been said that there are some 333 predictions and references alluded to in the New Testament from the Old. The Old threads the New, as the warp the woof. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on His resurrection, Luke 24:27, set Himself to show this connection. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself."

"In all the scriptures". In other words, the glory of Jesus shines on the pages of the Old Testament, as the light of God on the face of Moses. Only to many it is hidden. But your study of the old Testament will be futile indeed, unless you have learned in every veiled type and symbol, in every history and character, as well as in the words of prediction, to find your Lord. When you turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Let us consider the perpetual reference, on the part of the early Church, to this teaching about our Lord in the Old Testament. We will turn to the Acts of the Apostles, (Acts 2). In St. Peter's sermon, out of twenty-two verses in our version, eleven are Old Testament quotations. I am not sure that congregations in these days would stand that proportion of scripture quotation in our sermons; but you will notice that the sermon which the Holy Ghost used so conspicuously that thousands were converted, was largely a mosaic of scripture; from which we may gather why the Holy Ghost does not own many of our modern sermons. He seeks in them for something He can use. If we can once learn to use the Word of God, that is the sword which He can wield. In the third chapter, in St. Peter's second sermon, there are five references to the prophets--in Acts 2:18, Acts 2:21, Acts 2:22, Acts 2:24, Acts 2:25. He cannot open his mouth before the Sanhedrim (Acts 4:7) without quoting the Old Testament; and in the 25th verse, as soon as the disciples get together, they quote for their encouragement the Word of God. The seventh chapter of the Acts is one connected series of scripture reference. And again, in the tenth chapter, the sermon which the Holy Ghost used to introduce the gospel to the Gentiles, was full of Scriptural quotation. In St. Paul's first recorded sermon (Acts 13.) you will notice distinct references to scripture in the Acts 13:22, Acts 13:27, Acts 13:29, Acts 13:32, Acts 13:33, Acts 13:34, Acts 13:35, and his closing words in Acts 13:41. So that again, if you will count the number of words in that sermon, you will find fully half of them are Old Testament quotations; throughout he is endeavouring to make the people see the correspondence between the Man of Nazareth and of Calvary with that wonderful portraiture in the Old Testament. Will you turn next to Acts 17:3, where you learn that just so soon as St. Paul reached Thessalonica, for three Sabbath days he reasoned with them in the scriptures, opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead, and "that this Jesus whom I proclaim unto you is the Messiah foretold--the promised Christ." And then if you go to Acts 18:28, the characteristic of the golden tongue of Apollos was that he powerfully confuted the Jews, and publicly shewed by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. You have it again in Acts 26:27. When St. Paul found himself in the presence of a Jewish Judge, he said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." And then lastly, in Acts 28:23, we are told that he expounded to the Jews in Rome, testifying to the Kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning till evening.

There are two things to be noticed here. The first, of course, in our own reading of the Word of God to find Christ in the Old Testament; and secondly, in dealing with young men and young women who are troubled with modern doubt, and who are eagerly demanding all manner of books and helps by which to combat it. Let us shew them that the Bible is its own best witness, and that probably the most conclusive proof of the truth of scripture is this wonderful correspondence between the prophecy of the Old and the portraiture of the New.

Because the field is so vast, I am compelled to take a specimen to illustrate what I am saying, and limit our consideration to the paradoxes of the Old Testament. Now, a paradox is a sentence which consists of two separate statements, each of which is true, considered in itself, but which appear contradictory when laid side by side; but they are combined and harmonised by some deeper truth that lies beneath. For instance, it is a paradox that, on the one hand, we are saved by the grace of God, and on the other hand, that it is

necessary for every soul to Acts for itself, and to flee for refuge--to take hold of Christ. It is the old controversy between election and free-will. But these two statements are, doubtless, consistent if we could get the deeper truths which harmonise them, and which at present are veiled from our sight. So it is with the paradoxes of the Old Testament. There were a number of apparently contradictory statements which awaited the fulness of time when Jesus Christ appeared; but, as God's deeper truth was manifested, it became obvious that they were in harmony.

Let us look for a moment at some of them. Take our Lord's own paradox in Matthew 22:42. There our Lord turns the tables upon His interrogators. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?. They say unto Him, the Son of David." This was the ordinary appellation for the Messiah. Thus the blind man had called out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy." And He said to them, "How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord?." quoting Psalm 110:1-7. How could the same being be at one and the same time David's son and David's Lord?

There are three sorts of paradox--the paradox in prediction, the paradox in type, and the paradox in history. First, the paradox in prediction. Let us consider two or three instances. Take two psalms, Psalm 22. and Psalm 45. Psalm 22. has been called by an illustrious commentator the "Psalm of Sobs," because it is so full of the sighing and broken heart of Jesus. It seems to me that probably (if I may dare to say it) our Lord Jesus Christ was quoting this, verse by verse, to Himself as He was slowly dying on the cross. Look at Psalm 22:6, "I am a worm"; look at Psalm 22:12, "compassed me"; look at Psalm 22:15, "athirst"; look at Psalm 22:16, "compassed and pierced"; look at Psalm 22:18, "stripped." It is very remarkable that the death thus foreshadowed could only be the death of the cross, and very wonderful that it should have been predicted of Jesus Christ, since to the Jewish mind it was so utterly repugnant. But turn now to Psalm 45, the Psalm of the Bridegroom. In Psalm 45:2 He who had been as a worm is said to be "fairer than the children of men"; He who had been surrounded by enemies, in Psalm 45:3 is a "conqueror"; He who had been athirst, in Psalm 45:2 verse has "grace poured into His lips"; He who in Psalm 45:16 had been pierced, in Psalm 45:6 is "on a throne"; and He who in the former Psalm had been stripped of His garments, in Psalm 44:8 is "clad in royal robes." How puzzling to a Jew. Must he not have wondered how Psalms 22, 45. could be true of the same Messiah? And yet the close of those two Psalms distinctly points the reference to Him. Take another chapter in which these paradoxes occur very numerous, Isaiah 53:1-12. A friend of mine has noticed that Isaiah 53:1-12. comes just in the very middle of the sixty-six chapters of Messianic predictions with which the Book of Isaiah closes. Now take this cluster of paradoxes. In Isaiah 53:8, He is "cut off," in Isaiah 53:10 He "prolongs His days." In the Isaiah 53:2 He is "a root out of a dry ground" (there is no seed from it), but in Isaiah 53:10 "He sees His seed and is satisfied." In Isaiah 53:9 He makes "His grave with the wicked," and in Isaiah 53:12 He divides "a portion with the great." In Isaiah 53:12 He is "numbered with the transgressors," but in the same verse He makes "intercession for the transgressors." In the Isaiah 53:12 He "pours out His soul unto death," in Isaiah 53:10 the "pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand." Do you wonder that the Jews have invented two Messiahs in order to satisfy that wonderful chapter? So much for paradox in prediction.

Turn for a moment to the paradox in type. He was the pigeon whose neck was wrung, and its blood shed over the flowing water; and He was the pigeon flung up into the air, and winging its way to its native woods--the type of resurrection. He was the goat that fell beneath the stab of the priest, and the goat that went into the lonely land, bearing the guilt of the people. He was the victim and the priest.

With regard to the paradox in history--He was Elijah sweeping up in the ascension car, and Elisha completing a milder ministry. He was David the great conqueror, and Solomon the man of peace. He was

Moses the law-giver--nay, a greater than Moses--and he was Aaron the priest, and Joshua the forerunner. He was Adam the father, for He was the second Adam, and the figure of Him that was to come; but He was also the son Abel, though His blood speaks better things than that of Abel, and puts away sin. He was Noah, who built the ark and swam the flood, and He was the Ark that bore him across. He was the Joshua that led the people into the promised land, and He Himself is the promised land. So that beneath all these paradoxes, with which the Old Testament is so full, we must implicitly find our blessed Lord Jesus as the only interpretation of what is contradictory. Is this not true of all perplexity and anxiety--of all that seems so contradictory in your life and mine--that underneath all these dealings of God there is the one loving purpose in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Whenever there is a veil, whether on human life, or in regard to the mysteries of Scripture, so soon as we turn to the Lord it is removed. As Jesus Christ underlay the Old Testament, full of grace and truth, it was necessary for those who lived after His time, by faith to extract from the Old Testament that which He was. Just as it is necessary for us in these days, who know that He underlies the New Testament, by faith to extract all the grace and all the blessing that await us there.

Turn for a moment to 2 Corinthians 3. the apostle imagines he is challenged for letters of commendation, which he refuses, "because" in the third verse he says, "You are my epistles, you are my commendatory letters; upon your hearts the Holy Scripture has engraved the character of Jesus"; and then he draws a contrast which I pray you to notice. In the seventh verse and onward, he suggests a parallel between the face of Moses, upon which there was a veil, and the veiled glory of Christ in the Old Testament. He describes the Jews as sitting in their synagogues with their veiled faces, as though the veil had fallen from Moses' face on theirs, and is fearful lest the same veil might hide from his converts the glories of the Lord. In the fourteenth and fifteenth verses he says, "Until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." When the people turn unto the Lord, the veil will be taken away. First let us lay aside the veil; then receive the Spirit of the Lord; and then with unveiled face beholding in a mirror, or reflecting as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed. The Old Testament did not profit them because of the veil, because they did not realise the power of the Holy Ghost, because they did not adequately reflect.

These are the three lessons for ourselves here to-day.

(1) Christ is in the New, as He was and is in the Old. Up till now, perhaps, with some of us, our Bible study has not profited. We have not seen Jesus in the Old or in the New; and, therefore, to-day let us meet the solemn challenge, Is there any veil upon our face? There was a time when, in the Holy of Holies, the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Has there ever been, in your life and mine, a rending of that veil? Has there ever been a time when your spirit and your soul have been, so to speak, thrown into one, and your individuality overshadowed and penetrated by the Shekinah glow of the Holy Ghost?. Has there ever been a moment in your life when there was the sudden rending in twain from the top to the bottom of some prejudice, of some uncharity, of some inconsistency in heart or life? Oh! what wonder, if there be such a veil, that up till now the Word of God has been a veiled Book--that you have not seen „Christ in it! And whatever it may be, I pray you get alone by yourselves before God Almighty, and ask that this veil--whatever has come between you and the perfect vision of Christ in his Word--may be rent in twain, and that you may see eye to eye.

(2) But next, there must be the reception of the Holy Ghost. It was by the Holy Ghost that the prophets wrote, and by the Holy Ghost that the apostles were directed to understand what the Holy Ghost meant; and there must be on the part of all of us the constant reception of the Holy Ghost who wrote the Word,

and who will reveal Jesus in that Word. It is by the Spirit that we know the Lord all along the line of our life. You will find that if you live near God, there will be a constantly fresh reception--a constantly enlarging reception of the Holy Ghost--and in proportion as you get this, He will open up to you the Old and the New Testament alike--Jesus Christ and His glory. Have you received the Holy Ghost? Have we received the Holy Ghost definitely into our life, as a spirit of revelation? And do you, whenever you open the Word of God, meekly bow your heads and say, "Oh! Spirit of God, shew me the face of Christ here"?

(3) And then, lastly, in order to appreciate Christ in the Old or New Testament, there must be reflection. People go away from our Conventions and Conferences with their notebooks, and say to themselves, "I have got it all here "; and they think that because they have recorded the words of the speaker they have got the truth; whereas, in point of fact, they have only got so much truth as they are obeying and living in their lives. Those are not blessed who hear, but blessed who do--"that man shall be blessed in his deeds." And if you really want to see Jesus in the Bible, you must go and live Jesus in your daily life. When you have seen some sweet trait of the character of Jesus Christ in the Word, you must ask that by the grace of the Holy Ghost you may reflect it amongst men. I want just to say a thing here that has been of extreme help to me. So often in one's life, one waits to feel impelled in a certain Christ-like direction; and if the impulse does not come, one is disposed to postpone action. But we have no right to wait to feel in the mood to Acts in such and such a way; rather, by the force of our will, obeying the impulse of the Holy Ghost who wills in us, it is our duty to do, or to attempt to do, what we know we should do; and as we do it, we shall find ourselves able to do it; so that, what we did merely by the force of our will, we shall do ultimately by the choice of our heart. Thus if you will begin to live Christ up to the small limit of your knowledge, and because you ought, you will be transfigured by reflecting Christ, you will be changed into the likeness of Christ. In other words, transfiguration does not only come to the man who, with rapt attention, beholds the glory of God in Jesus, but to the man who day by day is trying to translate Jesus into his daily life, and repeat Jesus in thought, word, and deed. If you would be a Bible yourself, you would understand the Bible. If you would pass on what you have found, the Bible would get richer and deeper to your soul. So with the rent veil, with the reception of the Holy Ghost, and with the daily endeavour in the power of the Spirit to live Christ, we shall ever find in this Word the Christ who is in our heart. We shall see His face looking out from Old Testament and from New, and we shall realise that the whole Book is like His seamless robe, "woven from the top throughout."

1 Kings 6:20. "Is not the love of Jesus the Holy of Holies unto millions of souls? Is not the love of Jesus the inner sanctuary into which now, as the veil is rent, we are permitted as priests to enter? We stand upon a pavement which is redemption ground, and that ground is laid, every stone of it, in the love of Jesus. We stand between walls of providence and grace, and whether it be the providence of His Hand, or the grace of His Spirit, in either case we are surrounded by the love of Jesus. We stand under a canopy which is bright with glory, and full of mercy. It is a very heaven of heavens to us, but it is a heaven of love, the heaven of the love of Jesus. Whether, therefore, we look up, we look into the love of Jesus, or whether we look down, we look down into the love of Jesus, or whether we look at the right hand, it is to the love of Jesus, or whether we look to the left hand, it is to the love of Jesus. The Oracle is one full of love in breadth and length and depth and height."

REV. J. B. FIGGIS

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE."

Ephesians 3:19.

"Having in love foreordained us." (R.V.) "Quickened together with Christ." "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."-- Ephesians 1:5; Ephesians 2:5; Ephesians 5:2, Ephesians 5:25.

WHAT the Song of Solomon is to the Old Testament, that the Epistle to the Ephesians is to the New. It is the fragrant love letter of God to His children, and one of the key-words of the epistle is the word love. The apostle had not gone far into the epistle before, in the first chapter and the sixth verse, he speaks of "the Beloved." That is the position in which our Saviour stands to His Father. But in four other places he discriminates the various shades of the love of Christ to us, for we speak now of "the love of Christ that passeth knowledge." In the first chapter and in the fifth verse, adopting for a moment the possible rendering of the margin of the Revised Version, we have the love of Christ shown to us in foreordination. In the second chapter and in the fifth verse, the love of Christ is shown in His identification with us. In the fifth chapter and second verse the love of Christ is shown in His blood shedding, and in that same fifth chapter and twenty-fifth verse the love of Christ is shown as the Bridegroom and Husband of the soul. The love that is deathless as His own love; the love that dared to stand together with us before the gaze of all worlds; the love that stooped to redeem us by the gift of blood; and the love to which the strongest, deepest love that ever man had to woman is as the glowworm torch compared to the sun in its meridian strength. I want to focus my text. It will be of very little service to thee to have a vague intellectual knowledge of that love. I would that thou shouldst hear the Bridegroom say to thee, "I love thee." Oh that there may be a definite apprehension on the part of all!

There is as much love for each as though there were no other being in heaven or upon earth to share the love of Christ. "Thou art as much His care as if beside nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth." It is not at all wonderful, therefore, to be told in the text that the love of Christ passeth knowledge, or, as I suppose the Greek might be rendered, passeth limit. It is illimitable. The love of Christ to thee, and me, and each, is illimitable. The whole wealth of Christ's heart, the infinite wealth of Christ's infinite heart, is thine to-day as though the sun should shine to light one firefly, or the Amazon flow to water the roots of one daisy. Jesus Christ, who combines the sympathy and tenderness of man with the infinite capacity of God, loves the lowly, weary, sinning, worthless soul with all His force and gentleness and strength. It passes knowledge, and yet we may know it. That is the divine paradox. A paradox states a truth antithetically. We can know each antithesis. But there is a deeper truth beneath. I cannot touch that deeper truth, but only the antithesis. First, that the love of Christ passeth knowledge; and, second, that we may yet know it.

First, it passeth knowledge. We would be prepared to believe it because God is always passing out of knowledge. I once heard a scientific man say that he felt himself to be living in a garden, and, from the place where he stood, pathways opened up and out right and left and all round; but whichever pathway he took, after going some few steps, the pathway was lost in the moorland waste, and his progress was barred by the notice, "Further progress is impossible." If that be the confession of a man of science, how much more shall it be true of us who to-day are standing in a very paradise of love, whilst all around us pathways lead forth to the love of Creation, or the love of Providence, or the love of our Redemption, or the love of our foreordination and election? But whichever path we take, and begin to explore the love of God, we shall discover that His love, like all the rest of His attributes, will soon leave us behind, and we shall find ourselves face to face with the limitation of our ignorance, because this love passeth knowledge. Is it not well that it should? Do you not think that the sublimity of nature comes from infinite distance and infinite depth? What is it which at night gives to the upward view that sense of magnificence? Is it not the thought of illimitable space? Why do your children love to get down to the seaside?. Is it not the sense of

space and distance to the far horizon line? So it is with the glaciers blue with depth. There is a sense of grandeur in being loved with a love like this. You may dive into it with no fear of collision, deeper, deeper always, yet it is ever beyond you. Now let us just take three or four texts to show why we cannot know this love.

Romans 8:39 tells us that the love of God is in Christ Jesus. Do not think because it is a man who loves you that you have lost anything of the fulness of the love of God, for the love of God is in Christ, and therefore, of course, the love of Christ must be the vehicle of God's. One can hardly go further. It seems too wonderful to believe that all God's love is in Christ, and in Christ that it might be tempered and toned before it encountered the delicate organism of our natures. As the sun may not strike on the babe's eye save through the undulations of the ether, so the great love of the infinite God would be our destruction did it not come through the nature of Him who loved the children, who wept over the city, and who allowed the woman to wet His feet with her tears. But you must not think that you lose anything of the love of God because it comes through Christ.

Take yet another text-- John 13:1 --" Having loved His own which were in the world, our Lord loved them to the end." Too often that word is taken to mean that He loved them to the end of His mortal career, surely altogether inadequate. I prefer the Revised Version, that says, "He loved them unto the uttermost." As much as to say that He loved them to the uttermost possibility of love, that there was nothing in the conception of love which the love of Jesus left unexhausted or unexplored.

Take another text-- John 15:9 --"Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you." Do you want to know how much Jesus loves you? Ah! soul, before thou canst master that arithmetic thou must learn another mode of computation. Tell me first the love of God the Father to His Son, and I will tell thee the love of the Son to thee. Dost thou wonder at the love of Jesus, sinful, weak, ignorant man? Dost thou wonder that it passeth knowledge?

Or take one thought more Romans Ephesians 2:7. In this marvellous epistle we are told that God the Father, who loves us in Christ, is going to make His love to us a specimen of love through all the ages. There are two things which God is going to show to the principalities and the powers of other worlds; the one is in the second chapter and the seventh verse, "The exceeding riches of His grace and of His kindness," and the other is in the third chapter and in the tenth verse, " His manifold wisdom." Do you wonder then that it passeth knowledge?

We may gain one more suggestion Romans the expression saints. Each saint can only see his side of it. If you ascend Snowdon, you go up Romans Capel-curig or Llanberis or Beddgellert, and will only see one slope. In order to form a true conception of Snowdon three travellers must start each by a separate route, Romans Llanberis the one, Capel-eurig the other, and Beddgellert the third, and only when the three meet on the summit will they know the whole of the mountain's grandeur.

So the Baptist must come Romans his side, and the Congregationalist Romans his side, and the Presbyterian Romans his, and the Church of England man Romans his, and it is only when all the saints meet together, and each has caught his own angle-view of the love of Christ, that the Church will understand the whole. It is because our powers are so limited that we cannot take it in. And yet there is one other thought suggested by saint. We are not holy enough. We must be saints to know the love of Christ, and the more saintly we are the more we shall know, because anything which is not perfectly saint-like casts a blur upon the mirror and dims it.

I would we might be quiet a minute, and each say to himself and herself, "It is not simply a feeling of complacency, it is love. If it were complacency God would only like me when I am good. But He loves me. It is not benevolence, that is only a kind feeling. It is better than this. God who fills everything loves me in Christ with a love that passeth knowledge." You may not feel it, but you must believe it. You may have no responsive motion, but that does not alter it. The earth may wrap itself in clouds, but that does not affect the sunshine; and that you feel weary, depressed, sin-stricken, almost helpless, does not alter or affect the fact that the whole of Deity is pouring out its tides towards you through the channel of Jesus Christ.

Is not that enough to banish loneliness, depression, and the fear of ultimately being east away? It is impossible that God should ever let one go upon whom He has set His love. The illimitable love of Christ to the soul has sometimes so engrossed and overpowered holy men that they have been beside themselves. I was reading of Flavel, who on one occasion was travelling by himself through the country on horseback. He tells us that he became suddenly conscious of a very sweet and powerful sense of God's personal love to him, so much so that he became oblivious to the road, the country, and all that was happening.

He says, "I did verily think that as I stood there--for his horse had come to a stand --that if I were in heaven I could hardly hope to have more blessedness than I then enjoyed." A passer-by startled him, and he found his way to the inn where he was to spend the night, but he said that all that night his consciousness of being loved by God swept over him wave on wave, and he could not sleep; only he adds, "I was more rested than I had been by many nights of sleep, and I saw in my soul things I had not known."

May it not be that God is wanting to say as much to some of us, but we are so busy, so hurried, and so monopolised by little things that we let the great stream pass by, indifferent to the murmur of its waves.

Though God's love passeth knowledge, yet we may know it. It is conceivable that a settler should receive many acres, and even square miles, of territory of which he knows but little in its whole expanse; but he may know something of the character of the soil in the few acres which he first enclosed and cultivated. Cannot you see him arriving there? Settlers' waggons pass through Chicago by the hundred a week to the Far West. A man will take his wife and his children, his farm implements and a few household utensils, and travel to the unoccupied lands. He will finally come upon his new estate. Selecting some corner of it, he will erect a shanty to shelter himself and his dear ones; and when he has done all he can in a few weeks of labour, he says to his wife, "Wife, I am going to survey our property." He climbs some mountain, and looks far away to the horizon, or the flashing waters of lake and river, and all is his. How little he knows of the wealth of his estate.

But presently he goes back and says, "Wife, we shall be old and grey before we know all that we possess in this place. But we will begin to cultivate the little plot round our house, and every year put the fence further back, bringing the limit of our experience ever nearer that of possession." So, men and women, we are settlers upon the continent of the love of God. We only know a little of its coastline, we fringe its shores; but what the wealth of that continent is we shall never know, for it has no limit, no bound, no end. Let us, however, follow on to know and enjoy this wonderful love.

We should know it first as a matter of doctrine. It is a great thing to increase our knowledge of the love of God by the reverent study of His word. I have not much faith in a man who discounts doctrine. What the bones are to the body, doctrine is to the fabric of the moral and spiritual life. What law is to the material universe, doctrine is to the spiritual. Get an intelligent knowledge of doctrine, the doctrines of the grace of

God, and hold them fast. If you have time additional to that you give to the Bible, study strong books, books that will give you true conceptions of the love of God, and the lines on which it runs, and the laws which it has followed and will follow. We need to know the love of God doctrinally. Secondly, we should know the love of God by meditation. I was reading of one called Isaac Andrews, of whom Dr. Calamy writes. He was a devoted minister in the North of England. He wrote a book called Looking unto Jesus, which is very sweet and fragrant. It is said that he was in the habit of preaching eleven months in the year, and spending the twelfth in a little hut in the woods, that he might have uninterrupted leisure for meditating upon the love of God to him. Do you not remember what Rutherford said when he was put into prison? "My enemies thought that they would put me in prison, but they have put me into the King's banqueting-house, and the banner of His love has been unfurled over my head."

Thirdly, we should know the love of Christ experimentally; that is, we should sit down and ask for the Spirit of discernment to see the thread of love running through the beads of our life. "Whoso is wise will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." If you read that psalm you will find there is an account of storm, of a march through an arid waste, and of five more different episodes, many of them fraught with pain, and at the end of it the psalmist has what you may call the audacity to say, "If a man wants it he will find the loving-kindness of the Lord in the storm, in the wilderness, and even in the prison-house." Let us therefore sit down and let that thought permeate the heart. Have your pencil, if you will, and begin to put down all the manifestations in your life of God's love to you, and methinks the more you write, like Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the more it will grow on you, and you will fill one sheet of paper and want another, and then another and another. I would like a man who is disappointed, whose heart is full of depression and desolateness, to try my recipe, to put down in order the manifestations of Christ's love, the sin which has been forgiven, the iniquity pardoned, the waywardness and wickedness with which He has borne. Oh, man, come sum it up, and I think you will throw down your pencil when you are but half way through the enumeration, and cry, it passeth knowledge. Lastly sympathetically, i.e., by sympathy. Kepler, the great astronomer, who laid the foundation of much of our knowledge of the stars, one day exclaimed, after spending hours in surveying the heavens, "I have been thinking over again the earliest thoughts of the Creator," and surely every time a man sacrifices himself, or takes up the cross for another he is thinking over again the earliest, deepest thought of the love of Christ. Have you not often felt as though God kept training you? When you first loved that twin-soul, now your husband or your wife, did you not one day say to yourself, "I love, and Romans my own heart learn what love is"? So in that first attraction to another you woke up to a new realm and cried, "Why I suppose that Jesus Christ's love to me is something like this, only infinite." The quality is the same, though not the quantity. Every time you do a gentle Acts for another who does not deserve it, every time you lay down your life to save others, every time you endure shame and spitting and scorn to rescue lost women and lost men, in the glow of your human interest, and amidst disappointment and rebuff you say, "Well, thank God, I am seeing deeper than ever I saw before into what Jesus has been feeling for me." Abraham learnt more of the love of God the day he was led up Mount Moriah than anything else could have taught him.

Perhaps there are men and women who have been hearing all this, and who are saying, "Well, well, my life has been so dreary, so perplexed, that I cannot think God loves me." I pray you remember a text which says that "we must know and believe the love." Standing upon the granite block of redemption and providence, and the blessings which have come to our life, we must dare to face the inexplicable, the dark, and the mysterious; and reason that the pathway of love lies through these also, and when we have traversed them we shall look back on a trail of light. The love of God has never once failed me, and though I cannot see it, or how that trouble which menaces me is consistent with it, it is only the text over again,

"The love of God passeth knowledge." You cannot know it, you cannot tell its great and devious track. "His footsteps are in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters." You cannot always follow Him, but you may always believe that there is love, though it passeth knowledge.

We need a baptism of love to-day. We all need it. Many are leading such a miserable life of repression; they are ever flying to jealousy and hatred and ill-will and suspicion and dislike. Of course we do not admit these things, and yet they incessantly torment us and follow our footsteps, as the dog which we meant to leave at home, but which follows us. And in so far as they are permitted in heart or life they exclude the consciousness of our Saviour's infinite love. Let us absolutely and for ever put away all these--wrath, anger, malice, ill-will, and all uncharitableness. Let us reckon that such have neither part nor lot in our new resurrection-life. Let us give up our ill-will about each and all who may have injured us, or at least tell Christ that we are willing to be channels through which His love may flow to them. And when this is so, and in no part of our heart there is cherished aught that is inconsistent with perfect love, we shall not only understand as never before the unsearchable love of Christ, but we shall be able to claim a baptism of the Holy Spirit, who sheds abroad the love of God in willing, obedient, and believing souls.

"Lord Tennyson has sung-

'I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.'

The thoughts of men may be widened, but the thoughts of the Lord are not widened by the process of the suns. He has Romans the beginning of the world hid all things- in Christ. His will is in Himself--that wonderful "of God, that blessed will of God, that mysterious will of God, His own purpose which shall stand. And it is that Christ may have the pre-eminence, and be exalted. Let our little purposes and plans be all lost sight of, and merged and brought into captivity and to obedience to Him 'who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.'"

SIR ARTHUR BLACKWOOD, K.C.B.

(Last words at Mildmay.)

"THE ETERNAL PURPOSE WHICH HE PURPOSED IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD."

A BIBLE READING

"That in all things He might have the pre-eminence." "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."-- Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10; Ephesians 2:7.

I TAKE as my starting-point for this Bible talk the Epistle to the Ephesians 3:11 (R.V.): "According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in Him" or "through the faith of Him."

We are thankful to know that our Father has a purpose, and that that purpose is ensphered in Jesus Christ our Lord, so that, as John puts it in the book of Revelation, there is a book which, though sealed with

seven seals, is delivered to the Lamb that He may open it seal by seal The ultimate end of our Father's purpose, so far as we can discern it by the light of revelation, is disclosed to us in the 1 Corinthians 15:24 (R.V.), "Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power." The kingdom which God gave to man in paradise was filched Romans man by man's great foe, the devil, and though God had made man to be the king, the vicegerent over the earth, the crown was torn Romans his brow and his dominion trampled under foot. And for long it seemed as if Satan were to continue to hold the empire which he had unrighteously obtained; but at last the Son of man appeared--and in the temptation of the wilderness, in the garden of Gethsemane, on the cross, and upon the Easter morning He showed that God in man was stronger than the sovereignty of the devil, and that comparatively speaking the empire of Satan over men, over the earth, and the material elements was to be a thing of a short duration. This wonderful Saviour of ours has already defeated Satan, and broken his power; and as the ages go on, the meaning of that conquest and victory is becoming more apparent. Our Lord is putting down, one by one, the great foes of man. The last enemy shah yet be destroyed. And when Jesus Christ has asserted His supremacy over the entire domain of human life, of man, and of the earth, then He shall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father. It is certain that there is an infinite beauty in thinking and in knowing that the consummation of all things is to be in the kingdom of our Father God. But though that be the ultimate outworking of God's purpose in Christ, I am very anxious not to lose myself or my time in these generalities, however sublime they be, because when you go Romans this Conference you will need to have for your own life words that will empower you to live and work for God.

The eternal purpose of God, which must certainly include us all, must be claimed by a living faith. This comes out clearly in the text, which we will read again. In the epistle to the Ephesians 3, you find it written, "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access in confidence, in faith." Now why, in the same sentence, does the apostle join the outworking of God's eternal purpose with our access to Him in boldness and confidence? Is it not remarkable, when you consider it, that the apostle turns Romans the vast extent of the purpose of God to consider the small circle of human life? It is as wonderful a comparison as to compare the orbit of the earth with the circle of a gnat's eye. Why does the apostle turn Romans the general to the particular, Romans the vast sweep of God's purpose to our little life? Well, partly because God's purpose will only be fulfilled through individuals, and partly for another reason, to which I desire to bring you.

I want you to see, in fact, that the purpose of God, whilst it is secure of being fulfilled, yet waits for you to claim it. Claim its realization by a daily faith, and you will find how real and easy faith becomes when it is based upon the eternal purpose of God concerning you. I do not wonder that some people complain that they are unable to believe; it is because they do not apprehend God's purpose; but directly you apprehend God's purpose you have access with boldness and confidence to claim it.

Now let us see how this works out. Take, for instance, the Epistle to the Ephesians; and first, as concerns the Blamelessness of our Character. Is there one here that does not want to live the blameless life? Do you not sigh often again for the lily of a blameless, spotless character? Is there a single soul that has seen the King who does not sigh over the impure lip? Is there one who has ever thought of the pellucid water of life without desiring to be a pure vessel, so as not to contaminate it when passed to another? You long to be holy and without blame, and yet very often it seems like the vision of a night that mocks you, or like a mirage upon the desert sand, that dies away when it is approached.

But turn to Ephesians 1:4. (R.V.) He chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him." The apostle takes us back to the eternal ages before a seraph flamed, before a cherub loved, before the heavens or the earth were made. You who believe in Christ were chosen in Him; that is, God chose Christ and all who shall have affinity to Him--that affinity being shown by their faith. And God chose such, you amongst their number if you believe in Christ, that you should be holy and without blemish. Oh, weary heart, travel back to the origin of the river, away in the heart of those eternal ages, and see how it has been flowing down through them to bear you upon its broad bosom into a blameless life; and when you have once understood that God's election means that you should be holy and without blame, then remember that your faith may come into the very presence of God with boldness and confidence, to claim that His election shall be made a living fact in your experience.

Secondly, work out that same thought with regard to the Consciousness of Sonship. In Ephesians 1:5 you are told that you have been predestinated unto the adoption of sons. Some of you may not have the joy of assurance. You do not realise yourselves to be sons and daughters of God. You have not got the peace of conscious acceptance, and yet you cling to Christ. But, remember, since you have been foreordained unto the adoption of sons, you have therefore a perfect right to go into the presence of God and claim that the Spirit of adoption should witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

Consider a third illustration--With regard to the Sympathy of Jesus. In Ephesians 1:10, you are told--and I use the Greek word here --that it is God's purpose to head up all things in Christ, that He may be the apex, the climax, the Head of all things and of all men who believe. Perhaps you have been longing fervently for sympathy, but just so soon as you see God has constituted Jesus Christ as your Head, forthwith, by a living faith, you will claim that all that the head is to the body Jesus will be to you. You will claim that as the head sympathises with bodily pain, so you may be conscious of the sympathy of Jesus; and as the head impels the members to obey, so your life shall yield fealty to Christ.

Fourthly, with regard to Possession by Christ and the Infilling by the Spirit. You long for a Pentecost. You know that the blessing of Pentecost was that men were filled with the Spirit. If ever a man has longed to be filled with the Spirit of God it is you. You have heard of happy souls who, by the grace of God, have stood beneath the open heavens, and the dove has flown to their hearts and the voice of God has declared them His beloved children, but with all your nights of prayer and days of fasting you have never yet realised what it was to be infilled with the Holy Ghost and possessed of God. Yet if you look at that text you will see--and I use the Revised Version--in Ephesians 1:11, "In Him we were made an inheritance." Now an inheritance is that which you occupy and possess. If it is a house, you live in it; if it is an estate, you cultivate it, and you leave no single acre uncared for. So that God's eternal purpose was that you should be His estate, His house; that you should be filled by Himself, as the waters fill the ocean bed. The Holy Ghost at Pentecost was given to you because you were represented in Christ in His ascension, and if you were wise you would now claim Him Romans the presence of your Father. You need not plead with Him. You need not spend a day or a night of prayer, but take the purpose of God in your hand, and go to Him and say, "My Father, I find it is Thy purpose that I, Thy child, should become Thine estate. I am like very poor land, therefore put all into me that Thou wouldst take out. I am not a tenantable house, but put me in repair. Come and live in me, O God, by the Holy Ghost, and let there be no cranny or corner of nay life unfilled." Plead the purpose of God about yourself, and you will plead with confidence and boldness.

Take a fifth illustration, as it concerns Our daily Walk. Take Ephesians 2:10. Is there a soul that does not want to do the best work possible? How may we do it? The text begins by saying that "we are His

workmanship." In the Greek word it is "We are God's poem," as if God were a poet, and He were making one great poem--the church--and just as in some of Browning's poetry the conception is obscure, and it takes two or three readings before we can understand the rhythm, the measure, the meaning, so we may have to wait before we see God's thought in the church. But there is a rhythm and a majesty and a beauty in it: somehow we rhyme, somehow each one contributes to the cadence. We are God's poem.

But we have been "created in Christ." You were created a new creature at the cross when first you found Christ. Ah, yes; but you were created in Christ Jesus ages before that, when in the purpose of God, you were created in Christ unto good works.

In that far away eternity, God also sketched out the path of your good works. He prepared the good works for you to walk in. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God before prepared that we should walk in them." Every path begins at the Cross and ends at the Golden Gate. But they intersect--they are devious, or lonesome. Now there is a bit of sward or moss, a stretch alongside a river; just now a steep climb up the hill Difficulty, and presently the Delectable Mountains and the land of Beulah. But whatever path you are treading, believe that you were created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared for you to walk in. And if you were wise, you would not scheme this or the other, and say, "I will do this in imitation of another," or, "I will work out a new plan which I have devised," but every day you would walk with God, and as you opened your eyes to consciousness you would cry, "My God, I want to walk with Thee to-day in the good works which Thou hast prepared for me to occupy."

When once we see that there is a purpose of God in our life it makes prayer so easy! We have access with boldness and confidence upon the groundwork of God's purpose for us. "Do as Thou hast said."

Notice those last words of the passage, "Boldness and confidence through faith." People do not seem to understand the difference between praying and believing. Our lives are full of prayer; but, alas! there is too little of this faith. What is faith? Well, you may put it thus: Faith is the power to claim that God's purpose shall be realized, and the power to take the grace that shall enable you to realize it. Oh, Christian people, have not some of us made a terrible mistake, in always praying as if God were unwilling to give, spending days and nights in agony, as if to wring Romans God some boon Romans His reluctant hand, when, in point of fact, our God is like the sea that seethes all down a line of wall, hungry to find the aperture through which to pour itself into lough or loch? We forget that the very desire for God has been implanted by God, and that He is not likely to disappoint the desire, the appetite, which He Himself has created. We forget that all around in Nature there is an abundant supply of food before the babe or the insect or the fish or the young lion requires it. And so our appetite or desire is but the reflection flung upon the clear waters of our heart Romans the purpose of God which is hanging over us. We need therefore to understand more clearly the purpose of God for us, and then there will be a definiteness and a meaning and a reality in our prayer which will make our prayer-time full of a new interest. A man said to me the other day when I was talking like this, "But, sir, if we were to begin to pray like that, would it not make our times of prayer much shorter, and limit the hours that we spend before God?" I replied, "Certainly not. We might ask for fewer things, and ask more definitely; but we should have to spend quite as long within our prayer-closet, because our hearts would be overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving and adoration, and with the expressions of our love."

I leave this with you. God has a purpose for everyone of us. God's eternal purpose is to do the best for you that He can. God has put you just where you are, because there you have the best chance of realizing His purpose. His purpose is contained in promise. Hence, if you get the promises of God you get the purposes

of God. Get then back to God's purpose. Deal with Him about the things that He Himself has purposed and pledged. Do not pray for them as if He were unwilling to grant them; but go into His presence with boldness and confidence, and say, " My Father, Thou hast said this or that of me, for I am in Christ, and I do now claim as Thy child, standing in Him, that Thou shouldst do this or the other for me." And when you have definitely asked, believe that God will be as good as His promise, arise Romans your knees, and go down to your daily warfare or work, and as you go down, keep saying to yourself, "Glory be to God. I do not feel; I have no rapture; I have no consciousness of reception; but I know that God has done what I claimed, because He has said that He would, and I am going along my path reckoning that He is faithful." You will find that at that moment when you claimed you took in a cargo which will stand you in good stead on your voyage, and that when you come to your duties, your difficulties, or your trials, there will be a consciousness of power, of contentment, and of wealth which you had not known before. Thus believe in the eternal purpose of God, and go into His presence with boldness and confidence by faith in Jesus Christ.

ALL life is part of a Divine Plan.--As a mother desires the best possible for her babes, bending over the cradle which each occupies in turn, so does God desire to do His best for us all. He hates nothing that He has made; but has a fair ideal for each, which He desires to accomplish in us with perfect love. But there is no way of transferring it to our actual experience, except by the touch of His Spirit within, and the education of our circumstances without, God does not show us the whole plan of our life at a burst, but unfolds it to us bit by bit. At the end of our life the disjointed pieces will suddenly come together, and we shall see the symmetry and beauty of the Divine thought. Then we shall be satisfied. In the meantime let us believe that God's love and wisdom are doing the very best for us.

"How manifold is the character of Christ! No one metaphor can set forth all His beauty. Creation has to be ransacker for metaphors to unfold the mysteries of loveliness and power which He hid within Him, waiting to be unfurled:

'The whole creation can afford

But some faint shadow of my Lord;

Nature, to make His beauties known,

Must mingle colours not her own.'

"In all men there is a fatal incompleteness. One quality seems to have grown rich at the expense of others. The soil of their soul has given all its nutriment to some exquisite flower or fruit of the Christian character; but just in proportion as it has poured itself in one direction, it has been drained away in others. Have you not often wished to take the characteristic qualities Romans the men in whom they are strongest, and put them all together into one nature, making one complete man out of the many broken bits, one chord of the many single notes, one ray of the many colors? But this that you would wish to do is done in Him--in whom the faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the strength of Daniel, the love of the apostle John, blend in one complete symmetrical whole."

"THE FUTURE TENSES OF THE BLESSED LIFE."

THE SECOND MAN, THE LORD

"Above the firmament was the likeness of a throne." "Upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness of a Man." "In the midst of the throne stood a Lamb." "There was a rainbow round about the throne."-- Ezekiel 1:26, Revelation 5:6, Revelation 4:3.

THE subject which we have to consider throws us more than usually back upon that Divine Spirit by whom alone our blessed Lord can be glorified in our midst. The subject is so stupendous in its sublimity, and so touching in its grace, that no mortal lips can do it justice. But while we stand in His presence, and behold His face, we may expect the Holy Spirit to reveal to us those deep things which are as strong and sweet as they are deep.

In the thought of the eternal God our Father the whole human race is summed up in two men; for we read in the inspired Word that the "second man" was the Lord Romans heaven. For the first man we must traverse the glades of Eden, and find him there unfallen, in communion with his Creator, and fulfilling all the conditions of a perfected creation. That is God's original thought for man. On passing through the gate guarded by the flaming sword, we discover him cursed with travail, fruitless toil, disease and death. And we cannot forget that, in virtue of our natural birth, we have inherited these conditions, and carry with us always an hereditary tendency or bias towards the evil which wrecked and marred his life; to say nothing of the guilt accruing Romans a broken law.

We scan in vain the succeeding ages of mankind, to find one able to undo the fatal tragedy of Eden, until, in the fullness of time, we encounter Him, around whom our thoughts revolve to-day, and who, whilst He was the Son of God, was the Son of man, the second Adam, one with us in all the conditions of our life, sin excepted.

I present you with three pictures. It is the Passover at Jerusalem. The vast central square before the Roman governor's abode is filled with crowds rent with fanaticism, which Pilate is striving to quell. It is clear that he, a shrewd observer of human nature, had found something in this unwonted prisoner to arrest his attention, else he had never cried before them all, "Behold the Man." There were converging elements in His appearance and bearing which singled Him out as a man amongst men. Though He were suffering, and of that suffering there could be no doubt, for there was every trace of it in His pallid face and bloodstained garments, yet there was no trace of ignominy or shame, but the outshining of a nobility that could not but arrest eyes unprejudiced by hate. His innocence was attested by the witness of those who knew Him best, yet there was no weakness in it; and though it was evident that this Man had done nothing " amiss, He bore Himself with such a strange strength, that the representative of an imperial race felt himself the weaker. Moreover, He was the center of a strange conflict--on the one hand, of the love and adoration of His followers, and of those who had shared His help; on the other, of the execrations and malignity of His foes; whilst nature herself seemed to sympathize with the wondrous scene, and stood aghast to gaze on the spectacle. And as we to-day review that story we are constrained to feel that the Lord Jesus identified Himself with man in his sorrow and shame and the consequences of his guilt, was planted with man in the likeness of his death, touching him at his lowest, that He might lift him with Himself to heights that Adam and Eve in Eden could never have scaled. There could not have been an ascension of our race to the throne, if there had not been this previous descent to the death of the cross.

Now for the second picture. It is the early morning. The villagers have not commenced to bring into Jerusalem the produce of their fields. A little group have gathered not far Romans the beloved Bethany; surely a message will be sent to call for the two sisters and the brother to join the little group that gathers around One, who is not less man now that He has taken to Himself His body of glory than He was when

we saw Him in the hall of Pilate. With outspread hands He blessed them, and as He blessed was parted from them, and began to ascend towards His home, as if the attraction of its blue depths were stronger than that of the earth. The Church has always put special emphasis upon the atonement and resurrection of our Lord, but I am not sure that it has always apprehended the marvel of that scene upon which we are gazing as we stand on Olivet together. See how He climbs those upper steeples, as if the inherent buoyancy of His nature spurned the lower earth. Mark how yonder cloud waits, like a veil, through which He passes, irradiated with morning light. Now let us follow Him in His upward progress. In Ephesians 1:21 the apostle gives us a clue to what succeeded. He tells us that our blessed Lord was raised by the power of the Father to sit at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Romans a comparison with other passages, especially that in the last chapter of the same epistle (Ephesians 6:12), it seems very likely that these principalities and powers, through which our Lord passed, were evil and fallen spirits, who may even have striven to obstruct His passage, making one great last stand against Him. But whether that were so or not, it is clear that through the ranks of spirits, whatever they were, He passed. They fell right and left to yield Him passage, and so He came at last to those confines where the holiest spirits could no longer accompany Him, for no created thing had ever breathed or could breathe the rare atmosphere into which He entered, and no created thing had ever gone where He took our human nature. This is a marvel at which heaven itself has never ceased to be astounded. There was no wonder that the Son of God should go back to God. But the wonder was that He took our nature with Him, and that He has borne our humanity where no created thing had ever gone before, until He sat down as a man at the right hand of the throne of God. "For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham." It is marvelous to think that the first-born sons of light are not bound so closely to God as men are, since God has taken our human nature into such intimate fellowship with Himself. "Upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above."

There is a third picture. We look through heaven's open door and see a throne excelling in beauty the luster of earth's most precious jewels. We hear at first the chant of angels and elders; and after a while a strong angel with a loud voice, asking for one able to open the scroll of divine decrees, lying in the right hand of the Supreme. No voice seems able to answer that challenge, and our tears flow only to stay when eager expectancy is excited as to who can assume so high an office. But as we wait wit

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