

THE  
GOLDEN LAMP;

OR,

TRUTH IN LOVE

FOR

THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

---

“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT  
WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.”

*John viii. 12.*

---

“Now are ye light in the world: walk as children of the light.”

*Ephesians v. 8.*

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,  
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—*Matthew v. 16.*

---

LONDON:  
YAPP AND HAWKINS, 70, WELBECK STREET;  
S. W. PARTRIDGE AND CO., 9, PATERNOSTER ROW,  
EDINBURGH: JAMES TAYLOR, CASTLE STREET.  
GLASGOW: GEORGE GALLIE AND SON, BUCHANAN STREET.  
DUBLIN: JOHN ROBERTSON AND CO.  
*And may be ordered of all Booksellers.*



## CONTENTS.

	Page
The Family of God . . . . .	1, 48
Wholeheartedness: An Appeal to the children of God . . . . .	5
The Passover in Egypt . . . . .	11
The Hope of the Coming of the Lord, and its transform- ing power . . . . .	21
The Golden Candlestick in the Holy Place . . . . .	29, 66
The Cross and the Crown . . . . .	35
The Passover in the Wilderness . . . . .	41
Order and Ministries in the Church of God . . . . .	52
Love's Confidence and its Response . . . . .	55
<i>The Path of Faith and its Dangers</i> . . . . .	57
The Passover in the Promised Land . . . . .	72
The Manner of God's Love . . . . .	79
Redemption, Reconciliation, Remission . . . . .	83
"Blessed with all Spiritual Blessings" . . . . .	85
Abiding in Christ . . . . .	96
The House of Wisdom and her Seven Pillars . . . . .	99
The Three Stages of Peace . . . . .	105
The "Begotten of God:" Who is He? . . . . .	108, 135, 161
The Blood of the Lamb . . . . .	113
The Earnest of the Spirit . . . . .	116
The Church; the Bride . . . . .	124
The Passover in the reign of Hezekiah . . . . .	128
The Teaching of the Old Testament . . . . .	141
Death and Resurrection: a Lesson from Hezekiah's History . . . . .	145
The Church; the Wife . . . . .	157
The Goodness of God . . . . .	166
The Basket of First-fruits; or Worship and Service . . . . .	169
Service the Fruit of Worship . . . . .	176
The Passover in the days of Josiah . . . . .	181
"Alive from the Dead" . . . . .	187
Israel—A Prince with God . . . . .	196
"He that winneth souls is wise" . . . . .	197

	Page
The Church; the Body of Christ	201
Jesus—The Bread of Life	209
The Mystery of Christ	210
What is the Church?	212
The Fellowship of the Church	214
Worship and the Lord's Supper	219
"Go unto Joseph"	224
The Passover after the Captivity	225
God's perfect Servant	233
The Christian Walk;—"Crucified with Christ"	242
The word "Church"	249
The Heirs of the Kingdom; their Characteristics and their Place (Part i.)	253
The Last Passover	265
Through Death to Life	273
Glorying in the Cross	281
Walking in Darkness: Its cause—its remedy	287
The Heirs of the Kingdom (Part ii.)	290
The Well of Bethlehem	301
The Love of Christ	306
David's Mighty Men	309
The Heirs of the Kingdom (Part iii.)	314
The Teaching of the Ark	323

# THE GOLDEN LAMP.

---

## THE FAMILY OF GOD.

“I AM the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” were the words of the Lord Jesus to the enquiring disciple, and they are still His words to all who desire to know Him in truth.

“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

Such, beloved in the Lord, is part of God's written testimony concerning His children. It was God's pre-determined purpose and grace to have a family who

should be "a peculiar treasure" to Himself, and in Christ Jesus this family was chosen by God before the foundation of the world. He "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will."

This family differs from Adam in innocence. He was made "of the dust of the ground," and was "of the earth earthy." It also differs from angels in glory: *they* are not called sons, but are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." God's "peculiar" family is formed by special relationship, they are "begotten of God," "partakers of the divine nature," "one with Christ;" "for both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren;" "and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Thus, then, those who are the children of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are predestinated, chosen, called, begotten, adopted, one with Christ; and as already possessing eternal life are, by the love of that gracious God who has "begotten them again," entitled to the spirit of adoption; and if they have it not, oh, let them consider that it is their own ignorance or unbelief, and neither the decree nor the desire of their Father in heaven; for as truly as they were once begotten according to nature, so truly has every child of God been "begotten again" of grace.

The Lord Jesus can say of them to His Father, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" and of His sheep, He says, "I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck

them out of my hand : my Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Of such it is written, "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Such is the place of dignity to which every child of God is already raised. They may know it, or may, alas! be ignorant of this wondrous grace; but the Lord Jesus distinctly declares, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment), but is passed from death unto life." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

This family is distinguished from Israel of old; *they* were the lineal descendants of Abraham who was indeed God's friend. They were a nation separated from all nations to be an earthly tabernacle for God, that He might dwell in their midst, having an earthly nature, earthly promises, earthly blessings, "carnal ordinances," and an earthly inheritance; whereas God's own chosen family are gathered out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," to be the "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," one with and made in the likeness of "the second man, the Lord from heaven;" for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

They are also "a *purchased* possession." By nature all men are alike lost, ruined, undone; "but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us," "found a ransom," and paid the price of our redemption to the uttermost farthing. Would you know how precious these ransomed ones are to

God? Would you try to estimate the value God set upon this "one pearl of great price"? Listen, beloved, and while you hear, bow down with the deepest reverence and gratitude, and worship and adore Him whose love to you is thus unfolded. Yes, HE so loved you that "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Yes, beloved, to save us from eternal condemnation and unutterable woe, and to make us partakers of eternal life, and sharers in the glory, He has given His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, that blessed Christ of God had to expiate our sins by His own death on the cross, and, while hanging there, to endure the wrath of God against sin to the uttermost; and thus we were "*redeemed* with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." This was the *ransom* God gave—this the inestimably precious price He paid, and all who are thus redeemed form the one family of God—"the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood."

Thus the Son of God "was delivered for our offences," and, blessed be God, "was raised again for our justification." He was the first-begotten from the dead, and all who now believe on Him are described as "*quickened together* with Christ, raised up *together*, and made sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," "that in the ages to come God might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Christ in resurrection becomes the Head of His body



the church, and every believer is one with Him,—a “member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” Whether, then, we consider the inconceivably precious *ransom* our most gracious God provided and paid, or the dignity to which in wondrous grace He has raised His people, creating us anew in Christ Jesus, and making us His sons and daughters, we can but wonder and adore, and call upon our souls and all that is within us to bless His holy name.

We have quoted largely from Scripture, for it is all important our readers should for themselves determine whether they belong to this heavenly family, not by *profession* only, but by the present possession of eternal life,—“Christ in you the hope of glory.”

You must be a *saved* person before you hear the voice of the living God saying, “My son, give *me* thine heart.” You must know that you are of the family ere you can attempt to walk worthy of God unto all pleasing. You must have *life* ere you can *walk*—must know the love of God which passeth knowledge, before you can present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service. God in His grace enable you to decide truly.

*(To be continued, if the Lord will.)*

---

## WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS.

### AN APPEAL TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

THE words of the apostle, “Let your moderation be known unto all men” (Phil. iv. 5), have sometimes been misinterpreted, either from a misunderstanding of their meaning, or from a want of consideration of the context in which they occur.

By this interpretation the words are made to mean, that in the service of God too much zeal is not to be encouraged, but that we ought to keep our feelings under control, and not allow ourselves to be carried into an extreme of energy or activity in the cause of religion.

Such strong feeling and active labour is called "excitement" or "extravagance" when it appears outside the usual forms; and though it may be suitable in some modified degree in persons wholly devoted to the ministry of the gospel, in others it is considered unbecoming.

Mischief has often been done to young believers by this mistaken interpretation of a most holy and precious precept. Their love has been restrained, their ardour cooled, their devotion modified, and their energy diverted into other channels by this unhappy misuse of a passage, the purpose and design of which is very different from that for which it is used.

Several of the best authorities believe that the word in the original ( $\tau\acute{o}$   $\epsilon\pi\iota\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ), translated in the authorized version "moderation," ought to be rendered "gentleness," or "yieldingness." This is the sense given by it in the other places where it occurs in the New Testament—Titus iii. 2; James iii. 17; 1 Peter ii. 18, &c.

But even if with some others we prefer the translation in our Bibles, how evident it must be from the context that the moderation referred to relates not to spiritual but to temporal things. "Be careful for nothing," which immediately follows, cannot mean that we are not to be anxious about the glory of God, or the work of Christ, but about our earthly and temporal concerns. Again, in verses 11 and 12, the apostle

shows clearly what his meaning is, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content; I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

How evident it is then, that when the Spirit of God would have men moderate, it is in regard to the affairs of this world, its interests and its cares, in order that their minds and their affections may be more free for whole-hearted occupation in those of the next. As it is elsewhere written, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

But how unbecomingly would an exhortation to moderation in the things of God be introduced into such an epistle as that to the Philippians.

Paul wrote from a prison, to which his zeal for Christ had conducted him (chap. i. 13); from his prison he looked forward to the possible prospect of death for the same beloved Master, with an "earnest expectation and hope" that he might not flinch from it when he might be called to suffer (ver. 20), but that "with all boldness," as always, he might go on to his end, in order that Christ might be magnified in his body—whether it should be by life or by death, it made no matter to him.

Again, he expresses his joyful readiness to be offered up in the service of the Lord's people (ii. 17), and speaks in the highest commendation of Epaphroditus, who, for the "work of Christ, was nigh unto death."

Here, then, were two men who counted not their lives dear unto them in comparison with serving

Christ; who were ready to go to prison or to death in the promotion of their Master's cause.

In chapter iii. we have the example of one who counted all profitable things to be loss for Christ; who "suffered the loss of all things," even of what men held most dear, and counted them dung "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus;" and still he presses on, not content with his present attainment. The glitter, the glare, and the glory of all earthly prizes cannot divert his gaze, nor turn aside his footsteps from the pursuit of that one Object which riveted his ambition, and absorbed his whole being.

In his own grand and memorable words—"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And then, lest any should say that such a high tone and lofty purpose was only befitting the apostle and minister of the word, while ordinary Christians must not presume to aim so high, he adds, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." "Brethren, be followers together of me."

And yet again, in chapter ii., he sets before our eyes a higher model of exclusive devotion to this one purpose in life, of glorifying God, when he says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," who, in the pursuit of the interests of God's name and glory, stepped from the throne of His Majesty to take the form and fashion of a man, and never swerved or hesitated till He had bowed His sacred head in the dust and degradation of the death of the cross.

May we not confidently conclude that one principal

object of the epistle is to oppose the indifference and lukewarmness that belongs to our carnal natures; to separate us in heart from the cares and anxieties of this life; to modify the desire for earthly good, and to inflame and kindle the affections and spur on the desires of God's saints after Himself, and the accomplishment of His service; to sink into insignificance all earthly concerns, and exalt into all-absorbing pre-eminence in our minds the interests of Christ?

But it is not only in this one portion of revealed truth that we discover what sort of habit and behaviour befits a Christian in his earthly career; we find it in every page. Taking a large and general view of the revealed truth of Scripture, nothing attracts the attention more than the extreme and superlative greatness of all its parts.

Whether we look at the rock of hard-heartedness from whence we were hewn, the hole of the pit of corruption from which we were digged, or seek to count the price by which we were redeemed; whether we peer into the dark future of eternal suffering from which we have escaped, or gaze upon the high glory to which we shall be raised; whether we contemplate the stoutness of our rebellion, or the magnitude of God's grace,—the measure of our hatred of God, or of God's love to us; turn we on this side or on that, still we move amid infinity on all sides. Nothing is moderate here, nothing little, nothing low. If then, as to our privileges, we are infinitely blessed, ought not the sense of God's great love and grace thus displayed to stir us up, and spur us on to a whole-hearted service, and an implicit surrender of our whole selves to do His will and pleasure?

Oh! brethren, we live in a degenerate day. Evil abounds in close connection with the profession of the name of Jesus, and the love of many waxes cold. Thoroughness, whole-heartedness, out-and-out devotion, is hardly to be found except in the pursuit of money, pleasure, sin, or this world's praise—shadows that fade before the touch, hollow phantoms of time, which, while men blindly follow in eager competition for earthly happiness, do but conduct them to misery and eternal ruin.

There is no want of ardour here, no need to spur men on to activity. These vain and vapid uncertainties are prizes sufficient to incite to the hottest zeal, and the most unwavering determination of purpose.

But among Christians, whose wealth neither moth nor rust can touch, whose future happiness no words can utter, whose praise and glory is a reward conferred by the highest Hand in the universe—among these there is on all sides weakness, coolness, and indifference.

Oh! brethren, let us take shame to ourselves. Is it for this result our blessed Lord Jesus suffered and bled and died, that we who live should henceforth live unto ourselves? Is this the due return for His great love? Awake, awake, put on your strength, fellow-Christians; put on your beautiful garments. Shake yourselves from the dust; arise and go forth to the Master's work!

The time past of our life may suffice us to have spent our strength for vanities. Henceforth let us yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and may those well-known words, so often on our lips, be the more fervent utterance of our heart of hearts:—

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
 That were an offering far too small:  
 Love so amazing, so divine,  
 Demands my heart, my life, my all.”

---

## THE PASSOVER IN EGYPT.

“CHRIST our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”—1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

THE feast of all feasts to Israel was the passover. Its importance cannot be overrated. It stands in a place of special prominence as the first feast which God instituted for His people Israel, and the spiritual teaching and truth unfolded in it is extremely precious, varied, and rich.

The passover was commanded to be observed by Israel throughout their generations for ever, and doubtless they kept the feast many hundreds of times; yet only six of these occasions are noticed in the word of God.

Each of these six observances had its own peculiar significance, and is replete with interest; and each of them unfolds some special truth connected with Israel, and also with the Church of the living God, and important teaching respecting the responsibility and privilege of God's people to feed on “Christ our passover, sacrificed for us.”

The *first* observance of the passover was in Egypt.

The *second*, in the wilderness.

The *third*, (or rather, the third recorded for our instruction and blessing) in the promised land.

The *fourth*, in the reign of Hezekiah.

The *fifth*, in the reign of Josiah.

The *sixth*, in the book of Ezra.

May the Lord enable us by the power of His Spirit to discern the different aspects of truth connected with each of these occasions.

Let us now turn to the first observance of this feast, as recorded in Exodus xii.

This passover was kept in the land of Egypt, before Israel had been delivered from the power and oppression of Pharaoh.

The lamb was slain, the blood was sprinkled, and then the Israelites were commanded to shut their door, and eat the lamb roast with fire, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They were to eat it in haste, with girded loins, and shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand,—all ready to depart out of Egypt. No stranger or hired servant might eat thereof, but only the real seed of Israel, or those who had been received into Israel by circumcision.

How plain and blessed all this is.

The holy spotless Lamb of God has been slain as the sacrifice for sin, and by His own blood He has entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. God has set forth Jesus “to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,” and “by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

The very moment a poor sinner rests in the blood of God’s beloved Son, believing in it as the only and all-sufficient remedy for sin, which cancels, blots out, and puts it all away for ever, his soul is safe. ✓ No more condemnation! no more wrath! He has passed from death unto life; has been new created in Christ Jesus, and made a child of God, “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the circumcision of



Christ;" his sins "stripped off all round," and he clothed with HIS spotless righteousness.

He has *used* the blood. By faith it has been sprinkled on his heart and conscience, and through God's boundless grace this gives him an eternal, perfect, and never failing immunity from the wrath to come.

It is "not of works, lest any man should boast;" "for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift"—the rich, free, full, unmerited gift—"of God."

Now mark the next step.

As soon as the Israelite had sprinkled the blood, he was commanded by God to shut the door of his house, and feed on the lamb roast with fire. So also with the "new-born" child of God, the spiritual babe of but an hour old. *He* needs to shut the door of his heart, excluding Satan, and the world with all its cares and calls, and in the secrecy of his own soul to feed, and feed abundantly, on Christ.

Oh, listen to His wondrous words: "My flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed." "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Yes, beloved fellow-Christians, the very bread which God Himself delights to feed upon is given us to be our constant food, to nourish and sustain our souls, and make us strong to do our Father's will, and full of zeal and energy to follow on to know the Lord.

Why then are we so weak and feeble? why so devoid of joy and gladness? why overcome by sin and Satan?

Because we feed so scantily on Christ, we give our souls so little time to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Our blessed Lord says Himself, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." But how does He minister this more abundant life?

Listen again: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so HE THAT EATETH ME, even he shall live by me." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;" and surely in proportion as we eat and drink, our strength will be increased, our souls will become fat and flourishing, and we shall be empowered by the Spirit of our God to bring forth the fruit which He delights in.

But to proceed. The Israelites were commanded to feed on the Lamb with "*unleavened bread and bitter herbs.*"

Hearken, beloved in the Lord, to God's own word to us, His blood-bought children: "Therefore let us keep the feast; *not* with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

We cannot feed on Christ unless we purge out the old leaven. Our sins must be laid at His feet, surrendered to Him, to be subdued and conquered, or we shall find we cannot feed. Indulged or cherished sin will surely shut us out from the feast, and spoil our spiritual appetite.

It is a feast indeed! "a feast of fat things, a feast

of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,"—a feast of which our God Himself partakes: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will *sup with him*, and he with me." A table spread by God Himself, to which He invites His sons and daughters, and bids them eat and drink abundantly.

Most holy is the food He gives—the very flesh and blood of Christ Himself! Most precious, costly food—the very tears, and groans, and agonies, and bloody death of God's own Son alone could purchase it.

Oh, shut your door, beloved babes in Christ, and gaze, and gaze ON HIM! See *Him* in His agony of blood! Look at Him scourged and buffeted, yea, mocked and spit upon! Go further still—gaze on Him on that shameful cross! mark well His agony! behold Him roasted with the fire of wrath which you deserved. Listen to His groans and bitter cries! and as you listen let your soul bow down with deepest self-abasement, and worship and adore this wondrous loving God, who did not grudge this infinite price to buy your souls, and spread this feast of joy for you.

But note again, we cannot feed on Christ without the bitter herbs. There must be self-abhorrence, some little sense at least of what we owe to Him, some apprehension in our souls that *our* rebellious hearts and ways have caused these awful sufferings, and thus, while we abhor ourselves, and cast ourselves as vile before Him, there will be praise, and gratitude, and joy that He so loved—ah yes, *so loved us* that He shrank not from all this agonizing woe to buy us for Himself.

Now mark what follows. The Israelites rose up from that feast of gladness, and marched straight out of Egypt. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light."

No hindrances could stop their progress. The Red Sea may seem to shut them up; but "Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," is the message sent them. And again, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward;" and forward the people went, regardless of the apparent danger. They believed the word of the Lord, and waited to see what He would do.

Well may the Psalmist say, "Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known." "The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled." "He spake the word, and the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as a heap; the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea." "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand and on their left," and so they passed over gloriously indeed.

Pharaoh and his hosts might pursue and follow them even into the Red Sea, but only to their own destruction. The Lord was on the side of Israel, and none could harm them. Pharaoh, his chariots and his hosts, "sank as lead in the mighty waters," and there remained not so much as one of them; and Israel triumphantly sang their song of victory, and boasted in the Lord their God.

Beloved fellow-Christians, has this been your experience? You *have* used the blood of the holy and blessed Lamb of God, and your sins *are* blotted out for ever, and you shall never come into condemnation; but have you, like Israel of old, come out victoriously from Egypt? Have you, in the strength of the Lord, fairly turned your back upon the world to yield yourselves to Jesus, to do His will and walk with Him, and be His own peculiar separated people?

Have you the full assurance of faith, perfect rest of soul, and perfect freedom from all doubts and fears for your eternal safety? Do you realize in your inmost soul that your sins are buried in the red sea of the precious blood of Christ? and can you joyously take up those words—

“O love, thou bottomless abyss!  
 My sins are swallowed up in thee;  
 Covered is my unrighteousness,  
 Nor spot of guilt remains on me;  
 While Jesu's blood, through earth and skies,  
 Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries!”

Have you taken the Lord as your portion—content to be a pilgrim and stranger here, to prove this world a wilderness indeed, and to draw your supplies of strength and comfort and joy from God alone?

Is this your experience? If so, you have been feasting on the heavenly Lamb; and continuing to feast on Him you must necessarily become strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, able to fight the good fight of faith, and to overcome the wicked one.

But do you, alas! hang your head and say, “Ah, no, I cannot pretend to this experience; I am a poor, timid, doubting soul, and have no settled peace; I do believe in Jesus and trust in His precious blood alone,

and sometimes I am full of comfort, and then again I am full of doubts and fears."

Dear child of God—for such you surely are—you *have* used the precious blood of Christ, but you have neglected or forgotten to feed on the Lamb.

Go feast your soul on Jesus, delight yourself in Him, eat of His flesh, drink of His blood, feed on His agony and grief; and as you do this, your soul will gather strength, your faith will grow, and you will come forth like a giant refreshed with wine, willing and able to follow the Lord, and give up all for Him.

And you, beloved fellow-saint, whose heart still clings to things below, and cannot give up all for Christ,—why, why is this? May be you say, "I know that I am safe, I know my sins are blotted out, but something holds me back and ties me to the world, so that I seem unable to come out as I would wish, and know I ought."

Beloved one, *you* need to shut your door and feed again on Christ. Your soul is starved—half-fed—and therefore weak.

Oh, why despise the riches of God's grace in spreading such a feast for you! He loves to see you eat abundantly. It is a *feast* and not a *fast* He calls you to. Oh, then, arouse yourself, pour out your heart to Him your loving Saviour God, and open wide your mouth, and He will fill it to the full; and if your soul is filled with Christ, the world will lose its charms, the flesh its power, and you will be set free (made free by Christ Himself) to yield yourself to Him, and follow where He leads.

We thus see that *the first* passover was kept in Egypt.

It was God's provision for His newly redeemed people, to strengthen them for the journey which lay before them. So now God gives the flesh and blood of Christ as the *first* food of the new-born soul; and believe me, beloved, the difference between one Christian and another does not depend on natural character, or disposition, or circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, but simply and alone on this one point, *how much each feeds on Christ.*

The one who feeds scantily will be a poor puny Christian, with no power for separation from the world or devotedness to the Lord, little or no joy and peace in believing, little prayer, less praise, and no ability for service; in short, a dried up withered soul, stricken down to the ground, and *like* those who go down into the pit.

On the contrary, the one who feeds continually and plentifully on Christ will have the world beneath his feet, and yield himself a living sacrifice unto the Lord; his peace will flow like a river, his prayer and praise abound, and he will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Choose ye, beloved in the Lord, which shall it be? Would you have the more abundant life? Then, oh, remember the secret of strength and victory is simply this; feed much, yea, feed constantly on Christ, the Living Bread, eat of His flesh, drink deeply of His precious blood; oh, cleave to Him, and as His fulness flows into your soul, you will be able to say with one of old, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

This first passover has special reference to the babe in Christ. It is God's provision to strengthen His newborn child, to rise up and come out decidedly from the world—food given him by God to enable him to break asunder every link of that chain by which he is bound to sin and Satan—and to go forth in the power of the Lord conquering and to conquer.

---

### THE HOPE OF THE COMING OF THE LORD AND ITS TRANSFORMING POWER.

“SURELY I come quickly,” was the parting word of consolation given by Him who had testified to the church of a coming glory and a coming kingdom; and in the blessed book that closes the “Scriptures of Truth” we have the unveiling of the glory of the rejected Son of man—the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The hope of the coming, the certainty of the coming, and the speediness of the coming, are in these assuring words left as the last utterance of our blessed Master, the parting words of that undying love which years before had sought to comfort the hearts of His sorrowing disciples with that memorable promise, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

To Him the hope of gathering His own unto Himself was ever present. He had lived, and laboured, and died that He might redeem *unto Himself*; and for the joy set before Him had endured the cross; and now when received up into glory He is awaiting the time when the purposes of God shall be accomplished—the



Bride be gathered to the throne, and the earth become the footstool of His glory.

God waits and the Lord waits, in patient, earnest long-suffering; and we are called on to wait likewise, in the patience of a hope that while waiting is earnestly expecting, and ardently longing for the time when we shall see Him as He is. The effect of the hope is purity; for he who has it purifies himself; and by this rule have we to judge of the reality of the hope in our own hearts. There is much that is intellectually accepted as a part of a man's creed that never gets into the region of his faith. Of all truth it must be affirmed that a living faith in it will of necessity produce fruit, and when there is no fruit the faith is dead. All truth in the mind of God in its relation to us centres round the person of Him who is emphatically "the truth," as He is also essentially "the light;" but as when He is light He is living light, or the light of life (John viii.), so when He is the truth He is living truth; and as light from Him quickens ere it can save, so all truth must quicken before it can sanctify.

The renewed soul needs light, it seeks after truth; and the great enemy, who has a "pillow for every arm-hole," and a seduction to meet every case, is ever seeking to satisfy with a light that does not save, and a truth that does not sanctify; and the brighter the light and the holier the truth, the greater the danger that the unwary soul be ensnared and deceived thereby. There can be no truth more elevating to the believer, and no hope so purifying, as that which connects his daily thoughts, purposes, and engagements with the hallowed expectancy of meeting his Lord and of seeing Him face to face. Truth held in faith is power; and

an important inquiry to every Christian is, how far in his own case is a truth an opinion merely, or a living belief? If the latter, it will become a mighty power in the soul—mighty in proportion to the power of the faith that lays hold on it; if the former, it will be lifeless in the soul, having never taken possession of the heart, and thereby controlled the will.

A living faith subjects the will to its control, and hence becomes an influencing power in the life of him who possesses it. We see this exemplified in the difference that exists between one who knows about Christianity, and assents to it as a matter of opinion, and one to whom it has become a faith, in the scriptural sense of that mighty word, which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The one has a substance and a reality, which is to him the witness of the unseen; the other has only an opinion. Opinions save not; they sanctify not; and therefore it is of such importance that what we receive be received in the power of a faith that transforms; for if it does not conform him who receives it into its own likeness, it is but a powerless “dead faith,” because “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

A truth when recently apprehended comes often with a large measure of unreal power; for novelty has a great charm of its own, and for a season exercises a very constraining influence upon him who is brought under its power, that is not due to the truth itself. This is specially true of any truth that has a particular power of acting on the affections and on the imagination, and such is the precious doctrine of our Lord's speedy return. There was a time when it was on the lip and in the heart of every one who received it, when

it became the moving power of action, the spring of much real and of much ephemeral zeal for Him who was so soon to come in the glory of the Father, and to gather the children of the Father into the many mansions that the blessed coming One had gone away to prepare. Years have passed away since then. Many have fallen asleep in the "blessed hope," and some are living still in its power and in its enjoyment; but it is a question we may well put to ourselves, Is the hope of the coming, in the case of the majority of those who receive it doctrinally, what it once was?

It was but lately the writer was present at a meeting which lasted over two days, in which a vast variety of subjects had been alluded to, and in which there had been very much that betokened freshness and unction; but at the close a brother rose and said, he had noticed with great sorrow that there had scarce been a solitary allusion to our blessed hope, much less had it been, what in years gone by it would have been, one of the prominent themes of any such meeting. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and it is well that we should examine our hearts, and see why it is, that the coming of the Lord is not more present in the minds and hearts of the Lord's people. We would at this time particularly call attention to this subject, and hope that it may be continually brought before us, and that our hearts may ever pray with the apostle, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

As we have said, faith transforms. A real belief in anything necessarily leads to action; but faith to be transforming depends upon a revelation—a revelation from the Holy Ghost, by whom we have not only a written word, but an inward unction, an anointing of

the Holy One, that makes the truth of the word a direct revelation to the soul. The Spirit's place is to bear witness, and to take of that which belongs to Christ and shew it unto His people. We have therein an inspiration, not apart from the word, but in the word; not independent of the written revelation, but that which makes the written letter a living ministration and an unveiled glory. This is illustrated in the conversion of the apostle Paul. He saw the glory, and he heard the voice of Him whom in His people he was persecuting, and immediately he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. The glory had filled his sight, and the Shepherd's voice had filled his hearing, and from that day the reality of what he had seen and heard occupied his whole soul. His faith rested on Christ, and Christ who had been revealed *to* him as the object of faith, was revealed *in* him also, conforming him to the likeness of Him on whom his faith had laid hold, so that he could say (borne witness to by the Holy Ghost), "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He was a crucified man waiting for the coming of the Lord from heaven, for he had seen the Crucified; and the transforming power of that revelation enabled him to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby I am *crucified*"—not as many would say, when asked why they gloried in the cross, "whereby I am saved."

The sufferings of Christ had been entered into by him; and he could also say with Peter, that he was "a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." The hope of this glory was a soul-sustaining assurance of the coming of his Lord, that enabled him, when sum-

ming up all his sufferings and all his afflictions, to speak of them as "our light affliction, which is but for a moment," and which, he adds, is working "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen." There was an energizing power in the contemplation of those unseen hopes presented to faith, that gave a triumphant joy in all the sorrows of the present, which made them appear as nothing in the light of that which was to be revealed. He felt therein the transforming power of which he had just before been writing, when recording the glory of the present administration of the Holy Ghost. He says, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." I would rather render here, "We all, with unveiled face reflecting as from a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed," &c.

Then follow two results from faith's contemplation of the glory: the one is its reflecting power from us, and the other is its transforming power in us. Let us for a moment occupy our minds with the reflecting power of the glory of a coming Christ in our life and walk on those around us, and the transforming power of the same glory in ourselves. There is no effort in this reflection, no labour in this transforming; we toil not up to it by painful endeavours in conscious weakness. Our faith but contemplates the glory in its reality, and we reflect it of necessity, even as Moses' face shone and reflected the glory of the Holy Mount, as a matter of course, though he wist it not; and the more real, the more unconscious will reflected glory ever be.

So likewise the transforming power that moulds into the image of Him who creates, comes on the soul as the day lightens up the landscape far and wide, making every mountain top and every flowing stream to witness to the glories of the risen sun. This we conceive to be the meaning of that verse in the second epistle of Peter, where the coming of the Lord is likened to "the day dawn," and "the rising of the day star." It is the present rising of the day star *in the heart* of the believer in Jesus to which we particularly seek to draw attention, and for the realization of which we would urge exercise of soul. The day will dawn on the church of God before long; the brightness of its glory will soon no longer be hindered by the darkness now reigning in "the dark place:" but we appeal to God's dear children, Has the day star, the harbinger of coming day, shined into their hearts, so that as with an unveiled heart received, it has been as from an unveiled face reflected? Thus would each believer himself become a morning star in the midst of the world's darkness, bearing witness to an unseen glory, (though seen to faith,) and proclaiming to all that "yet a little while, and He who shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

What would mark the character of the Christian having the day star shining in his heart? Our Lord has given us the answer. He would stand with his loins girded, his shoes on his feet, and his light burning. How much is implied in that word *stand!* The indolence of the flesh would not lull to sleep and repose, when faith looked for a coming glory and a Master near at hand; and the impatient restlessness of the flesh would also be quieted in the remembrance, that *obedience*

is the highest preparation, the most needed work,—a work that teaches those taught of God to seek above all the “ear of the learned,” or, as prayed for by Solomon, “a hearing heart” (rendered “an understanding heart,” 1 Kings iii. 9). The girded loins speak of readiness for service, and the shod feet of preparedness for it; and the light of a faithful confession and testimony witnesses to that Light, to which he alone has access, who, together with the place of the servant, occupies the higher place of the worshipper before the mercy-seat. Thus in the midst of a taunting world and of scoffing professors, as Jesus before Pilate, they will witness a good confession to the kingship of the rejected Christ, and as the Lord before Caiaphas, they will repeat far and wide in an earth ripe for judgment: “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

As those who hold the blessed truth of the near approach of our Lord, we have a double duty to perform. To *ourselves*, that we be found in that day men approved of God, able to contemplate the judgment-seat of Christ, and in its contemplation to say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” To *others*, that we sound the alarm of coming judgment, and that our life and walk, our plans and purposes, all bear witness that we verily believe what we say. Thus might we bring conviction to the consciences of all that our words are not to *us* as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, when we tell those who are looking forward to the result of

man's efforts in the regeneration of a sin-stained world, that all their works will be burnt up, that God alone may be exalted in that day.

We need to have the realities of the future more deeply impressed on our own souls, and the powers of the world to come more engraven on our hearts; content to be counted mad, remembering, as has been well said, that a mad man is one who sees what no one else can see. Let us cultivate a deeper fellowship of spirit with the hopes of the future, that we may live in the full sunshine of the mount of God, and come down as those who have had an audience of the King of kings, and who bear witness of that which they have seen and heard above. To this then must we address our most earnest concern, that the blessed truth of the coming of the Lord become a reality to us, and not an idle and barren imagination of the mind; so that in the living and loving contemplation of its glory we become transformed into its very glory, and as "children of the light," and "children of the day," we may shew to all that "we are not of the night, nor of darkness," but as those "who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet the hope of salvation."

In conclusion, as those called on to "comfort one another," and "to edify one another," may our fervent and united prayer, in a sense of our responsibility for all the precious truth revealed to us, be (with the apostle for the Thessalonians) that the very God of peace sanctify us wholly; that our whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: for faithful is He that called us, who also will do it. Amen.



## THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

## IN THE HOLY PLACE.

ERE we can hope to understand the spiritual teaching of the various things contained in the tabernacle of Israel, we must have some definite thought of what the tabernacle itself represents.

A heavenly original had been shown to Moses when he was forty days and forty nights in the mount with God; and in giving him directions for the construction of the earthly tabernacle, and all the things to be contained therein, God was pleased to reiterate again and again, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was showed to thee in the mount."

Thus then the tabernacle, and everything inside it, and everything connected with it, was an earthly representation of heavenly realities—"a figure for the time then present," "a worldly sanctuary," with "carnal ordinances" and "a changeable priesthood," all of which served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

May we not suggest that the tabernacle itself represents the secret dwelling-place of the Most High? and that the things of the tabernacle depict to us those heavenly realities which have been occupying the mind and heart of our God and of His Christ, from before the foundation of the world?

There was no tabernacle in Egypt, no dwelling-place *there* for God; but when God has redeemed His people, and brought them out of Egypt, we hear the gracious commandment, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that *I may dwell among them.*" He redeems a people to be

a peculiar treasure unto Himself above all people; and when the tabernacle is reared up, and everything is completed according to the prescribed directions, He takes possession of it: "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." Heaven comes down to earth, and God dwells in the midst of His people, to be unto them everything they need, in their passage through the wilderness to the land of promise.

God thus acts in wondrous grace, and reveals Himself in a manner and measure hitherto unknown. But our blessed God is also the *holy* God, as truly as He is the God of all grace; and in unfolding His purposes of love to His purchased people, the claims of His holiness may not be forgotten, but must be met in a way consistent with the dignity and glory of "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity." ✓

In this earthly tabernacle there must be a holy and a most holy place.

Into the most holy place the High Priest alone could enter, and that but once a year, on the great day of atonement, with the blood of atonement, which he offered for himself, and the errors of the people; while into the holy place the holy priesthood alone may come. Only that foot which had been sanctified by the blood, and anointed with the holy anointing oil, could tread there,—only that hand which bore the mark of the blood, and had the sweet fragrance of the holy anointing oil, might handle the holy things of the holy place. No unhallowed foot must tread that holy ground, no unhallowed hand dare touch those holy things. Instant death was the penalty for intruding into the privacy of God's sanctuary.

Provision was indeed made for every Israelite to draw nigh to God day by day. [The altar of burnt offering at the door of the outer court/was always accessible to those Israelites who sought after God.] This was the appointed place of which God had said, "There will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle [*or Israel, margin*] shall be sanctified by my glory." God would in grace *come out* to meet Israel; but none other than the holy priesthood may *come in* to God: even the Levite, specially separated as he was to God's service, dared not enter into the holy place.

This is most significant, and speaks to us in a way we ought not to misunderstand of the intense holiness of God's dwelling-place, and of the preciousness to God of those holy things which were formed and arranged in it according to His divine wisdom and goodness. If then in the earthly figure we learn the holiness that becomes God's house, and the sacredness of everything therein, with what manner of spirit ought we to contemplate the heavenly realities? Is there not, beloved, a special need in our day to guard against the profanity which prevails, in dealing with the things of God and the church of God?

Let us for a moment consider the relative position of the golden candlestick. The tabernacle had four sides. On the west side of the holy place hung the beautiful curtain or veil, which separated between the holy and the most holy; before the veil stood the golden altar of incense. On the south or left side was the candlestick of pure gold; opposite to which, on the north or right side, stood the table of shewbread; and on the east hung the embroidered hanging or curtained entrance, the only way or door into the tabernacle.

All *natural* light was carefully excluded from the sanctuary, another deeply important and instructive truth. The rays of the mid-day sun could not penetrate there, nor could the silvery beams of the moon by night. It had "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it." There was no light there but that which radiated from the shekinah of glory in the most holy, or from the golden candlestick when the lamps were lighted in the holy place. Thus I think that in this earthly representation of a heavenly reality the same truth is presented to us as in the book of the Revelation—"The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple," and "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

What, then, is the golden candlestick with its seven lamps, and what scriptural and heavenly instruction may be obtained from this most precious symbol? May God in His grace preserve us from error, and guide us by His Holy Spirit into the knowledge of the truth He would unfold to us through it.

The candlestick was "of pure gold." "Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side. . . . Their knops and their branches shall be of the same; all of it one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. . . . And look that thou make them after the pattern which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus xxv.)

The whole candlestick was formed out of one talent of pure gold. Divine wisdom and skill given to Bezaleel enabled him and his assistants to beat the gold into the perfect form of exact resemblance to what Moses saw in the mount. There was no furnace to melt the gold; no process for refining it. The gold was pure, without alloy, ere it was appropriated to its purpose.

Surely the pure gold represents Christ Himself in His divine nature, formed by divine power into this candlestick of surpassing beauty and glory; and in the branches *beaten out of the shaft*, is there not a representation of the church of the living God, formed out of the Son of God Himself? "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ."

We are made partakers of the divine nature; or, as taught by the Lord Jesus Himself, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Is not this ONENESS? Are we not the "body of Christ, and members in particular"—living branches of the true Vine?

In the golden candlestick we have in symbol Christ and His church, essentially, inseparably, eternally ONE. "The mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God" is thus prefigured; and now, in these days of wondrous grace, when it has pleased God to reveal "the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you the hope of glory," we may look back to this beautiful candlestick, and learn some of the precious secrets of this mystery.

When Adam awoke out of his deep sleep, and fixed his gaze on the beauteous bride taken by God out of Adam himself, he at once recognized her as his own, and said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." So also "Christ is the head of the church," as "the husband is the head of the wife;" and though it is "*a great mystery*," yet is it true as it is mysterious, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." And on the glorious morning of the resurrection, He will present us to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. *Then* we shall see the pure metal of the golden candlestick shining out in all its brilliancy and glory, and share with Him in the ecstasy of that day when He presents us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

We *now* see through a glass darkly, but *then* face to face; we *now* know but in part, *then* shall we know even as we are known. Our present knowledge is indeed most limited and imperfect, and we yearn for that day of full and complete revelation, when "we shall see Him as He is"—when "we shall be like Him!"

With holy joy we now can say, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," and boasting in His grace may triumphantly exclaim, Our life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

*(To be continued if the Lord please.)*

## THE CROSS AND THE CROWN.

“He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.  
ISAIAH llii. 11.

HAVING realized union with Jesus on the cross, and through His death obtained life, it is the privilege of the saved soul to have union with Him also in everything else.

“Crucified with Him;”

“Buried with Him by baptism into death;”

“Quickened together;” “raised up together;”

“Made to sit together in heavenly places.”

The believer has now to suffer with Him; to be rejected with Him by the world; to tread in His footsteps; to live by His power; and soon to be eternally glorified with Him.

“He is the Head,” “we are members;” and each member has sympathetic thoughts and feelings with the Head according to the measure of *realized* union.

In Genesis, the first book of God’s revelation, we see the germ or embryo, in type or picture, of His great counsels and ways in redemption. In chapter iii. 16 we find the woman, the standing figure of the church of God, through sin entering upon travail, even as in the previous verse we learn that the promised Seed, by His own *bruised heel*—His own most bitter travail—was to bruise the serpent’s head. As God thus comes down to the place of sin to save the sinner, the saved one is brought into the “mind of Christ,” into fellowship with Him in His travail of soul for the children God has given Him.

When the last child has been born, His body the Church being fully completed, the travail will end in

His deep, full satisfaction *with her* for whom He bled and died; and her fellowship in the travail will be changed to joy, and she will be eternally blessed with Himself,—all her joys, though endless and deep, all the cravings of a divine nature, met and *satisfied* in Him, all the inmost passionate longings of every heart, though immeasurably increasing with the increase of God, *for ever* gratified with Him.

What holy, happy *family* companionship and intercourse with the Father and the Son, in eternal spiritual union and communion! What bliss unspeakable, inconceivable! Absolutely *nothing* to hinder the fulness of the mighty love of the Triune God flowing out to His redeemed children day after day, age after age!

Such being the prospect of that glory, which eye hath not seen, ear heard, or heart conceived, we may surely, beloved in the Lord, the more patiently, submissively, and obediently, through grace, seek to enter *now* into the travail of Jesus, who, though He was rich, yet for *our* sakes became poor, that *we* through His poverty might be rich. It is *first* “the sufferings of Christ,” *then* “the glory.” Taking our place with the world-rejected and despised Nazarene, the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, who suffered for us without the gate, “let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” Soon will He come forth to meet and lead us unto His glory.

Let us then, beloved, follow Christ, and with Moses esteem His reproach *greater riches* than the treasures of Egypt. Instead of making merry here in the flesh in the place where He was crucified, or joining in the frivolous, empty, unsatisfying, God-dishonouring, wasted existence of a worldly Christianity, let us seek



an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom. Let us lay up treasure in heaven, building on the one foundation, Christ Jesus, gold, silver, precious stones, which shall stand the refiner's fire, and redound to His glory and our eternal gain before His judgment-seat. While satisfied with the inheritance, let us seek the reward of it, as serving the Lord Christ, and making known His glory.

Immediately following the travail of Jesus on the cross, in Isa. liii. we get the song of triumph—"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud," &c.; for children are born to the Father, the lost are found, the dead are brought to life again, the blind receive their sight, the spoil is divided with the strong, the great act of redemption is accomplished.

In Psalm xxii., from the 22nd verse, the Lord passes in spirit from the cross to the crown, and sees Himself declaring the *Father's* name to His brethren: "for He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He" (the mighty God) "is not ashamed to call them brethren;" "for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." He then sees the *fulness* of the glory. "*In the midst* of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Then follow the salvation of Israel and the blessing of the whole earth, as announced by Moses and the prophets, and also by the apostle Paul in Romans xi.

So in John xvi. 16-22 He tells us of the "little while" of His absence, and the travail and sorrow of it; but ends with, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from you." The world may rob us of the joy of serving the

Lord, and of increased conformity to His blessed mind and will, and deeper communion with Him by the way, but *that* joy it cannot touch—it is the *abiding* joy of the Father's house.

Thus again in Romans viii., from verse 18 to the end: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed *in us*" as we sing,

"O how will recompense His smile,  
The sufferings of this 'little while!'"

At the crucifixion itself also, as another has pointed out, *the crown rested on the cross,* in the sight of all, written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

But one says, 'My occupation leaves me no time to work for Christ.' Get happy in the Lord, my brother, before you go to your daily work; gather the manna fresh, and feed upon it. A few minutes even over the Word, at the feet of Jesus, will strengthen the soul morning by morning to go out *with Him*, so that even in the busiest hours of the day He will *manifest* His presence, and give opportunities of speaking for Him, or in some way honouring Him before men, and being a blessing to others.

The Lord Himself was subject as a child to His mother and Joseph, and till thirty years of age He was known as the carpenter of Nazareth, and in the home life and duties was God's perfect man; in the little as well as the great things of life always glorifying the Father and doing His will. It is in the *little* things each day that we especially need the watching, prayerful spirit, looking off unto Jesus, to be kept from self and the sin that doth so easily beset us.

Many of the Lord's people are the more hidden members, the sick ones; for a shorter or longer space laid aside from more active service, needing "to be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." To such the temptation often is a murmuring heart at being able to *do* nothing, being useless, &c. One great end in sickness is, I think, often not seen; that is, *meditation*—letting the written word get down into the heart, revealing God in Christ Himself more fully to the soul. One's poor easily-deceived heart thus learns to rest more in Himself, and as His grace, and love, and purposes, and ways, pass before the mind, the heart goes out to Him in praise and prayer, that Jesus may be glorified in the church and in the world, and that all means to that end may be owned and blessed of God. Thus, when the secrets of all hearts are revealed, it may be found that the hidden members have *done* more than many more actively employed; besides the patience and resignation they have learned amongst other lessons.

Whatever our position, beloved, it is good to have the judgment-seat of Christ before us, realizing that at any moment He may come, and *then* the thought of each will be, How shall I be found to have used the precious time lent to me here—saved, like Lot, so as by fire? or with much fruit of His Spirit's work in me, and through me to His glory at that day? We are prone to take the joyous part of *the hope*, and shun the responsibility it involves; and not only so in respect to the Lord's coming, but with all the promises, forgetting that through them we are to become partakers of the divine nature.

The present seems a testing time for God's children. After the light, and truth, and partial return to the simplicity of Christ He has given of late years, He seems to be saying to each of us—

“My son, give me thine heart,  
And let thine eyes observe my ways.”

“My son, if thine heart be wise,  
My heart shall rejoice, even mine:  
Yea, my reins shall rejoice  
When thy lips speak right things.”

“My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,  
That I may answer him that reproacheth me.”

The secrets of the Father's heart are thus unfolded to us, and the deep desire of Divine love that we might walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. The purpose and work of the great enemy of Christ and His people is also exposed to us for our warning and profit, who “accuses us day and night before God,” unceasingly endeavouring to dishonour Christ in His saints' walk and ways on earth.

Let us remember the exhortation, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your *reasonable* service”—that surrender of self, which is according to His word. “And be *not* conformed to this age”—which passes away—“but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

There is cause for fear, lest Satan, through his subtlety and cunning craft, gain advantage even through the glorious freedom of the gospel of the grace of God, which of late years has been proclaimed again through

His servants in its grand simplicity and clearness. It is a truism in human things, that that which is easily earned is easily spent, and that which is lightly obtained is lightly esteemed. Minds brought into peace with God through the clearness of the gospel set before them, without deep exercise of soul, are prone to live loosely as believers, not realizing the solemn responsibilities of our position to yield spirit, soul, and body, to Him who bought and redeemed us to HIMSELF with His own most precious blood.

Such ingratitude would be very base even in the things of man; how much more when brought before the cross of Christ? One feels it notwithstanding in one's own heart. The Lord give us a single eye.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

---

## THE PASSOVER IN THE WILDERNESS.

(Read NUMBERS ix.)

WE have already considered the passover in Egypt; let us now glance at the next passover, which is recorded in the book of Numbers.

This passover was kept in the wilderness, at the foot of Mount Sinai; a remarkable place indeed, full of momentous memories. There had the children of Israel heard the voice of God speaking to them out of the midst of the fire, and so terrible was the sight, that

all the people trembled greatly; and Moses himself declared, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Yet such was the hardness of their hearts, that they soon forgot God's power and His works, and in that very spot they dared to make the golden calf.

There, also, had they learned somewhat of the amazing love and grace of their God, who, instead of cutting them off in His anger, devised a way in which this rebellious people might have fellowship with Him; and that He, the holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, might dwell among them, without being obliged to consume them for their iniquities. In wondrous grace, upon that very mount He gave directions to Moses about the tabernacle and the priesthood; and in obedience to His commands that beautiful tabernacle was prepared, and on the first day of the second year it was set up. So fully, too, were the requirements of God's holiness all met in type and shadow, that this defiled people, purified as to the flesh, might draw nigh, and worship and serve their God acceptably, according to His own order and appointment.

Then came the word of the Lord, "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season."

The distinguishing characteristic of this second passover, as contrasted with the first, was, that God was now dwelling *in the midst* of His people *in the wilderness*. He was not now, as they might have thought in Egypt, a God afar off, but, according to His own gracious words, He had borne them on eagles' wings, and brought them to HIMSELF (Exodus xix. 4); and had come down from His high and holy habitation—first to Sinai's top, and then down to the very desert-

ground which Israel's feet trod—placing His tabernacle in the midst of their tents, and giving to each of His people His own appointed place around Himself.

Is there not a lesson for us here? While Israel were in Egypt, Jehovah could not *thus* come into their midst, nor would they have been prepared to receive Him. Israel must be separated from the Egyptians, and Egypt must be exchanged for the wilderness, ere the meeting between God and His people can take place. So is it now. Mingled with the world, what fellowship can we have with the Lord, or He with us? But drawn away *from it* and *to Himself*, we may together meet with Him, and realize holy and happy communion.

What a solemn time it must have been for Israel! What wondering joy and gratitude must have filled each soul, and yet what self-abasement! Surely there was no room for boasting; but, as they retraced the way the Lord had led them, what bursts of melody and praise must have resounded through the camp! The waste and howling wilderness was round about them, the land of Canaan still far off; but need they fear? No; for God was with them, and they had proved that He would meet their every need, and be their present help in every time of trouble.

Is not the Lord's Supper the spiritual answer to this passover in the wilderness?

This world is a true wilderness to the child of God; a dry and barren waste indeed, where everything tends to depress the soul and deaden the spiritual life. Each day we painfully learn out more and more of the desperate and utter badness of our own hearts, and also prove somewhat more of the exceeding riches of

God's grace in the full provision He has made for us in Christ.

We are a poor and feeble folk, and oftentimes get discouraged and cast down, because of the difficulties in our heavenward way. Our Father perceives our need, and pities us, and therefore provides a feast to cheer and strengthen us while passing through the wilderness. He spreads the table for us, and bids us welcome, while the well-known words of our Lord Jesus meet our ears as He reminds us of His agony and death. He speaks of His body broken for us, and thus stills the tumult there may be within, as we recall our own perverseness and rebellion against Him.

Again, as we take the cup and remember His blood shed for the remission of our sins, our sorrow is turned to joy, and songs of praise and gratitude ascend to Him.

It is a holy *family* feast, where our Father loves to see us gather together around our Lord Jesus, that He may come into our midst and minister to our souls, and reveal His love and grace in a richer and fuller measure than we are accustomed to enjoy when alone with Him; a feast which our Lord has *commanded* us to keep, and which cannot be neglected without great loss to our own souls; a feast to which our Father comes Himself, to delight with us in Jesus, and also to receive the sacrifices of praise which ascend from our hearts to Him, because of the joy He ministers to us.

Not only is the need of each soul met in communion with the Father and the Son, but we are placed in our true relationship one with another. We are reminded of our oneness with the whole church of God, and of our mutual responsibilities as members one of another; "For we being many are one bread and one body."



As Israel were assembled in due order, with the living God in their midst, so should it be with us—all verily worshipping in spirit and in truth, and learning more of the mind and will of God, as His servants taught in the word are enabled to reveal it.

Thus the Lord's table is a place of very special blessing to the children of God—a feast of feasts indeed; and through the exceeding greatness of God's love, it has been preserved to us all through the failure of this dispensation; and like the disciples of old, we may and should come together on the first day of the week, to break the bread, and drink the cup, in remembrance of Him who died for our sins.

That broken bread—what a tale it tells of the torture of that holy, spotless Sufferer! That cup of blessing—how it speaks of His shed blood; and tells us He has drained the cup of agony and woe which we deserved, and gives to us instead a cup of full unmingled joy!

The Israelites were commanded to keep the passover once a year: but what is the word to us? “This do in remembrance of Me . . . . For *as often* as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.”

The Lord would have us *continually* remember HIM; and, therefore, instead of prescribing certain seasons for this holy feast, He allows us to observe it as often as we can. And shall we be slow to remember HIM? Does not His love demand our presence? As the day returned on which the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, the disciples of old voluntarily gathered together to remember HIM: and do we not need it as much as they? Shall we think it matters not, and

that now and then will do? Is our love so warm, that it does not need reviving? Is our faith so strong, that we can forego these blessed opportunities? Can we afford to rob our souls of the increased blessing and joy our God desires to give? Or shall we deprive HIM of His delight in seeing His children gathered round His table? Surely we are weak enough! Then let us come together whenever we can, and seek to get strength to our souls by feasting together on the flesh and blood of Christ.

There is one striking fact recorded about this pass-over. Certain men were defiled by the dead body of a man, and therefore ceremonially unclean, and unfit to partake of the passover. These men were very desirous not to be deprived of this privilege, and the Lord in exceeding grace met their desire, by allowing them to keep the passover in the second month.

Nothing was said about uncleanness in Egypt, because until their first passover there, Israel was *not* a cleansed people; they were in their sins: but now as a redeemed people, passing through the wilderness, they contract defilement, which renders them unfit for the presence of God.

Is it not so with us, beloved? Do we not get defiled both in heart and practice while passing through this world? Is it not also true that our consciences must be purged to enable us to have fellowship with God? How well we know, in our own experience, what it is to be shut out from the presence of God by a guilty conscience, or unable to enjoy the word of God, because of indulged or cherished sin. He is the holy God, He *cannot make light of sin*; and surely at such times we are not fit or able to partake of the Lord's Supper.

What is to be done under such circumstances?

Hearken, beloved, for wonderful indeed is the provision of God's grace for us His blood-bought children. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

With Israel, a period of seven days was requisite to make them clean again (See Num. xix.); but *now*, the precious blood of Christ prevails. He ever lives at God's right hand to intercede for us. He is *there* as our Priest, ever ready to purge our consciences from all defilement; and thus restored by Him, we are again made meet for fellowship with God.

No lengthened process is required. Only *confess* to Him, and we are cleansed; for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth* us from all sin." We need not wait; we need not keep away. Before the feast, (and such is surely the proper time,) every stain may be removed from our consciences. But *even there*, if the evil of our hearts be revealed to us through the light of God's holy presence, there is cleansing through the blood, and we may still partake. "Let a man examine himself, and so *let him eat*." "If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged;" and thus we may draw near with holy boldness, and keep the feast with joy and gladness.

How great the riches of His grace! how wonderful His love!

"Sweet feast of love divine!

'Tis grace that makes us free  
To feed upon this bread and wine,  
In memory, Lord, of Thee."

## THE FAMILY OF GOD.

(Continued from page 5.)

THE Christian is privileged to know the purposes of God's grace from the revelation God Himself has made; that revelation is contained in the Scriptures only, and when the Scriptures are diligently searched, and divine knowledge is imparted by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the soul is overwhelmed by the wonders of grace, and exceedingly marvels as it strives to "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

While the heavens and the earth, with all their infinitely varied beauties and glories, were created and perfected in *six days*, the *new creation*, of which Christ is the firstfruits, and all who are His at His coming the full complement, has been in process—how long? Oh, beloved! how many centuries has it taken the triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to create "the body of Christ"—to perfect the number of the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?

If "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork," if "His eternal power and Godhead" are now manifested in the things that are seen, what must be the display of His glory when, in the ages to come, He shews forth "the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"?

The mind, the will, the wisdom, the power of God, are all gloriously displayed in the first creation; but ah! in the *new creation* the *heart* of God has to be unfolded; the infinite heights and depths of boundless

LOVE have to be revealed, and the *saved sinner* has to learn to his amazement that he—*he* is the peculiar object of God's most wondrous love, and the special subject of His mightiest power!

A rebel against God the sinner has always been; in a state of alienation, depravity, and moral vileness which can scarcely be conceived; yet *his* sins and *his* necessities educe the much more abounding grace of God, and are the means of developing "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Yea, the full and triumphant development of the holiness, love, and grace of God depends upon the glorious fact, that *sinners* are being *saved by grace*, made *sons of God*, and heirs of glory. Yes, of *such* sinners God is forming His own peculiar family.

God had one only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who "was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." This Son "thought it not robbery to be equal with God, for HE was God." This Son, in boundless love, left the heaven of heavens, His own dwelling-place, vacated the throne of His glory, and came down to this world of sin and sorrow; "and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring *us* to God." And God "in bringing *many sons* unto glory" made "the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all *of one*: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Thus we briefly learn what is the "body of Christ," and who are the "children of God." "He who sanctifieth" is CHRIST, and "they who are sanctified" are

Christ's,—united to Him as the branch to the vine, as the living members to the living Head; *one* with Christ as having received His life, “joined unto the Lord, one spirit.” Having received the Spirit of adoption we cry, Abba, Father; “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that *we are* the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Such, beloved, are God's family,—poor sinners raised out of the dust, beggars lifted from the dung-hill and “set among princes, to make them inherit the throne of glory.”

Very unequal they may have been in their earthly circumstances, but whatever their natural status, all were equally alike “dead in trespasses and sins.” So also all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are equally quickened into life, and have “passed *from death* unto life.” No doubt there was a vast difference in social position between Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, and the thief on the cross; between Chuza, the wife of Herod's steward, and Mary Magdalene; yet all alike were saved through the precious blood of Christ. Every believer everywhere is equally indebted to the grace of God which brought salvation. All are alike loved of God; infinite, eternal love the portion of each and all. And should we not, beloved in the Lord, ALL be equally devoted to Him?

Rich, indeed, is the grace that invites us to “behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that *we* should be called the sons of God.” Never should we forget, never for an instant forget, that “*now* are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet

appear what we shall be; but we *know* that, when He shall appear, we shall be *like* HIM; for we shall see Him as He is." Blessed result of His appearing—we shall be *like Him!* This we *know*; we do not think, or suppose, or even hope that it may be so; we *know* that when "Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

To have a clear and distinct understanding of this new relationship, formed by God's love and power, is essential to the happiness of the Christian, and surely is conducive to the glory of God.

A good conscience, holy affections, and godly conduct, are the *outcome* of the heart's apprehension of the new and wondrous place in which God has in His grace set us; and these fruits of a renewed nature all flow from the power of divine life working effectually in us.

A Christian desires a conscience befitting a heavenly person. A child of God, he seeks to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man—toward God, who searches the inward parts as with eyes of fire, as truly as toward man, who can only judge by the outward appearance.

He wants a holy, loving, humble, tender heart; weaned from the love of earthly things, occupied with heavenly realities; always at leisure to receive the communications of the Holy Spirit of God; ever a welcome home for Christ Himself; a heart that will never keep HIM knocking without (Rev. iii. 20); and never grieve, by the indulgence of evil, that Holy Spirit by whom he is "sealed until the day of redemption."

A Christian wants to conduct himself as becometh a

son of the Lord Almighty, giving none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God; but, on the contrary, ever ready to lay down his life for the brethren, and to be "fruitful in every good work, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

These precious fruits of God's love and grace can only flow from a heart at perfect rest and peace with God, and happy in the knowledge of His favour. This is surely the portion of every child of God, and should be diligently sought after; so that with every anxious question answered, every fear removed, every doubt dispelled, the soul might rest in complacency and delight in the enjoyment of the love of God.

It may afford us further subject of meditation to consider our gracious God's happiness and joy in His beloved children, the presence of the heavenly Father with His heavenly family, and all the happy responsibilities arising out of this relationship, whether on God's part or on ours. As yet we have reached but the threshold of our heavenly position, we have considered but the first step into God's household, and have barely entered on the knowledge of that divine relationship and glorious inheritance, into which our gracious God has brought all who come unto Him through Jesus Christ our Lord.

---

## ORDER AND MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH OF GOD.\*

THE question arises, how is order to be kept? and how are we to have these distinctions recognized if we have no ordination? How can these varieties of gifts and ministry be kept acting in harmony and in the bond of

\* Extracted from "Things as they are, but ought not to be." By F. C. Bland. London: Yapp and Hawkins, 70, Welbeck Street.



peace, unless we have a regular system, and appoint to office in it?

Is there any provision made by God to ensure all this? or has He left us a mere theory about which we may talk and give addresses, but which to attempt to carry out is certain to end in failure?

Let us take an example, or rather illustration, from the Old Testament, where a variety of agencies are at work, and all work harmoniously together, fulfilling most perfectly their end, and see if we can discern how this was accomplished without formal order or pre-arrangement as to the part each was to take.

In the vision in the first of Ezekiel, we find a variety of agencies in action, but their action is most perfectly concurrent; and in these wonderful varieties of wings, wheels, hands, and eyes there is neither jar nor discord. We find their various characteristics described in the faces of the four living creatures, typifying intelligence, strength, stability, and swiftness of apprehension. We have eyes, hands, wheels, and wings, no one of which could do the work of the other, but they all work in harmony and for a common end. "When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood;" and when the wings were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up with them; *for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels*, "and when they stood, they let down their wings." Each wheel (an earthly agency) had its corresponding wing (a heavenly one); and there was an appearance of fire, like the appearance of lamps, that went up and down amongst the living creatures.

There was some active agency outside and independent of themselves continually at work amongst them, and the result was a collective one. There was a voice like the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech. There was a time to wait as well as a time to act, and when the action above ceased, they let down their wings.

But how was all this managed? Did one agree with another that they should be lifted up together, or else be guilty of breaking this wonderful unity? No, beloved friends; there was a Man above in the midst of the throne, and there we get the secret of it all.

You will have anticipated me, I dare say, and understood the vision. *We* represent the living creatures now, "fearfully and wonderfully made." We have our heavenly as well as our earthly part; we are the hands, the wheels, the wings, and have our various characteristics. Ah, verily, a greater than the cherubim is here! And we too have the Spirit going up and down among the living creatures; and we too have "the Man," not only on the throne, but in our midst. But where is the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech? where is the power which makes the unbeliever, when he comes in, fall on his face and confess "that God is amongst us of a truth." The secret is, beloved, that we refuse the authority of "the Man on the throne." We do not believe that *He* is in our midst, and the Spirit present to work each gift, dividing to every man severally as He will. And so we either establish a system to supply the lack of order which our faithlessness has caused us to feel, or else we assert the right of each to do as he pleases in the assembly of God.

But have we *really* a right to expect this guidance of which we speak; or is it all a myth? If it be so, beloved friends, we had better make a hasty retreat from the ground we have taken; for with such high pretensions to guidance men are entitled to expect from us a corresponding result (for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power); and our responsibility is tremendous, for in making the assumption we do, we involve nothing less than the truth and faithfulness of God.

That God contemplated this unity, and provided for its maintenance is plain; for in chapter xii. of 1st

Corinthians we get a statement of what the gifts to the body are. In chap. xiv. we are instructed how they are to be exercised, and under what power and authority; and chap. xiii. comes in between, showing that a *moral* fitness is necessary for their proper exercise, without which the best gifts are as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

The gifts of chap. xii. must be baptised in the love of chap. xiii., to be exercised in grace in chap. xiv. Chapter xiii. is the Red Sea for the gifts of the church, in which the flesh is left at the bottom. But to say that because of our failure these chapters are no longer our guide for the exercise of these gifts is unwarrantable;\* for chapter xiv. supposes failure amongst the Corinthians, *even at the time it was written*, in commanding that all things should be done decently and in order.

---

## LOVE'S CONFIDENCE AND ITS RESPONSE.

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."  
Prov. xxxi. 11.

Do not these words unfold the desire of our blessed Lord concerning us? and should not we seek, in some feeble measure at least, to respond to His desire? What joy to Him to have a people on earth, of whom He could be assured that, however circumstanced, their one business would be to *please Him!*

When we think that He ever lives at the right hand of God for us, and that blessing is perpetually flowing through Him into our souls, to live for Him should surely be *our* joy. If He in the glory has at all times a heart to remember us, to think upon us in our toil

\* These chapters (xii. and xiv.) are sometimes set aside, on the ground that miraculous gifts have ceased. But surely "the body" *remains*, with its glorified Head, indwelling Spirit, and varied membership; and though some gifts have passed away, those essential for the edification of the body remain, such as "the word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," and for their right use these chapters contain the principles of guidance.

and suffering, should not we remember Him, who has done and is doing such great things for us?

But we may have something even better than a *remembrance*, for He *Himself* has promised to be *with us* "always, even unto the end."

Should we not seek that our heavenly Husband might "safely trust" in us—find hearts true to Him, abiding here *for Him*, and proving the sweetness of those words, "I delight to do thy will, O my God?"

Our blessed Lord would then have gained His object—the desire of His heart; so we can understand why it is added, "He shall have no need of spoil." To have hearts that once cared not for Him delighting to be near Him, listening for His voice, finding in Him their joy, their *all*,—this is better to Him than "all spoil."

If we feel how far, how very far we come short, and how little in any way we thus gladden our Lord and respond to His love, let us be stirred up to think of this blessed One—out of sight, but ever watching with deepest interest those so dear to Him. He knows whether we are striving to abide for Him, and is quick, so quick, we may be sure, to mark our feeble efforts. And what can have such power to stir us up as His love, His wondrous love,—believed, *enjoyed*,—and then the thought that He values *our* love! "Let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice."

To think of our Lord's thus caring for us, thus seeking our company, is so wonderful that we little enter into it; yet to know Him after this manner would be very helpful to our souls. May He indeed so manifest Himself unto us that our souls may long for that hour when the deep purposes of His grace shall be fulfilled! ✓

"He comes—for oh! His yearning heart  
No more can bear delay—  
To scenes of full unmingled joy,  
To bear His bride away!"

## THE PATH OF FAITH AND ITS DANGERS.

THE path of the children of God, whether individually or collectively, is a path of trial: we must not expect anything else; for the flesh *must die*. It is to resurrection life that we are called, and if anything is to be maintained according to the word of God, it can only be as the flesh dies and the spirit lives.

Great and manifold are our dangers, and, as has been truly said, 'it takes all the ability of God to keep us from falling.' ✓ The special object of God's love is always the special object of the devil's enmity. Witness Adam and Eve in Eden. See Noah brought through the flood in safety, and then falling into Satan's snare. See the Son of God born into this world, and the dragon ready to devour Him. See Satan marking His steps, and plying his temptations with all his subtlety.

The words "gathering together" and "of one accord" are spoken of the children of God, but they are also spoken of the children of the devil. See Satan at the cross marshalling his forces against CHRIST: they are of one accord, of one mind, with hellish unity of purpose, to grieve the heart of God and mar His glory. But, blessed be God, HE is above it all.

Soon we find, in the early chapters of Acts, *the Church* becomes the special object of Satan's enmity, and of his most subtle wiles.

His first attempt to work mischief (Acts ii.) is by throwing discredit on the glorious Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost; but the mockers are silenced, and thousands are saved. Soon he tries to stop the mouths

of the apostles; but this fails. Then he endeavours to sow strife in the matter of caring for the widows; but this is defeated. Next he seeks access through Ananias and Sapphira; but this evil is quickly purged out. Afterward he tries persecution (chap. viii.); but this only scatters the seed.

Let us turn, however, to 2 Cor. xi. 12-15, and we shall find that, failing to work the mischief he desired in these openly evil ways, Satan assumes the garb of "an angel of *light*," and his servants are "transformed as the ministers of *righteousness*, whose end shall be according to their works." *Herein he succeeds*, and herein is the danger *for us*.

Mark how Satan attacks us. He has all arts and wiles suited to every case. One is very far off from the Lord: there is no need of a subtle bait for him; he is easily snared. Another is very near to God, living in communion, in the light of His presence; for such Satan must needs devise a very subtle temptation. Failing to ensnare through the allurements of the world, or through the lust of the flesh, he comes as an angel of light, and beckons to come just one step beyond Christ—one step beyond His word—one step more separate than Christ—and that is enough. Let us beware of such a step. May God keep us from it.

If we are called to go "without the camp," to be like Abraham, who went out "not knowing whither he went," let us obey. It may be a path of trial; but faith will overcome—and nothing else. (1 John v. 4.)

It is comparatively easy to go out like Lot *with* Abram, or like the mixed multitude *with* Israel; but it is a hard thing to go *alone after God*. The question is not, Where is there an easy path, or a broad path

where many go? but to know from the word of God where *He* would have us; and if there we have not a fellow-man with us, we have God.

In the apostle's parting address to the Ephesians (Acts xx.) failure is contemplated. He foresees that Satan will get the advantage; and for that day of failure, of perplexity, of distress, to what does he commend them? Is it to teachers, or to the church, or to the presbytery? No; but "to God, and to the Word of His grace; which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

There is no resource but *God and His Word*. Not God apart from His Word; for there must not only be trust in Him, but intelligence as to His mind. Not the Word merely apart from God; for there must not only be intelligence as to His mind, but faith ever counting upon Himself for grace in time of need. We must both "abide in Him" and have "His word abiding in us." (John xv. 7.) *V. G.*

But is it possible that failure could be so deep and general, that ALL God's people could be in the wrong? Let us look at 1 Chron. xiii., and we shall indeed find a solemn instance in which ALL ISRAEL were WRONG. "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." Mark, dear friends, this must have been quite a gathering of all the elders, of all the instructed and well-taught people in the land. "And David said unto all the congregation of Israel" (the people seem to have been here as well as the leaders), "If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord."

People often seek to know if a thing be good unto

*them* first, and then if it be of the Lord. How solemn it is to hear people talk of things being "of the Lord," and then finding out they had been "of the devil!" How can we ever know if a thing be of the Lord unless we bring it to the test of the Word? Impressions in a deceitful heart are but a poor guide.

"Let us bring again the ark of our God to us." The desire was a good one doubtless. Who could do otherwise than approve such a proposal? But, alas! how often, through leaning to our own understanding, and consulting one another, instead of consulting the word of God, we do a right thing in a wrong way, and bring upon ourselves only confusion and bitterness.

"And David went up, and all Israel, to Kirjath-jearim, to bring up thence the ark of God. . . . And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart."

But where did they get the idea of a "new cart"? It was a human device. They got it from the Philistines, from unconverted people, who had appropriated to themselves that which could only be for their judgment. And not a man in Israel—prophet, priest, or king—detected the fault. ALL, ALL were wrong. A little child, with God's plain word in his mouth, might have rebuked them all. But they had to learn in sorrow what an evil thing it is to act in the service of God without consulting His Word. "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God. . . . And David was afraid of God."

Now pass on to chap. xv.: "And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David



said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever. . . . For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, *for that we sought Him not after the due order.*"✓

And now, beloved friends, who ought to carry the ark of the Lord? Has God separated a people for His service, or has He not? Are not the saints, in virtue of the blood of Christ and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the separated people, the royal priesthood, whom God has made the custodians of His holy things? Are we not exhorted in these last days "to contend earnestly for THE FAITH once delivered to THE SAINTS"? (Jude 3.)

Paul, as a true Levite, could say, "I have kept the faith." But has the faith since then been kept by God's separated people? or has it been betrayed into the hands of men—who, knowing not the mystery of its holiness and divinity, have contrived new ways of preserving it, inventing a creed or a catechism—like the new cart—to support it, when the saints, through negligence and ignorance, had deserted their charge? Oh, may God show us the meaning of all this!

But when David and Israel went about God's service in God's way, behold what joy and blessing! (See 1 Chron. xv. 25-28; xvi. 1-43.)

In these days worship has indeed been desired, but it has been gone about in the wrong way. Fellowship has been desired, but it also has been gone about in the wrong way. The only remedy, and that which is yet sufficient, is "God and the word of His grace." Blessed be His name, He still remains the never-failing resource of His people!

But we are not left to discover from Old Testament types, the causes and remedy of present failure; it is all foretold in plainest language in the New Testament. Let us turn to the second chapter of Colossians: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." (ii. 4.) } "*Any man*"—the most spiritual or learned—"should beguile," as Satan beguiled Eve through his *subtlety*. } And with what? The glare of this world? No; we may be past that; we may have seen the rottenness of it (though indeed we might go back any day). It is not *that* the Colossian saints are warned against, but "enticing words." ✓

Again: "Beware lest any man SPOIL you." Oh, it is easy to "spoil" God's people! easy to spoil God's gospel! One bit of legality in it, like the dead fly in the ointment, renders poisonous that which was intended for healing. "Spoil you" through what? Not licentiousness, not frivolity, but the wisdom of the world—"philosophy and vain deceit." Alas! how many a young warm-hearted believer has been "spoilt" by taking to human philosophy, in the vain deception that there are some springs of wisdom outside Christ.

"After the tradition of men." I do not think we know anything about how much we are in bondage to tradition—how much we have learned from father to son. } Nothing is more worthless than traditional religion. } Every individual believer is responsible to "prove all things" ✓ to bring all traditions, be they ever so time-honoured, to the test of the Word; and let them stand or fall by it. It is written, "Every man shall be taught of God."

"After the rudiments of the world." That is, I believe, after the pattern of a ritual that God had

designed for a worldly people worshipping in a worldly sanctuary—all which is done away in Christ—some garment, or ceremony, or priesthood, having no sanction in the New Testament, really borrowed from Judaism. These things are on every hand *spoiling* God's people, and deluding the world.

Oh, beloved, is not this enough to put us on our guard against "any man"—the most gifted, the most seemingly spiritual? Let *none* be so trusted as to be above being tested by the Word; for man is Satan's best instrument, the fleshly-mind his ready tool, and the more in reputation for knowledge and other gifts, like the old prophet of Bethel, the greater the danger.

In the second epistle to Timothy we are told that "in the last days perilous times shall come." Not times of persecution, but rather, as described in the last stage of the church in Rev. iii., times of lukewarmness, when all iniquity is wrought under the cloak of "the form of godliness," when men are lovers of pleasures without God, as Israel of old sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play; and God called it "idolatry." (1 Cor. x. 7.) "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," beware of pleasures in which you have not the presence of God.

Then follows a list of all the abominations done under the "form of godliness;" and finally God's explicit command, "*From such turn away.*"

The "form" may be ever so fair, but where the power is wanting or denied, separation may be imperative.

Let us also beware of misapplications of the word of God. There is nothing in which Satan is more crafty. When he comes and tells us to separate not only from the world, but also from the children of God,

let us know that it is from EVIL we are to be separate. Are we then to have fellowship with all God's children? Yes; except God's Word says NOT.

When we are referred to the Word for guidance, let us be very careful that we obtain its true application. [Let us be on our guard, lest any man beguile us into one step of separation beyond that which Christ has commanded.]

---

### THE WORD AS A WEAPON.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—HEB. iv. 12.

NEVER am I rightly using the Word as a *weapon*, unless I know it to be a *two-edged* sword, cutting deeply home—feeling it in my own soul in the very way and measure in which I desire that my brother should feel it.

If I seek to bring it to bear on my brother's conscience for rebuke, I ought also myself to be convicted, judged, "pierced," and "divided" by it.

Nay, if this be not the case, I shall probably fail in the very thing for which I condemn my brother, though the exhibition of it may be different.

For instance, if I see him ensnared by a literal Delilah, and point out to him his danger, and Samson's fall; if I am not at the same time feeling the edge of this very warning, and bracing up my own soul, I may at once fall a prey to the mystical Delilah, with her cords and ropes, resulting, unless preserved by almighty power, in blinded eyes and sore bondage.

If the beloved children of God duly weighed this truth, how much more powerful would be the too

often needed reproof! With what meltings of heart would it be administered! How should we be shamed by the discovery of another's failure, remembering that his sin is our own! How should we seek to hide such failure from those outside the "household of faith," and from one another too; for, alas, we breathe too little of the Master's spirit in this, as in everything else!

Oh for sympathy with what He must feel when His precious ones "err in their hearts, not knowing His ways!" And truly we "pierce His hands and His feet," when, by unkind word, or look, or act, we wound the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

Surely we have much to judge in ourselves in this matter! How we should pause before we speak of anything in a saint which is not commendable, and how often would it be left unsaid, aye, and the hard thought that prompted the utterance be judged and rooted out, did we remember that we were touching the apple of His eye! Nay, more, in the light of the Lord, might we not often discover that our *thought* was more sinful than the act it condemned? We judge an act; we cannot judge the thought that originated it. The Lord judges our thoughts as the root and spring of action. Verily we are "pierced" and "divided" here.

This is no weak and lax system of cloaking evil. No; but the Lord would lead us into deeper self-judgment, that, with clean hands, we might more tenderly wash our brother's feet.

May our patient Teacher train us to His own thoughts and ways, that He may be glorified and others blessed. Amen.

## THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

IN THE HOLY PLACE.

*(Continued from page 34.)*

THE candlestick had intrinsic excellence and value: it was of pure gold, and it exhibited the perfection of unity. We have seen that it was beaten out of one piece, and branches were formed out of it to bear the lamps, the sevenfold light from which diffused itself through the holy place, revealing the beauties and glories which were otherwise undiscernible.

Christ was hidden there in the manifold characters of His grace. The boards of shittim wood, encased in gold, declared Christ. The veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of cunning work, with cherubims, unfolded Christ. The curtained entrance by which the holy priesthood gained access exhibited Christ. The ceiling or covering of the tabernacle, glowing with brightness and beauty, displayed Christ. In every place, and in every thing, the glorious Person, offices, and work of the Son of God, were variously portrayed. Yet was there "the thick darkness," impenetrable to the human eye, until the lamps of the golden candlestick were lighted, and then the hidden glories of the holy place shone forth, to the delight and joy of the holy priesthood.

The floor was the only part of the holy place which did not witness to Christ. It was formed of the desert itself, and had no covering of any kind. One pregnant reason amongst others for this arrangement is surely this,—that the things of God must not be trodden under foot even by His holy priesthood.

When the passover lamb was slain in Egypt, the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and two side-posts of the door of every Israelite. Any one of the redeemed standing in the open door-way, looking above, beholds the sprinkled blood; turning to the right, his eye rests on the blood; or to the left, still the blood meets his view: the blood above him, the blood around him, but no blood could be found on the door-step.

God will not have the precious blood of His dear Son trampled under foot; and when through that precious blood access is obtained into the holy or most holy place, the holy things of the living God must not be trampled upon. Therefore, in the tabernacle in the wilderness, the sands of the desert form the only floor; as also, if we look into heaven itself, we behold "a sea of glass mingled with fire," upon which those stand who get the victory over the beast, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Nothing in heaven or on the earth that unfolds the person or work of Christ may be trodden under foot.

Standing, then, in the holy place ere the lamps are lighted, all is "thick darkness." God may make "darkness His secret place," but man may not enter into His presence. He has eyes indeed; but he scans not divine things with the natural eye. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" and man must ever remain a stranger and utterly blind to the glorious mysteries and the wondrous contents of that holy place, unless light shines within, and God Himself reveals that which is hidden.

When Aaron filled the seven golden lamps with the pure oil olive, and lighted them, the beauteous scene he gazed upon, and the varied glories by which he was

surrounded, were not *produced*, but only *displayed*. The light itself could not add virtue or value to anything it shone upon; it could merely exhibit what was there.

The candlestick represents Christ. It was elaborately ornamented and beautified by divine wisdom. The brighter the light shone upon its towering shaft, the more clearly would its manifold beauties be developed; but not one tittle of beauty or value could the light confer upon it. The light could display and make manifest, but could not add one atom to its worth.

Thus Christ, the Son of God, stands before us in symbol in all the transcendent dignity and perfection of His own nature; while in the branches beaten out of the candlestick—on either side three, each bearing equally with the central shaft its golden lamp, and all burning in lustrous brightness—we behold a gloriously perfect whole, symbolizing Christ and His church, yea, the church of the living God, abiding in Him in everlasting oneness—another form of the truth taught by our blessed Lord Himself—“I am the vine; ye are the branches.”

Well may the apostle to whom the knowledge of this mystery was specially revealed exclaim, “What shall separate us from the love of God? . . . I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Surely the complete antitype of the golden candlestick, its branches and seven lamps luminous with divine glory, is *yet* future, and will be manifested in



heaven itself when the glory which the Father has given the Son, and which the Lord Jesus in richest grace shares with His church, will be displayed. Then, in the perfect unity of the divine nature, and in blessed conformity to His glorious image, will be fulfilled those precious words of the Lord Jesus—"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." And again, "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."

Then will be fully manifested "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The bride of Christ in transcendent loveliness will shine forth in the brightness of His glory. Intense happiness and joy will fill every heart; worship and thanksgiving, adoration and praise, will again and again burst forth, ascending to Him whose infinite love and amazing grace are thus revealed.

Then also will the manifold wisdom of God be displayed; and not the church only, but principalities and powers in the heavenlies, will look back with wonder and delight upon the wisdom and prudence, the patience and forbearance, the tenderness and care, with which this glorious candlestick was formed.

Then, too, will "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints" be apprehended in the clear light of that wondrous day. If "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," as the old creation with its teeming wonders came fresh from God's hand, oh, what will be the outflow of ineffable joy, and the chorus of universal praise, as

God's workmanship in Christ Jesus—the sons of the Lord Almighty—stand out, invested and arrayed in the glory, which is their everlasting portion in Christ Jesus the Lord!

There will be no failure then; no dim lights or charred wicks; no need for the golden snuffers: the one Spirit of the living God will fully animate the whole; the life of Christ will flow forth in all its power and fulness; His unsearchable riches will be unfolded; and “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” will be the rapturous utterance of every creature in heaven and earth.

One word more as regards the symbol. Do we not learn that Christ and heavenly realities are absolutely unknown and undiscernible except by the inshining of the Holy Ghost into the mind and heart? and are we not assured by the Lord Himself, that God the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to take of the things that are Christ's and show them unto us? Is it not true that the marvellous love of the Father in the gift of the Son, and the equal love of the Son in giving Himself for our sins, would be of no avail were it not also for the love of the Spirit? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, and in all the things of God the flesh profiteth nothing.

This united interest in and love for the saved sinner by the eternal Godhead, in the distinctness of their own personality, is very wonderful! We hear God saying in the very beginning, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;” and, alas! how soon Adam fell from innocence and happiness to sinfulness and misery! But never do we learn what the “new creation” is until “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” was

accomplished; until He "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" had ascended up into heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost to "baptize believers into one body"—thus forming the church of the living God, where, according to Christ's promise, He is to abide for ever.

Then "the eternal purpose of God which He purposed in Christ Jesus" was revealed; and types and shadows, images, figures, and symbols of the Old Testament scriptures could be understood, and "the exceeding riches of His grace" be proclaimed! And, blessed be God, notwithstanding the apostacy of Christendom, the Holy Ghost still remains in and abides with the church, and is ready as ever "to guide us into all truth." May we listen to His teaching, be instructed by His wisdom, and no longer grieve Him by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

May this very bare outline of the teaching of the golden candlestick lead into deeper research and increased knowledge of this precious subject. It is prefatory, if the Lord please, to the further consideration of HIM who is "the Light of the world," and also of the place which His church occupies between the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the appearing of the bright and Morning Star, when the church will be completed, and we shall find ourselves "for ever with the Lord." "Amen: so let it be."

"O blessed Lord, unveil Thy glorious face!  
Shine, brightly shine, and bid all darkness flee!  
Shine till my soul, reflecting back Thy grace,  
Tells of the glory that abides in Thee.  
Shine thus upon me, Lord, till I depart  
To be with Thee for ever where Thou art."

## THE PASSOVER IN THE PROMISED LAND.

(Read Joshua v.)

THE circumstances connected with the passover *in the land* are replete with the deepest interest and spiritual import.

The wilderness was passed; the mighty power of God had dried up Jordan's floods; and through this new made way, the hosts of Israel passed triumphantly, and reached the promised land. The Lord of Hosts was with them, and nought could stay their progress. Their enemies were filled with fear, and Israel dared to pitch their tents facing the lofty walls of Jericho, and *there* they kept the passover.

The special teaching of this passover is connected with the place in which it was observed—*in the land*.

The land was Israel's promised inheritance. It was a goodly land flowing with milk and honey; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land where they would eat bread without scarceness, and should not lack anything.

The land *was theirs* long, long before. It was their proper portion which God had given them. Soon after their second passover, He led them to its borders, and commanded them to go up and take possession of it. They refused and rebelled; and instead of enjoying their rich inheritance, they reaped the bitter fruits of their unbelief and hardness of heart, by having to wander in the wilderness for nearly forty years.

What is *our* portion, beloved? Our gift of gifts from God Himself; our *one*, our great inheritance?

Is it not Christ HIMSELF, and all the fulness trea-

sured up in Him? Is not our home the heaven of heavens? Are we not blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus? Is HE not *ours*—God's own peculiar gift to us? Are not the treasures of His love, the riches of His grace, His wisdom, might, and power, all, all bestowed on us? Our *one* inheritance—our everlasting portion! Quite true, we have redemption through His blood; and heaven with all its matchless bliss is ours:

“But sweeter far than all besides,  
He, He Himself, is mine.”

“The Lord is my portion,” saith my soul: “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.”

Our blessed Jesus has entered into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us; and *we* are raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. HE is *there* as our forerunner, and *through Him* we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. By His own blood HE has opened a new and living way for *us* into the holiest, and by faith we may enter there, and drink of the river of His pleasures, and be satisfied *even now* with the fatness of His house.

As with Israel of old, a pathway was made for them right through the otherwise impassable floods of Jordan, so is it now with us. The true Ark—the Lord Jesus Himself—has gone down into the floods of death, and the waves and billows of righteous wrath and judgment have exhausted themselves on Him; and He Himself has become the *new* and *living way*, by which we draw near to God.

It is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the

vulture's eye hath not seen; a path that faith alone can tread; a path right through the hosts of wicked spirits; a path which leads to God Himself.

“There we on eagle wings would soar,  
Where time and sense are all no more;  
There heavenly joys our spirits greet,  
For glory crowns the mercy-seat.”

It is a blood-sprinkled path; and only blood-sprinkled souls can venture there: but washed from our sins in the precious blood of Christ, we may pass through the rent vail into the very holiest of all.

*There*, there is fulness of joy; *there*, there are pleasures for evermore; *there*, we can feast on the grapes of Eshcol, and taste even now the new wine of the kingdom; *there*, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and the fulness of Jesus flows forth to revive and satisfy our souls. His strength is made perfect in our weakness; His grace makes us more than conquerors; His comforts delight our souls; and we prove in very deed that we have a goodly heritage; and adoration and praise flow forth from our enraptured hearts.

But ah! what countless hindrances impede us in our upward flight. How constantly our souls are cleaving to the dust. The heavy chains of sin and unbelief get wound around our hearts, and though the way is open still, and Jesus waits to lead us in, yet oft indeed we yield to slothfulness—give up the fight—and settle down and try to be content without this blessed fellowship within the vail.

Like Israel of old, we cannot enter in because of unbelief. (Heb. iii. 19.) We can see their folly; but oh, what fools are *we*! We throw away this rich and

present portion which Christ has purchased for us, for fancied ease and self-indulgence; and is it ease? Oh, no; our souls get crushed with sin and care instead of joying in our God; we lose the promised rest, and drag along a weary life, and with blighted hopes and aching hearts learn out the utter vanity of all below, instead of so rejoicing in the Lord, that all compared to Him would become as dross.

Which shall it be, beloved? Oh, let us be wise, and gird our loins, and press with vigour on,

“On faith's strong eagle pinions rise,  
And force our passage to the skies,  
And scale the mount of God.”

We have an High Priest over the house of God; all things are ready and prepared for us to come and enjoy; and when our God and Father sees us gathered together unto Him in the holiest, worshipping Him in spirit and in truth, He can rest in His love, and joy over us with singing.

As soon as the Israelites had entered the land, “the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.”

So is it with us. When our souls, by faith, travel along the new and living way into the heavenly places, where our portion is, there must be a fresh circumcision of heart and ways. In the light of God's holy presence we discover things to be sin, which once, like others, we deemed not so. Thoughts, feelings, and habits, which have been previously indulged and excused, have to be yielded to the sharp two-edged sword of the Spirit.

We have already been circumcised by the circum-

cision of Christ (Col. ii.), cut off and separated *by God* from sin and the world, from Satan, and from judgment; but when we seek this place of nearness to God within the veil, there must be a *second* circumcision—a cutting off of the indulgence of the flesh, and a *personal* separation from the world and self unto God.

It is the light that makes manifest, and every increase in the knowledge or enjoyment of God necessitates increased separation of heart and life unto God.

This second circumcision is a deep reality. We must be thoroughly separated unto God, and striving to obey and please Him in *every thing*, if we would *now* enjoy our heavenly portion, and be filled and satisfied with Christ. If we are not prepared for this thorough surrender of ourselves to God, we must, like Israel, continue to wander in the wilderness, until we learn the wretchedness and emptiness of the things we prefer to Christ.

Surely “the time past” of our life should suffice us to have done our own will: then let “the rest of our time” be spent in following the Lord fully, and seeking to get possession of, and enjoy the blessings stored up for us in Christ.

After Israel’s circumcision, the Lord said unto Joshua, “This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.” And has He not joy when He can thus speak of *us*, His blood-bought children? How HE rejoices to see us walking in all holiness and godly sincerity before Him? Should we not seek to minister to this joy, to be a praise and not a reproach to Him, to let Him see of the travail of His soul in our fruitfulness to Him? Oh, may His voice be



heard by our souls, in all its thrilling power, as He says to us, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Though so rich in its associations, little is said about this third passover, but that little is connected with eating the old corn, and the fruit of the land; surely speaking to us of a deeper and richer enjoyment of Christ than is typified by eating the manna.

We have previously seen that the Lord's Supper is the spiritual answer to the passover in the wilderness; and does not the passover *in the land* still more emphatically present to us the same blessed feast?

In the greatness of God's grace, He permits us to keep it in the wilderness, but its *proper* place is in the land. It is a season of refreshment and blessing in the wilderness, but in the land it is a season of fulness of joy.

In the wilderness we are pressed with troubles, and need to disburden our souls, and pour out our complaints in our Father's ear; and He in His pity comes down to us in our low estate, spreads the table for us, revives and comforts us, and bids us "awhile forget our griefs and fears," and feast upon the heavenly Lamb. But when by faith in the precious blood, we are able to press within the veil, and gaze on Jesus *there*, and listen to His wondrous words, our hearts can *only* praise. We find that He is a full, a satisfying portion, and thus we get a little heaven below.

It has been well remarked that the Lord's Supper (our passover) should be a time of unmingled worship; each soul delighting itself in, and feasting on Christ, and pouring out its melodious songs to the Lord.

On the other hand, it is often asked, "Why is there so much confession and prayer, and so little praise at these seasons?"

Ah! beloved, the answer is plain enough. *We are in the wilderness, but should be in the land.* "They that worship the Father *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth;" and our spiritual power and tone must necessarily correspond with the state of our souls.

Beloved fellow-Christians, why should we let our portion slip? How long shall we be slack to go up and possess the goodly heritage the Lord has given us? We little think how much we are losing. We are not straitened in the Lord, the fault is all in ourselves. He is well able to lead us in, and give us the possession of our inheritance. Then let us bestir ourselves, and be in earnest in seeking after that present fellowship with, and enjoyment of Christ, which He delights to give.

What glorious seasons we might have at the Lord's table, if when we came together each soul were seated in the holiest! What melody and songs of joyous praise! No wandering hearts or eyes, no cold unmeaning looks, but each one wrapt and occupied with Christ, full of His love and satisfied with Him! Oh, how the treasures of His grace would be unlocked, the secrets of His heart told out, and what a full and overflowing cup of joy each one would have!

We should not have cold prayers or weary dissertations then. All would be full of freshness: our hymns would be sung with gladsome hearts; the Scriptures read would be as the voice of God Himself; our prayers and praises would be in the Spirit, the voice of one would utter the feelings of all; and the

ministry of the word would come from the living Jesus in the mighty power of His Spirit, according to His knowledge of our need.

Each child of God is responsible in this matter. When we are gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus, the power and blessing does not so much depend on the servants of the Lord who minister the truth, as on the individual condition of those present.

If most of us are in the wilderness, our worship will correspond with the place we are in; but if individually and collectively we are able to enter into our proper place within the veil, there will be a higher tone of spiritual worship, and far more power and unction in the ministry of the word.

Let us then humble ourselves on account of our personal share in the present low state of the Church of God, and seek grace from the Lord to amend our ways, and to start afresh in the power and energy of His Spirit.

God "giveth grace unto the humble;" and He is able and willing to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. May it be so, for His name and mercy's sake!

---

### THE MANNER OF GOD'S LOVE.

"God is love," and the manner of the Father's love is the pattern after which the children's should be fashioned. Christ is the expression of the Father's love, and Christ is our life. As we have learned Christ, we shall manifest Him; and to this end we have received the spirit "of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Manifesting these gifts, others will see

that we are disciples (learners), and have learned of the Father.

The world's love is selfish, for man has something to gain *from* the object of his love, and something *in* the object to draw out his affection. God's love is unselfish; from eternity He loved us, not because *we* were worthy of His love, but the reverse. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God *sent* His only begotten Son into the world, *that we might live* through Him." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation *for our sins*." God *gave up* His Son, and this giving up was not only planned in view of, but carried out in the midst of, the scorn and hatred of those for whom Christ was given up. (See Luke xxiii.)

Paul, in common with all who are born again, had this same love in him; and through keeping under the flesh, it shone out, so that he could say, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." In this he was known as one who had sat at Jesus' feet.

In 1 Cor. xiii. we have love as it was in Christ. It begins with *longsuffering*, and ends with *enduring all things*. To manifest the love of God, Christ came down—"the Word was made flesh."

The first act of love is a *coming down*, an emptying of itself, to bless its object. The life of Jesus from the manger to the cross was just this; and we as disciples have to learn of Him.

The world shows its love in a patronizing way, *without stooping*; "but it shall not be so among you," is the language of our blessed Lord: like Him *we must*

*stoop*. Even so did Paul put his own sentence upon all that gave him position among men: "What things were gain *to me*, those I counted loss for Christ." That is, whatever made anything of *Paul* as a man in the flesh, he counted so much loss, for love to the One who had stooped so low for him.

While man's love seeks to gratify itself, God's love seeks the good of its object. In *all His ways* towards us, our Father acts for our good. Earthly fathers may chasten their children *for their own pleasure*; but our heavenly Father chastens us *for our profit*. This gives its character to the chastening of the Lord. It is not that He delights in chastening, but *we need it*.

Just as an earthly parent foresees the pain and sorrow that unchecked evil in his child would cause, and chastens, though he feels, as it were, every stroke he lays on his child: so does our Father know that what *He* cannot endure can only cause grief to us, and therefore *in love* He chastens us.

God seeks not His own pleasure but our profit, even in correcting what His love cannot bear in one of *His own*. So David says, "It is *good for me* that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." And having learned the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God," he adds, "The law of *thy mouth* is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." (Psalm cxix. 71, 72.)

The school of God was no easy one to David. As we behold him lying on his face, pleading for the life of his helpless babe, we know it must have been *hard* to part with that babe. But as we look on and see "the end of the Lord," we can say, All was well.

Beloved bereaved child of God, our Father knows

all; "He knoweth our frame," and so He says, "No chastening *for the present* seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." David's exercise we have in Psalm li. On his face before the One against whom he had sinned, those precious utterances rise up to refresh the heart of God.

Thus, beloved, must our way be toward one another, if it is to be after God's pattern. If, in dealing with an erring brother, *we seek our own*, that moment we cease to manifest the love of God. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, *restore* such a one *in the spirit of meekness*; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

There is no time when Satan is so busy in an assembly of saints, as when they are dealing with a brother's sin; for we are so apt to forget that we are dealing with what, as to its root, is *in us*, and, but for grace, would have been manifested *by us*, after a like fashion.

When discipline is to be exercised at Corinth (1 Cor. v.), it is *not* in the assembly's name, but "*in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

It is *His* judgment, *not ours*. The remembrance of this will keep us lowly; for the One who has judged our brother is present to judge *us*, if need be. So when Ananias and Sapphira fell under the judgment of the Lord, "great fear" came on all the church.

Mark also that it was in love this act was to be carried out at Corinth, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" for love seeks not its own, but its object's blessing. So we find that when it can be done, there is another acting toward this same one: "I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him." (2 Cor. ii. 6-8.)

How grievously have we failed here; how little manifestation among saints now of this *love*. Alas! what seeking *our own things*, what care for *our own consistency*! What utter want of that love which "seeketh not her own!" What biting and devouring of one another! What volumes of words—and all for what? Simply, if the truth must be told, to maintain *our own consistency* in the past, and to justify *our own position* in the present. Oh, beloved, the church of God is one; we cannot separate ourselves one from another, and the sin of the church of God is, *seeking its own*.

May the Lord grant abundance of grace, as He did to the Corinthians: "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort." (2 Cor. vii. 11.) Oh that *love*, love in the Spirit, might lead us to see one another *in Christ*. Then should we come down from the pedestal of *self*, and begird ourselves with the towel to wash one another's feet, according to the grace of Him who, *though He was rich*, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. So, with loins girt and lamps burning, might we go forth, as *one united band*, to meet our coming Lord.

"Waiting and ready may we be,  
As those who long their Lord to see."

---

### REDEMPTION, RECONCILIATION, REMISSION.

THESE scriptural terms, though apparently of similar application, have each a special signification and value, and together form a blessed compendium of divine truth, showing forth the ground of a believer's acceptance through that one perfect offering of Jesus on the cross.

The Greek word for redemption (*apolutrosis*) implies a releasing upon the ground of a ransom, or otherwise. This word appears in Luke xxi. 28; Romans iii. 24, viii. 23; 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. i. 7, 14, iv. 30; Col. i. 14; Heb. ix. 15, xi. 35.

Reconciliation (*katallagee*) means "a change from enmity to friendship." We find it in Romans v. 11 (translated atonement, but it should be *reconciliation*), xi. 15; 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

Remission (*aphesis*) signifies a letting go, freeing, forgiveness, as in the year of jubilee (Lev. xxv.), in which all debts were to be forgiven. It is used seventeen times in the New Testament, and is rendered *remission* in Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark i. 4; Luke i. 77, iii. 3, xxiv. 27; Acts ii. 38, x. 43; Heb. ix. 22, x. 18; *forgiveness* in Mark iii. 29; Acts v. 31, xiii. 38, xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14. The word translated *remission* in Rom. iii. 25 is *paresis*, not *aphesis*, and should be translated "passing by;" that is, a passing by of sins, a pretermission.

Such are some of the words used in Scripture to convey the blessings of redemption through the cross, blood-shedding, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

Thus we have for our portion as saved sinners *reconciliation*, which assures us that God has brought us from enmity into a state of friendship; that His anger has passed away for ever, our great Substitute having borne on the cross all the vials of God's wrath for His people, that they may know nothing of it. *Redemption* tells us that God has released us from the bondage of sin and Satan, the heavy *debt* having been paid by our Substitute. *Remission* brings before us the forgiveness and pardon of sin.

Although these words convey peculiar and distinctive ideas, yet they all serve to show forth—however variously, yet unitedly and harmoniously—the great doctrine of salvation by Christ, and form a glorious and divine arch of truth, speaking peace and liberty, joy and assurance, to every believing soul. May the Lord so give us to understand His word, that our hearts may be filled with adoring thankfulness, and our peace flow as a river. ✓



“BLESSED WITH ALL SPIRITUAL  
BLESSINGS.”

How wonderful is God's salvation! Well does Scripture call it a “*great salvation*,”—great in the Divine conception of what is truly great. Infinite love devised it, infinite wisdom planned it, infinite power accomplished it, infinite grace is displayed in it, an infinite price was paid for it, and, as the result, *infinite blessing* rests on those who least deserve it.

God's grace has provided for those who, by nature, were condemned to eternal wrath, a full forgiveness of all sin. That blots out all the dark past. The debts incurred are struck off the books: “There is no condemnation.” If God had done no more than this, He had yet done what none but a God of infinite compassion would have done. But He does not stop here. Love like His (and love is stronger and deeper than mere pity) cannot be content with merely reinstating its object in the negative position of “no condemnation,” great and undeserved as that blessing is. He goes further, for grace “much more abounds.” Now He proceeds to load with benefits the pardoned culprit. He gives him a position of sevenfold blessing.

1. Having been by nature in the kingdom of darkness, he is now made a *subject* in the kingdom of glory. He is “translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.” (Col. i.)

2. He is made a “*fellow-citizen* with the saints” in the heavenly metropolis, and shall inhabit the mansions which Christ has declared are therein.

3. He is brought still nearer: he is made a member

of the household of God (Eph. ii.); he is brought as a *servant* into the very house of God; he is an attendant at the court, and is nearest the throne of the King.

4. But more: he is not a servant only; he is made a *guest* at the table of Christ (Rev. iii. 20; Cant. ii. 4) to sit and eat in His presence.

5. Can it be possible that he is more than this? One who sinned as he did, to be made subject, citizen, servant, guest! "It is enough," is the voice of the grateful heart. But the thoughts of God are higher than our thoughts. He makes the rebel His own beloved *son*. The relationships before mentioned might be broken; this never can. The subject might be expatriated, the citizen banished, the servant dismissed, the guest dishonoured, but the son is a son for ever. "The son abideth ever." (John viii. 35.) Oh, amazing love! Not only do we, as says John, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called* the sons of God," but (as he adds) "*now are we the sons of God*,"—born sons, begotten again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And now, once His sons, we can never cease to be so.

Moreover, it is not a name only, but every privilege of sonship is ours, and that for ever. Access, liberty, boldness in the Father's presence, a Father's smile, a Father's tender care, a Father's love unquenchable—all, all is ours, and ours already; for He has already given us the spirit of sonship, by which, though yet bodily absent from Him, we may cry, "Abba, Father." Angels may fill all the other positions, but here we are raised above them! Of us it is written: "Now are we the sons of God;" but "to which of the angels said

He at any time, Thou art my son?” What! is it possible? man made higher—brought into a position of greater blessing—than the pure and holy angels! Yes, marvel, and wonder, and worship, as well we may—angels are ministers sent forth to minister for us, the sons of God, the heirs of salvation. Truly, in this respect also, we are in an atmosphere of superlative wonder and glory.

6. And yet there is more! Ah, we need large hearts and expanded understandings to take in the character of God, as revealed in His dealings with us. Let us remember that many a son is not an heir, but must work for his bread, while the eldest alone is provided for by his father’s will.

Not so with the pardoned sinner. “If a son, then an heir.” “If children, then heirs, heirs of God.” “Begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” Oh, what a rich inheritance! and, thanks be to God, unlike earthly possessions, it cannot be lost to us. It is “reserved in heaven.” And we cannot be lost to it, for we are “kept by the power of God” till we enter upon possession. But yet there is an extreme of blessing in this respect also, for God will do nothing with reserve. We are made not only heirs of God, but also “joint-heirs with Christ.” This is the climax of glory.

The eldest son in this case gets nothing apart from the younger. He will take nothing that He will not share with us. “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them.”

High—high He has risen to His Father’s throne.

The once crucified One, made lower than angels for a little while, and trampled in the dust and degradation of Golgotha beneath the feet of men, has been raised from the dead, and God hath highly exalted Him, yea, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" and given "Him to be head over all things." (Eph. i. 21.) How? in what manner? with what accompaniment? Alone? No. Spread forth the strong wings of your spiritual intelligence, and soar to the height of this amazing, transcendent revelation. God has made Christ to be all this "to the church, which is His body;" that is, it is as Head to the church, and therefore as in common with the saints, that He occupies this majestic glory and honour.

"Co-heirs with Christ!" So when the saint looks upward from that glory, there is nought above his head but the Divine Majesty itself. When he looks down, if by this means at least he may measure his blessings, he finds himself "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion." When he turns him round, lost in wonder and amaze, to search what exceeding power has brought him to so high a dignity, he finds beside him, as his companion and joint-heir, that same adored, beloved, and worshipped One, who, though heir of all things, and named above every name, is yet "not ashamed," when speaking of His redeemed ones, "to call them brethren."

7. These are high thoughts. Ascending into this region of revelation, one feels like the traveller treading the pure snows, and breathing the rare atmosphere of some exceedingly lofty mountain, where the won-

ders that surround him on every side are so sublime and overpowering that words fail, and imagination is distanced and overcome by the supreme greatness of reality. Yet, let us seek to reach the summit, or at least to gaze upon it, for only by the power of the Holy Ghost can we be raised into the enjoyment of these truths.

We are made “joint-heirs with Christ,” as we have been considering. This touches upon and hints at the great truth from which, indeed, that relationship and all others flow, and on which they are dependent, viz., that Christ and we are ONE. “*We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.*” (Eph. v. 30.) “At that day ye shall know that . . . *ye are in me, and I in you.*” (John xiv. 20.) “*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.*” (John xvii. 23.) There is association in six degrees of nearness, as we have already seen; *now* we have what exceeds association even of the closest kind—ONE-NESS; the oneness of Christ and His saints—a oneness compared to that of the natural body, composed of Head and members; so that each believer is entitled to look upon himself no longer as a separate being merely, but as a component part of a whole, actuated and indwelt by the same Spirit and the same life which animates the Head and all the members; and this united whole is in 1 Cor. xii. designated “*the Christ.*” The Christ, who shall inherit the high glories we have referred to, will be constituted of the blessed Lord Himself as the Head and all the saints as members.

“Oh teach us, Lord, to know and own  
 This wondrous mystery,  
 That Thou with us art truly one,  
 And we are one with Thee.”

Hence we have the explanation of those otherwise mysterious words, "IN CHRIST," which are of so frequent occurrence: "Chosen *in Him*" (Eph. i. 4); "Accepted *in the Beloved*" (Eph. i. 6); words which indicate that the full sea and flood of love that flows from God's heart, and surrounds the Son of His love, encompasses us also, and that, not as *with Him* merely, but as part of Him—*in Him*. "Thou hast loved *them* as thou hast loved *me*." (John xvii. 23.) Again, "*In whom* also we have obtained an inheritance." (Eph. i. 11.) God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*." (Eph. ii. 6.) In short, whatever position of glory and dignity God will give to His Son as a glorified man, that same position, and nothing lower, will He give also to His children, made one with their risen Head.

But these texts reveal only the results of union. The union itself is beyond the power of words to unfold. The figure in the Old Testament, in which Jerusalem is represented as *married* to Jehovah, is wonderful; and yet this closest of all earthly ties does not come near the truth revealed to us: "*We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones*." The wife may be divorced, or may treacherously depart from her husband; but a man's limbs are himself—apart from him they have no existence, and without one, even the least of them, he is imperfect. "No man ever yet hated his flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the Church*."

But even this figure is exceeded in the words used by the Lord in addressing the Father, "That they may be *one, even as we are one*." Again must we seek to rise, in the power of the Spirit, to that which is infi-

nite and divine. The union between you, believer, and your Lord, is compared to that between the Father and the Son. In what degree the Father and the Son are one, in that degree are Christ and you. As the Divine Son is, in the perfection of Deity, one with the Father, so are His saints, whom He has redeemed, one with the man Christ Jesus, in the perfection of His risen and exalted humanity.

This marvellous revelation—may God enlarge and enlighten our spiritual intelligence to receive it—will give us some idea of the perfection to which He has raised us in order that this union might be possible.

In the union of the Father and the Son, there is, speaking after the manner of men, a perfect moral consistency between them. So, unless all sin had been utterly and absolutely put away—unless, in the language of the Holy Spirit, Christ had “*perfected for ever* them that are sanctified,” it would be morally impossible there could be this oneness between Christ and His saints. Oh, think of this, my brother. You and Christ one, and that *consistently*! The blackest sinner on earth, when washed from his sins by the blood of Christ, is made so perfectly clean, so spotless, so stainless, so perfect, that even Christ, “the holy, harmless, undefiled,” can take him into oneness with Himself. “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” (Cant. iv. 7.)

We cannot enlarge upon this wondrous theme. We must leave it where Scripture leaves it—revealed, but unexplained; stated, but not reduced to the level of man’s unaided understanding; and can only pray with the apostle, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, that we may know the riches of this

glory, and the *exceeding* greatness of that power by which such a union, of the highest being in the universe of God with the lowest and guiltiest of His creatures, has been accomplished.

Oh, fellow-believers, what can we say to these things? Human language is utterly powerless to tell forth their glory and blessedness. Let our hearts bow, as we study them, in unutterable wonder and worship.

Now, we can understand how it is that the church is called "the *fulness* of Him that *filleth all in all.*" (Eph. i. 23.) For, when all creation's noblest intelligences, when all principalities and powers in heavenly places shall witness the wonder of this union—when they who had known His glory of old, and had always rejoiced in His light, and who had seen how men treated Him on earth, shall presently behold these murderers washed, forgiven, sanctified, and raised to a higher glory than their own, even to this excellent and supreme delight of being eternally one with their exalted Lord, *then* will His highest glory be revealed, *then* will heaven's loudest note be sounded, and *then* we shall be manifested, to the praise of His glory, monuments, before the wondering universe, of the triumph of super-abounding grace, and of the depths of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

When Paul sits down to tell the Ephesian Christians of these mysteries of Divine love, the first line he pens is an outburst of the spontaneous worship of his overflowing heart: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." There is no reserve on the part of God. There is no limit, no measure, no degree in the riches of the glory with



which God enriches His children. “ALL things are yours.” (1 Cor. iii. 21.)

Thus have we feebly traced the ascending scale of blessing till the step has almost faltered, and the eye become dim amid the rare heights and dazzling glories of the revelation of the believer’s standing in Christ. We have read of unbounded and unfathomed grace in God, bestowed upon the guiltiest of His fallen creatures; of love in Jesus “that passeth knowledge,” of riches unsearchable, of glories infinite, of power almighty, of wisdom divine; and we have seen ourselves the objects upon whom all this was poured out in unmeasured fulness and riches—for whom every attribute of the divine mind and heart were put into exercise, and in whom God will find His highest praise eternally.

And what shall we say more? for time and space would fail us to consider the abundance of our present privileges, and the brightness of our future hope. Otherwise we might recall to mind how by faith we may make all this glory our own; how we may draw unlimited supplies from the fulness of Christ from day to day; how amid many temporal trials we may have “peace that *passeth all understanding*; how amid many sorrows we may “rejoice with joy *unspeakable and full of glory*;” how amid much weakness we may be “strengthened with *all* might according to God’s glorious power;” how amid much perplexity we may be “*filled* with wisdom and spiritual understanding;” how, notwithstanding all demands upon our time, and strength, and means, “God is able to make *all* grace *abound* toward us, that we, *always* having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may *abound* to *every* good work;” how

we can "do *all* things through Christ which strengthen us;" how for ministry we may be "enriched in utterance and in *all* knowledge;" how at all times we may enjoy the fellowship even of the Most High and Holy One; how Christ will "*never* leave us nor forsake us;" how our bodies are the temple of the Spirit of God, and our hearts the dwelling-place of Christ; how "our God shall supply *all* our need, according to *His riches* in glory by Christ Jesus;" how our "hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, unto *all riches* of the *full* assurance of understanding;" how "*all* things work together for our good;" how for our conflict the *whole* armour of God is provided for us; how God will freely give us *all* things which we ask in faith; how in all afflictions we are *more* than conquerors through Him who loved us; and how, "being *enriched* in *every* thing unto *all* bountifulness," *all* that God has being ours, we may live in the daily realization that every need is fully met, and every want supplied, and that our full cup of blessing from the hand of God runs over, and ever will run over, for all who only lift it up for God to fill it, even till the day when want and need shall be no more, and all tears shall be wiped away, and conflicts cease—when the full rest of God shall be enjoyed by every weary heart, and endless, endless joys spring up in the free, unburdened souls of all the heirs of that inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and whose beauty fadeth not away. That day may be at hand for all of us; "for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come," and we shall see His face, wake up in His glorious likeness, and be for ever satisfied.

But now as to the application of all this truth. To

what end has our Father made known to us the extreme greatness of our blessings, and the boundless expanse of infinite wonders amid which we move? For what purpose, but that, by knowing these things, we may be transformed into fitness for the full enjoyment of them, and moulded into a spiritual character that corresponds with them. None of these supreme and excellent benefits are to be obtained by any fitness on our part as a qualification for their reception. They are all freely given us out of the fulness of unmerited grace, in order that by them we may become capable of the eternal enjoyment of the friendship and fellowship of God.

When the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of grace is fully known, then shall we be what we should be. Till then, and in proportion as we by faith lay hold in our hearts and spiritual understandings of these rich gifts, we shall be changed into the Divine “image from glory to glory.” *Now*, and not then—*this present time*, and not the future—is the season in which these great realities are to exercise their transforming power upon us.

When all hindrances are removed, and “the old man with his deeds” is no longer present to harass and hinder, the effect upon each redeemed soul will be so great, as to rouse to their highest burst the songs of heaven’s praise to God. And if such, in a little while, shall be the effect of this manifold grace of God, ought not a most marked and real effect to be produced even now upon the hearts and lives of those who are the subjects of it?

---

## ABIDING IN CHRIST.

THE direct result of receiving the precious truths which the Lord has revealed to us should be *communion with God*, flowing from complete harmony and agreement of heart and mind with Him. Prayer, strictly speaking, is not communion, though often included in it. Prayer is the telling out of our wants to God; and, as those who from moment to moment depend on His sustaining bounty and grace, we should "continue instant in prayer;" but *communion* is something more. It implies mutual communications between the Father and the child, brought near one to the other through that perfect work of Christ, which has put away all sin.

Upon the realization of this privilege all else will hang. It is the mainspring of living Christianity. Weak in this respect, the whole man is weak, and failure is the natural consequence. Strong here, we cannot fail in external behaviour. Oh, then, for a higher tone, and greater power, and deeper heart-energy, in our secret communings with God!

What, then, is the man who lives in fellowship with the Father and the Son? He is one who realizes that he is more nearly related to God than to any one on earth; and who, having "crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," counts not that he has any existence except as "*a man in Christ*." He is one who believes in the perfection of communion hereafter with the highest and holiest of beings, and yet, who by faith is able to enjoy this marvellous privilege here on earth now, in the power of the Spirit. He is one who is content to let all other friendships cease, dear

though they be, rather than let the slightest shade interrupt his fellowship with God.

He is one who, like Enoch and Noah, "walks with God;" one who holds intercourse with Him, like Abraham and Moses, "as a man speaketh with his friend;" one who, like David, can say, "one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." He is one who "meditates in His law day and night;" one who can speak to Him with holy confidence while he stands in the market, hurries along the street, sits toiling at his desk, or mixes with his fellow-men; and yet one who often escapes from the buzz and hum of life, to meditate like Isaac alone, or steals an hour from the night to converse with Him whose eye never slumbers, and whose eyelids never sleep.

He is one who, though busily and intently occupied, in thought still constantly realizes the presence of God; who does not merely bring his cares and burdens to Christ, but who *dwells in Christ*, according to His word. He is one who opens his heart, not merely that Christ may pay a transient visit, but that He may dwell there at all times, and make it His abode and throne.

He is one who lives on Christ as the support and joy of his soul, even as he eats and drinks for the support of his body; he would rather lose his "necessary food" than allow an interruption of his communion with Him. He is, therefore, a happier man than any of his fellows, for he is daily in the enjoyment of the highest joy—the joy of loving and being loved most

purely and intensely. He rejoices in the Lord *always* with *exceeding* joy—yea, “with joy *unspeakable* and *full of glory*.” He is not morose, or sour, or melancholy. He is never lonely, for he is never alone. Living in the pure atmosphere of the Holiest of Holies as his dwelling-place, he “sinneth not.” Dwelling in the presence and company of Christ from morning till evening, his manners and behaviour and the fashion of his face become moulded like His, and he is “changed into the same image, from glory to glory.”

Then, also, the same mind which was in Christ becomes his, and his walk is a witness that he is “filled with the fruits of righteousness”—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” He never thirsts, for he is always drinking from an unfailing fount.

He pines not, nor pants for worldly society and pleasures, for he is always in the full enjoyment of unseen joys, and the delights of the highest companionship. Yet he goes out into the world as a bold, faithful, and loving witness for his Redeemer, and by his graciousness to those around him, seeks to win their ear to God’s sweet message of forgiveness. He cannot shut himself in from the perishing world around: his burning love for Christ impels him forward into earth’s darkest places to lift up the banner of the Cross.

He is not understood by those who are not in his secret; he is little esteemed where his Master is not honoured; sometimes he is persecuted like Him, but his eye is on the smile that men cannot see, and his ear attentive only to the approval of the voice that men cannot hear. Thus he presses on—strong, amid everything to weaken; happy, amid everything to depress; and daily more than conqueror through Him that loves him.

## THE HOUSE OF WISDOM AND HER SEVEN PILLARS.

“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.”

PROVERBS ix. 1.

WHAT—who—is Wisdom? We have the answer to this question in 1 Cor. i.—“Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

If wisdom is out of Christ it is no wisdom. Every thing of wisdom is centred in Jesus. “In HIM dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” The blessed Jesus is the treasury of all wisdom and knowledge. If you get wisdom in Jesus, you get *treasure*. You may have only a little wisdom, still it is treasure—there is reality in it.

Mark what is said of Christ: “Wisdom hath builded her house”—“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” Christ builds the house and hews out the seven pillars.

What are the seven pillars? The great attributes of God displayed in the house that Christ builds. Saved persons are the stones of the house, as Peter says, “Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house.” God is not only saving men and women, He is saving them for a building—for glory, that He may have them for ever, as beautiful stones hewn out to shew His character—to display Himself. We may be shewing out God very feebly, very dimly, very partially, but if we are walking with God we shall display Him more and more.

One pillar is the *love* of God. Christ came to hew out that pillar. On that firm mighty pillar rests the

house. No one knew what love meant till God shewed His love. We may talk and think of love, but it is not love except we see God's love. Love is the affections of the heart set on something valueless, worthless, altogether unattractive; that is God's love.

We cannot love first-hand, we can only love second-hand: we only love something that we have a selfish desire for. God loves the unattractive sinner in his sins, the ungodly in his ungodliness, the hater in his hatred of Him, the weak in his weakness, the vile in his vileness. What is there in such to attract God? Nothing; yet God loves. "We love Him because He first loved us." Oh, trust the love of God, though you do not, cannot find anything worthy of it in yourself. Though you are worthless God loves you, though you are filthy God loves you—that is love. We may feel pity for a beggar, we cannot feel love. God loves the beggar on his dunghill, in his filthiness and wretchedness.

Remember this central pillar, the love of God. How does God love? He loves us as He loves His Son, the lovely One, the comely obedient One, the One who is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person; that is the measure of His love.

God's love cannot be bought. If you could pile this earth full of gold, it would not purchase an atom of the love of God. If you give your body to be burned for the truth of God, if you bestow all your goods to feed the poor, you cannot purchase a particle of God's love. It is full, free, spontaneous, and eternal, flowing out of His heart unrestrained. He loves on and on, till He places the sinner saved in the glory. *Then* He will have a reason for loving us, because we shall be like



Jesus; but He loves us first in our sins, unwashed, uncleaned.

Those who have grown most in the knowledge of God, who have been longest in the enjoyment of His love, know more and more how dependent we are on that love, and how deeply we are indebted to it. Our love compared with God's love is like a little drop compared with the mighty ocean. You may add a drop to the ocean, it will not swell it in the least; you may take a drop out, it will not look the less. We cannot add to the ocean of God's love by our little drop, or take away from it; it flows on vast, wide, eternal as ever, undiminished, undrained, not a bit more full, yet still full, ever full and unbounded.

Jesus is the fulness of God's love. Look at Jesus, and we see how God so loved us, that He put His blessed Son instead of us on the tree. He has dealt with Jesus on account of our sins, and therefore He will not deal with us. "He has laid help upon One that is mighty." Think of that, and do not listen to the clamours of your heart, the clamorous woman always crying out, uttering her voice, always telling falsehoods of herself and God. Listen to the cry of wisdom, telling you she has hewn out her seven pillars.

What is the next pillar? *Mercy*. The mercy, the grace of God is without beginning or end, it is "from everlasting to everlasting." "His mercy endureth for ever." O the mercy of God! God crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercies. He crowneth the year with His goodness, and His paths drop fatness.

As soon as we come into the great temple of God which Jesus has built, we see the pillar of mercy. It reaches to heaven, and it is founded deep in death.

God's mercy extends deep into the depths which our sins deserve, and it is as high as the heavens. Can we get to the top of this pillar? It reaches to the throne of God. Can we get to the bottom of it? It reaches down into the depths. Can we get beyond it? No; we cannot measure or span it, it is infinite. From everlasting is this mercy of God in Christ, mercy to sinners in their evil, their ungodliness, their vileness. Thus love and mercy are two pillars of this glorious house that wisdom has built.

A third pillar is *truth*. What would mercy and love be without truth? The truth of God cannot fail, it is like Himself, eternal. He is a God of truth and faithfulness; He is faithful and true.

*Righteousness* is a fourth pillar. God is faithful and righteous in His forgiveness of sins—remember that. God is not only merciful but righteous in pardoning a sinner. He challenges all the gods of the earth,—Can you find a *just* God and a Saviour beside me? He challenges you that trust in idols, in your own works, in the false woman—Have you a *just* God and a *Saviour*? Can you put grace and truth together?

God has made grace and truth meet in Christ. God's greatest seal to the glory of His righteousness is that He forgives sins. He is not more manifestly righteous in condemning than He is in pardoning, because He pardons on the ground of having punished the sinner in Christ; having avenged Himself on the sinner in His blessed Son; having poured out His indignation and wrath on Christ on behalf of the sinner. This is the righteousness of God; another firm block in this glorious building, another pillar of substance, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

God is righteous to forgive, to forget, to pardon, to save.

Another pillar is *holiness*. This mighty attribute of God is what the sinner dreads most—what we as un-saved ones greatly shrink from. It is written, “Our God is a consuming fire.” “*Our* God,” not the God of the unbeliever. The unbeliever fancies he has a God who will have mercy on him, without justice or holiness, who can pardon without being holy.

See how the fire of God’s wrath burnt up the blessed sacrifice, JESUS, like the sin-offering burnt to ashes outside the camp. Jesus was taken outside Jerusalem; He died on the cross of wood; He sunk under the fire of God’s holiness. “My throat is dried,” He said; “Mine eye is consumed because of grief.” Though He was holy and spotless, He was bearing sin, and therefore He felt God to be a consuming fire. There we see God’s inexorable holiness. He can by no means clear the guilty; He would cease to be God if He did; He must judge and condemn, and let the fire consume His blessed Son that He may clear and absolve us.

God knows what sin is; we do not. We feel a little of its effects; God knows it in the kernel. We cannot see it in its root, in its malignity, as God does. “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.” He looks into the depths and finds out the spring of iniquity; no one else can do this. God is the holy God. He made Jesus “to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” If you do not view Christ under the wrath of God for you, you will have to know God as a consuming fire in hell.

The cherubim say, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” The seraphim cry to one another, “Holy,

holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." It is the joy of God's people in heaven to know that He is holy. There holiness is a pillar of the beautiful house.

Another pillar is *peace*. "Having made peace by the blood of His cross;" "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What a blessed thing for the sinner to hear of peace; no question with God; all settled by Jesus in His precious blood. I can rest under the blood of Jesus and be at peace. God hath procured this peace for our sakes and for Himself. He could not be at peace with the sinner without Christ, and He wanted for His own rest of heart to have sinners at peace with Him, and so He gave His blessed Son to make peace.

The peace of God passeth all understanding. It comes into the guilty heart, and spreads itself over that heart, and keeps it in perfect peace. The devil cannot touch it. This is peace which cannot be added to—God's peace. What a glorious pillar! Jesus is the peace of God.

The seventh pillar is *power*. Christ is the power of God. What would all the blessings of God be worth if there were not power to accomplish them, and power to sustain them? How could we get them if God were not the God of power? His name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God." The last pillar of the seven is a great pillar. The building begins with love, and ends with power. What do we want more?

"I am the door," says Jesus, the door into the house of glory and wisdom filled with blessings. The door is open to all. If you walk in at the open door, what will you find? A table spread. Jesus invites you to partake, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the

wine which I have mingled." "I am the bread of life"—the bread of God which cometh down from heaven to sustain the soul. And there is wine there to make the heart glad, full of joy, the precious blood of Christ—true meat and true drink.

The saved sinner is at peace with God, all questions are settled for ever, and he can sit down. If persons are at war with one another, they do not sit down together, they never enter one another's houses to partake of a meal; but the sinner at peace with God can sit down to eat and drink. Jesus has prepared the feast. He invites you to come in and partake, and there you will be at rest.

When we are in the house, we may look round and see the seven pillars, and say, I am safe; the devil cannot enter here; I am surrounded with power, righteousness, holiness, peace, truth, mercy, and love; I am at home; I am safe, for Christ is here. Safe for eternity, safe for glory, safe against the coming of the Lord Jesus; as safe as if already with Him. All is done! all is finished! Wisdom's house hath received Wisdom's child! God is glorified, and I am safe and happy for ever!

---

## THE THREE STAGES OF PEACE.

### PHILIPPIANS iv.

By a comparison of this chapter with Romans v., it will become evident that there are three stages in the full enjoyment of divine peace.

Rom. v. 1, shows that "peace WITH God" is the consequence of being justified by faith.

Phil. iv. 6, 7, shows that the "peace OF God" is the consequence of casting all our care upon God, and

by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known our requests unto God. Then the peace of God, *i.e.*, the very peace that God Himself has, and which passeth all understanding, shall guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. No care nor anxiety will perturb us. We shall feel that He who loves us orders all things, that nothing can happen contrary to His blessed will; and if we know He sitteth upon the water-floods undisturbed, our confidence in Him will be simple and perfect.

But then Phil. iv. 8, 9, reveals that there is something beyond even all this peace *with* God and peace *of* God. This is the immediate presence of "*the God of peace*" *Himself* with the obedient Christian. What he has learned, and received, and heard, he is instructed to "do." Then the promise is: "The God of peace shall be with you."

It is essential carefully to distinguish between these three stages in this divine peace. The first is obtained by faith in Christ. The second is secured, and sustained in possession, by prayer to God. And the third is guaranteed as an encouragement to the one whose path is according to the word of God.

If these three are at all confounded, grave error in doctrine will be the result; the inspired specific for distinct and special blessing will be ill apprehended, and much of what God loves to give, even His own blessed company, will fail to be enjoyed, because the way marked out by the Holy Ghost to obtain such and such a mercy is not pursued. On the other hand, if the instruction given by the Lord is seen in its precision, and heeded, what a state of happy fellowship with Him is the result.

It is singular to observe the close correspondence of thought here, with the words of our Lord in John xiv. 23. There the Lord Jesus states, that the abiding of the Father and of the Son, with a disciple of His, is connected with that individual's "keeping His words." This view does not at all contravene the fact, that the great manifestation of the love of God is in the gift of Christ, according to 1 John iv. But the manifestation *here* spoken of is something special and additional. Not unfrequently the order is inverted, and souls are found looking for a "manifestation" in themselves, ere they have gazed with satisfaction and delight on that great proof of God's love in the mission of His Son. And hence they wait in vain. For God cannot grant the special favour which is dependent on holy walking, ere His grace is beheld; otherwise the eye would be turned away from Christ.

The marked difference between these stages in peace, the different methods by which each is obtained, and the advance being threefold, discloses how solicitous God is that we should be FILLED with peace: yea how He wants our company. Ere the Lord came at all, ere the earth was made, He says His delights were with the sons of men. Now that He has made us so comely in His sight, no wonder that He loves to consort with us.

May we so know Him and His perfect ways as to enjoy Him, cling to Him, rejoice in Him, work for Him under His eye, and wait for His personal return to receive us for ever to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

NOTE.—The expression "God of peace," occurs seven times in the pages of the New Testament. It would be interesting to glance at the divergences of thought, and at the connexion in the context of each of these seven places. But this might be a proper subject for another paper.

## THE "BEGOTTEN OF GOD." WHO IS HE?

WE would call the attention of the children of God to what the Spirit brings before us in the first epistle of John as to the necessary effects of regeneration; and amidst the abundant profession of the present day, may we have our hearts exercised while contemplating the testing declarations of this most important epistle.

From it we but too plainly gather, that during the closing years of the first century the reality of the state of things manifested in the Acts had given place to the hollowness of a professing Christianity that lacked the proofs required by Him who sent His apostles, not with a gospel in word, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. How often does the beloved apostle say, "*If we say;*" and arouse the sleeping conscience by the solemn word "LIAR." The epistle is specially given as furnishing tests whereby the false and the true may be distinguished, so that the children of God and the children of the devil may be manifested.

There are seven separate results given to us in this epistle as characterizing those who are begotten of God.\*

\* *οἱ γεγεννημένοι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*—"those who are begotten of God." The force of the preposition must not be lost sight of, implying the source *out of* which the relationship sprang. It may be well to state that the expressions "born of God" and "begotten of God" are only variations in our translation for the same Greek words. I have purposely used the word "begotten" instead of "born," as more expressive, and as directing our hearts to the cognate expression "Only-begotten," made use of by John to denote the relation of the Son to the Father prior to the incarnation. In resurrection He is invari-



These we will take up in the order in which they are stated. If we are thereby led to more *humility* in profession, and to more *reality* in walk, our consideration of this glorious subject will not have been in vain. And what subject more worthy our consideration than that which bears upon our relation to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has said, that unless we are "born again," we cannot see the kingdom of God?

The seven characteristics are as follows:—

1st. *He doeth righteousness.* In chap. ii. 29 we read: "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him."

God is essentially the righteous One, in direct contrast with the unrighteousness all around,—the One who only is right, and who has declared that He will lay down His righteousness for a plummet (Isa. xxviii. 17; not "to the plummet," as in our translation); to which standard must everything be brought; for God can accept no lower.

God can only beget into His own image, and hence a child of God is not one who is merely *imputatively* righteous in the substitutionary work of the blessed Lord, but who is also *impartatively* righteous in the begetting power of the incorruptible seed imparted in the regeneration of the Holy Ghost.

We have learned to speak of imputed righteousness often, until many seem almost to have made it the ultimate point in their theology. God in His infinite mercy imputeth a judicial righteousness to the sinner

ably presented as the First-begotten, or the First-born, as standing chief amongst the "many sons" presented in glory through His death and resurrection.

who believeth in Christ; but He leaves him not there. That which was imputed must needs be imparted; and therefore it is written, that to them that received Christ, "to them gave He power to become sons of God." Herein lies our responsibility; and anything that dims in our mind the sense of the infinite reality of that relationship will necessarily weaken the sense of that which is involved in the relation.

It is designedly that the Spirit of God brings out the practical question of *doing* righteousness in this epistle, as the first of the effects of regeneration; for the flesh then as now is ever prone to turn the superlative grace of God into licentiousness, and lead many to make their boast in a salvation made easy, that knows little of what our Lord means when He says, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." God's Christianity is a following of Christ, and becoming "holy, even as He is holy."

The question here then to consider is not an imputation of something that we are not, but a doing of that which in the act proves the source whence it came, and establishes the fact of the relationship between the doer and the fountain of all that is holy, and right, and good.

2nd. *He sinneth not.* This is nearly allied with what has gone before. We read (chap. iii. 9), "Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

In considering this statement we have to avoid two opposite mistakes—the one which would contradict what the apostle John is particularly desirous to keep

present in our minds; namely, that we still carry sin about with us (read chap. i. 7-10, and chap. ii. 1, 2), and the other which would lay sin to the door of the old man, and thereby virtually get out of the responsibility of our actings, whether for good or evil. If we do the right, it is *we* who do it, and not the new man as separate from ourselves. And if we do the evil, it is *we* who are responsible for it, and *we* who shall suffer, and not the old man, as if it were guilty, and not ourselves.

Verse 7 opens with a word of warning: "Little children, let no man deceive you;" as if in this matter there were special danger of self-deception; and the apostle goes on to say, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil" (*ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου*). In this passage, as well as in that in verse 9, it is of importance to notice the use of the present tense, which implies a habit, and not an accident, or that which is out of the current of the life. It implies the habitual direction of our will, that indicates what we are; and it is this that gives to our life its bent, and to ourselves our character.

The sow, washed never so clean, returns to its mire as to its natural element; and the lamb that has fallen into it avoids it as repugnant to the instincts of its being.

Alas! how prone we are to apologise for our sinfulness in thought, word, or deed by the hasty avowal that we are sinners; as if there had been no regenerating grace that gave dominion over sin, and victory over that which is so intensely opposed to the new life into which we have been begotten again. On

this ground the apostle writes: "He cannot sin" (or be sinning); "for His seed remaineth in him."

It is a solemn, searching question—What is our individual relation to *sin*? Have we in relation to it "taken up the cross?" That is, have we entered into that condition in the new life which brings us into fellowship with the cross-bearing Saviour in relation to sin? Not in His atoning character; for there He stood alone; but can it be said that, in our antagonism to sin, we have resisted unto blood, striving against it?

Cross-bearing has been thought to signify meeting the trials and difficulties that lie across our path; but surely the cross, whether borne of the Lord or by His followers, is something far deeper, something which in the bearing of it by us calls forth ever and again that bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It was not the outgoings of sin, but its indwelling, that caused this cry of deepfelt wretchedness which those who dwell in the light know most of; for they see the glory and "groan, being burdened."

We are but slow, very slow, to enter into that position with regard to sin which can alone ensure victory; and yet it is "in this that the children of God *are manifest*, and the children of the devil;" for "whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (v. 10.) Here we find that righteousness develops itself into love, and this brings us to the third feature of the outworkings of this indwelling power of God, which, if the Lord please, we will consider at some future time.

---

## THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

Rev. i., v., vii., xii., xxii.

THE book of Revelation may be divided into two parts. It describes the portion of the redeemed through the blood of Christ, and that of the world under the beast, who represents the man of sin. (2 Thess. ii.)<sup>s</sup>

In a book so awfully descriptive of the iniquity of the last days, so full of God's overwhelming judgments upon all who shall take part with the dragon and the beast, in fearful confederacy against God, and against His Christ (see Ps. ii.), we should scarcely expect to find so much unfolded in reference to the *blood of Christ*. This precious theme sheds its lustre, and reveals its power and blessedness, throughout the whole book.

The glorious portion of the church—the fruit of the blood of Christ—comes before us in every possible point of view; whilst, on the other hand, the iniquity of Christendom is unfolded and headed up in the man of sin. In this book we get the manifestation of God's judgments in their most dreadful form, ending in the lake of fire; whilst the glory of the redeemed appears in the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, of which God and the Lamb are the temple and the light. The dark ground of diabolical wickedness, with its deserved punishment, seems to make the heavenly portion of the church more blessedly vivid.

Our meditation upon this precious book should be connected with the strongest assurance that we are called out of "this present evil world," and from all that in Christendom awaits the sickle of the Lord, and the winepress of His wrath. We should stand

aside from those elements and principles which are hastening the world's ruin. We need constant diligence to keep the heart and mind in that spiritual state which shall preserve us from the deceiveableness of unrighteousness on the one hand, and the spirit of the world on the other.

The Lord in His tender mercy has spread before us in this wondrous book what should be our hopes and expectations; and if these fill us with their full power of delight, it will be easy for us to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

How exquisitely touching are these opening words: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Here lies the secret and foundation of all our hopes. To a guilty world the *wrath* of the Lamb speaks terror; to a believing soul the *blood* of the Lamb speaks peace, and love in its greatest heights and depths—a love from all eternity, unalterable and unchangeable. What peace these assuring words give us: "washed from our sins in His own blood,"—"made a kingdom of priests [Greek] unto God and His Father."

This glorious anthem of praise appears again in the fifth chapter. The song of redemption there peals forth triumphantly—"Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." In addition to a kingdom of priests, it is said we shall "reign on [or over] the earth." What glories are here! God's people are *now* God's priests. The priesthood of this dispensation is limited to His believing people. Christian priesthood is not derived from man, and owes nothing to human appointment or descent. God only can make a true priest; and all are His con-

secrated priesthood; and they alone, whose sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb.

The time of reigning has not yet come. Jesus is now on the Father's throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) When He takes His own throne of government over the world, His church shall reign with Him for a thousand years. (chap. xx.) He is now fulfilling the office of High Priest on the right hand of God.

In chapter vii. the robes of the redeemed, we read, are washed and made white in "the blood of the Lamb." All defilement has passed away from their garments; they are clothed in the perfect righteousness of redemption; and stand before the throne of God in adoration and praise: God feeds them and dwells among them.

Chapter xii. gives another aspect of the precious blood: "They overcame Him [the dragon] by the blood of the Lamb." The devil has no power against the blood of the Lamb. It has sealed his doom. The death of Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death. The blood of the Lamb is the church's ransom money. He who stands on the merits of that blood can appear before God in the very blaze of judgment without fear or terror, and meet every assault of Satan, open or covert, with victorious confidence.

In the amended text we have the blood of the Lamb again referred to in chapter xxii.: "Blessed are they who have washed their robes [not do His commandments], that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." All who have washed their robes have a right to eat of the tree of life, to feed on Jesus, to live on Jesus. The blood of the Lamb gives a place to all who are par-

takers of its healing virtues in this glorious city of our God. Our city hath foundations; its builder and maker is God. When the cities of the nations shall fall, the heavenly city shall shine forth resplendent with light and glory, and full of all that can gladden the heart. Above all, God Himself shall be there.

This book summons us to behold the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world, and the end of the wicked, and gives to the saints the confidence of sin forgiven through the blood of the Lamb, and unfolds to them their glorious and everlasting habitation in the presence of God.

In these last days, when error and confusion abound, it is well to keep the great and eternal conclusions of this book clearly before our minds, though we may be in ignorance of many details. We need to be on our guard against any attempt to lower the blessing of God's children on one hand, or to set aside the judgment of the enemies of God on the other.

---

### THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT.

WHEN He, who came into this world to seek and to save the lost and ruined, was about to leave the little flock which infinite love had drawn around Him, His gracious lips poured forth words of comfort to be their stay and support amid all the trials of a life in the footsteps of the rejected One—"I will not leave you comfortless"—"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." And He prayed not "for these alone, but for them also which should believe on Him through their word," even for us, for the weakest and most unworthy of those for whom He shed His



precious blood, looking forward in His wondrous sympathy to every need of all His members, down to the latest day of their sojourn on earth, until He should come again to receive us to Himself.

It was expedient for them that He should go away. He went not away for Himself, as He came not for Himself to bear contempt, and pain, and rejection in this world of sin and sorrow, to endure the cross, despising the shame. It was for them and for us that He came, and for them and for us that He departed for a season. "The joy that was set before Him" was this—the joy of bringing many sinners to God, the joy of sharing His throne and glory with the vilest—washed, sanctified, and made meet. It was expedient for us that He should go away. "For if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." And so when He ascended up on high and led captivity captive, this was the most precious of the gifts which He received for men, even the Holy Spirit of God, first of all "outpoured," as the promise of the Father at Pentecost, and then given to abide in each member of His body, that by His indwelling we may be made truly one with Him in His death, in His redemption, and in meetness for the glory yet to be revealed.

The loving Saviour knew our needs. He, who was to be our compassionate High Priest, was One who could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He did not pray that His own should be taken out of the world: He did not desire that the servant should be above his Master, or that we should escape by unfaithfulness that suffering at the hands of the world which He knew that conformity with His holy walk

would entail. It was not His mind that we should pass the time of our sojourning here in fellowship with the world which crucified Him, sharing in its vanities, being of its spirit, setting before ourselves its enjoyments and cares and hopes and objects. His purpose and His provision respecting us were that, as regards the things that are seen and temporal, we should live a life of profitable and blessed discipline in the school of our Heavenly Father, but that we should have a joy—the joy of the Spirit—abounding exceedingly above all the sufferings of the present little while.

His heart's desire for us was not that we should escape those things which to the world around and to the flesh in the child of God appear not to be joyous but grievous, but that we should be strengthened to bear all these, and to get precious blessing from them by the joy and peace—His peace—which was our provided portion.

The joy of the world, equally with the sorrow of the world, but works death for us. The joy shed abroad in the heart from above, equally with the chastening of our Father in heaven, hurts only the old man, the flesh; and both are alike helpful to the new creature—that which is begotten of God, encouraging and steadying us to run with patience the race that is set before us.

To minister to us all this help, and comfort, and blessing, is the office of the Holy Spirit, sent down to teach, to sustain, and to sanctify us,—to help our infirmities, to guide us into all truth, and to show us things to come.

In one aspect only of His gracious work can we now

contemplate this Holy Spirit of promise. He is not only our patient and compassionate guide, and comforter, and sanctifier, He is also "the earnest of our inheritance." Yes—wondrous truth!—there is reserved for us an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and while we sojourn here for a season, kept by the power of God through faith unto that great salvation, the Spirit of God is given to us to be the **EARNEST** of that inheritance.

Has the reader ever pondered on, apprehended, and laid to heart the truth thus revealed, and the unspeakable grace and condescension involved in it?

The spiritual—here as elsewhere—can be but dimly shadowed forth by the natural; but He who teaches of the unseen by the seen tells us—from the relation in the transactions of men which the earnest-money bears to the full price of which it is the pledge—to learn what must be the preciousness of that portion in store for us, the earnest and anticipation of which is the indwelling Spirit of God. He is at once our assurance, and, in some degree, a measure of the glory to be revealed. And the child of God, while resting on His abiding presence, and carried onward by faith to the time when that which is in part shall be done away, is encouraged reverently to put to himself at every step the question, What will be the *fulness* of that blessedness in the presence of the Lord Jesus, of which the very Comforter Himself, in these days of separation from Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, is but the foretaste and the pledge?

Not once, but thrice, is the Holy Spirit described as the "earnest" to us of that which is to come. The passages are—"Who also hath sealed us, and given

the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 22); "who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. v. 5); and "in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Eph. i. 13, 14.)

The term employed describes simply that which we understand as earnest-money—the sum paid on the completion of a purchase to witness for the full payment of the remainder, to which, though the same in kind, it ordinarily bears but a small proportion. Further, in Rom. viii. 23, the same truth is taught by a different figure—"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have *the firstfruits of the Spirit*,"—the firstfruits being at once the promise and the indication of the abundant harvest to follow.

Some may be helped in the apprehension of this by a reference to God's dealings with Israel, a people raised up to be living lessons to us in the way of types of heavenly truths, and of whose wondrous history it is written—"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types], and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have met." (1 Cor. x. 11.) It is probable that if we had the spiritual intelligence of those who by reason of use have their senses exercised, we should find in what has been put on record respecting Israel the figures and foreshadowing of all that is true respecting ourselves.

The teaching of their history on our present subject is distinct beyond mistake. Israel, like ourselves, "had good tidings proclaimed to them" (Heb. iv. 11), tidings of a promised land, of "a good land and a large, a land

flowing with milk and honey." They, as we, had been delivered out of Egyptian bondage, and brought by the outstretched arm of God into the wilderness, through which lay their way to Canaan. And to them, as to us, the God of all grace vouchsafed, while as yet they were wayfarers, an earnest of the inheritance which He had provided for them.

He might well have required them to trust His faithful word, to rest on His unchangeable love, to stay themselves on all their experience of His goodness; but He pitied them as a father pitieth his children; He knew their frame, and remembered that they were dust. And so when, in accordance with their habitual distrust of God, they desired to learn something more of the land before they entered it (Deut. i. 22), God, in His compassion, ordered (Num. xiii. 1) that spies should be sent to search the land, who "came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs."

Here was Israel's foretaste of that which the God of Abraham had promised and prepared. "Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes." Before them and in their hands were some of the fruits—the firstfruits of that land, for the possession of which many a battle was yet to be fought. Some had gone from them and returned to bring this fruit, and to tell them, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; *and this is the fruit of it.*"

To us also ONE has been sent from the better fatherland, that is to say, the heavenly, to abide with us till

the wilderness is past, and to be Himself the earnest and the foretaste of the joys that are beyond. Israel, looking at those grapes of Eshcol—grapes such as they had never seen before—might have viewed the whole land that yielded them as theirs, and reflected what the whole vintage of such a land must be. And the child of God may ask, and seek to be taught,—

“If such the sweetness of the streams,  
What must the Fountain be?”

I remark, but passingly, for it is beyond our subject, that there were giants in the land—children of Anak; that in God’s appointment these were to be overcome before the land could be possessed; and that Israel turned back at the report of them, and despised the pleasant land, looking at their own impotence instead of trusting in the living God, who, if they had cast themselves upon Him, would have dealt with all their enemies as they had seen Him deal with Egypt and Amalek, and have made His people in every conflict more than conquerors.

If we think no battles are to be fought, we deceive ourselves; and we misuse, to our own great harm, the precious grapes of Eshcol, ministered to us by the Holy Spirit, if we receive them as sent for any other purpose than to quicken us in the weary way, and to encourage and strengthen us in that conflict, not with flesh and blood, as in Israel’s case, but against principalities and powers, in which we need, not only the whole armour of God, but all the refreshment also of the Spirit of God, to enable us to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

“The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was sepa-

rated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for to thee will I give it." As Abraham was a sojourner, a stranger, and pilgrim on the earth, so should we be, and the Spirit of Truth, if we yield ourselves to His guidance, will help us, by faith and by the foretaste which He supplies, to walk through the length and breadth of the land which only Jordan separates from us. Let us remember, not only that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him;" but also that "God *hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.*"

Let us not grieve "the holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Sealed:" as He is the earnest of our inheritance, so is He the seal of it till it is redeemed. Scripture ever testifies to this. It is the Holy Spirit always, baptism never. He it is that answers to the circumcision made with hands. He is the abiding witness, who leaves not, neither forsakes us, till the redemption of the purchased possession.

Three amazing grades of comparison are suggested to us by this subject. May the consideration of them help us to lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.

1. Who can estimate the joy and blessedness of those who were privileged to commune with the Lord in the flesh, who walked and talked with the loving, sympathising Saviour, and saw the holy, gracious ways

of Him who pleased not Himself, but was ever ready to bear each sorrow of all around, and minister to all their needs ?

2. Yet it was expedient for them that He should go away for a season, in order that the Comforter might come. What then is the measure of the blessing to which we have been called, who are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit ?

3. The holy Spirit is the *earnest* of our inheritance. What will that inheritance be ?

Let us labour that, whether present or absent, we may be well pleasi g to Him.

“What will it be to dwell above,  
 And with the Lord of glory reign,  
 Since the sweet earnest of His love,  
 So brightens all this dreary plain ?  
 No heart can think, or tongue explain,  
 What joy 'twill be with Christ to reign.”

---

## THE CHURCH : THE BRIDE.

In the Scriptures the Church of God is presented to us for our instruction under several different figures, as, the Bride, the Wife, the Body, the Temple, the City. Let us consider that of the Bride.

In the apostle's love to the church at Corinth that had treated him so ill, he writes, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to *one* husband, that I may present you as a *chaste virgin* to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ,” or from single-heartedness towards Christ. He



also writes to the Romans, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and *simple* concerning evil"—literally, *unmixed* with that which is evil.

The first thought, then, connected with the spiritual, as with the natural bride, is chaste single-heartedness to Him to whom she is betrothed, coupled with wisdom concerning His things—all that is good—that she should be unmixed with the evil around her. Not a partaker of others' sins, but rather ignorant of them; or, where this is impossible, with chaste virgin modesty drawing closely round herself her bridal garments, His robe of righteousness, keeping *herself* unspotted, yet using her influence with Him for those yet dead in trespasses and sins, or only partly alive to their position as married in resurrection life to the holy and spotless Bridegroom.

What would be thought of a betrothed bride, who, on her way to the wedding, had eyes for every thing and every one but him to whom she was affianced, and to whom she had plighted her heart's best affections under God? Yet how few Christians there are to whom this monstrous conduct is not an every-day occurrence? Well may it be said to us, "What is *thy* beloved more than another beloved?" Surely none but our matchless Jesus Himself would *so* bear with our manners in the wilderness.

Paul sets us an example of this singleness of eye and heart, when he says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." What a cutting off of everything else these words convey! What a letting go of earth and its belongings to grasp a *living* Saviour, and to seek His glory and do His will, to know *nothing* but Jesus Christ, and to

know Him as the One who was crucified, and *in* Him and *with* Him to be crucified to everything but Christ, and the glory that is from God only.

We need the eye fixed on the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to weigh "things present" in the scales of God's word and promises, and like Abraham, unwavering in faith, to give glory to Him. Each moment to the believer here has eternal results depending upon it for gain or loss. Our *start* in heaven depends upon the measure in which we have fed our souls upon Christ here, and desired to know nothing and follow nothing apart from Him.

With a true heart there must also be the wisdom that is from above, that the *best* use may be made of the time, talents, money, and other gifts the Lord may have lent to us for His glory. It is written "there is oil in the dwelling of the wise," and "the *wise* virgins took oil in their vessels with their lamps."

Surely all the mistakes in the church of God have arisen from lack of the light of the Holy Spirit on His own word. Let us remember that there is indeed cause for the jealousy and fear that the apostle expressed. The tempter is ever seeking to beguile us as he did Eve, and that to meet his wisdom and subtilty, "the wisdom that is from above" will alone suffice.

"Can we find such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" said Pharaoh of Joseph,—the poor Hebrew slave from the prison. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making *wise* the simple," and "the *wise* in heart will *receive* commandments." Sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearing His words, Mary of Bethany grew wise enough to anoint Him beforehand for His burial, showing her belief in His being about

to die for her, and drew forth the special commendation of her Lord. This act of faith and adoration perhaps stands unrivalled in the New Testament, like that of Abraham in the Old, when he offered up Isaac, and the odour of the incense, not only filled the house and spread through the world, but gave joy to Christ, and ascended to the heart of God. She listened to the words of Jesus with a true heart, and thus obtained the "mind of Christ," which raised her above her fellows. And this must be *our* path also, if we would be great in the kingdom of heaven.

Divine wisdom in the knowledge of Jesus will give the soul the watching, waiting, longing, expectant, attitude of the Bride. It is the *Spirit* and the *Bride* who say, "Come." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Let the Bride, then, go forth from her closet, looking for and hasting unto His glorious appearing, for whose kingdom and glory she waits. Leaning on the Beloved, she will sit loose to the things of time and sense, which perish in the using, and hold her all at His disposal, laying up treasure in heaven against the day of His tribunal and her manifested glory, enduring as seeing Him who is invisible, feeding on the hidden manna, seeking the white stone of His approbation, entering into the joy of her Lord.

The Lord Jesus says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might *remain* in you, and that your joy might be full." "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching *daily* at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

## THE PASSOVER IN THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH.

Read 2 CHRON. xxix., xxx.

ISRAEL was a typical people, and everything connected with them has some special teaching for the church of God. Hence the importance of the divine record, and the need of the inshining of the Spirit of God, to reveal to us the precious but oftentimes hidden teaching contained therein.

The Lord has not given us a mere detail of facts, in which everything of historic value is noticed, but in matchless wisdom He has culled out certain incidents (some of them apparently trivial in themselves), and recorded them for our admonition and spiritual blessing.

Thus many centuries elapsed, after the Israelites had kept the passover in the plains of Jericho, before we *read* of another passover. We may justly conclude, that in the days of Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon and others, this primary feast was not neglected; but Scripture passes it over in silence. In the reign of Hezekiah, however, we get a detailed account of a very important passover, which, like the three we have already considered, has its own distinctive and special teaching.

If we look back on Israel's history, we find it marked by continual declension and rebellion against God, and also by amazing patience and restoring grace on His part.

The fall of Jericho was followed by immediate failure. The prosperous days of Solomon were quickly marred by idolatry. However rich or great the grace bestowed, they invariably turned away from the Lord,

and went after their idols. "Their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant. But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He his anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath."

Thus was it in the days of Hezekiah. His father Ahaz, in daring impiety, had shut up the doors of the house of God, removed the brazen altar, cut in pieces the vessels of the house, and had made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

Is not this a true picture of the church of God? As Israel might have looked back on the harmony, the prosperity and blessing of the days of Solomon, so may we look back to the days of Pentecost, and bemoan our low estate.

*Then*, the multitude of them that believed were together; the living stones of the living temple were builded together, and formed a habitation of God through the Spirit, where He delighted to come and manifest His presence and power. *Now*, what confusion and weakness! Instead of being one united body, knit *together* in love, striving *together* for the truth, we are scattered and divided. Ah, more! Like Israel in their days of declension, we are found fighting among ourselves, biting and devouring one another. Instead of all gathering together in the name of our Lord Jesus, to worship God in spirit and in truth, how many believers are going to some altar of their own choosing, and, like Israel, worshipping God after their own devising, and oftentimes, alas! setting up some idol—some gifted teacher, or favourite dogma—as their centre of attraction.

*Then*, the Lord's people were of one heart, and one soul; great grace was upon them all, and, walking in the fear of the Lord, they were edified, or built up together. *Now*, there is but little fear of the Lord, and we are prone to do what is right in our own eyes, thus increasing the confusion and troubles which perplex the church of God.

Still there is hope for us in God. The unsearchable riches of Christ are not exhausted. The treasures of His grace are full to overflowing. His patient love and tenderness are still the same; and if we return to Him, and walk in obedience to His commands, we shall be built up, yea, He will be our defence, "and the light shall shine upon our ways."

Let us be encouraged by the history of Hezekiah. He did not sit down in despair, but in the first month of his reign he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He then gathered a few of the priests and Levites together, and exhorted them to sanctify themselves, and cleanse the house of the Lord. The priests and Levites obeyed; and so heartily did they enter into the work, that in sixteen days they had thoroughly cleansed the house, and all the vessels thereof.

Thus may it be with us. *We* are the house of God—the *spiritual house*—and assembling simply in the name of the Lord Jesus, we reopen the door of the house. As the *spiritual priesthood*, ordained by God to offer up spiritual sacrifices, we need to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. And, as the *vessels of the sanctuary*, we should not be conformed to the ways and usages of man, but sanctified through the truth, we should seek to be meet for the Master's

use alone, to be filled or emptied in His holy service as may please Him, looking to Him to preside over, order, and arrange our worship. We may be very few, and very feeble, but still if there be but truthfulness of heart, the Lord *will* manifest Himself among us, and minister to and refresh our souls, according to His own blessed promise, that if but two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be in their midst.

Hezekiah rose early and prepared the appointed offerings, and "commanded that the burnt-offering and the sin-offering should be made for *all* Israel."

There was no exclusiveness here, no setting themselves up as more holy than the rest of Israel. They took their place with the nation, and confessing the nation's sin as their own, sought restoration and blessing for all the people.

If by the teaching of the Spirit of God we are led into a better knowledge of His will as to the order and worship of the assemblies of His people, we must not lift ourselves up in pride and self-sufficiency, or exclusiveness, but taking our place as *one* with the whole family of God, present JESUS as the perfect, all-sufficient sin-offering, and seek for the fulness of His blessing to come down on every member of that one family. So also with the burnt-offering: we should remember that the *whole* church is accepted in the Beloved, and God takes delight in and rejoices over every believing soul, because HE sees them perfect through the comeliness of Christ, which He has put upon them.

"O glorious grace! nor spot, nor stain,  
Is seen on the adopted child!"

“And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began. . . . And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded. . . . And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.”

This joy sprang out of the burnt-offering, and not from their own obedience. If we would know anything of joy, we must look away entirely from our own works and doings, and gaze upon the perfection and beauty that is in Christ; and as we discern His exceeding preciousness, and realize that His perfection is imputed to us, we shall be able to rejoice with joy unspeakable.

Then followed the *voluntary* offerings in great abundance; “and Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people.” How beautiful and perfect is this order. Their gladdened hearts were constrained to ask, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?” and their free-will offerings were the unbidden but natural expression of their thankfulness and joy. Let us seek to enter more into the treasures laid up for us in Christ, and then we shall know far more of this free and spontaneous service to our God.

But Hezekiah did not rest here. His heart was enlarged. He had tasted the blessedness of the true worship of God, and he longed for the rest of Israel to share it with him. He therefore sent letters throughout Israel and Judah, and entreated them to come to the house of the Lord to keep the passover.

Is not this true of us? When we get a taste of the blessedness and liberty of gathering together in the presence of our God to be ministered to by Him, do we not long for all the Lord's redeemed ones to



share our joy? And should we not invite and intreat them to turn from the forms and ordinances of man, and to come together to keep the feast (1 Cor. v. 8), and worship the living God according to His own word?

Hezekiah's messengers were mocked and laughed to scorn by most; but some gave heed to the message, humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem to keep the passover, so that a great congregation were gathered together.

This passover was kept in the second month. They could not keep it in the first month, because *then* neither the house, the priests, nor the people were prepared; but they had tasted the sweetness of the grace of God, and gladly took advantage of His provision for a second passover, for those who were not clean at the appointed time. (See Numbers ix.)

Indeed, even then, many of the people had not cleansed themselves—for the thing was done suddenly—and yet they kept the passover. Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." The grace of God again abounded, and they proved the truth of the king's words: "The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him." "The Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people."

It was a time of very special blessing, and their joy during the seven days of unleavened bread was so great, that "the whole assembly took counsel together to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven

days with gladness." "So there was great joy in Jerusalem."

The whole scene teems with reality. There is no formality or half-heartedness about it. The Lord had prepared the people; and though there was manifest failure and short-coming in many ways, His matchless grace flowed forth to meet His returning prodigals, and, uncleaned as they were, He fell on their necks and kissed them with the kisses of His love, killed the fatted calf and feasted them, and bade them make merry and be glad.

How encouraging is all this. True, indeed, we cannot get back the pristine glory of the early church. We cannot prevail on all the Lord's people to gather to His name alone; and many indeed of those who do thus gather to Him, may be mixed up with much that is contrary to His mind and will. There may be much ignorance about His arrangements for our spiritual worship, much difference of judgment on many points, much weakness in every way, still let us seek simply to keep His word, and the promised presence of the Father and the Son (John xiv. 23) will be our rich reward.

We may have but little of the manifested gifts of the Spirit; we may be poor in every way, but our God is the same. He changes not. He will not fail to meet with us, and refresh and bless us. Nay, more; if there be but real dependance upon Him, and true-hearted waiting upon Him to order our worship, He will so manifest Himself among us, and cause us to hear His voice, that, like Israel, instead of growing weary of His worship, we shall eagerly seize every opportunity of enjoying or prolonging it.

The result of this passover is very beautiful and instructive. The people went forth and brake down, and utterly destroyed all the remaining images and altars in Judah; and as soon as the commandment came forth to bring in the firstfruits and the tithes, they brought them in in such abundance, that chambers had to be prepared to receive them.

How blessed is this! Obedience and devotedness are the natural outflow of a grateful heart. Would we be obedient? We must get our souls strengthened by fellowship with the Lord. Would we be devoted? We must obey His word, and wait on Him to minister such joy and blessing to us, that our souls will delight to pour out their free-will offerings at His feet. We can only give to Him as we receive from Him. We can only yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him, as we are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.

May we be wise with the wisdom which comes down from above; and esteeming His precepts concerning all things to be right, may we use the means He has so lovingly provided for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls.

---

## THE "BEGOTTEN OF GOD." WHO IS HE?

(Continued from page 112.)

Of the seven characteristics of him who is "begotten of God" mentioned by the apostle John in his first epistle, we have already considered two: he *doeth righteousness*; he *sinneth not*. Let us now pass on to the next.

3rd. *He loves*. In chapter iv. 7 it is written, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and

every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

What is love? Is it to love them that love us? Hear what the Master says: "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

Love has various spheres of manifestation, and the character of it depends on the sphere in which it is called to display itself. We will speak of two of them.

There is the outer sphere of love, wherein it meets the unworthy object that yields no response—the enemy, the alien, the unthankful. In this sphere has God showed that "*He is love*;" for in this He "commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Yes, "when we were enemies;" for He "*so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.*" He commendeth His love. He lays it side by side with all human love, and stamps its divine character as beyond the range of man's thoughts; and it is into this that we are called to enter, when enjoined to love our enemies, that we may become the children of our Father who is in heaven. Thus do we find "love" following "brotherly kindness" in 2 Pet. i., and standing as the very climax of all grace.

This is evidently the character of the love which occupies the mind of John; for in the next verse he

writes: "In this was manifested the love of God *in* us"—and will be manifested to all eternity *in* the redeemed—"that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him;" and, "Herein is love, *not that we loved God*, but that He loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins."

On this does God base His demand that we love mankind, and love one another, even though it may often be, that "the more abundantly we love, the less we be loved." Happy they who can say with the apostle Paul, "But be it so:" I am prepared to love on; for "if God *so* loved us, we ought also to love one another." How much of the love of the publican and of the world outside goes among saints for that love which comes unsought, and flows still unrequited! The response to this love is gratitude.

There is another sphere of love—nearer, closer, and deeper, but necessarily more limited—and that is the love of complacency, of friendship, and of delight. In this sense Jesus "loved Mary, and her sister, and Lazarus;" and that God of all grace, who loved when we were enemies, loves us when reconciled to Him in Christ, when complete in Him, and when made sons, with a love so deep and infinite, that the Only-begotten can alone fathom it, and finds an expression for it in the following utterance addressed to the Father, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 23.)

No human mind can fathom either the one or the other. Eternity will unfold it; but the necessary outgoing of this love is communion, and in order to make communion possible, glory has been communicated; for Jesus says, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."

He who thus gave the measure of the Father's love, gives the like measure of His own love: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John xv. 9); and having given us this infinite measure, He lays on us the debt of the love that we owe to each other for His sake, and, measuring it by His own standard, says, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

He who laid the claim to our gratitude as sinners, when in the infinite breadth of His love He died for His enemies, now lays us under the deeper obligation of friendship, as the One who laid down His life for His friends; and friendship is measured by obedience. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." The response to this love is personal fellowship; and we learn what it is to say, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;" and in Him we have fellowship one with another; for we are all one in the Father and in the Son. (Jo. xvii. 21.)

Let us, then, ponder in the light of the word the meaning of that sentence, "Every one that loveth is begotten of God." Surely we need to estimate our love to the world still in its sins, and to the saints of God redeemed out of it, by a very different standard from that by which we are prone to measure it. God's love is the only measure and character of all love that springs from being begotten of Him.

4th. *He that is begotten of God believeth that Jesus is the Christ.* (chap. v. 1.) The relation in which he that is born of God stands to *righteousness*, to *holiness*, and to *love*, having been dwelt upon by the apostle, we have now brought before us his relation to God as a

believer in the Lord Jesus as *the Christ* of God. That title embraces the whole relation of Christ Jesus to man as the Anointed One of God.

When the Lord asked the disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied, "The Christ, the Son of the living God." And so says the babe in Christ, to whom John writes: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake;" and so likewise the father in Christ, of whom it is said, that he "has known Him who is from the beginning." All, from the lowest to the highest, are embraced as making the confession that "Jesus is the Christ."

There is an endless diversity in the measure of the realization of what this truth involves, and its power on the believer will be in proportion to the measure in which it is really believed; for to realize Jesus as the Christ, the true Melchizedec on His throne, is to lay hold on all that is said of Him as the Anointed One.

The word owns not that dead faith that has no fruit; for faith will ever bear fruit. Faith receives out of the fulness of Him on whom it rests, and receives in proportion to its reality. Faith has a transforming power; and Christ *believed in* is a Christ *formed in* those who believe; and when that image is wanting, the apostle would say, as of the Galatians whose view of Christ had become dimmed by Judaism, "of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you;" for he stood in doubt of them.

The Anointed One believed in unites to Himself; and those who believe become the anointed ones of God, who, having the anointing, know all things, and need not that any man teach them. It is to those who

receive Jesus that the power is given to become the sons of God; and of them it is written, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

To believe then, that Jesus is the Christ, is not to receive a mere dogma as our creed, but to receive a *Person* into our being, in the mighty power of whose name we are transformed into the image of the Son Himself. We are elected to be conformed to His image, that He should become the first-born among many brethren.

Believing in Him who came without form or comeliness as *the Christ*, constitutes the peculiar honour of the church of God. To own Him, while covered with the veil of an outward uncomeliness, is truly to walk by faith, and not by sight. There will be a time when this veil will be taken from all, as we read in Isaiah xxv. 7, "And He will destroy in this mountain" (the very place where He was rejected and cast out) "the face of the covering that is cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."

This veil was taken away from the mind of the apostle Paul when he saw the crucified Jesus in the glory of the heavens; and so shall it be from all nations when the Crucified shall again return in His own glory, in the glory of the Father, and in the glory of the holy angels. Till then it is our privilege and glory to believe in Him without having seen Him, and by faith to behold in Him the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Let us seek to lay hold on this connection between regeneration and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to enter into that abounding grace by which, through union with Him, we may be able to maintain our walk as the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we are called to shine as lights in the world.



## THE TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

GENESIS is a book of allegories; Leviticus a book of figures. In both we have the shadows of things to come; but while in Genesis the representations are carried on by *persons*, in Leviticus the lessons are taught by *things*. To the Christian who does not recognize this, a large portion of God's word is lost; Genesis remains indeed a pleasing, and in some degree instructive history, but Leviticus is a mass of obsolete nonsense.

The same may be said of the other books of the Pentateuch: the historical portions may be looked on as the statements of past events which it is useful to the believer to know, but the practical momentous lessons held out in every page to *himself* are uncared for or unknown. Egypt, the wilderness, and Canaan, are things of the past; the tabernacle, the priest, and the offerings, are no more; and the narratives and descriptions of these things, however interesting, have lost all direct bearing on the reader personally "in these last days," if something deeper than the mere narration of events, or delineation of ceremonies, be not understood as concealed beneath them.

But to understand this—or, at least, so to understand it as to make it efficient—a certain degree of spiritual intelligence is required. Acquaintance with the anti-type is needed for the apprehension of the type, and our knowledge of the Lord Jesus in all the varied offices and relations in which He stands with respect to us, will be the measure of our appreciation of the figures and emblems under which those offices and

relations have been foreshadowed and described. But this required intimacy with the person and character of the Lord presupposes an interest—a deep and habitual interest—in something beyond personal salvation; and here we have the explanation of a state of things too prevalent on all sides.

Leviticus is perhaps the least read book in the Bible, though one of the most precious, and the reason is that Christians stop short where they ought to begin, content themselves with the knowledge or the hope that they are saved, and judge all truths beyond that of redemption as “*non-essential*,” perhaps as theoretical and unimportant. They are saved that they may know and rejoice in these truths, that they may enter into all the revealed counsels of their God and Father (John xv. 15), and have intelligent fellowship with Him and with their Lord: but they judge these things on which the thoughts of God are set—the various aspects of the work of Christ, the beauty of His person, “the excellency of the knowledge of Him,” the glories that await Him, the riches of the glory of our Father’s inheritance in the saints: these and an endless list of other “things which angels desire to look into,” and which until “these last days,” eye had not seen, nor ear heard, but *God hath revealed unto us* by His Spirit, they judge unprofitable and speculative. God has seen it good to reveal His blessed Son in the most varied aspects—to reveal not only what He has done for them, but what He Himself waits for. They can understand the sin-offering, but what are their ideas respecting the burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the peace-offering?

No book gives us such minute details as to what

Christ is to us, and we are in Him, as Leviticus; but before these details can be understood there must be that intelligence in spiritual things which can be attained only where it is known that these things are THE ESSENTIALS of the saved man, and that questions respecting his salvation and all rudimentary truths—"the word of the beginning of Christ" (Heb. vi. 1, margin),—instead of occupying in his thoughts the place which they ought to occupy in the unbeliever's, are to be left behind. Christ must be known as our priest, as a victim, as an offerer of Himself, as our forerunner, as one with us, our brother, "the first-born among many brethren," and that salvation must be known to which *we*—the Church—are called: and *then*, according to the degree of understanding which the Spirit of truth may give to each of us, we shall be enabled to feed upon the substance which the types reveal, and to take the strong (*Greek* 'solid') meat which belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who *by reason of use* have their senses *exercised*.

Under types and emblems it should be known the believer's most solid food will be found; for beneath the shade of these the Holy Spirit has been able to unfold truths which will be sought for in vain amid the direct statements of the word of God. Much that could not, consistently with our Father's purposes, be left exposed on the surface to the idle and heedless, equally with the sanctified and searching eye, has yet been covered over with no more imagery than will assist in its discovery, and add a beauty to it, when in the search after it our guide is that Holy Spirit whose office is to "lead us into all truth," and who is needed now as much as formerly to teach us things

which we are otherwise unable to bear. (John xvi. 12, 13.)

This explains the circumstance that when a typical person is introduced in Hebrews v., and it becomes desirable to trace out the priesthood of the Lord Jesus as foreshadowed by that of Melchisedec, we for the first time find the apostle censuring the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" for being babes when they should have been men, for needing milk when they should have been able to digest solid food. They had much spiritual intelligence as compared with believers now, but Paul felt the difficulty of opening up to them the deep truths concealed beneath a typical character, since their dulness of hearing (their low measure of apprehension) made the "many things" which were to be said, "hard to be *explained*."

We commenced by saying that Genesis is a book of allegories, and Leviticus a book of types. The word of God furnishes abundant evidence on both points. Respecting Genesis see, *e.g.*, Heb. iv. 9, 10; Eph. v. 31, 32, and Gal. iv. 22-31; and respecting Leviticus, Heb. ix. and x.

In 1 Cor. x. 1-11 we have a summing up of the chief incidents in the history of the Israelites as they passed through the wilderness, and then are told, "Now all these things happened unto them for *examples* (*margin*, 'types') and they are written for *our* admonition," &c.

In Heb. viii. 4, 5 we read that "the priests serve (conduct the service of the tabernacle—*λατρεύουσι*) in the likeness and shadow of *the* (see the original) heavenly things,"—*i.e.*, in the tabernacle of which God said to Moses, "See that thou make *all* things accord-

ing to the pattern (*Greek*, 'type') showed thee in the mount." So chap. ix. 9, correctly translated, "the first tabernacle which is a figure unto the present time;" in ver. 23, 24, "the copies of the things in the heavens," and "the figures of the true;" and in chap. x. 1, the law is said to "have a shadow of the good things to come."

These passages sufficiently establish that Leviticus is a book of types, a book full of minute directions and descriptions, the most minute of which has a significance of infinite moment to us, since it forms a part of the revelation of God; and that these types are in general indicative of the present position and relationships of the Church as in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 6.)

---

## DEATH AND RESURRECTION:

A LESSON FROM HEZEKIAH'S HISTORY.

ISAIAH xxxviii.

God is constantly teaching us that we have to do with Himself; and this not only as the One before whom "all things are naked and bare," but likewise as the One with whom "all things are possible."

It is the glory of the gospel that "it is the *power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." In the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, God has triumphed over every obstacle in the way of a sinner's salvation; and from first to last in our Christian career, we have to learn that this power *alone* avails in our arduous path. (Ephes. i. 19.)

The total ruin of man has necessitated the introduction of this power of God. Well may one awakened

to a sense of his real condition as a sinner before God, cry out, "Who *can* be saved?" The answer is, "With *God* all things are possible."

God does not bring in His own power needlessly. There is a certain propriety in "the ways of God"—there is a "due time" for God to bring in the almighty remedy of His own counsel and power.

He has given ample scope to man to use his own powers, whether to meet his need as a sinner, or to satisfy his cravings as a creature. But man has ever proved restless and unsatisfied, with a dreary and uncertain future before him. God has shown him his plain duty, both towards God and towards man, but while all allow the excellence of this, none save Christ Himself has been found to fulfil it.

It is after the proved failure of man under every responsibility, that God Himself comes to his rescue, triumphing over all difficulties by raising the dead. And He not only shows His omnipotence, but His grace, mercy, and love. "For when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*." "God commendeth *His love* toward us, in that while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us."

The gospel of "Jesus and the resurrection" alone meets the need of man as "without strength," "ungodly," a "sinner." And it is this gospel which brings out the enmity of the human heart. Man does not like to be convicted of weakness. The Sadducees, and the philosophers at Athens alike scoffed at a doctrine which set aside all their pretensions to wisdom, strength, and goodness.

In Jesus "delivered for *our offences*," we have the proof of God's love; but that love does not stop there.

Jesus is "raised again for *our justification*;" and by the same act we are also delivered out of this present evil world; and as quickened and raised up with Jesus, and made to sit down in heavenly places in Him, we are enabled to say, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth under the wicked one."

After learning *peace with God through the blood of Jesus*, and *access with confidence through the faith of Him*, into the very presence of God, we find *liberty* in being rescued out of this present evil world, "according to the will of our God and Father." Nothing short of this satisfies the heart of God for us. And He thus rescues us by associating us with His own beloved Son now at His right hand.

Our redemption is "*in Christ Jesus*"—in union with Him as risen and glorified. But while redemption "through His blood," and "in Him" as risen, is the blessed testimony to us, we have to learn the "needs be" that redemption should be *in resurrection*. Our highest experience is to carry the power of resurrection into everything, and to learn in ourselves that nothing short of this power worketh unto effectual blessing.

The truth which Paul taught in the way of testimony to others, he learnt very experimentally in his own soul. In the first chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle describes himself as brought into such straits, that there appeared no way of escape. The sentence of death was in him, but it was turned to blessed account by his learning to trust in "God which raiseth the dead." Nothing short of this power of God could meet his need, and this power he had to do with, not only for present deliverance, but for strength in the prospect of future trials.

“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver.”

In the same way we find in Rom. v. 1-11, the believer learning experimentally the God he has to do with, and his need of such a God. As to ourselves, have we not from time to time been brought into the place of difficulty and strait—and what then? We have been thrown on God; and this is always a real blessing from God to our souls.

But there is a deeper way, and that is to learn in the same school as Paul, when he says, “That I may *know Him*, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” Realized union with the risen Jesus, taught the Apostle that all here was death-stricken; so that the power of His resurrection could alone meet his need, and it is this that we need to know.

In this way, rather than in the way of testimony, the saints of old learned resurrection. The time for testimony could not be till Jesus had died on the cross, and risen again. Nevertheless the saints of old learned resurrection experimentally. Abraham had death written against himself, that all expectations from himself might be taken away, so that he might know God as the quickener of the dead. (Rom. iv. 17-19.) Hezekiah also learned the same truth; and his case we will more especially consider.

#### HEZEKIAH'S LESSON.

The thirty-sixth and three following chapters of Isaiah occupy a very peculiar place. They are historical rather than prophetic, and divide into two very distinct parts the “vision” which Isaiah saw.



The former part of the prophetic vision reaches on (in chapter xxx.) to full millennial blessedness. Then occurs a remarkable break, bringing out historically the thorough evil of the flesh—first in the case of Sennacherib unrestrained by grace, and then in the case of Hezekiah, the saint of God—open defiance of God in the one—self-seeking in the other. When all flesh is thus distinctly proved to be “grass,” the Spirit of prophecy flows on in all fulness of grace.

Fearful as it is to contemplate the flesh unrestrained, as in Sennacherib, it is unto this issue that all in the world is now working. Impatient of all restraints on his own will, man will throw them off, till at last he asserts power to be in himself, and not in God. If we would be kept from the spirit of the world, we must know the power of Christ's resurrection; for resurrection is against “all that is in the world.”

To learn ourselves in the presence of God is a needed and bitter lesson. So to realize death stamped upon the fairest forms of the flesh, that we may know the needs-be of resurrection, is the continuous lesson which Christ teaches. Hezekiah had to learn *this* in his day, and in a most painful school.

About the very time that Hezekiah was proving what the flesh was as unchecked in Sennacherib, he had to experience what the flesh was *in himself*. Outward evil may be learnt by observation; but the real root of all evil can only be learnt in ourselves.

“In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.” Hezekiah, however, was not willing that his “times” should be in the Lord's hand. He

did not say, "Thy will be done;" but turning his face toward the wall, he prayed unto the Lord: "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore."

It was not wrong for him to say this. He spoke the truth to the Lord. But he was on low ground, looking from himself to God, instead of beginning with God—dwelling upon what *he* had done, instead of upon what God had done.

"The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by His actions are weighed;" and those that honour Him He will honour. He weighs the plea of Hezekiah, and what is it worth in His estimation? Fifteen years here—that is all! And if the grace of God had not afterwards abounded over the sin of His servant, he would not have had that which he sought—even *his* reward, fifteen years here.

How foolish to urge any plea from ourselves, instead of coming before God on the ground of His mercies. We may pray to be raised up from sickness; and God in mercy may hear our prayer; and yet use the added years for a purpose we little thought. We may hope to be raised up for increased usefulness in service: God may use the added space to show us ourselves. Thus He dealt with Hezekiah, teaching him *experimentally death and resurrection*. Paul was deeply instructed in this truth, as he says, "I die *daily*." (See also 2 Cor. i.) And we too have to learn it, "line upon line," by frequent incidents; so that when death actually comes, it is only to "fall asleep."

## HEZEKIAH'S EXPERIENCE.

In order to learn profitably, Hezekiah had to learn humbly. He was brought down to utter helplessness and hopelessness. He was "without strength." He saw no way of deliverance. If he looked to God, it was rather as to one against him than for him. "I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will He break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me." He was ready to say, "All these things are against me."

But when brought thus low, he threw himself upon God. "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, *I am oppressed; undertake for me.*" The conflict is over; death has been learned experimentally; and he has no trust but in God that quickeneth the dead. *He* must "undertake" for him, or all is lost. *He* must save, and He alone.

God will have us to learn, not only that we have to do with Him, but that it is our real blessing to be brought near and kept near to Him. We are "made nigh by the blood of Christ;" but we often slip out of this place, and God deals with us to bring us back to it. We may be brought back through some humbling failure, as Peter was. He was converted from fleshly confidence; and not only learnt for himself where his *strength lay, but was able also to strengthen others.* God makes us learn His truth in the inward parts.

How good for Hezekiah to have been afflicted, and to have been restored. "What shall I say? *He hath both spoken, and HIMSELF HATH DONE IT.*" Hezekiah needed to learn that man liveth "by every word that

proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He who spake had done it; He who promised had fulfilled it.

Our souls rest their confidence of salvation in an already fulfilled promise. "The promise which God made to the fathers, He hath *fulfilled* the same to us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again." God now sends His testimony to that which He "*hath done.*" It is to the finished work of Christ on the cross that the Holy Ghost testifies. He does not testify to that which He does within us, although He *is* the doer of it, but to that which Christ has done once for all—"HIMSELF *hath done it.*"

We may turn from this to graces within; but on these we cannot rest, even as Hezekiah turned from what God had done to that which Hezekiah would do—"I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." This is one of the subtle forms of the flesh.

If Sennacherib exhibits the desperate wickedness of the heart, Hezekiah here exhibits its deceitfulness. His prolonged life in answer to prayer furnishes occasion for the display of his own vanity, and shows us Hezekiah exalting *himself* instead of God. Hezekiah had turned from God and what He *had done*, to Hezekiah and what he *would do*. And "God left him to try him, and that he might know all that was in his heart."

Have there not been times with ourselves when we have used similar language? When our hearts have been softened by some marked interposition of God on our behalf, and we too have been led to see what God hath not only said but done, have we not promised that we would go softly all the days of our life? But the work which God hath wrought fades away before something in which we ourselves are pro-

minent. If we desire to go softly, it can only be done by beginning from above as one with the risen Jesus, and coming down into the actual circumstances in which we are.

“O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.” What a lesson! Although we shall never taste death as the wages of sin, yet have we to learn that death is stamped upon even our fondest hopes with respect to the creature, and then we live. Death stamped on self drives us into the power of life, and makes us more fully know that our life is hid with Christ in God.

Even if our hopes in service are disappointed, our labour in the Lord is never in vain. Strange indeed to us are God’s ways of teaching us. But would God love us perfectly, *if having given to us eternal life in His Son, He did not make us prove the value of this gift now?* Has not our deepest knowledge of Christ been learnt in the school of disappointment—in the world, among saints, and with ourselves? Thus are we driven to Christ, where disappointment cannot come. If we seek honour or satisfaction here, God in mercy is pleased to disappoint us.

“Behold for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.” A believer is repeatedly taught the great difference between the peace which results from outward circumstances, and the solid peace of the gospel. Peace arising from without may be and often is disturbed, and God uses such disturbance to plant us more firmly in peace with God through Jesus Christ.

We may be brought down into the pit of corruption; "plunged into the ditch so that our own clothes abhor us;" and then God in love to our souls brings us up, by teaching us that all which we have learnt of ourselves in the pit of corruption He has cast behind His back.

We should learn what we really are, not by outbreaks of sin, but by judging ourselves in the Holiest of all, whereunto the blood of Jesus bringeth us. It is there we learn that all our sins are behind God's back, and Christ before His face. There are no stages in redemption. "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God." But there are many stages in learning what redemption really is.

"For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth." Sennacherib blasphemed "the Living God," and Hezekiah had to learn that the living God can only be worshipped in life. Hence our need of the blood of Jesus to purge our "conscience to serve the living God." Everything that man does of himself has the savour of death upon it. It is only by abiding in Jesus that there is life in anything we do. All our worship and service must be grounded on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. "We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

"The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days

of our life in the house of the Lord." Such is the end of Hezekiah's writing after his sickness, even the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. And what is the end of all God's discipline, however humbling and painful it may be, but to bring forth the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving? We do not delight in our humbling for its own sake, but that we may sing His praise *for evermore*.

#### HEZEKIAH'S FAILURE.

After all this experience of God's grace and power; after he had had the spirit of heaviness exchanged for the garment of praise; after his resolution to go softly all the days of his life, we find on the part of Hezekiah almost *immediate failure!*

"All flesh *is* grass; surely the people is grass." Flesh is flesh in Sennacherib; flesh is flesh in Hezekiah. What will flesh do if restored, raised up from sickness, brought out of poverty into affluence, out of ignorance into intelligence? It will use all God's blessings for its own exaltation. How emphatic the declaration, "All flesh is grass." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Hezekiah had both an outward and an inward sign from God; the outward sign—the going back of the degrees on the dial of Ahaz, was indeed marvellous: but more marvellous that which he had learnt under the hand of God in His dealings with him. But to neither of these signs does Hezekiah refer the messengers of the king of Babylon, although they had expressly come to enquire about the former; but he shows them his own treasures. He seeks to glorify himself rather than the Lord. "Howbeit in the

business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." God knew what was there, Hezekiah knew not; his heart deceived him, and he must needs learn its deceitfulness.

Peter had to learn the same lesson, under the gracious hand of his loving Lord, although it cost bitter tears to himself. So again Paul had to learn in another way, deeply painful to him, although not by actual failure, but by means of a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be "exalted above measure." God will be justified in His sayings; and if we take not heed to His sayings, He will teach us in the school of bitter experience that "God is true" in His assertion of the deceitfulness of the heart.

How apt are *we* to seek to display ourselves, our gifts, or our graces, and to keep out of view all that which the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ has made us. We too are often betrayed into an admiration of talent, science, and riches, as if resurrection had no due place in our hearts.

What will be the end of all that commands the admiration of the world; and is the subject of its self-glorying? All will follow the course of Hezekiah's treasures, *all* will "be carried to Babylon;" yea, all will help to rear that Babylon which is to be destroyed.

Let Christians beware lest they attempt to use those things for building up the church of the living God, which man is using to *build up himself*. "Not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the LORD."



## THE CHURCH: THE WIFE.

EPHES. v. 22-33; GEN. ii. 18-25.

“FOR Adam there was not found a help *meet* for him.” Where, indeed, could there be found, amongst the beasts that perish, or the fowls of the air, or creeping things of earth, one *meet* for him who stood erect amongst them, in the image of God, a *living* soul?

And where in this fallen creation, amongst Adam's sinful lineage, from souls viler in their sinful thoughts and actings than the beasts, more unclean than the birds of prey, creeping in the defilement of sin and death, of the earth earthy, the thoughts of whose hearts are “*only evil continually*,” can there be found a help *meet* for the Second Adam, the LORD from heaven? Where shall a partner be found for the meek and lowly, spotless, holy Jesus,—to share His love, His thoughts and counsels, His throne and glory, who is God over all, blessed for evermore?

Ah! beloved, full well our souls know the old, old story *in the letter*. From Himself *alone* can the Wife be taken; *on* Himself *alone* can she be builded, and grow up into His likeness. By means of His sleep of death *alone* can the actings of sin be *for ever* banished, the sinful nature be changed, the hard heart be melted by His dying love to love Him; and His darling, His *only one*, who was hidden in His heart on the accursed tree, be *manifested* in His beauty—“Perfect through my comeliness, which I have put upon thee, saith the Lord God.”

God, who is love, *must* have a help-meet for His love; something that angelic nature and being could not

supply; something beyond the reach of mere creation; *more* than the product of His divine power and wisdom—even that which is the outflow and expression of His *heart*,—the Church of the Firstborn,—sinners saved *by grace*, and made *real* children through the new birth of the Spirit; not created merely by a word, but “born of God.” Hence “it became Him, *for* whom are all things, and *by* whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering; for both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are *all* of one.” It was *suited* to His heart of love, *fitting* for His purpose so to do, and carried out at *all* cost to Himself in Jesus.

Well may one taught of the Spirit exclaim, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His *abundant* mercy, hath begotten us again unto a *living* hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are *kept* by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

*This* is the mystery, *these* the things that angels desire to look into; but into which she, whose it all is, for whom it all is, cares so little to search! Like the infant whose attention is caught by any trifle, so are our hearts towards Him. Oh, for *stability* of soul and *full* purpose of heart to cleave unto the *living* God, who has thus married us to Himself in Christ. God has thus, in His *manifold* wisdom, taken advantage of Satan’s work in Eden, to turn the ruin of man to His own *greatest* glory in the cross of Christ;

and so it is still—the tempter is *always* overcome, and his artifices turned to God's glory and our gain.

In Eve thus presented to Adam we have in type God's gift of the Church to Christ. Adam at once owns her as his own: "This is now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman (Isha); for she was taken out of man (Ish)." So Jesus *loved* the Church and gave Himself for it, and *now* receives *all* who come to Him, drawn of the Father to the Son by the Spirit, through the Word—claims each as His *own* blood-bought one, and shortly, in the resurrection, will own, and embrace, and present the *whole* Church to the Father, writing upon each His own new name, "that they *all* may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that *they* also may be *one* in us." (John xvii. 21–26.)

In John xx. the Lord Jesus presents Himself to Mary (who represents the Church), out of whom He had cast *seven* devils, the perfection of wickedness—cleansed and washed and brought to His feet—to whom He is enabled to say in resurrection, "Thou art *all* fair, my love; there is *no* spot in thee."

In the Song of Songs, which is our Solomon's, the first experience of the loved one is, "My Beloved is *mine*, and I am His." This is the joy of first love, of peace and salvation—the consciousness of being the Lord's, *safe* from judgment and eternal woe, having *heard* the word; "Peace be unto you," and *seen* His hands and His side.

She is soon led by the green pastures to a further and richer experience, though one more crucifying to her own self and the desires of the flesh—"I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." "Ye are not

your own, but bought with a price," is now the *first* thought of her heart—to *live* unto Him who *so* lived, and died, and rose again for her—to present *herself* "a *living* sacrifice," treading in His steps.

A third and higher flight of soul is *yet* before her: "I am my Beloved's, and His *desire* is toward me." "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him*, and make our abode with him." *Abiding* in Jesus, and His word *abiding* in us, fruit will be borne by us, unconsciously but really, even as Moses "wist not that His face shone;" and our loving Lord will take every grape thus borne by each branch of His vine, and pressing out *all* its precious juice—the "wine to cheer the heart of God"—will present it to the Father for His gratification and delight, cleansing it from every impurity and dreg of our corruption in His own most precious blood, and presenting with it all the incense and fragrance of His own person and work.

While coveting and maintaining, through grace, the virgin freshness and bridal warmth of first love, in the Wife that love becomes more matured; ripens by daily trust and confidence; grows by walking *with* the heavenly Husband in the ups and downs, the cares and sorrows, as well as the joys of life. It is sustained and fed by communion with Him over His word, and increases with the increase of God in a growing knowledge and experience of Him as *everything* to us. It is a *fruit-bearing* love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. May the Lord grant us more of it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

## THE "BEGOTTEN OF GOD." WHO IS HE?

*(Continued from page 140.)*

THERE remain for our consideration three of the seven characteristics of the children of God.

5th. *He that is begotten of God overcometh the world.*

This is the fifth mark given unto us whereby we may ascertain our relation to God. Those born of God are overcoming ones, because greater is He that is with them than that which is against them; but if He is to be with us, we must be with Him.

The moment the believer in Jesus has passed from death unto life, he has been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. (Col. i. 13.) He is one whose eyes have been opened, and who has turned "from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan unto God." As soon as Satan's authority and power are set at naught, the enmity between the two seeds is brought out, and that warfare commences, in which Paul tells Timothy he has to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, *not entangling* himself with the things of this life (lest the thorns come in and choke the seed), but seeking one object, even to please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Our enemies are threefold, the world, the flesh, and the devil. The enmity of the flesh to God and to His ways, is met by the power of the righteousness and the holiness which keeps from sin, which we have already been considering. Righteousness in walk and holiness in life are alike placed within the reach of him who has learned to know Christ as "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,"—as the source and

centre of a divine power that worketh mightily in them that believe; that is, in those who are exercising a present living faith on Him who has the fulness of God dwelling in Himself. On this fulness faith relies; for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

How can faith overcome? or what victory can there be in faith? What but this, that faith lays hold of the arm of the Mighty One? for the very essence of faith is that it has nothing in itself, but trusts solely on another. It girds on the sword because commanded to do so, but while girding it on, saying still, "I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies."

This is ever the attitude of faith; all else is unbelief, which may manifest itself in two opposite directions,—either laying down its weapons, expecting God to work without them, or taking up the weapons, and thinking God will come in if needed to help when we fail. It is a grand truth to have learnt that "*the battle is the Lord's*," and yet it is *we* who fight it, and therefore the victory is ours; for "He giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Faith is ever a receiver, and there is no limit to the supply—it is infinite; and therefore there can be no limit set to the onward progress of him to whom faith is a living present reality, resting on JESUS, the Son of God, who is the Saviour of His people from sin.

Earlier in the epistle we get the solemn warning: "Love not the world, neither the things in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Why is the love specified as "the love of the Father?" Is it not because the revelation of the

Father has only come to us through His crucified and rejected Son, in the power of whose resurrection we are made children of God, and brought into eternal union with the Lord Himself, so that we are crucified with Him, and therefore crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us?

The moment the world becomes anything else than a crucified object, faith has lost its hold, and although the infinite arms of our eternal Saviour may be underneath the one of little faith, still he has practically lost his hold of the object of faith, and the result is defeat and sorrow.

Let us seek to realize it as the normal condition of the begotten ones of God, that victory is the rule of their life, as victory was in the life of Joshua, except in the memorable defeat before Ai. His commandments are not grievous to the loving soul, and victory is not uncertain to the believing one; and it becomes us to see that by the grace of God we are enabled to say, "I fight not as uncertainly," and then when life's warfare shall close, we shall be able to say further, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

6th. "*He that is begotten of God keepeth himself,*" and to this the Spirit attaches another characteristic, which is:—

7th, and lastly, "*And the wicked one toucheth him not.*" These two clauses we will consider together.

What a victory is here contemplated! We have already noticed the victory over the world which is the saint's prerogative; and here we close with a double victory over self and over Satan. This verse com-

mences with a reiteration of the great truth stated in the third chapter, "Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not." Its repetition here is deserving of notice as connected with the following statement, "he keepeth himself," and as a necessary result, "the wicked one toucheth him not." With this, we have in the next verse, the contrast between those who "are of God," and those who are of the world, and therefore with the world, lying in the embrace of the wicked one. The word rendered here, "wickedness," is identical with "wicked one" in the verse under consideration.

By nature man is under the dominion of Satan, even as Israel in Egypt was under that of Pharaoh, but redemption has released the captive and set the prisoner free, and he who in Egypt was a bondsman to an enemy becomes God's free man. God has not called us to bondage, and consequently the Lord says to those in the bondage of Satan, "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

While in sin man is kept by Satan in an iron bondage, wherein he is not his own master; and though oftentimes a willing slave, a slave still, having no self-control,—that is, no proper control over himself. No sooner, however, does divine power beget a soul anew, than he becomes a free agent under the intuition of the divine life; possessing a will in all the self-consciousness of individuality, yet a will whose every impulse is in fullest harmony with the will of Him who begat. Hence the statement, "he keepeth himself."

It is stated elsewhere most blessedly, that we are kept by God, and hence the prayer of the blessed Lord: "Father, keep through thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one."



But while this is true, and our final glory depends on it, we must not forget the individual force of the word here, and of the precept in Jude, "*Keep yourselves in the love of God.*" Regeneration makes this possible, and not only so, but natural, as resulting from the principle of a new life implanted.

Thus then a Christian is one who is impowered to control himself, to keep himself; and while thus keeping, as well as being kept, he is beyond the reach of the enemy.

Amidst the conflict and the strife, how prone are we to forget that there is a place where the wicked one cannot touch us; there is "a highway," of which it is said, "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon;" and that path is called "the way of holiness." This describes the position of him who *stands* having on the whole armour of God.

What is God's armour but God's Christ, given to the believer to be taken up and to be put on by him, remembering that then he will be able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the wicked one? Not *some*, but *all*; and that which the shield quenches, touches not him who is thus under its mighty protection. We have, too, that word which was spoken by the Lord to Abraham, "I am thy Shield."

The connexion between Isaiah xxxv. 8, 9, and this passage in John is very striking, connecting, as both do, the immunity of the path from the enemy with the power of that holiness from which it springs. He who keeps himself and keeps his garments undefiled, is he who, walking in the way of holiness, has learnt experimentally that "he who is born of God sinneth not," and that therefore "the wicked one toucheth

him not." This way of holiness is for the redeemed; and redemption is the power enabling us to walk in it; for the precious blood is not only God's remedy *for* sin as putting it away, but, in the power of the Holy Ghost, it is God's remedy *against* sin, and a certain victory over it.

May the Lord enable us to live by faith, rejecting and disallowing everything that is seen, looking only at the unseen, and thus fulfilling our high calling to walk by faith and not by sight.

The Lord bless these thoughts on our calling and responsibilities as the begotten ones of God, that He may be more abundantly glorified in those whom, in infinite grace and condescension He has made children, and if children heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Amen.

---

### THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

God's goodness is expressed as early as Genesis ii. 8, in a way not often noticed. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed." He had made everything good; but when He came to provide for His creature man, He was not satisfied with sending him abroad into the world—beautiful though it was, and filled with proofs of His love—but He took the pains, as it were, to plant a garden, setting out a certain spot in which to put "every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food;" not only providing for the sustenance of the object of His love, but placing around him every delight wherever he turned his eyes.

The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," instead of being, as many have supposed, a limitation of

man's happiness, was as essential as anything in the garden to complete it; it was a token that man was subject to, and dependent upon, God. This is the very foundation of the creature's happiness.

In Deuteronomy viii. 7-10, we have another expression of this goodness of God in quite another state of things. Man, having fallen, was taken up again in Abraham—was again brought into relation to God by promise, and He, in the joy of His heart, sets Himself again to promote the enjoyment and blessing of His creature. The first part of the chapter describes how Israel had been brought into a condition of absolute dependence upon God. (verses 3-5.)

He would have His people happy in depending upon Him for everything. He takes away all outward resources to bring them to Himself. He not only supplies their daily need, but He is Himself that supply. He would have their hearts trust Him for everything. And then He announces further what was in His heart to give them—"A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." Oh, what riches were there, beloved! and mark with what evident pleasure this good land was described. Let our minds dwell on this gushing stream of goodness which was in the heart of God toward His creatures, and see if it does not invite the confidence of every soul.

I will now draw your attention to another testimony, which is that of an adoring worshipper, who, luxuriating in thoughts of God's goodness, breaks out into these rapturous words, "Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee;

which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" (Psalm xxxi. 19, 20.) The expression is so beautiful, goodness *treasured up*, put by, to be distributed to those who fear Him.

Then in Psalm cvii. we are reminded of God's great goodness and love to poor erring man in all the depths of misery brought on by his own sin and folly. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" It is as if God were watching for an opportunity to meet man in the extremities into which he had brought himself by folly and rebellion, eagerly embracing the time when he is at his wit's end to show him extra kindness and love, and grant deliverance in spite of his departure and sin.

We are utterly incapable of entering into the depths of the unmingled, unbounded, ineffable enjoyment God proposes to Himself in blessing His people. Language fails to express His joy in making others happy, and because of the selfishness of our nature, it is beyond us to fully comprehend. Oh, that He would plant this truth so deeply in our hearts that it might be an antidote to the poison of the devil's lie which naturally rankles there, that God is a niggard, that He is unwilling to expend His treasures of happiness upon us! What a lie that is! He is thirsting, as it were, to give Himself and all His riches to His people, ransacking the universe in order to fill their hearts to overflowing, to satiate them with goodness.

Just notice another passage in Zephaniah iii. 14-17. In all these passages mention is made, not so much of what are the feelings of the recipients, though it must necessarily follow that they also will be happy, but it is *God's* happiness that is spoken of—*His* joy in doing that which springs out of His own heart of love. Goodness is His very nature, and to do good His delight!—From *The Goodness of God*.

THE BASKET OF FIRST-FRUITS; OR,  
WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

DEUTERONOMY xxvi, 1-10.

IN this blessed ordinance—the presentation of the basket of first-fruits—we are taught much spiritual truth; truth that is preeminently needed in the present day, and with which the soul of the believer must be well acquainted, and upon which he must feed, if he would grow up into the image of Christ, “rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith.”

In the first place we see that this was an ordinance that could only be observed when Israel was in real and actual possession of the land. Egypt with its groaning and bondage, its idolatry and all its associations, must be left behind, ere they could be in a position to present the basket of first-fruits. The wilderness with all its trials and sorrows must have been traversed, and Jordan with its lesson of death and resurrection, passed; and Israel in the present enjoyment of Canaan, ere its fruits could be offered in thanksgiving to the Lord.

So it is with believers now. There can be no true offering of praise (of which the basket of first-fruits is a striking type) until there is a conscious and enjoyed deliverance from condemnation, and an assurance of having passed from death unto life; and when this is the case, worship will flow forth as the natural result. But let it be remembered that a known and enjoyed salvation must always precede true worship. The very essence of worship is praise, and there cannot be praise in the heart while there is any uncertainty

as to whether salvation is present and complete, and until God's love is known and apprehended. In Christ God has revealed Himself as a *just* God and a *Saviour*, as one who, having received at the hands of our blessed Substitute payment in full for all His righteous demands, can and does *now* justify every sinner who trusts in the atoning work of Jesus. When this truth is simply received as the testimony of the living God, who cannot lie, peace is the result, and worship flows forth spontaneously.

Joy in the Lord is the spring and power of all true worship and service; we can only do either acceptably as we are well grounded in the grace of God, and know Him as our "exceeding joy," and our eternal portion. God's order always is, first *deliverance*, then *worship*, then *service*.

"Thou shalt take of the first of all the fruits of the earth, which thou shalt bring of the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place His name there." The first-fruits of that land which the Lord had given to Israel were to be rendered back to Him as an offering of praise and thanksgiving. How full of grace is this! What a picture of the matchless condescension of God, that He should receive of His own, and yet reckon it to be the offering of His people! He first gives the land to Israel, and then they in gratitude give back again to Him that which is the product of His rich bounty, and the proof of His love.

The Lord had previously claimed the *first-born* as His own portion, now He demands the *first-fruits*; both the life He has redeemed—the first-born—and the

product of the land He has given—the first-fruits—are His own peculiar property. It was so with Israel of old; it is much more so, and in a higher degree, with the Church of God now, which He has purchased with His own blood.

Love always begets love, and especially when it is manifested to an utterly unworthy object. When the love of God to guilty, ruined man is apprehended by the soul, there must be a response—it cannot be otherwise. The most obdurate heart must melt before the revelation of such love. And further, when the soul of the believer enters into the deeper truth of God's delight in His children, and learns that Jehovah's portion and inheritance is in "sinners saved by grace," what can the language of the heart be? Surely the deep and earnest desire and purpose must be to render all as a living sacrifice to Him.

In order to get power to do this, we must enter into the presence of God, behold the manner of His love, and contemplate HIM whose life on earth was one continual burnt offering of sweet savour to God, one perpetual basket of first-fruits. As we gaze upon the walk, life, and person of Jesus, we shall receive power to follow in His footsteps.

But while we bask in the full sunlight of God's love and favour, let us not forget what He demands from us. He revealed Himself to Israel as "the Lord, whose name is Jealous." (Ex. xxxiv. 14.) He was jealous over them as His redeemed people, and while His heart yearned to feed them with the finest of the wheat, and to make their peace flow as a river, yet in consequence of their base ingratitude in forsaking Him who had brought them out of the house of bondage

into the good land, for gods of wood and stone, He gave them up for a time to their enemies ; and instead of being the head of the nations they became the tail, a bye-word, a hissing, and a reproach.

God is the same holy, jealous God now. Having purchased us at such a price, and from such a pit of death and judgment, He is jealous over our affections. They are no longer to be set on this present evil world, fast ripening for the sickle of divine wrath, but they are to be concentrated upon Him, who is gone into the heavens, who is our life, and who will soon be manifested in glory, and we with Him.

What should the child of God have to do with this world? Nothing, except as the sphere in which he is called to show forth the virtues of Jesus. It is still the same world as crucified the Lord of glory. What then can the servant have to do with that which disowned and rejected his Master?

Let us then lay this to heart, and seek divine power to surrender our hearts as *first-fruits* to Him. Is He not worthy of our love? Has He not proved His right of ownership over us by giving Himself for us? And shall it not be our joy, our highest delight, to render back to Him as a praise-offering all that we have and are? First, let us yield our hearts; then our lives will surely follow, and the talents with which He may have entrusted us will be used for His glory.

The Israelites were commanded to go unto the place which God had chosen, and to the high priest that was in those days. In this dispensation we have the heavenly reality of which this was the shadow. Our place of worship is the Holiest, the access to which



has been opened through the rent veil, the blessed sin-atoning sacrifice of God's Lamb; our time for worship is always; our occasion—everything, and our authority—God's word. Oh, what a near place to God are we brought into, beloved. What ceaseless praises should flow forth from our hearts unto our God and Father who hath *so* blessed us!

In the epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 15), Paul gives a beautiful but very concise commentary on this ordinance of the presentation of the basket of first-fruits: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to (or confessing) His name." *By Him*: Jesus at the right hand of God is our priest, and the only priest that we need; none but He must be allowed to come between God and the sinner, or the Father and His child. He receives and presents to God the praises of His people, like the priest of old received the basket from the hands of the worshipping Israelite. What a blessed Priest is He! He "continueth ever, having an unchangeable priesthood." Well may we then draw near with boldness into the Holiest, and begin now to chant that "new song" which will be our never-ceasing subject in the ages of eternity.

Mark next the confession of the worshipper. "I profess this day unto the Lord thy God that I am come," etc. Here is the thankful acknowledgment of the goodness of the Lord in bringing him into the land. "*I am come*" was the language of His lips; not "I am hoping to come." He knew he was in the land, and he had brought tangible proofs that he was in possession of it.

There should be the same assurance, the same cer-

tainty, the same enjoyment of present blessing with believers now ; but alas ! we see many still standing outside the place of blessing, and doubting both the grace and the power of God—His grace to pardon and receive them, and His power to fulfil His word. They know not whether they are saved or not, and as a consequence have no joy, and no peace, but are continually harassed with doubts and fears. Such a state of soul greatly dishonours the name and promises of God. He has declared unmistakably in His word, that all who believe on Jesus are pardoned, justified, and accepted, and to question this is virtually to make God a liar.

In true worship there will always be a remembrance of our past low estate, of the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged. So we find the further confession was, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father . . . . and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage." We should never forget, in the abundance of the blessings that are bestowed upon us by a gracious Father's love, what rebels we once were, and what a fearful judgment we have been delivered from. It is very helpful at times to partake a little of the "bitter herbs," it sharpens our appetite for praise, and sends forth anew from our hearts "thanksgiving unto the Father," who "hath called us out of *darkness* into His marvellous light."

The children of Israel were often reminded of that low estate from which the grace of Jehovah had lifted them, and especially so in the yearly recurrence of the passover. In that ordinance they had presented to their recollection the love and pity that had saved

them from death by the "blood of the Lamb." In like manner are we reminded in the Lord's supper of that judgment which was our due, and which fell upon our blessed, sinless Substitute. "This do in remembrance of me" were our dear Lord's own words, and can we ever remember Him without thinking of His agony, His sufferings? And why did that holy One thus suffer? To bring us, the guilty, nigh, to atone for our sins, and to reconcile us unto God. His work of redemption, and His blessed person, what *He has done* for us, and what *He is* to us, are the themes upon which it is our privilege and delight to dwell at such times.

When we are thus brought to gaze by faith upon Jesus, there is no profession of human merit; the light of His presence makes bare the chambers of the imagery of the human heart, and one glance within reveals its deep abyss of sin and iniquity. There is nothing to boast of in self or nature. "A Syrian ready to perish," is the stock from whence we spring, bondage our natural condition, and death our just desert. But while this is perfectly true, faith lays hold upon the risen Jesus at God's right hand, beholds Him as the One in whom His people are perfectly and for ever accepted, and raises a joyful song—"The Lord has triumphed gloriously." "He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey."

On earth the song begins,—

In heaven more sweet and loud,—

"To Him that cleansed our sins

By His atoning blood;

"To Him," we sing in joyful strain,

"Be honour, power, and praise. Amen."

## SERVICE THE FRUIT OF WORSHIP.

DEUTERONOMY xxvi. 11-19.

SERVICE to God is the natural consequence of worshipping in spirit and in truth. In the New Testament the word λατρεύω is sometimes rendered "to worship," and sometimes "to serve." This shews their close connection—they are inseparable. The joy which fills the heart that is full of praise *must* flow out. It is impossible to restrain it. David, when he was happy in Jehovah, having brought the ark of God back to its place, danced before the Lord, and after offering burnt sacrifices and peace offerings, "he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine." (1 Chron. xvi. 2, 3.)

If we turn to John vii. 38, we find the same thought. The Lord Jesus there says, "He that believeth on me, . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Thus it must ever be. When the joy of the Lord is filling the believer, he will seek that others should share in the blessing. True joy is unselfish, impartive—it cannot abide alone; it is like God its author.

So in this portion of God's word we find (Deut. xxvi. 11), "Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." The Levite, unto whom the Lord had given no portion, and the stranger were alike to share in the good things His love had provided. This is

very important. If the Lord has blessed us *in Christ* with all spiritual and eternal blessings, it is in order that we should first rejoice in Him ourselves, and then desire and labour that the stranger and the portionless should also partake with us.

This truth is beautifully exemplified in the next verse. The Israelite was commanded to give tithes of his possessions to "the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled." And how much more is it incumbent upon us who are called by the name of Christ to go and do likewise? He, our great example, has called us as His disciples to follow in His footsteps. He went about doing good; He found His delight in imparting joy and happiness to the poor sin-stricken children of man. And surely, if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, it will be our delight to let His grace flow forth from our lips, and His life be manifested in us by living fruit.

In Heb. xiii. 16, we read, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This immediately follows "giving thanks to His name," to which it is inseparably linked; and "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." He has coupled fruit-bearing to living union with Christ, works to faith, and "doing good" to "giving thanks."

One great device of the enemy of our souls is to put good works out of their proper place, to make them a necessity in order to be saved, instead of the fruit of salvation. Many are thus stumbled, and seek to do that which God has declared to be an impossibility, that is, to bring a clean thing out of an unclean.

The tree must first be made good ere its fruit can be good; the unclean fountain must be purified before its waters can be sweet and clear.

When Satan fails in this, his great aim is to make the children of God ignore good works as unnecessary, to pervert the grace of God into lasciviousness, and in short to say, "Sin, that grace may abound." This is painfully the case in the present day, for in no other way can we account for the low standard of walk among those who profess the name of Jesus. Nothing can be more diametrically opposed to the lessons which *grace* teaches, as recorded in Titus ii. 12, "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Works certainly do not save, for "by grace are ye saved through faith;" but without them there cannot be true life in the soul. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the test which our blessed Lord Jesus Himself gave. We read also in Eph. ii. 10, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*," and again in James ii. 17, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Similar passages might be adduced in great numbers, but these will suffice to shew the importance which God attaches to good works—service to the Lord Jesus as the outflow of thankful hearts—the result and not the means of salvation.

I would earnestly press this upon your attention, beloved, because it concerns in the first place the honour of our God and the name of our blessed Jesus, and also the happiness and joy of our own souls, for it is an indisputable fact that a fruit-bearing Christian is a happy one.

In the next two verses (13, 14) the Holy Ghost brings before our notice a very important point—separation from uncleanness. This is a *sine qua non*, without which there cannot be acceptable and happy service rendered to the Lord. “Holiness becometh thine house, O God, for ever.” “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.”

The path of the child of God, as defined by Scripture, is one of entire separation from the world—separation not only from its grosser and more patent evils, but also from its vanities, its pleasures, and its associations. The love of the world is quite incompatible with the love of the Father. Communion with the Father and the Son is only to be enjoyed as we are walking in the light.

It is imperative on the believer in Jesus to seek to walk with clean and unspotted garments through this defiling and defiled scene. Growth in grace and conformity to Christ will be attained just in proportion as we keep ourselves unspotted from the world. This is one great end of redemption; the Lord Jesus “gave Himself for our sins, that He might redeem us from this *present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father.”

Lastly, we come to the mutual avouchment of God and His people. This is a large and blessed subject, and to enter into it fully would occupy pages. We will just for a little contemplate the ineffable transcending grace of our God that thus condescends to avouch us to Himself as His own possession. It will be the wonder and praise of eternity that He should have stooped so low, even to raise us, poor bond-slaves

of sin and Satan, to His own glory, to be "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

The Lord did not set His love upon Israel because of any worthiness or attractiveness in them; neither is there anything in us which could be viewed as a cause why He should have chosen us in Christ Jesus to be "the riches of His inheritance." All is of grace—causeless, matchless, unutterable grace.

"Grace all the work shall crown  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise."

The believer can also through the same grace claim the infinite and eternal God as his portion, taking up in faith the language of Scripture: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul." "My beloved is mine, and I am His." "Thou art *my* God."

Oh, the eternal blessedness of all who can in truth appropriate such wondrous words to themselves! Verily, if God had not thus spoken, we should indeed draw back and say, "Such things are too high for us, too good for such sinners as we." But seeing it is the testimony of the only true and living God, let us boldly lay hold of these sublime realities, and not through unbelief or worldliness fail to enjoy these things that are freely given to us by God.

In conclusion: Since God has so richly blessed us by bringing us out of darkness into His marvellous light, and making us in Jesus His own blood-bought possession, shall we not consecrate our ransomed powers, all that we have and are, to Him and to His service? And in His grace may He make us what He would have made Israel, had they continued faithful



to His covenant, "high above all nations, . . . in praise and in name and in honour, . . . a holy people unto the LORD thy God." Amen.

Oh, by the mighty, energizing power  
Of God the Holy Ghost, apply Thy word!  
With unveiled face may I therein each hour,  
As in a glass, behold Thy beauty, Lord!  
Into my soul Thy glorious fulness pour,  
Till Christ, not I, lives in me evermore.

Thus let me know the joy Thy love bestows,  
Thus live upon the treasures of Thy grace,  
Thus apprehend the blessed peace that flows  
From dwelling in the shinings of Thy face:  
Draw nearer—nearer still—and let me hold  
Sweet fellowship with Thee, my risen Lord.

---

## THE PASSOVER IN THE DAYS OF JOSIAH.

(Read 2 Chron. xxxv.)

THE Bible is a revelation of God—a gradual unfolding of what He is in Himself. To know HIM is life eternal; and grace and peace are *multiplied* to us through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. He desires to make us intensely happy—to gratify all the cravings of our hearts, and therefore He has given JESUS as our portion, and is ever ready to reveal to us the fulness treasured up in Him. He is indeed a satisfying portion; and as we learn out His exceeding preciousness, our souls increasingly declare—

“O precious Jesus, there’s indeed  
Enough in Thee to meet our need!  
Enough in Thee to make us glad!”

In His favour is life, and in His presence is fulness of joy; and nothing short of that holy, happy fellowship with HIMSELF, which He has redeemed us to

enjoy, can satisfy *us*, or meet His desires concerning *us*.

The history of Israel is specially helpful, because it opens out so many secrets of the Lord's heart. We not only *read* that He is merciful and gracious, but His longsuffering and lovingkindnesses are displayed in such a variety of ways, that again and again we are constrained to fall down before Him with adoring gratitude, and rejoice that this God is our God for ever and ever.

His people's wickedness and rebellion only seem to draw out His resources, and become a means of manifesting the treasures of His grace. Verily He delights to devise a way by which His justly-banished prodigals may be restored to His presence and favour!

Thus we find that when Israel, notwithstanding His great goodness, turned aside from Him to worship idols, not only did He send His prophets to them (rising up early and sending them), beseeching them to return to Him that He might have mercy upon them, and heal their backslidings; but again and again He raised up and empowered some chosen vessel to destroy idolatry, and bring them back to hear and obey His law.

It was so in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah. Both these kings were earnest servants of God, prepared and taught by Him to withstand the full tide of evil which their fathers had countenanced, and indeed delighted in. Both of them did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. They cleansed the land of idols, repaired the temple, re-established the worship of God, made a covenant with Him, and gathered the people together, and commanded them to keep the passover and return to the Lord their God.

There is, however, one marked difference between the work of these two kings. Though Josiah was most earnest and zealous in his determination to obey the Lord, and "turned not aside to the right hand or to the left," and "his heart was tender before the Lord," yet the people were so sunk in idolatry and carelessness that they seem to have merely *submitted* to the king's authority, instead of seeking the Lord for themselves.

The Spirit of God distinctly states, that when Josiah made a covenant with the Lord, he *caused* all that were present in Jerusalem to stand to it, and *made* them to serve the Lord. And *he* was the only one who rent his clothes and wept, when for the first time he heard the words of the law, and discovered how grievously they had sinned. Throughout his reign there seems to have been an *indifferent* submission to his commands, instead of a spirit of self-judgment and humiliation; while in the days of Hezekiah we read that "the Lord prepared the people," so that they gladly joined with him in his efforts to return to the Lord.

The results of this difference are very instructive, and are brought out in the description of the two passovers which were kept in their reigns.

In Josiah's reign the passover was observed according to *all* the ordinances prescribed in the law of Moses; so that "there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah." But though outside obedience was so perfect, there is no mention made of joy and gladness, no taking counsel to keep other seven days because of their delight in the Lord.

There is decided teaching for us in this—a warning

word from our God. We look back to the passover in Hezekiah's days, and are greatly encouraged as we mark the exceeding blessedness which flowed from an effort—imperfect, and in some respects disorderly, as it was—to obey the Lord. But here we learn that the most perfect *outward* obedience may possibly be accompanied with *inward* coldness and indifference; and whenever this is the case, there will be a lack of the blessing the Lord desires to give.

If we would be obedient children, our public assemblies must be ordered according to His written word. He has commanded us to gather together in His name, to meet with Him, and worship Him in spirit and in truth, and hear what He has to say to us. We are slow indeed in learning that we do not need anyone to preside over and lead our worship; for Christ Himself has promised to be with us. He is present to manifest Himself, to draw out our hearts in prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, and to satisfy our souls as with marrow and fatness.

Still it is quite possible to have scriptural form without spiritual power; and we need to be alive to this danger, that we may guard against it. We may seek to follow out the Lord's directions as to meeting together, owning Him as Lord and Head, and recognising the various members as set in the body for its edification; we may try to carry out the simple instructions of the Word as to partaking of the Lord's Supper (our passover), and yet be unable to say that we have *kept the feast*; we may eat the bread, and drink the wine, in remembrance of the broken body and shed blood of our blessed Lord, with the usual accompaniments of prayer, singing, and ministry in

the Word, and yet there may be no burning hearts, no bursts of praise, no joy unspeakable. The Lord's Supper may thus dwindle down into a cold-hearted remembrance of His death. Let us beware of this, and seek that real fellowship with our God which cannot fail to gladden our hearts.

It is also possible that Christians may be influenced by a superior in talent or spiritual gift, and gather round the gifted brother, and look to and lean upon *him*, instead of coming to meet the Lord, and to feast with Him. In such cases there may be external order; but if the Lord is not confided in and waited on, there will probably be a mere imitation of spiritual worship and cold formality under the profession of scriptural order.

There is another great point of difference between the way in which these two kings set to work. Hezekiah began by repairing and cleansing the temple, and seeking to bring back the people to the true worship of God; and after their *hearts* were set right, they went forth spontaneously to cleanse the land of idols. Josiah began by cleansing the land—the outside—and then sought to repair the temple.

We must not blame Josiah; for he was very young, and the law of the Lord was lost, so that in the early part of his reign he had never heard it. He acted up to the light he had, and the Lord was well pleased with him. Still there is teaching for us in it.

If we would effectually help our fellow-christians, we must seek to bring them *at once* into the place of privilege and blessing which the Lord has given them, and the result of enjoying His presence and worshipping Him will *necessarily* be increased devotedness to Him.

We cannot work ourselves up to God by gradual reformation or obedience; but He has made a new and living way through the precious blood of His own Son, whereby we may draw nigh to Him, and have that blessed intercourse with Him which would induce and empower us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

We find Hezekiah exhorting, beseeching, entreating; and his word was with power; so that the hearts of the people were stirred. And surely now effectual ministry is that which rouses the affections, and produces a real desire to draw near to the Lord.

It is His great delight to bless us; and not only has He poured out the riches of His grace upon us in giving His beloved Son to put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, but in the greatness of His wisdom He has devised and planned a way in which He may bring us into special nearness to Himself, and so reveal Himself in us by the power of His Spirit that we may be constrained to yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him.

Let us seek to give Him His true and rightful place, whether in our hearts or in our public meetings, and we shall surely prove *how full* the blessing He can give. Let us gather together simply as believers in Jesus, confiding in Him to lead our prayers and praises, and minister the word to us through those whom He has gifted for that purpose; and at the same time let us beware lest this professed dependence upon God degenerate into the wilfulness or self-sufficiency of the flesh.

The flesh is always ready to usurp the Lord's place in the assemblies of His people. Often indeed a godly man is appointed as the minister, and *unwittingly*, yet

really, displaces the Lord by undertaking to do everything himself.

But there is a more subtle way of displacing Him. While *professedly* depending upon and recognising HIM as present to order our worship, one and another may rise, *unbidden* by Him, and give out a hymn, or pray, or even seek to minister the word. Surely this is confusion in His sight, and grievous to His Spirit.

May He make us very watchful about this, and teach us so to apprehend His presence, and believe in His *willingness* and *power* to speak to us, that none may venture to open their lips, unless led of HIM to do so. We are *not* straitened in Him. HE will not disappoint our expectations. He is more ready to give than we are to receive; and wonderful and glorious will be the blessing and joy of such dependance upon Him. May He lead us more and more fully into it for His own name and mercy's sake. Amen.

---

“ALIVE FROM THE DEAD.”

ROM. vi. 13.

It is of infinite moment to the believer clearly and fully to know the mind of God. All that is revealed is needed by him that he may be thoroughly furnished. Nothing is unnecessary. Except so far as the faithful word sheds light on our path, all is darkness.

The believer is as unable as the unbeliever to arrive at truth by his reason, or to develop it out of his own consciousness. God has not endowed him with any faculty by which, apart from the inspired word opened up and applied by the Holy Spirit, he can apprehend anything of the unseen and eternal aright.

Thus necessarily the believer cannot, apart from revelation, know anything rightly and assuredly respecting his own state. The unbeliever, as we may all learn from a retrospect of the days when we were children of wrath even as others, little apprehends that he is under that righteous and fearful wrath, though conscience will at times suggest that some terrible retribution must be the issue of a godless life.

And so it is with the child of God. He has indeed, by virtue of the new creation which God has wrought in him, the faculty of apprehending that which is spiritually discerned and beyond the reach of all natural powers, but he has no intuitive knowledge of this. He cannot think anything out for himself of the mind of God. He can learn it only as far as he finds it revealed, and when revealed he can learn it to profit only by humbly and reverently submitting himself to the teaching of Him whose gracious office it is to lead the dark, and foolish, and sinful, yet renewed, creature into all truth.

It is not, then, by virtue of any impression made on his mind, or by any reasoning of his understanding, that the believer arrives at the knowledge of his own salvation. He has passed over from death to life; he was under condemnation, and now is justified; he was an enemy, and now is reconciled, a beloved child of the living God. How does he know these blessed truths? Only because *it is written*; because he has now, as one of the faculties of his new and heavenly life, the power, possessed by no natural man, of spiritually apprehending that which is written, and because he has now for his guide and enlightener the indwelling Spirit of God.



What, then, is the testimony of the word of God as to the condition of every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ? It is that he is saved; that he is at once and for ever, by that act of God's infinite power and love which cast him on Christ, justified and washed from all the inherent sinfulness of his depraved nature, and cleansed from the guilt of his own unnumbered sins (Col. ii. 13); that whereas he was before dead in trespasses and sins, he is now quickened—made alive—together with Christ.

The believer could not have thought this out for himself. He might have concluded, his eyes being now opened to see the enormity of sin in the sight of a holy God, that the case of fallen man was beyond remedy; or he might have been led by his own reflections to some vague hope of deliverance at the end; or he might have supposed that salvation would be attained to by the few who might seem to be following most closely in the footsteps of the crucified One; but peace—settled, abiding peace, peace resting on a foundation not to be moved, he could never have attained to, for he has no instinct or intelligence which of itself could assure him of the thoughts, and counsels, and unchangeable purpose of God.

How unspeakably important, then, is it that the child of God should turn away from his own vain imaginings, from his own wisdom, which is but utter foolishness, and betake himself in simplicity to the unerring word. What says the God of truth? What says He who cannot deceive, He who alone can make known to me the unseen, He who alone can tell me what are the requirements of His holiness and His righteousness, and how these have been met, and what

is to all who believe the blessed result? There is no ambiguity here—no place for a doubt or a question. Every soul that believes in the Lord Jesus, every vile and perishing sinner that has been driven by a sense of guilt to take refuge under the shadow of His cross and in the sprinkling of His precious blood, is ALIVE FROM THE DEAD. He was indeed dead—dead, so that none but God could have given life—but he has been made alive. God has breathed into him the breath of a higher life than that by which the first Adam walked on earth. He is now a son of God, begotten of God, united by a heavenly and never-ending life to Him who is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

"Alive from the dead." Amazing and most precious truth! And this is the condition of *all* the children of God, of the babe in Christ, of the feeble and halting, as well as of the more faithful, and obedient, and earnest believer. And it is the work of God—perfect, complete—to which we can add nothing, and from which none can take away. We were under sentence of death, and justly liable to it, even death eternal: this sentence, through the wondrous grace of God, we have suffered in Him who hung upon the cross. In Him we died—not only He for us—in Him we were buried, and in Him we rose again, so that death hath no more dominion over us, and our place is where He is, at the right hand of God. "For ye are dead, and your life has been hid with Christ in God." And thus we have no more condemnation, for "He that has died has been justified from sin." "So reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Alive from the dead." Dear brethren in Christ,

are we all apprehending this? Are those apprehending it who spend days and years in doubtings, and fears, and questionings? God's word is sure. When all else shall have passed away it will abide unchanged. You know at least this, if you know nothing else, that God has opened your eyes to your guilt, of which you before thought little, and in some measure to the preciousness of Him who died that you might live, so that you cannot withhold from God the acknowledgment in this respect, “Whereas I was blind now I see.”

You know that your sinfulness has brought you in helplessness to Christ, that He is all your hope, and that you can look for help to none beside. And you know that to every soul which has been thus led by God, all the promises of God are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus. You are alive from the dead—alive by no work of your own, and for no merit of your own, but because God has had mercy on you, and for His great love, wherewith He loved you, He has quickened you together with Christ.

And while you know this, doubting, cast down, or lukewarm child of God, to be the certain and unmistakable testimony of His word, you allow your evil heart of unbelief to draw you away by its own natural and corrupt suggestions, which will always be opposed to the unfathomable grace of God. Your heart tells you that you are unworthy, and sets before you your constant failure, your daily and hourly unfaithfulness and ingratitude, and leads you possibly to think it but a becoming humility thus to continue distrusting God's word and love.

Is it then the worthy that are saved? Is it a mistake that Jesus came into the world, and died for sin-

ners such as you, the most guilty, the most helpless, to save them to the uttermost, and that His precious blood makes the vilest clean? And is it presumption to believe God, who cannot lie? Oh, cast away your folly and your unbelief. Cease to listen to a heart out of which proceeds no thought that is not evil. Rest henceforth on the word of your Father in heaven. Grieve, yea, grieve as you have never yet grieved, that you should walk so unworthily of Him who has called you; humble and abase yourself more and more as you are taught more fully to see how utterly undeserving you are, but add not to all this sinfulness the sin of doubting God, and *making Him a liar*, the ingratitude which, while it receives His best of blessings, even eternal life through His beloved Son, denies Him even the acknowledgment of it, and makes Him no return.

"Without faith it is impossible to *please* Him." Unless we believe simply and implicitly—with the faith of little children—in the love which has brought us from death to life, we shall not give God the joy which he looks for from His beloved children. As it is only through belief in Him who died for us that spiritual life breaks in upon the soul, so it is only by daily and hourly apprehension of the love of God to us, by an abiding recognition of it, notwithstanding all failure and shortcoming on our part, that the Christian is strengthened to walk with God, and to be well-pleasing to Him. Love is the only source of any real power to follow Christ, to take up our cross, to deny ourselves, to mortify the old man.

"Alive from the dead!" Are we again discerning this, and bearing it in mind, who manifest in our walk and conversation so little of the new creature, so little

conformity to Christ? What of the worldly Christian, the slothful Christian, the Christian in whom may be more plainly seen the desires of the flesh or the mind than the fruit of the Spirit, the Christian whose heart is set on things below, whose energies are called forth by earthly vanities or earthly pursuits, rather than constrained by the love of Christ? Do not such abound, children of God, of whom their Father may ask what more could He have done for them than He has done, and who yet do little or nothing for Him?

Brethren, we are alive from the dead not in order that we should live in those things to which in Christ we died, but that we should be as dead to them, and walk in newness of life? How shall we who died to these things continue any longer therein? We died in Christ to the world and the things of the world; to the natural man, and to all his desires and objects and engagements; to the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life—a comprehensive summary of all that nature, whether in its grosser or in its most refined and most highly cultivated manifestations, approves and esteems and holds dear.

We have not been delivered from the death in the path to which these things lie, in order that we should turn again to them. Our character should correspond with the place of holiness and blessing to which God has called us. “Ye are dead”—“Mortify therefore (put to death) your members which are upon the earth.” The old man—all that we are by nature—all that the most amiable and polished and moral and religious amongst us would or could have attained to without the grace of God—all, in short, that is not of the new creation is *to be crucified*.

The new life is strengthened only by the daily dying of the old. What know we of this dying life? It is to this that the child of God is called. It is the way of peace and blessedness. God's law for our redemption and for our daily growth is the same—through death to life. And it is in this path only that we shall have fellowship with Christ.

That we are alive from the dead is not only a precious *truth* and a constraining  *motive* for a holy walk: it is also an effective *power*, a source of all needed strength. We are one with Christ—His strength is ours. Dying in Him we have been freed from all that held us in bondage. An open door is set before the weakest child of God, and none can shut it. In Christ all things are ours, and in Him, if we will be faithful, we shall be more than conquerors.

One further thought may be of service. The word of God is not "alive from *death*," but alive *out of or from among dead bodies*. What a scene it summons up before the instructed eye! It contemplates not only what God has wrought for us individually, whom He has drawn to himself, but also, by way of most deeply solemnising contrast, the condition of others among whom we by nature were. We can suppose the case of a single soul which was dead and was made alive, no other soul ever having existed. This is not the figure which the word of God presents. The picture drawn is that of a soul lying dead among the unnumbered dead around it, and then by the infinite grace of God quickened—raised to life—and called to contemplate itself standing up alive amid the multitude of corpses on which on all sides the eye falls.

Oh, it is a solemn, solemn sight. Solemn would it

have been to have been raised up from death; but, oh, more solemn far to have been raised up while so many lie lifeless at our feet!—to look about at our fellow-creatures, none more guilty than ourselves—ourselves not more deserving than they—*dead*—dead beyond recall—dead, because they will not have life: to walk among such, to find but one here and there alive, and almost all lying in the silence and deformity of corruption and death! Oh, with what feelings should the child of God walk in such a world.

If I stood on some sea shore, the sole survivor of a wreck, looking at the dead bodies around me, of all who but an hour ago were my fellow-voyagers, what would be the thoughts of my heart? Yet how utterly would such a spectacle fall below that which meets the eye of each soul which God has quickened with Christ.

Shall we who have been made alive live like the spiritually dead around? Has the perishing world no claim on us to see us walking as Christ's, and holding forth the word of life? Has God no claim on those whom He has redeemed from death with the precious blood of His own beloved Son? What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

The unreal surrounds us on all sides—the things that are seen and temporal. The scene unfolded by the Spirit of God is a reality. Let us walk in the remembrance of it. It will fill us with abiding thankfulness—to look at the dead, and see what we were and deserved to be: it will press on us our responsibility to be witnesses of Christ; and it will strengthen us while living as the children and servants of the God of love in a needy, guilty world, to keep ourselves in separation from all that is not of Him.

## ISRAEL—A PRINCE WITH GOD.

JACOB received the name of Israel in a mighty conflict with God. God had a conflict with him, and withered his flesh and the sinews of his strength. It was not till Jacob became a helpless withered man, with no power left, that he had power with God. He then clung on; he hung on God's strength and conquered. He prevailed with God and men, and was called *Israel*—prince with God.

There is no greater joy in the heart of God than when His children prevail with Him by their weakness; not by their strength, for "by strength shall no man prevail." "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "When I am weak then am I strong."

"In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision;" no form or ordinance in the flesh, "but a new creature;" a person born again. We must be as helpless as an infant at its birth before we can avail anything in Christ. "As many as walk according to this rule"—or canon, the rule of the new creature—"peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel"—the principedom—"of God," those who prevail with God. We must have the sinews of our natural flesh withered—dead—before we can have strength with God as risen persons.

In proportion as we walk as risen persons by faith in Jesus, we shall prevail with God. "They overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." A strange victory—to be killed and to overcome in death: a strange weapon to overcome with—the blood of the Lamb; they were more than conquerors, though slain. Their victory was not deliverance in this present world, no triumph in the flesh, but power with God from above, a triumph to be seen by-and-by in resurrection.



## "HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE."

FELLOW-CHRISTIANS, receive a loving word of exhortation from one who feels his own great need of what he seeks to inspire in others.

If we believe the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, about the broad and narrow ways, we must believe that the majority of our friends and neighbours and fellow-countrymen, the majority of men and women in the world, are fast going to hell. "Wide is the gate . . . that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat . . . Narrow the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it."

What then should be our conduct towards them? We Christians are the people responsible. No angels hold a commission to preach the gospel. No voices from heaven wake the dead. We alone have this trust committed to our charge, to make known the gospel of God to men.

What bright examples we have in Scripture of the faithful discharge of this trust! I will instance but one; that of him who cried, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel;" who, when men would dissuade him by warnings of prison and death, felt his heart would break if they hindered him (Acts xxi. 13); one whom "tears and temptations" did not weary; whom "bonds and afflictions" did not move; who counted not his life dear to himself, if only he might surrender it with the joy of conscious steadfastness to the end; who could say, "I am pure from the blood of ALL men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL the counsel of God;" who *ceased not* to warn EVERY ONE, night and

day with tears, and yet who worked the while with his hands for the support of himself and his companions." (Acts xx. 17-38.)

He was "troubled on every side," yet not turned aside, he was "perplexed," yet did not despair, "persecuted," yet upheld, "cast down," but toiling on. He lived in daily fear of death, was pressed out of MEASURE, BEYOND STRENGTH, insomuch that he despaired even of life, *yet never seemed to think of giving up his work.* "Afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labours, sleepless nights, fastings," slander, reproach, sorrow, and poverty, (2 Cor. vi.) were the daily details of his history, and were accepted without a murmur. "Fightings without and fears within" were mingled with the most poignant pain that man is called on to suffer; that pain of heart, that disappointed affection, expressed in those touching words, "The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Beatings, stonings, storms and shipwreck, a night and day spent in the ocean, journeying incessantly, danger of drowning and of robbers, perils from murderous Jews and Gentiles; in cities and in deserts; dangers from the violence of mobs of idolators, and the perfidy of false brethren; weariness and pain, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness—these were the weapons with which the devil sought to bar his way and turn him aside. But in vain; he believed too certainly what he preached, his doctrines were too great realities, heaven's glory was too bright in his eyes, and hell's torment too vivid to his apprehension for such *trifles* as these to affect him.

On he went in his career of faithfulness, impelled

by an unseen power, and supported by strength not his own. His faith made the unseen future a reality and a substance to him, and the same faith made trials that were seen and keenly felt, to be but as shadows, not worthy for a moment to be compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory beyond.

Let us turn our eyes from Paul to ourselves, my brethren. Our doctrine is his; our creed is the same as his. The glory before us is not another. The souls around us are in the same condition as regards their future state. And yet what comparison can be made between our life and Paul's?

If we were to plead that we could not believe in the doctrines of the Bible, that hell is a fable, and heaven an old wives' tale, that God's love to man is a hollow invention, and the cross of Calvary a worthless tradition, then our lukewarmness would be accounted for. But this is not our case. We are not infidels, but Christians; those who for ourselves believe as Paul believed, but whose faith bears but little fruit as regards our fellow-men.

I do not mean to say that all are called to work as Paul did, for none have the gifts that he possessed; but this I urge, that his life is a reproof to every believer in Christ. Is the care for the souls of others to be left to the gifted preachers of the word exclusively, or have we not all a work to fulfil?

“Stand fast,” says Paul to the saints, the overseers, and the deacons, at Philippi, addressing all as to their duty alike, “in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of *the gospel*.” “Many of the brethren are much more bold to *speak the word* without

fear. Christ is *preached*, and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice." "Shine ye as lights in the world, *holding forth* the word of life." (Phil. i. 14, 18, 27 ; ii. 16.) Thus it is evident that all saints should make the gospel known, one in this way, one in that, one in private, another in public, one by writing, another by preaching, but that all should be at work, "warning every man, and teaching every man" to flee from the wrath to come, and to seek refuge in Christ.

Oh! this is a pernicious evil, this idleness among God's people; this quiet renunciation of responsibility towards our neighbours. To those who watch for the eternal interests of their fellow-men, there are a thousand means by which this great and blessed work of winning souls may be done. Whatever our walk in life may be, it is the same. Only give me a man whose heart is set upon this blessed service, and I will show you one who never lacks opportunities.

May we all be more alive to the solemn realities of eternity, and then, as we go amongst our neighbours and friends, we shall find that openings are easily made. Let us go to them, and receive them with this object in view, so to speak to and influence them, that we may be used of God to give them some eternal blessing. Let us remember that we are left in the world for no other reason but to live to and glorify God, and should earnestly strive to bring souls to Christ.

Then we shall find it impossible to yield ourselves to the trifling and vain conversation about weather, and fashions, and reports of our neighbours' affairs, and the news of the day, with which the precious time of many of God's people is now taken up, while

those they thus trifle with are passing on to hell, in ignorance of that salvation which it is in our power to declare. Let our "morning calls" be henceforth calls to the unconverted to flee from the wrath to come, or calls to God's saints to give themselves more entirely to His service.

Then again with our guests, our servants, our children, the poor around us. We must be faithful to them all. People may be sometimes a little offended now, when we speak to them about their soul's salvation; but lest this should daunt us, let us rather consider how bitterly their reproaches will be heaped upon our heads by-and-bye, when they hear their sentence of eternal punishment pronounced by the Judge, and turn to you and me as if to know why we let them pass us by on the road to destruction without a warning voice.

Oh, speak to them, brothers! speak and keep not silence: "This is a day of glad tidings, and we hold our peace!"

---

## THE CHURCH: THE BODY OF CHRIST.

"The church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all."

"For His Body's sake, which is the church."

THIS wondrous figure gives us a closer union than that of either bride or wife. A man *may* dislike a wife, but "no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." This spiritual union with Christ, which is the position of *every* member, every true believer in Jesus, each soul that trusts Him *only* for salvation, is the cause and source of every other blessing, whether for time or eternity.

By the renewing, converting, quickening, power of God the Spirit the change is made, life is communicated, the work begun, and by the indwelling presence of the same Spirit in the new heart the union with Jesus is maintained, and the Christian is made more and more Christ-like in life and practice in proportion as the union, the ONENESS with HIM, is realized and enjoyed

“ Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee ?  
 O height, O depth of love !  
 One with us on the cursed tree,  
 We're *one* with Thee above.”

By this union we are indeed “blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” “*All* things are yours; *and ye are Christ's*; and Christ is God's.”

As in the natural body every member, however small or insignificant in itself, is joined to the head, and cannot possibly exist apart from it, so it is with every member of Christ. The life flows down from Him—the Head—to every individual Christian. He is our Life, and we are inseparably united to Him by a living and eternal link which no power in heaven, or earth, or hell, can sever.

In the riches of His grace He has not only bestowed upon us life in Himself (as a child receives life from its parents), but He is the continual source and fountain of that life. Without Him we can do nothing; and only as the power and energy of that life flows down from Him into our souls are we able to bring forth fruit to Him. The old man, with its affections and lusts, is still alive within us, and proves itself still mighty for evil. By nature we are entirely under its dominion, and all our powers of mind and body are

yielded to it. The new nature which as believers we have received from Christ, delights in holiness and continually contends against the sin within us. This new nature has no resources in itself, no energies or powers of its own: Christ is our Head, our Life; all our springs are in Him, so that we are dependent, entirely dependent upon Him.

As in the natural body the hand cannot obtain a store of strength and wisdom of its own and use it independently of the head, so is it with the body of Christ. He is our strength, and only as we hang upon Him shall we be capable of doing the things which our renewed nature delights in. To will may be present with us, but how to perform that which is good we find not. If we are not *abiding* in Him we shall continue to prove the wretchedness and unchanged wickedness of our own flesh, instead of learning out the power of the resurrection life of Christ which He has given us, and through which He is able to make us more than conquerors over every sin.

Then again, as the members of His body, we should be in subjection—full, unwavering subjection to Him. How distressing it is when through paralysis or some other disease the members of the human body become either a helpless clog, or else move spasmodically of their own accord. And shall we be satisfied to be paralysed members of the body of Christ, burdening our fellow-Christians, and grieving and dishonouring Him? There *is* balm in Gilead—there *is* a Physician, there. “He healeth all our diseases,” and we may come to Him to give us the health we need, to make us strong and active to do His will. We cannot plead weakness, for He is able to make all grace

abound toward us, that we always having all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work.

Again,—spasmodic action of a limb causes much suffering, and may do much mischief, while it is utterly powerless for good; and if we do our own will, and are careless or indifferent as to what our Head would have us do, we bring suffering upon ourselves, and great dishonour upon His blessed name. We are redeemed that we might yield ourselves, spirit, soul, and body, unto Him, to walk with Him in newness of life and continued obedience to His gracious will.

As the members of Christ we should also bear one another's burdens, share one another's sorrows, enter into each other's joys, and care for and minister to one another in every possible way, shewing the same consideration and tenderness to our brethren as we do to the members of our own body. Surely we greatly fail in this, and that Holy One is continually grieved by the harshness and indifference with which we treat one another. Let us strive to cultivate a loving, gracious spirit, and so sit at His feet and learn of Him, that His meekness and gentleness may fill our souls.

As the body of Christ we are also inseparably joined to one another: one with all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity, united together by the very life of Christ, and baptized into the one body by the one Spirit. This *one* body should be manifested in unity *now* as it will be through all eternity. Instead of being divided and separated, believers *should* all be united together as the visible church on the one ground of life in Christ.



It is the work of Satan to divide and scatter, but were we all subject to Christ our Head, the whole body would be manifestly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, and having nourishment ministered, would be knit together and increase with the increase of God. Then would the world again say, "See how these Christians love one another," and our God would be glorified thereby.

Let us now consider some of the privileges into which the realization of union with Christ introduces us.

1st. *Prayer.* In crying to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for *all* I need for myself or others, I should *see* Jesus at His right hand as there *for me*, and remember that I belong to HIM, am a member of His Body, and as such have a *right* to draw near under the washing of His precious blood, and *plead* with God as one who cannot be denied. "If ye shall ask *anything* in My Name, I will do it." "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask *believing*, ye shall receive." What a power for good we lose from lack of simplicity and child-like trust and affection in coming to the Father with holy reverence and godly fear, yet as *seeing* Jesus and *expecting* an answer for His sake, and that He may be glorified.

A child often asks for something, and not being at once attended to goes away, and, absorbed in play or some other pursuit, forgets what he asked for. Such is surely the great mass of outward prayer that goes up hourly to God. There is little expectation of blessing, little looking for and awaiting the answer, so that prayer-meetings in the churches of Christ become the least interesting, the most dull and worst attended of

all meetings, instead of being crowded with happy souls accustomed to receive a Father's rich blessing, and thirsting for it. The quality and quantity of *real* prayer from an individual Christian, or a number of believers collectively, is the measure of his or their spirituality and usefulness in the world.

It is in connection with prayer in 2 Thess. iii., that we have the apostle uttering, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the *love* of God, and into the *patience* (mar.) of Christ." We need to pray as those who know the love of God in Christ, and come to prove it as HIS children. We need also the patience of Christ. He is our example in this as in everything. Not only "in the days of His flesh" (Heb. v. 7), but now at the right hand of the majesty on high, having heard the words, "Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool," HE patiently awaits the time of HIS manifested glory. He is *there* unceasingly occupied in receiving and saving sinners, and in watching over, caring for, and keeping His saints, until *all* are perfected for ever in His presence. Then, and not till then, His joy will be full, and the kingdoms of this world will be given to Him.

We need also the continued *patience* of prayer, remembering that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years, as one day," that HE loves the earnest constant importunity of a pleading child, and will surely answer for His name's sake. The work of the Spirit in this and in all things, within us and for us, is a steady, constant flow of action in the soul toward God and man. This was especially manifested in the daily, hourly, self-sacrificing life of the Lord Jesus Himself for us, as exhibited in the

four gospels,—*one* fixed object before Him, to *do* the Father's will, to speak His words, in every look and action to shew forth His glory at all cost to Himself, unto death, even the death of the cross.

2nd. In *praise* and *worship*. The natural man loves God's gifts, the saved sinner alone loves God HIMSELF; and only from the ground of peace and reconciliation with HIM can praise and worship spring forth to Him for all His wondrous mercies in Christ. Worship is the spontaneous outflow of a heart filled with the love of God, gushing forth in adoring gratitude to Him who first loved us, and gave Himself for us. As the skylark soaring upwards pours forth its song of praise and worship to its Creator, so does the new born soul towards the Father. In proportion as oneness with Jesus is thought on and realised, praise and worship ascend and cannot be restrained; as the Lord Himself said, "If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out."

Real scriptural worship on earth is simply a foretaste of that to come, a picture of the great church of the Firstborn gathered around the Lord Jesus in heaven; when that word shall be fulfilled, "In the midst of the church I will sing praises unto thee," each soul filled with the Spirit and with love pouring out its heart-notes as led by HIM who is in the midst, and our united worship as one harmonious whole, filling the Father's heart with joy, as He beholds His family happy *in* Jesus, and *with* Him finding all their joy in HIMSELF.

3rd, *Service*. God's *only* perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, was a stranger on the earth, because He was from above, from the bosom of the

Father, and in every way above the things and circumstances in which He found Himself on earth; He was always in full, perfect, spiritual power and union with the Father, dealing with the persons and things by which He was surrounded — “God *manifest* in the flesh.”

So the Lord’s servant should seek to walk in communion with the Father and the Son, his “ear opened to hear as the learner,” his heart too full of God’s love to be turned aside from the path of following his Master. He should seek to be obedient to the faith, single-eyed to the glory of God, true-hearted to Christ, and in union with a risen Jesus above the things of time and sense; so that the difficulties, trials, discouragements, or triumphs in his daily path may be all fields of victory to him in Jehovah’s strength, as he labours in the church or in the world. As the members of Christ, we are exhorted to walk worthy of the vocation where-with we are called, “with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love,” looking forward to the coming of the Lord, when we shall reap the reward of all our self-denial here.

Lastly, in suffering, trial, and affliction. In this the members of the body must be like the Head. As He suffered, we have to “suffer with Him.” This is our appointed path to glory, and in everything the Christian has the sympathy and loving care of the great Shepherd of the sheep Himself; and the support and comfort of each tried one is to feed upon His exceeding great and precious promises. Leaning upon the arm of the Beloved, he will come up from the wilderness strengthened to endure hardness, and run the daily race with-patience. He will be purified in the furnace

instead of destroyed by it, and in process of time will rejoice even in tribulation, as the Father's appointed way of training and fitting him for the place reserved for him in glory.

---

### JESUS—THE BREAD OF LIFE.

“BREAD is prepared food. The corn must be threshed, and winnowed, and ground in a mill, and baked in an oven, before it can be bread for us to eat. So the Lord Jesus Christ was, as it were, threshed by afflictions, winnowed by temptations, and ground in the mill of God's unbounded wrath; and all this was done that He might be *prepared* food, and a fit Saviour for us.

Bread is likewise common food. It is common to the poor as well as to the rich, for the foolish, as well as for the wise. The poor have bread, if they have anything. So the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all sorts of sinners. He is a full, perfect, complete Saviour to all His people, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, noble or ignoble, all of them are beholden to Christ alone for peace and pardon, righteousness and life, grace and holiness. Bread is likewise the stay and staff of life. So the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the food of our souls, but the soul of our souls, the life of our lives.

It hath pleased the Father, that in Christ, the head of the church, should all fulness dwell. From Christ, the head, believers receive a suitable supply. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and His members are complete in Him. In Him they are beloved, chosen, accepted, justified, and blessed. In

Him they have light, life, holiness, and complete salvation.

Christ is the matter of His people's glory, and they do well to glory in Him, and make their boast in Him, and rejoice continually in Him; for He is His people's all, and Jesus Christ is all things to His people."

---

### THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST.

"CHRIST is the head of His whole body, "the church." He dwells in it—"Christ in you the hope of glory." The Holy Ghost is the power of manifested unity on earth. Nothing less than the visible unity of the *whole body* on earth is contemplated and promoted by the Spirit, who forms and dwells in *all* the members of the body *alike*.

To exclude from the pale of the church on earth, except for such cause as is prescribed *in Scripture*, is to supersede the authority of Christ as the Son over His own house, and to overrule the voice of the Holy Ghost in the word which He has inspired, by bowing to the will of man, or to the so-called "authority of the church."

To make, therefore, the acknowledgment of this mystery the Shibboleth of *a part* of the body, saying, "I am of Christ," as if Christ were divided, is a grievous evil; for it makes that which God ordained for unity and edification, and to the praise of His name, the occasion of division and discord, to the dishonour of that name.

In days of evil we are as much responsible to "receive" those who love and hold the truth (3 John), as to reject those who deny the doctrine of Christ.

(2 John.) The first are described (in 1 John) as those who "do righteousness" and who "love them that are born of God." The second are "antichrists," "deceivers," and "those who have not God."

How little more than merely mental is the knowledge we have of this peculiarly precious work of God—this favoured vessel of His wisdom, and object of His eternal purpose of love—the body of Christ! This is the "One Pearl of great price" which the Divine Merchantman, having found, sold all that He had, and went and bought it. This exquisite elaboration of wisdom, love, and power, is the result of the secret and eternally-cherished intention and mystery of God's will and *heart*, which He has brought forth in fulness of time, and which is yet to be accomplished.

Every member of this body, curiously and marvelously made, is animated by the same life as the Eternal Son; dwelt in by the same Holy Spirit; loved with the same love as He is loved; having the same peace, the same joy, the same glory, as the Son who is in the Father's bosom.

Oh, why is it that the members of this body are the very opposite in manifestation to what they ought to be? Why but because the whole body is in a low and sickly state of health? This is the reason of the present ruin! This is the cause why the members of Christ, instead of being the great example of God's love, are, alas! notorious for division and disagreement—for biting and devouring one another.

It is *worldliness* that is the inward disease which shows itself in these external eruptions of evil. Israel's defeat before Ai was not for false doctrine, but it was the love of the world. The Babylonish garment, and the silver, and the gold,—these were the secret cause of that outward defeat. Let us mend our ways. Let us get into inward health, if we expect healthy action."

## WHAT IS "THE CHURCH?"

A WORD TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT CONSIDERED THIS  
QUESTION.

THE word translated "church" is *ekklesia*, from the verb *ekkaleō*, "to call forth." The first mention we have of the church is in Matt. xvi. 18, where our Lord, in reply to Peter's confession of Him as "the Christ, the the Son of the living God," declares that "upon this rock I *will* build my church." In verse 21 we are told that "from that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." It was necessary that all this should happen prior to the formation of "the church."

We read in Acts ii. that *after* the Lord had ascended up to heaven the Holy Ghost was shed forth on the day of Pentecost, and *then*, and not till then, did the Lord commence to build His church. The early disciples (numbering about 120, Acts i. 15) were "all with one accord in one place" on that day (Acts ii. 1), and were all baptised and filled with the Holy Ghost: here was the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise. (Acts i. 5; John xvi. 7, 13.) At the close of Peter's sermon which followed, about 3000 souls were *added*, who believed in the word preached, and they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Thus was the church constituted by divine power, according to divine purpose and promise.

The church is also said to be "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1



Tim. iii. 15), and Christ's purpose is to "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephes. v. 27.) In Colossians i. 18 we read that Christ "is the head of the body, the church;" and further, the church is composed of "lively (or *living*) stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 5.) It is obvious that *only* believers are included; no superiority over one another is here indicated; *all* are stated to belong to the same "holy priesthood."

We thus find from Scripture that "the church is a compact body of *believing* men and women, called by God out of the world "unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 9), to cleave to the one Head, even Christ, to love one another as brethren, to be holy unto the Lord, and to be separate from all and every thing that is not of Christ. (Read 2 Cor. vi. 11-18.)

Are these the characteristics of the professing Church of Christ? Do Christians assemble together with one accord? Do they all abide in the apostles' doctrine? Do they all unite in worship, and in the breaking of bread? On the contrary, is not the real Church of Christ, as a whole, lamentably mixed up with the world, and that to such a fearful extent that it is almost impossible to recognise the one from the other? The results of such an unholy union and commingling are deadness, formality, coldness, and indifference. The church, like the Jews of old, may be said to have mingled themselves with the heathen, and to have learned their ways.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

THE Greek word *koinōnia* is translated "communion" four times, and "fellowship" twelve times—*vide*, 1 Cor. x. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 14, xiii 14; Acts ii. 42; 1 Cor. i. 9; 2 Cor. viii. 4; Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 9; Phil. i. 5, ii. 1, iii. 10; 1 John i. 3, 6, 7; 1 Cor. x. 20. Also, in 2 Cor. vi. 4 the word *metochē*, and in Eph. v. 11 the word *sungkoinōneo*, is translated fellowship. If we turn to these passages we find that no two-sided meaning can be attached to them; there is but *one* meaning, viz., that fellowship or communion refers to partnership or oneness.

The apostle asks, "What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?" Can there be any? Can water mingle with oil? Can light and darkness mingle? Can Christ have fellowship with Belial? How then can the children of God and of light have fellowship or communion with the children of the world? Yet such an anomalous state of things exists, that the majority of God's children have so commingled themselves with the world that in outward conformity they are one with them. Instead of obedience we find expediency; instead of separation we see amalgamation; and instead of living witnesses for Christ we find little or no testimony.

The Church of Christ is called His bride. "I have," says the apostle, "espoused you to one husband" (2 Cor. xi. 2), and in the following verse he expresses his fear "lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." When we look around we can well understand the apostle's

fear. Whether it be in preaching, doctrine, or true worship, the bride has indeed been tempted, and led far astray from "the simplicity that is in Christ." Corruption has been added to corruption, until the truth as it is "in Jesus" has been well nigh lost.

But, thanks be to God, He has not permitted Satan to complete his work. Earnest men and women who love the Lord Jesus Christ are setting aside the traditions of men, and betaking themselves to "the law and to the testimony," and, like the Bereans of old, are searching the Scriptures to determine what is of Christ and His Spirit, and what is not. Errors long accepted as truth by the unenquiring masses are now being freely and fully exposed, and the mere *ipse dixit* of man does not now receive the amen of Christians as in days past. Our Lord has said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.) Here we have a condition and a promise: the believer who fulfils the one will never lack the happy realization of the other.

The church is repeatedly urged to "be followers of God," "to walk in love," "to walk as children of light," to "prove what is acceptable to God," "to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," "to walk circumspectly," to redeem the time, to be "filled with the Spirit," to be filled with spiritual melody, to submit one to another in the fear of God, to be subject to Christ in all things.

The church is Christ's body. (Col. i. 18-24.) Now as the Head is holy, harmless, and undefiled, so should the body be; and in God's sight it is indeed so, for the "life is hid with Christ in God;" but externally, as seen and judged of in the world, it is sadly corrupted

and defiled. I do not refer to defilement of the flesh, but to the spiritual state of the body. I will not, and do not, suppose believers to be living in the commission of fleshly sins; but be it remembered that the spiritual sin of the church at large is of a far more grievous type, and most deeply dishonouring to the Lord. Sin in the flesh is the natural outflow of man's depraved and fallen nature, a part and parcel of the unconverted man; but what a fearful thing it is to contemplate spiritual sin in the members that compose the body of Christ. Departure from Christ in any form is a fearful thing. We need not sit in judgment on the world and its sins, for we have enough, and more than enough, to do to judge ourselves, and in seeking to correct the walk of our fellow-believers.

The church is called upon to own allegiance to none but Christ, to be subject to Him, to follow Him only, and in everything to shew forth her intimate connection and union with Christ; and when the church is called upon to be faithful to Christ, and expressly forbidden to have fellowship with the world, is she not to obey?

This leads me to ask my Christian brethren in all love, in what way they reconcile their consciences to their oneness with the world in spiritual things? how break bread with the world? how worship with the world? in short, how act as if the world were a part of the body of Christ?

My own solemn conviction is, that instead of the *good* which so many allege as their plea for this unholy alliance, that a fearful amount of harm results from it. The very fact that a believer worships with the world is a tacit acknowledgment that they are one with him-

self, and the dead world are encouraged and satisfied to reckon themselves as a part of the church. How often, among the assemblies thus constituted, do we find all addressed as brethren and treated as such. Are not Christians who act thus, assisting Satan in his efforts to delude and deceive the world at large?

Since there is no passage in the New Testament which would authorize us to act in this manner, why should we turn aside from primitive church principles and order? why, instead of manifesting our unity in the things of Christ, should we under various outward names be found ranged with the world? Brethren in Jesus, in no harsh spirit do I ask these questions, but from an earnest desire to see Christians united, and that by such manifestations of oneness in communion and fellowship, our Lord may be honoured, our souls edified, and the poor world be blessed.

How grieving it must be to the Holy Spirit of God when the members of the one body thus array themselves with the world, and glory in any other name than that of Christ! Oh, when will the people of God be obedient to the word which saith, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty?"

The absence of manifested unity is the source of many grievous errors in the church, and thus the manifold gifts of the Spirit are to a great extent limited or hindered. Church order, according to the apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 23-40), is a very different thing to the existing arrangements and systems of men.

The secret lies in the departure by the church at large from "the simplicity that is in Christ." Had God's order and teaching been maintained intact, very different would have been the history of the church, past and present. My brethren, how much have we need of the word of exhortation by Jude, which teaches us "to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh." I do not in any way advocate the separation of *brethren*, but I do most strenuously urge separation from the world. The former is a sin condemned by God (1 Cor. xii.), but the latter is not only approved, but actually commanded of God. (2 Tim. iii. 1-5; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.)

The terms Church and World are distinct, and invariably used in contrast; the former comprehends *all* who love our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom He says, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," and the latter all others of whatsoever country, nation, or creed.

Believers are plainly commanded not to love the world (1 John ii. 15); and James tells us "the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4); and such friendly alliances are stigmatized as acts of adultery. Language such as this could not be plainer: as adultery is the sin of a married person, the terms used by the apostle can only apply to such, and there is no doubt that He is speaking of the unfaithfulness of the members of the church to Christ. Let us learn then, beloved, what the communion or fellowship of the church of God is, and resolutely do our best to produce and maintain it in all godliness according to the scriptures.

## WORSHIP AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord Jesus teaches us in John iv. that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," and emphatically declares "the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

The worshipper must first know God ere he can rightly become His worshipper: before a man can say "our Father" he must know and realize that God is his Father, otherwise the words are no true expression of the heart's experience. Adoration that is not from the heart is a mockery; true worship is in and with the Spirit; and in the absence of this the act of outward worship is mere pretence, and offensive to God.

Worship properly so called is a family duty and privilege, an act which belongs to brethren and sisters in Christ for adoration and praise of God their Father, and for mutual edification. We are called children of God because we know God and are known of Him, and acknowledge Him as our Father. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Worship itself needs reverence, sincerity, and purity. Any man that can *lightly* abide in God's presence must have a very slight acquaintance with the character of Jehovah. We must bear in mind that in the assemblies of God's saints He has promised to be present, and although where God's Spirit is there is liberty, yet we need ever to keep in mind that He is God. The child who loves his father does not dread him; but though at perfect liberty in his father's presence, he is careful not to grieve him; and this should be our attitude in God's presence.

The scriptures of truth are full of the necessary qualifications ere any man can be placed in the position of a worshipper of the one true God. The Lord has His requirements; but these among other things have been set aside to make room for man's inventions. No man can draw nigh to God but by Christ—"the way, the truth, and the life." Reception of Jesus is *essential*; "as many as *received* Him, to them gave He power" (*margin*, right or privilege) "to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.)

If Hebrews ix. be attentively perused, we cannot fail to see that ere anything could be undertaken in the service of God, the worshippers and the vessels must be purged with blood, "and without shedding of blood is no remission." All this was imposed on Israel until the time of reformation; "but Christ being come, a high priest of good things to come," He "by His own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." It is by His blood alone that the believer's conscience is purged; so that it is essential to see that we are *blood-purged* worshippers, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and perfected for ever by the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ.

The church of Christ is on resurrection ground—"buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." The worshipper thus stands on resurrection ground, and as "risen with Christ" should "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of



God." Is it not thus most evident that the world, or unconverted persons, can have nothing to do with the *worship* of the true and living God?

The confusion in this important matter has arisen from not discerning the difference between the worship of believers who are *in* Christ, and the preaching of the gospel to those who are *out of* Christ: both are distinct as to time and place, and both the privilege and duty of all Christians. The Saviour's parting command to His disciples was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and His gracious promise was, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." We must distinguish between the *church* and the *world*, between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Every opportunity should be taken to gather unbelievers together, to listen to the gospel of the grace of God; but oh, how distinct should be the assemblies of believers to worship God, by offering up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our next consideration is that of "breaking of bread," and the object of its institution. In turning to 1 Cor. xi. 26 we are taught, that "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." It is clearly an institution prescribed for disciples *only*, to commemorate the death of their now risen Lord "till He come."

Three things are here prominently brought forward—

1st, that Christ died; 2nd, that He is risen; and, 3rd, that He will come again. It is absolutely necessary that the heart should receive these three facts.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins accord-

ing to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3. Read Col. i. 20-22; Phil. ii. 6-8.)

"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. xv. 14. Read 1 Cor. xv. 4; Eph. i. 18-20; Rom. iii. 8-10.)

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i. 10, 11. Read Col. iii. 3, 4; 1 Thess. i. 10; iii. 12, 13; iv. 13-18; 1 Peter i. 13; 1 John ii. 2; iii. 2, 3; Rev. xxii. 20.)

It is obvious that any one who is not a disciple can have no right or privilege to partake of this feast of love, nor can he have any possible interest in it. Moreover, when we bear in mind the truths that are so prominently taught, when partaking of this bread and of this cup, does it not strike us that unbelievers by so doing condemn themselves? When the Lord comes to *them*, will it not be in "flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"? (2 Thess. i. 8.) And if this, my brethren in Christ, be true, shall we assist the poor world in its awful delusion?

The Lord's Supper in early Christian days was a simple feast of the disciples gathered together for the object of bringing to their remembrance our dear Lord's death, and was accompanied by prayer, thanksgiving, and exhortation; but through the agency of a corrupt Christianity it has now become a sort of ceremony, whereby the unconverted communicant obtains a sedative for the soul. Ah, is not this Satan's handiwork? Brethren, awake to the position you are in, and to that of the unconverted with whom you have thus linked yourself!

I am utterly averse to anything like sentimental

religion; it may suit the father of lies; but, beloved, the religion of Jesus is practical in its nature and results, and it bids His disciples to be up and doing. Mere sentiment may suit the drawing-room religion of the day; but listen to the Saviour's word—"Come, take up the cross, and follow me." Determination to be obedient to Christ at all hazards will certainly entail a heavy cross: trying to please God and man will never answer. We must each decide for ourselves, whether we will conform to church principles as taught in the scriptures, or to the varied doctrines and commandments of men.

The question is, Was not the Lord's Supper intended for His disciples, and for them alone? Can any true Christian man believe otherwise?

Let us remember that "Babylon the Great" is "the mother of harlots," and that her daughters will all manifest themselves under the various guises of corrupt Christianity. Beware then lest any of you be found walking with such! The apostle Paul, I think, clearly foresaw this, where he speaks of the "members of Christ" becoming "members of a harlot." (Read 1 Cor. vi. 15-17.)

In conclusion I commit these thoughts to the prayerful consideration of my brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus; and may the Holy Spirit, who alone can lead us into all truth, show us yet more and more what is the mind of Christ, and may we each have grace to follow the Lamb through good and evil report.

I trust it will be thoroughly understood that in no way do I advocate anything approaching to sectarianism, but simply seek the manifested unity of the body of Christ. And may the God of patience and consolation grant us to be like minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. xv. 5, 6.)

## "GO UNTO JOSEPH."

If Joseph "gathered corn as the sand of the sea, *very much*, until he left numbering, for it was *without number*," think what *our* Joseph has treasured up for us in *Himself*! Who can count the riches, the fulness that is in Him? Consider His precious *thoughts*: "How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand!" (Ps. cxxxix.) And then the "*wonderful works*" which He hath done. "They cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." (Psalm xl.)

Join these *together*—His *thoughts* of love, and the *ways* in which that love comes out—and what can we say? "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all His praise?"

If Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt gathering in the corn, doubtless rejoicing thus to be made a blessing to others, think of Jesus, of all His labour, all His toil, all His sorrows, all His griefs! And oh, who can tell the deep delight of His heart in gathering in the corn *for us*? It cost Him much, indeed, and as we meditate on this, we can better estimate the greatness of the love that "counted the cost" and met it all.

"Famine," we read, "was over all the face of the earth," and so our hearts exclaim if we look around—famine, famine! But "Joseph opened *all* the storehouses," and thus the people's need was met. Can it be that our Jesus will do less than Joseph? Do we not hear our Father say, "Go to Jesus." "In Him *dwelleth* all the fulness of the Godhead!" and are not His storehouses all freely opened to us? Thus our need—the famine we see all around—will be the means of bringing us closer and closer to Him.

## THE PASSOVER AFTER THE CAPTIVITY.

Read EZRA iii. and vi.

WE have already noticed, that when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, one of their first acts was to keep the passover; and we saw that the special teaching of that passover was connected with the *place* and the *circumstances* in which it was kept. So is it with the passover in the book of Ezra. The account of it is very brief, but it was the first passover which was kept by a few poor feeble Israelites, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, and the circumstances connected with it and leading from it are very important, and full of precious instruction for us in these last evil and perilous days.

Most Christians who have carefully studied the word of God agree, that Egypt is a type of the world, and that Babylon represents spurious or corrupt Christianity.

When Israel were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and set apart for God as His people, they were brought out of Egypt; even so God's children in this dispensation, are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and are called out of the world to be a peculiar and holy people unto Himself, zealous of good works.

The Lord's purpose was to bless Israel in every way, to make them high above all nations, to fill their treasures, and satisfy all the desires of their hearts. But through their perverseness and hardness of heart, He was obliged to chasten them, and at last their rebellion and idolatry reached such a height, that He suffered them to be carried into captivity to Babylon. So it has been with the church of the living God.

The glorious days described in Acts ii. to v. soon passed away, and internal trouble and discord followed; corruption was added to corruption; the commandments of God were set aside for the inventions of man, and the whole church was gradually enveloped in a mass of superstition and error.

Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, Abednego, and many others, were most eminent and faithful servants of the Lord, and yet captives in Babylon: so there have always been numberless Christians, whose hearts have been right with the Lord, and who have shone out as bright examples of devoted obedience, and self-sacrificing love, and yet have remained captive in a corrupt and spurious church, and have been shackled with the ordinances of man, instead of standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free.

But our God is full of compassion, and His mercies fail not. However terrible the declension, He is always ready to forgive, and forward to devise a way of restoring blessing to His wayward and erring people.

Thus in the first year of the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, the Lord stirred up his heart to make a proclamation throughout his kingdom, that any of the Jews who pleased might return to Jerusalem; he also restored them the vessels of the Lord which had been carried away, and commanded them to rebuild the temple and restore the appointed worship of God. But the Jews had settled down in the land of their captivity; they had built houses, and planted vineyards, and surrounded themselves with comforts, and a very small proportion of them took advantage of the permission given them. Still a remnant did return, and the Lord was with them and prospered them.

This return from the Babylonish captivity corresponds very much to the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The Lord stirred up very many of His people at that time, and led them to search the Scriptures, and at great risk and indeed loss to themselves, as regards this world, to come out of Popery.

The cry then *began* to go forth from the Lord which has been sounding ever since: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The mystic Babylon has many daughters. She is not only the great harlot herself, but is also the mother of harlots, and all corruption in the things of God, or mingling of the world with the worship of His people, belongs to this great Babylon, out of which we are commanded and entreated to flee.

As soon as the restored captives were settled in their various homes, they gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem, and instructed by Joshua and Zerubbabel, they rebuilt the altar of the Lord, set it upon its bases, and offered the appointed offerings; but we read, "*The foundation of the temple of the Lord was not laid.*"

So was it in the days of the Reformation. The Altar—Christ—was again set up, and He recognized as the One all-sufficient Saviour. Justification through His precious blood was again proclaimed. Christ was again believed in, and used as the great High Priest who has entered into heaven to meet His people's need, and through whom we have access with confidence to the Father.

Thus the altar was set up, but the foundation of the house of the Lord was not laid. Temples made

with hands were still called the house of God, and believers and unbelievers were still mingled together in the service and worship of God, as if He had made no difference between them.

In pursuing the history of Israel we find that some months after the erection of the altar the foundation of the temple was laid, amid the mingled shouting and weeping of the people. Those who remembered the first temple in its glory could not refrain from weeping because the contrast was so great; whilst those who thought of the captivity and the great things the Lord had done for them shouted for joy. How often has it been so in the church's history. When any lost truth has been recovered, and an effort made to obey it, how mingled and varied have been the feelings of God's people; so that the cry of confession and sorrow, and the songs of joy and praise, have ascended together into the ear of our God.

There was a long, long delay between the laying of the foundation and the finishing of the temple. The labour of preparing stones and timber was very great, and the enemies around succeeded in hindering the work. There was also a lack of energy and zeal on the people's part. They were no doubt very thankful for being delivered from captivity, and possibly satisfied with having the altar in its place, and therefore indolent or indifferent as to the heavy work of building the temple. But the Lord was very gracious to them, and raised them up prophets, to rebuke and exhort and encourage them to the work; and led on by Zerubbabel and Joshua, and stimulated by Haggai and Zechariah, they at last completed the temple and dedicated it with great joy.



So has it been with the Church of God. Christians have been very prone to rest satisfied with recognizing and using Christ as the Altar—the only way of access to the Father—and have not troubled to enquire as to the further truth of building the temple of the Lord. Christ is “the foundation” as well as altar; the chief corner-stone, elect, precious; the living stone to whom each believer comes; and as living stones, ourselves having received life from Him, we should be built up a spiritual house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus.

Believers *form* the house of God, and He delights to see us fitly joined together, and built up as a holy temple for the Lord. There are great difficulties in accomplishing this. As with Israel, they found it much easier to set up the altar than to build the temple, so is it now. But it is our Father’s will concerning us, and therefore we should, like Joshua and Zerubbabel, bestir ourselves, and seek grace and strength from the Lord, to enable us to labour earnestly for this blessed end.

We must remember that the *stones* of this temple are *living* stones—persons who have been quickened into life by God Himself, and united to Christ—and no *dead* stones must be received on any account whatever. On the other side, we must not lose sight of the blessed fact that *every* believer *is* a living stone, and *belongs* to this living temple; and therefore we shall not be building according to the mind of the Lord if any manifested child of God is rejected.

The Lord desires a habitation for HIMSELF, where He may meet His people, and unfold the riches of His grace; and if we rest satisfied with individually using

Christ as the altar, and presenting Him to others as the only way to heaven, and do not also seek to know the fellowship which He has prepared for us as the temple of the living God, we shall lose very much of the blessing and joy which He has provided for us while passing through this wilderness.

We may enquire, How is it possible for us to build this temple when the Lord's children, the living stones, are so divided and mixed up with the world that they will not consent to be gathered together as a separated people unto the Lord? This is a real difficulty, and sadly true; but the Lord Jesus in His tender pity and love has provided for it by promising, that wherever two or three are gathered together unto His name, there He will be in the midst of them. And though we cannot build the perfect temple, for that can only be done in heaven, yet a few of the living stones may gather together and form a tabernacle for the Lord; and whenever and wherever this is done, the Lord will never fail to come and manifest Himself.

The Lord wonderfully encouraged those feeble Jews as they bemoaned the smallness and plainness of the temple they were building, by telling them "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former . . . and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." So is it now. Only let us obey Him, and seek to prepare a habitation for Him according to His own appointment, and He will bless us and make us a blessing.

When all things were thus prepared and ordained according to the law of Moses, the passover was observed in its due order. The Spirit of God expressly states, that "the priests and the Levites were purified

together, all of them were pure;" and then "all such as separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen did eat, and they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the Lord had made them joyful."

And if we would know the true joy of the Lord's Supper, we must not only set up the true altar—Christ—and seek to be built up as a habitation of God through the Spirit, but also separate ourselves from the corruption and filthiness around us, and come together to meet the Lord, and to eat and drink in His presence. *Then* shall we prove how effectually He can satisfy our souls as with marrow and fatness, and know for ourselves somewhat of the blessed fellowship He has called us to enjoy at His table while feasting with Himself.

We have now traced the six passovers recorded in the Old Testament, and gleaned a few thoughts out of the rich instruction contained in them.

In the first passover, which was observed in Egypt, the Lord Jesus is brought before us as the Lamb without blemish and without spot, who has redeemed us to God by His blood, and given Himself as the daily and constant food of each individual Christian. We also learnt, that as no stranger or uncircumcised person could eat of the paschal lamb, so now, only those who have been born again of the incorruptible seed, the word of God, are able to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ.

In the second passover, which was held in the wilderness, we are further taught, that the Lord Jesus is not only given to us as our individual and constant food, but that He desires, and indeed commands His

people to gather together around Himself, and collectively to eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of His broken body and shed blood. And that whenever we thus meet He has promised to be with us, to lead out our hearts in prayer and praise, and so to minister to our souls out of His own abundant fulness, that all may be refreshed and strengthened. We also learnt, that unless we were personally cleansed from our daily sins, through confession and looking to the precious blood of Christ, we were not in a fit state of soul to partake of this blessed feast.

In the third passover which was kept upon entering the land of Canaan, we saw that the reason we have so little power of real adoration and praise at the Lord's supper is because we are prone to remain in the wilderness instead of pressing into the holiest through the blood of Jesus. Our souls so often cleave unto the dust, and are occupied with the sorrows and cares of the way, instead of rising on faith's strong eagle pinions, and laying hold of our portion in Christ. How true it is that if we desire to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, we must seek the *present* enjoyment of the love of Christ and of the fulness laid up for us in Him.

In the passover in Hezekiah's reign, somewhat of the riches of the Lord's grace in meeting his returning people was unfolded to us. What joy and gladness He gave them in their observance of the passover, although in so many ways they came short of the prescribed order. It is the same now; if our hearts are true in their desires after the Lord, He will wonderfully meet with us and bless us, in spite of much failure which may be caused through ignorance or weakness.

In the passover in Josiah's reign, the very opposite phase of truth is unfolded. The *perfect outward order* of that passover was not accompanied with joy or gladness, because the people's hearts were not right with the Lord; and however perfect the *outward* ordering of our assemblies may be, we shall come short of the blessing our God delights to impart, unless our hearts are true to Him and in earnest after communion with Himself.

In the last passover, in the book of Ezra, we further learn that if we would *rightly* keep our passover—the Lord's supper—the collective feast the Lord has ordained for us, we must obey the Lord's call, and come out of Babylon and her daughters (answering to various forms of corrupt or spurious Christianity), and gather together as the living stones of the living temple, to worship God in spirit and in truth. And though we are but a handful of the innumerable company whom no man can number, who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, yet as the Lord met with and specially blessed the small remnant of Israel which came out of Babylon, so shall we prove the special blessing and joy of thus worshipping our God.

May the Lord enable us to gather up these fragments of His truth, and encourage and strengthen our hearts to more perfect obedience to His revealed will in all things.

---

## GOD'S PERFECT SERVANT.

John xvii.

WHEN one of the sons of God was dying, he said to the friends who stood around his bed, "Draw the curtains, and leave me alone with God." Beloved

friends, when reading the 17th of John, we are in the position of the loved friends of Christ overhearing the dying utterances of His sacred lips, in the solitariness of His communion with the Father; shut in for a moment from the din and turmoil of His weary pilgrimage, now nearly over. Let us tread softly, and with unshod feet as we listen to His words. Let us read the chapter carefully:

The closing hour has come. Soon the last great act of obedience will be accomplished. "And now," He says, "come I to thee: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. He seems to take the place of the servant who had been engaged for a certain time to perform a certain fore-ordained specified work, and now that that time is about to expire, He renders up, as it were, His account. He presents, as men say, His books, wherein it will be seen that all has been fully and perfectly fulfilled.

We observe several distinct particulars of this service alluded to. The several things which we may suppose were written in the volume of the book of God's counsels, to which He referred when about to come into the world: "In the volume of the book it is written of me."

I will only briefly refer to them in order, leaving them to suggest thoughts for further and deeper study.

*First* in order comes the word—"I have glorified thee on the earth." The greatest achievement of all—God perfectly glorified by man, in the very scene of man's rebellion and ruin. On the very arena where God's name had been profaned, maligned, traduced, and trampled under foot, the name was now perfectly glorified. He pitied that "holy name," and sanctified

that "great name" (Ezek. xxxvi. 21-23) throughout His whole life, and in His death. From the midst of the blasphemies of men, and the putrid odours of corruption and death, the grateful incense of the perfect burnt-offering ascended to the Father, an offering and sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour. (Eph. v. 2.) The promises were fulfilled, the law was magnified and made honourable, the righteous judgment and wrath of God against sin was poured out and endured, and God was glorified on earth.

*Second* (verse 6), "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Now comes in salvation. First the glory of God, then the salvation of sinners. As sang the angels, "Glory to God in the highest" first, "goodwill to man" second. So it is here; God having been perfectly glorified, eternal life is now given to men through the knowledge of God.

God was never known till Jesus came and revealed Him. Much was known about God; but He Himself is known now as seen in the Son. In His every act of mercy to the sick and afflicted, in the tears He wept over Jerusalem, in bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows, in grace to the guilty, in His agony and bloody sweat, in His cross and death—in *all* He manifested the character, "the name" of God, its justice and grace, truth and mercy, holiness and love. This to know is eternal life; and in this knowledge He gives eternal life to as many as His Father had given Him.

Thus is the will of God fulfilled as to the salvation of sinners. Oh, who can estimate the preciousness of this salvation, founded as it is upon the knowledge of

God and of Jesus Christ, His Son? When God is fully known, and Jesus is fully known, then shall we fully know how great was the work perfectly accomplished by our gracious Lord.

*Third* (verse 8), "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." We have seen God's glorifier on earth, and God's Saviour of men, now we behold the perfect Servant in His character as God's prophet and teacher. "I have given them the words which thou gavest me." How wonderful! Thy words, not mine. The words of God that He gave to His Son for us.

In Isaiah l. 4, we read, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Is it surprising then, that all wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, and that even His enemies said, "Never man spake like this man"? The Father which sent Him, He gave Him a commandment both what He should say and what He should speak. Whatsoever He spake therefore, even as the Father said unto Him, so He spake. (John xii. 49, 50.) In all this too He perfectly did the Father's will; and what made His service so perfect was, that He spoke and acted always in full communion with the Father's heart. This is perfect ministry, and is what we should aim at who seek to follow His steps.

Observe how graciously He hides the dulness, the unbelief, the slowness of heart with which generally the disciples heard Him, and only tells the Father of their aptitude and faith. "They have received them,



and have believed," &c. In heaven their sins and their iniquities are remembered no more. He sees not perverseness in Israel. Satan is there, indeed, to accuse, but we have an advocate with the Father; and who is He that shall condemn us?

*Fourth* (verse 12), "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name." Now we behold God's Shepherd, God's Pastor, to keep the flock. As such, He has also fulfilled His service perfectly. He knows all the sheep by name, and reveals Himself to each one.

And think you He has forgotten them now? Now that His sorrows are turned into joys at God's right hand does He forget the companions of His affliction? Are His poor friends of earth forgotten? No, indeed. If He were as one of us, that might be; but no, though He is far away, and unseen, yet He keeps each sheep in safety, and counts Himself responsible to God for all. Kept we are by the power of God, through faith in the Shepherd of our souls. Lift up then thy drooping head, poor doubter! Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end. "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand." His service would be incomplete, His responsibility to God unfulfilled, if one of the feeblest of His sheep were wanting in the day that the Lord counts up His jewels.

*Fifth* (verse 18), another particular of His service, which has been duly remembered and accomplished. "As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world." He had not only to deliver God's words to men Himself, but also to insure that after His departure there should be a continual testi-

mony kept up on earth. Accordingly, those who had been with Him from the beginning are sent forth into the world to be the bearers of the message of pardon and forgiveness which they so often heard Him deliver.

But how can He say, "I have sent them into the world"? How strange this is! Where have they been? How can He send them into the world? The answer is simple. They were no longer men of this world; heaven had become their home, and God their Father, and the Cross formed a complete barrier between them and all below. Now they were heavenly men sent down into the world to speak of heavenly things, and to walk as new men in a way worthy of their high calling. It is most needful to keep in memory, that our citizenship is in heaven, and that if we are left on earth for a little while it is to walk here as strangers and pilgrims, the missionaries of Christ sent out into the world to speak of things above.

*Sixth*, (verse 19)—"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Coming in as this does, it is most significant. As He refers to the going forth of the disciples into the world, He recognizes the temptation they will be under to hold fellowship with the evil ways of men. Therefore, He says, "I sanctify myself"—that is, He always walked among those to whom He ministered as the Holy One of God, "separate from sinners." Ministering to every sort of need and suffering, but never becoming the associate or companion of those to whom God was unknown.

So He desires it may be with us, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." There is a tendency in us when desiring opportunities for service

to relax this separateness of walk, in order to gain the world's ear. But so it never was with the perfect minister. And it was "for *our* sakes" He so walked that we might follow His steps.

The *seventh* and last particular of His service mentioned here is in the 22nd verse. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." He started from glory, and back to glory He comes, bringing with Him, as His fellows and partners in glory, a multitude of saved sinners. "I have given them;" He speaks of it in prospect, as though all were now accomplished, because all is fulfilled which was necessary to that glorious consummation; and He does not cease to serve till all are safely housed in that glory.

The product of His whole work is a threefold glory. Glory to God in the highest. Himself glorified of God, and sinners glorified with Him as His fellow-heirs. Oh what a height of dignity—that same glory that is given to Christ as man risen from the dead is given to us in Him! Not a whit less. And this is (as Eph. i. tells us) to be far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and to be there as the body of Him who is "Head over all things," to whom be glory for ever and ever!

If a man would be higher than this, he must claim the throne of God Himself. Oh what praises will ring through heaven, when Christ in the presence of angels, principalities, and powers, invests with glory such as this the poor worms of the earth, whom He loved and washed in His own blood. Some recompence for His sorrows on earth that day of joy will bring.

Such was the noble work that Jesus undertook when He left His Father's bosom, and thus has He fulfilled it; and now, with a sense of perfect satisfaction he can say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

Another thing in the chapter I must refer to; it is that which some, I think erroneously, suppose to be the purport of the whole chapter. I believe the purport of it to be the service of the Son, as I have said, but we must not omit the prayers of the chapter. Jesus does not only fulfil His own service here, but looks forward to its new form, when He is gone, and prays to the Father accordingly. There are four beautiful prayers.

Verse 11—"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

What a sink of evil must this world be to the eye of Jesus, if *we* can see so much. He foresees our certain fall and shame in His absence, save in the protecting hand of God, and to Him He commits us. Thus whenever distress or trial presses heavily upon us, and we are conscious of our low estate as still on the shores of this evil world, let us look up for the Father's protecting care, and remember that God always hears the prayers of His Son, and is able and willing to keep us from the evil. He has sent us forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, but He has not sent us unprotected.

The next prayer is in the 17th verse; "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." This is the use of truth, to sanctify. Let us not read God's Word

in order to be filled with knowledge and to make a show of wisdom, but that by holy principles, examples, and precepts, we may be sanctified.

In order to this effect, there is something more necessary than mere acquaintance with the doctrines and letter of scripture. We need the Holy Ghost to teach us, that *with the truth* we may have the *power of it* to make it practical. To this end has the Holy Ghost come down to lead us into all truth, that through it we may be "sanctified."

We must not be afraid of any truth. God is gracious, and God is holy. Let us not fear to contemplate His grace, nor tremble to discover what demands His holiness makes upon us. Men talk about the grace of God making people lascivious; but grace lays hold of the heart, and makes a captive of it, leading it always in the ways of God. Like blind Bartimeus, when the Lord said to him, "Go thy way," we read, "He followed Jesus in the way." He gave him liberty to go where he would, and his free choice was to follow Jesus.

This is the effect of knowing "the grace of God in truth." And so it is with all truth when ministered by the Spirit; it separates (sanctifies) from the evil that abounds on every side. May it be so, beloved, with us!

Verse 21—"That they all may be one." Holiness comes before unity. Unity without holiness is to be found everywhere; but it is disorder and confusion odious to God. We are not united as we ought to be. How quick we are to see the faults and failings of our friends, how slow to see our own. What walls and barriers we ensconce ourselves behind to keep ourselves

one from another. The Lord keep us from extremes, from pressing one truth to the exclusion of another. In our effort to be united, let us beware of unholy association; and in our desire to be holy, let us not forget our responsibility to be united.

Verse 24—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." They have seen my shame and sorrow, and sorely their faith has been tried by this. Let them see my glory, which thou hast given me, for their reward. His last prayer is, "Glorify them." He sees them safely conducted all along the way right into the glory, and He is satisfied.

Thus we have had this wondrous object of God's love and admiration before us for our contemplation. May God's richest blessing be added; and may He grant that in this contemplation we may become changed into the image of His Son, and become bearers of His yoke of subjection to His Father's will, seeking only to please and glorify Him, whether it be by life or by death, even as Jesus has set us an example. Amen.

---

### THE CHRISTIAN WALK: CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

To be a Christian—a sinner saved—a child of God—is a blessed, but a solemn, very solemn thing.

It is not that one nation or several nations are chosen to be God's, and the rest of the world left in condemnation: it is that a few—one here and there—are taken out of, it may be, every nation, and as regards our own country, it may be, almost every town and village, to be Christ's, while those around

them remain at enmity with God. Yea, it will often be that one in a family has passed from death to life, and all those dear to this saved one remain under the wrath of God. And it will surely be to the end, that the broad way, in which there are many, will be the way of those that turn not to God; while the way of the believer will be narrow, and he will find few walking therein.

Now this at once makes the position of a Christian a very solemn one. He is as the survivor of a shipwreck in which many perished—as the one saved from a burning house, while all others within were destroyed. Yea, his position, if he considers it, is more solemnising still, for he is travelling along with many, well acquainted with them, holding social intercourse with them, drawn very close, it may be, by various ties to some of them, and he knows, if he will think, that soon, very soon, he must part with most of them, never to meet again—he, through infinite grace which has abounded to him, though as undeserving as any of them, to dwell for ever in the blessed presence of God, and they to be driven from the presence of that God, whose grace and love and messages of mercy they now despise and reject. Surely to feel this, to look thus on our daily walk and all around us, is solemnising in an extreme degree.

It is plain, then, from the word of God, which alone can inform us of the mind of God, that we are not Christians because we live in what we miscall Christian England, or because we were born of godly parents, or because we are guilty of no great sins, or because we are decent, and respectable, and religious, and amiable. We may be all this and much more,

and still in our sins, still unsaved, still in our natural state, and the children of wrath, even as others.

It is not only the negro, or the Hindoo, or the Mahomedan, who is not a Christian. All of us who call ourselves Christians, and even outwardly conform to the Christian life, are as far from God as the idolater, and as guilty before Him—yea, much more guilty, since the light of the gospel has shone on us, unless we are *born again*. On the other hand, the grace and work of God are restricted to no limits placed by man.

God's children are limited to no sect or denomination. They are scattered everywhere. But they agree in this, that having been born into this sinful world as the children of Adam, they have been *born again* into the family of God.

“Born again.” Yes, all depends on this. Each one may ask himself, or herself, this question, Am I born again? and each one may well lay aside all other business, however pressing, till he or she is able to settle this momentous matter, and to say, “By God's grace, this miracle has been wrought in me.” All the chiefest concerns of this world, the interests of kingdoms, or of all its kingdoms, are of no moment at all as compared with the importance of this matter to every soul among us. A day—yea, a moment—and all may be lost, if not settled now. How soon may come the summons of the long-suffering God. “Then, whose will those things be which thou hast provided?” and what will it profit to have gained the whole world?

There will be no excuse. Each soul can plainly and assuredly ascertain whether he or she is born again. Has there been one earnest, trustful look cast, under a



deep sense of need, on the crucified One? If so, all is yours. If you cannot say yes, you are responsible, and trifling with God and with your immortal soul, should you eat and drink and sleep longer in carelessness, or fail at once to implore God to give you—what He is waiting to give, what it is His joy to give—light and life and peace.

It is no reformation, no change however great, that will suffice; no giving up of the world, or self-denial, or self-mortification; no laboriousness in religious duties; no measure of conscientiousness; no extent of morality. "Ye must be born again." This is the law stated by Him who will soon ask each one of us whether we revered it; and if not, why not? It is a miracle—the work of God. God's testimony as to this is unmistakable.

Be serious and in earnest about this, you who profess to take the Scriptures as the word of God. Read anywhere—read especially John i. 13—"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Now this is a miracle, as I have said. It is beyond the power of man. God only can effect this. Yet none that seeks shall fail to find; none that in earnestness and sincerity casts himself or herself on that gracious, loving, forbearing God in Christ shall fail to testify that God has satisfied every desire of the soul. If any one receives not, it is because he asks not—asks not from the heart—asks not as becomes the perishing guilty sinner, imploring pardon and mercy from a holy and grievously dishonoured God. Oh, let none who have despised the riches of His goodness, and longsuffering, and forbearance, despise another hour. Believe, O perishing

sinner, on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

This, then, is the work of God—the wondrous work by which a soul is born again. It is a new creation, far surpassing in the greatness of the work that of which the first chapter of Genesis is the record. It is a work effected by the putting forth of that same “mighty power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead” (Eph. i.); and by it the believer passes from death to life. He was dead in trespasses and sins—a dead body, a corpse, with all a corpse’s loathsomeness in the eyes of a holy God, with all a corpse’s lifelessness. But God who is rich in mercy for the great love wherewith He loves us, has quickened him (made him alive) together with Christ. He has died in Christ unto sin, so that sin cannot again exact from him the penalty of death, and he has been raised up to newness of life. If any one be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature (a new creating): old things are passed away, behold all things have become new. We were buried with Him by baptism into death—the death of the old man—and the life that we now live we should live by the faith of the Son of God. Paul said, “I am dead, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

This then is the Christian. This is what God has done. Through death He has brought us to Christ. We can look out of the ark and see the flood sweeping away the ungodly world, not more ungodly than we should have been had God’s mercy not abounded to us. We can stand as Israelites on the wilderness shore of the Red Sea, and see Pharaoh and his host, not more guilty than ourselves, swept into destruction, while we are safe.

Now here our subject branches into two chief paths. We might follow on this life through death, and trace the child of God, raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in the heavenlies; we might contemplate the glory that is about to be revealed, the throne of Christ, the inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, the crown of life and glory and righteousness—all this is set before the child of God, and the Holy Spirit will take of these precious things, and lead our souls, as is meet, into the apprehension of them. But I touch not on them now. Precious, most precious, truths they are, revealed by God to cheer us on our way—a joy set before us, as before Him who died for us, to help us to run with patience the race which He too ran. But I pass them now, as in these days they are set forth largely before the children of God, and whenever they are contemplated, as it may be feared that they sometimes are, either in isolation or in disproportion to other departments of the revealed word, contemplated otherwise than in connection with the responsibilities of the Christian life, it is certain that the truth of God and the walk of the Christian must greatly suffer.

The child of God is indeed called to reign with Christ, but it is “if we suffer with Him,” and this is the present urgent duty. Here it is that we fail. He who shed His precious blood for us has delivered us, but He has delivered us not solely that we should rejoice before Him, and praise Him for this unspeakable love and grace, much less that we should sit down in selfish satisfaction, but in order that we should live to Him, in order that henceforth, as He walked, so we, His redeemed ones, should walk, that we, being reck-

oned dead, should die daily, and daily and hourly crucify the old man, from whose condemnation we have been rescued.

It is here that we, God's beloved children, fail. We are ready, in some feeble way and at times, to bless God for the deliverance which He has wrought for us, but we shrink from the following of Christ, the daily and hourly crucifixion, and turn our eyes away from those solemn parts of the word of God which lay on us the obligation to live this dying life here, if we would set before ourselves the blessedness of not being ashamed before our Lord at His coming.

The children of Israel sang a song unto the Lord when they looked back on Egypt left, their enemies destroyed, and the wondrous salvation wrought for them by His mighty arm, while they but stood still and saw themselves delivered. But in their wilderness life thenceforward there was little but failure, little but unbelief, and murmuring, and ingratitude, and dishonour of their loving, longsuffering God.

Brethren, all these things happened unto Israel for examples, and were written for the admonition of you and of me and of all God's children in these last days, upon whom the ends of the ages have met. Let us be watchful that there be not in our hearts a hankering after the things of the Egypt from which we have been delivered, its "fish, its cucumbers, its melons, its leeks and onions, and garlick." (Num. xi. 4.) Let us keep a watch over ourselves that the manna be increasingly precious to our souls, and that we find satisfaction in those things which the wisdom and the love of our Father appoint—whether in the way of requiring, or of giving, or withholding, or withdrawing,

as the best provision by the way for sojourners in the wilderness.

Let us see that we are *satisfied with Christ*—satisfied with Him, not only as our peace, our wisdom, our righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, but with Christ as the blessed One, in association with whom we should ever be found, *walking in His footsteps, living His life*, going forth without the camp bearing His reproach, denying ourselves, and *taking up each one his own cross and following Him*.

We all greatly need thus to go on to "*know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death*, if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection from the dead."

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal v. 24.)

---

## THE WORD "CHURCH."

I do not propose to dwell on the calling and position of the Church, but on the bare meaning of the word; although, as is true of God—as His *name* is so is He—it is also true of that to which He gives the name *ecclesia*: what that word means that *is* the "*ecclesia*."

The word is compounded of *ek* (out of) and *kaleo* (to call), because as a unity it is an *out-call*; while each individual pertaining thereto is possessed of the same character: they are severally *called-out* ones,—some from Judaism, some from Paganism, but for the most part in this day from professing Christianity; while all, without exception, have this in common, that they have been called *out of* the kingdom of darkness, and

have been brought *into* the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Now "church" does not express this; it is neither a translation of nor equivalent to *ecclesia*. So far as it goes it is a good word, and, as will be seen, we do not entertain the idea of giving it up, although at an earlier period we might have followed the example of the French, who adopted the Greek word into their language, and called "ecclesia" *eglise*, as we have adopted *martyr* for one who bears *witness* unto the truth even to death, instead of *translating* it. The word "church" is, as is the Scotch "kirk," a name coined out of *kuriakee*—of or pertaining to *the Lord*, and so far is a good name to give to the thing intended; but, as just remarked, it is neither a translation of nor equivalent with *ecclesia*.

But we may ask, Is "assembly" a better word? does it more accurately define what *ecclesia* is? It seems to me that the translators of the authorized version did wisely in never translating it "assembly," except in those three instances in Acts xix., where it expresses either a lawful assembly of citizens, convened by those having authority, or a mob assembly drawn together by common curiosity or irritation. (See verses 32, 39, 41.) Properly speaking, then, *ecclesia* expresses an assembly of the citizens summoned by the crier, the *assembling* being, first, the result of a *summons*; secondly, a visible *gathering together* in a certain place.

But when *ecclesia* is used in Scripture for that unity which in its several parts has obeyed the *summons* (which the *gospel* is) to submit and come to Christ by faith, it so rarely means the *visible assembling* of Christians, that at Corinth, where all the Christians in

that place formed the one and exclusive *ecclesia* there, when the apostle spoke in the first epistle (chap. xi. 18 and xiv. 23) of a visible and literal coming together, the *ecclesia* and the *coming together* of the *ecclesia* are distinguished the one from the other.

If this be laid hold of, the practical point of the argument against calling the *ecclesia* the "assembly" will now be seen; for inasmuch as that very word is taken from the French *assemblée* (a meeting, a *rendez-vous*), an ideal atmosphere of holiness gets to be attached in the mind to times and places of worship rather than to the presence of God, which is neither confined to times nor to places. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

If it be true, that where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, there He is in the midst, this is encouraging, and authoritative unto such gathering together, and is itself a warning against not assembling together; yet it is not thereby meant to imply that the holiness and reverence and subjection of spirit which become those who are *together in one place* before God are to be, or can be, in reality of a more spiritual nature than should be and will be at all other times, where it is believed and realized that each individual worshipper, everywhere and at all times, is a temple of the Holy Ghost.

We believe that when we come together to worship God, having access into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, that the indwelling Spirit will help our infirmities; that, in fact, He, being the only power in spiritual worship, is to be recognized as the mover unto prayer, therefore we *wait*. But let us get a step beyond this, and remember that the power to wait is as much of Him as is the power to engage in vocal worship, or any other service which having God for its end

must also have God for its originating power. Where He (the Spirit of God) indwells and works, it will be known, not by asserting that we believe it is so, but by a manifest arresting of the fleshly forwardness in man, and by silencing the mere talk of the lip, be that ever so accurate according to the letter of Scripture.

We doubt therefore whether "assembly" is in any sense an improvement on the word "church." It is very modern and commonplace when so applied, and at this day is generally used for *assemblies* which are anything but godly, while it is as much wanting in the power to express the divine thought involved in *ecclesia* (which is *what is*, the out-call of God, whether *assembled* or not), as is the word "church," for which it is sought to be substituted.

However true it is that *ecclesia* is the word used in ancient Greek for an *assembly* summoned by authority, it yet by its very sound bore witness of the *out-call* when adopted by the Holy Ghost to express what that divine unity "the Church" is. This the word "assembly" does not; while, as already shown, the tendency by the use of the term is to foster an idea of sanctity connected only with *gathering together*.

Is it not wise therefore to hold fast to the old familiar word "church," and then, whether assembled or not, call to mind that we are not our own, that God is near to *search* as well as to succour and to guide; and then, whether alone or with others, at meals in our private houses or at breaking bread on the first day of the week, working in the field or at the counter, bearing relief to others or receiving it, ruling or serving, remember that apart from Christ we can do nothing, but that, abiding in Him and He in us, there is nought that we cannot do that *He calls us to*, nothing that we cannot suffer, nothing that we should not cheerfully undertake that would please Him, however trying, however mortifying to the flesh it might be? Lord, increase our faith!



## THE HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM; THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR PLACE.

### PART I.

THE characteristic of our day is lawlessness, (*ἀνομία*) and it is working on with fearful rapidity towards the manifestation of "the lawless one" (*ὁ ἀνομος* "the wicked one," 2 Thess. ii. 8). the "man of sin," whom the Lord will destroy with the brightness of His coming. It becomes the saints of God to seek grace day by day to maintain their true character as loyal to Christ (*ἐννομος Χριστῷ*).

He speaks to us with the authority of a Teacher, and with the command of one who is indeed Lord and Master. The freeness of the gospel does not set this aside, and because we are saved by grace and not by works, by His toil and passion, and not by our doings and sufferings, He thereby has laid redemption's claim upon us, and has told us we are bought with a price, and have therefore to glorify Him on the ground that we are not our own.

The sermon on the mount contains precisely that which is most needed—a revelation of the principles of that heavenly kingdom into which by regeneration we are introduced; and John iii. would be a fitting introduction to it. The deeper the love, the more does it claim—the more does it render. The thought of how much, or how far never comes into calculation when love reigns, and hence the obedience of love is absolute, knowing nothing great or small, but owning the claim of love to *all*.

I purpose, as the Lord may enable, to ponder the

first sixteen verses of Matthew v. as bringing before us the characteristics of the heirs of the kingdom—the promises attached to those who possess these characteristics—and the position occupied by them in the world.

The first ten verses contain the word “Blessed” (*i.e.* blessed ones, or happy ones,) repeated eight times, to which seven separate promises are attached; for the blessing attached to verse 10 is the same as that mentioned in verse 3. In order to keep these characteristics clearly before us, we will arrange them with the blessing attached to each, side by side; and may the finger of our God write them on our hearts, and make them the witness of the New Covenant to our own souls.

THE CHARACTERISTICS  
ARE:—

- i. They are poor in spirit.
- ii. They mourn.
- iii. They are meek.
- iv. They hunger and thirst  
after righteousness.
- v. They are merciful.
- vi. They are pure in heart.
- vii. They are peacemakers.

THE PROMISES ARE:—

- Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
They shall be comforted.  
They shall inherit the earth.  
They shall be filled.  
  
They shall obtain mercy.  
They shall see God.  
They shall be called the children of God.

The eighth beatitude does not describe a personal characteristic, but reveals the result of the above characteristics, in the enmity of the world, and the consequent persecution that would follow to those who manifested them.

In these characteristics the first four are negative, and the last three are positive. The order in which they stand will furnish much blessed instruction to the obedient ear of the heir of glory who is content to

begin where God begins, and to seek in the divine order that consummation of blessedness which leads from the possession of the kingdom to the manifestation of the sons of God.

I would here notice that the key to the whole sermon is that oft-repeated phrase, "*Your Father in heaven.*" God as the Father is the revelation first made in its full meaning by "the Son who was in the bosom of the Father," for HE hath declared HIM. The whole character of the teaching in this blessed section of the kingly gospel—this gospel of the Son of David, rests on that name. Without that name its precepts are impossibilities, and its requirements unreasonable. Alas! for the folly of those who seek to enforce the principles of these chapters on those who have never known their key note—those on whose hearts the Father in heaven is no near reality, but only a far-off title!

To comprehend the kingdom, its King, and its righteousness, we must enter into the central name of Father, and adopt in heart the language of the apostle, and say—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Nowhere in the Old Testament is this personal relation of God to the believer as His Father taught, except in a few typical passages like 2 Samuel vii. 14, where the person so addressed becomes a representative person of Him who was to come.

As we have said, the first four characteristics of the heavenly family are negative. Let us never forget that in our condition as lost and guilty, the only condition of blessing is *receiving*; and that which makes receiv-

ing possible, is the consciousness of *emptiness* and *need*. Hence, to be poor and to mourn—to be lowly and to be hungry—all imply just that condition, which is so frequently described in the Old Testament, as that which marks those who have got into God's current of blessing. Hannah's song, Mary's song, the songs in the Book of Psalms, and all that is expressive of the faith of the family of God, has come out of the same depth which makes the barren woman the fit emblem of those who are prepared to *receive all*, because they have no hope in *themselves* for anything.

We will now seek to go down into the depths in the first four beatitudes, that in the last three we may get into the heights, and so realize the depths and the heights into which our Father in heaven would lead those who can follow His Son. Let us follow the order given to us by our divine Teacher.

1. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" It has been well remarked that poverty in spirit is never attributed to the blessed Lord. He is spoken of again and again as meek and lowly, as despised and afflicted, but *not* as poor in spirit. The reason of this is, because poverty of spirit expresses that condition of soul which has resulted from sin and the absence of all that is good. It is well to notice both the points of resemblance and of the opposite between the Lord and His people; for there will always be points of difference between those who are born in sin, and Him who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet without sin.

This poverty of spirit takes up the believer at the point where the peace of God met him, when as a sinner he had learnt that in him dwelleth no good

thing; the opposite of which was ever true of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. As the sin-bearer on the cross the Lord is represented in the Psalm as crying—"I am a worm and no man." And it is at the cross that the sinner first learns that he is "a poor sinner and nothing at all." This lesson *learnt* prepares the way for all that follows, for in it is that *receptive* grace which in regeneration makes Christ the "all in all" to the soul, and secures in Him the realization of the promise—"theirs is the kingdom of heaven." True poverty of spirit has brought the believer to an end of all that he is and has by nature, and this not as a past experience, but as an ever-present realization, in which he finds day by day the promise of Isaiah lxvi. 2 fulfilled, which says, "To this man will I look, even to *him that is poor* and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." This explains the whole end of the gospel, which is "that every mouth may be stopped," so that henceforth "he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

2. "*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*" There is no closer fellowship than fellowship in sorrow, and it is the prerogative of the redeemed to have fellowship with the "Man of sorrows"—with Him who was "acquainted with grief." When God looked on the apostate world at the flood, it is said "it grieved Him at His heart," (Genesis vi. 6,) where the same word is used as in Genesis iii. 16, 17, of the "*sorrow*" of the woman and of the man, resulting from judgment after the fall.

The God of love left not the fallen ones to sorrow

alone. He sorrowed for them, and with a far deeper anguish than they could sorrow for themselves. Of this sorrow of God, the groans, the sighs, and the tears of the Son of God are a witness to us; and the moment the believer enters into the kingdom, his heart falls into sympathy with the "kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

There is the groaning of the lost creation awaiting deliverance, and into sympathy with this the child of God enters as being himself in the body; but he has also the deeper groan of the heart in sympathy with the mind of God, in the moral and in the spiritual ruin that sin has caused. Creation groans over its misery, but Redemption teaches us to groan over all sin, and therein to be in harmony with the great Redeemer Himself, who said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."

Do we at all sufficiently enter into the fellowship of the sin-bearing of the Son of God? I think not, and yet I believe it is that which is meant in that oft-repeated expression, "Let him take up his cross." The cross is the symbol of sacrificial sin-bearing, and he who bears it, bears fellowship with Him who bore penally what we bear in sympathy. The grace that introduces us to the Paschal Lamb provides for us *bitter herbs* to eat with it, and he who examines himself will find matter for mourning and sorrow, in the midst of the very joy of forgiveness in the blood shed for the remission of sin. With many it is to be feared this fellowship in tears with a sin-bearing Jesus is little known; by some it is thought legal, and by

others out of place. Alas, that we should have wandered so far from our cross-bearing place as followers of a cross-bearing Christ! And if such be the case, is it to be wondered at that joy in the Lord is so little known, a joy that kindles the heart none the less when all is gone but the Fountain-spring?

The promise is sure, "They shall be comforted;" and certainly the consolations of the God of comfort are neither few nor small, but like all His promises to be realised by those who are able to receive it; and who is able but he who has walked in fellowship with God in the sorrow and in the dishonour that sin has brought upon God and upon his creatures?

3. "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*" As the first beatitude has to do with him that has learned that he *has* nothing, so this reveals the characteristic of one who has learnt that he *is* nothing, and therefore is content to occupy the lowest place here. There is a beautiful fitness in the promise of the inheritance of this earth to the one who is content to walk as a stranger in it; thus fulfilling that frequent utterance of the Lord, that he who is last of all, and servant of all, shall be the chiefest and the greatest.

The verse here quoted is from Ps. xxxvii. 11, where, as elsewhere, the Greek *πραΐς* stands for the Hebrew *עניו*, connecting thus meekness with humbleness, and which, according to the etymology of the Hebrew, signifies the bowing down of any one as under sorrow or affliction. It is also connected in meaning with the word used generally for lowliness of mind (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) in the New Testament, as we see them brought together by our Lord when describing

Himself (in Matthew xi.) as "meek, and lowly in heart."

Lowliness knows how to bow to the will of another, and thus the Son of Man found the yoke of the Father's will easy, and the burden light. It is this that we need to learn of Christ Jesus. When this lesson is learnt, all the rest is easy; but until it is learnt there will always be a controversy between God and His child. His will *must* be done, since the instructed heart has learnt that it is not only "*good and perfect*," but also "*acceptable*." (Rom. xii.) This enabled the meek and lowly Master to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," let the "even so" involve what it might. There were no reserves—the surrender was absolute, and hence the yoke was easy, and so will it be to those who learn of Him.

Perhaps there is no characteristic more at variance with all that is natural to fallen man; and hence that highest of all eulogiums passed by the Spirit on "a meek and quiet spirit," that it is "in the sight of God of great price;" and may not much of the discipline of life be to enhance the value of those precious living stones which are to compose the heavenly temple—the New Jerusalem—to give them a richer lustre and a higher glory, and thus to render them more fit to form the dwelling-place of Him who dwelleth in the high and holy place, and who even now can descend to dwell with the lowly and the meek?

The Lord is preparing the earth for her King of kings, and for those who shall reign as kings with Him. His Kingship is characterised thus by the prophet, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He



is just, and having salvation; *lowly*, and riding upon an ass; and upon the colt, the foal of an ass." The glory of His exaltation is the result of the depth of His lowliness; and the fitness of those who shall be accounted worthy to reign with Him will be that they have learnt of Him to rule in lowliness, and to exercise power for salvation and not for lordship.

In Ps. xlv. we have a remarkable instance of the divine connection that subsists between majesty and meekness. It is written, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness (נְעוּרֵי) and righteousness."

None can rule for God who have not learnt that meekness and lowliness are the first elements of His power; all else is Gentile lordship and earth's despotism, which man has learnt of the prince of this world, whose law is that might is right. Hence, when God expels the usurper, He gives the earth as an inheritance to those who know how to rule it, having first learnt in meekness to rule themselves.

4. "*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*" How often is this thought expressed in the Word of God. Hannah tells us that "they that were full have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry ceased (to hunger)." Mary had learnt the same lesson, when she sang, "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away."

What is the gospel but the call of God to the hungry and thirsty? It cries, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine

and milk without money and without price." All believers have realised this cry for salvation when as the poor and needy they sought water and there was none; when their tongue failed for thirst, and God came in and said, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." And why all this? "That they may *see*, and *know*, and *consider*, and *understand* together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this." (Read Is. xli. 17-20.) And so it was; we saw, and knew, and considered, and understood, that all was of God, and all of grace. And what then? Alas! it has been forgotten that the lesson of the hungry and the thirsty is the daily lesson that we have to learn.

These four characteristics of our divine life are not to be left behind in the foundation work of our soul's experience, but to be carried up to the very top stone. This hunger and thirst, that first found its need met in the fulness of Christ to the sinner, has ever to be finding its satiety in continual coming to Christ. He is not only life from the dead to the sinner, but the bread of life to the quickened child; a life that is hourly ministered to by means of that continued abiding in Him to which we are called. Hence Christ says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life." It is not said, he that hath eaten, &c. It describes the continuous acting of faith, in eating and in drinking.

Let us keep this ever present in our minds and hearts, or we shall find that our fulness becomes emptiness; and our fatness, leanness. That lesson which we learnt when we first came to Christ we have

to be ever learning; and that fulness and joy which first filled the soul, ought to be ever abounding more and more, as the promise, "They shall be filled" becomes realised. If it is not so, faith is waxing feeble, and the unfed hunger, and the unrefreshed thirst, gradually produce that condition wherein hunger and thirst more or less cease, and we become nigh unto death indeed, ready to say with Laodicea, "I have need of nothing," being all the while only the more "poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked."

Christ, He is the fountain, and to Him ever coming the child of God, conscious of no treasure-house in himself, finds an infinite supply, which like the manna falls daily, and needs to be gathered daily. It will not keep. How many feed upon a Christ of yesterday and remain lean and poor, who, did they but feed upon a present Christ, in a present realisation, would be fat and flourishing as trees planted by the river.

The object of this hunger and thirst is righteousness. But the Lord tells His disciples that if their righteousness did not exceed that of the Pharisees, they could never enter into the kingdom. The righteousness of the believer is imputed and is imparted. It is imputed in the righteousness of God, given in Christ by God, to all who believe; and it is imparted by the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost in the new nature that God has given. As Christ is *all* for the sinner, so is He *all* for the saint; when the sinner believes, he is once and for ever saved; so when the believing child of God day by day exercises a living faith on Christ, he finds Christ a daily power, enabling him to fulfil those principles of the righteousness of the kingdom, which lead the children of the kingdom

to become in manifestation what they already are in fact, the children of their Father in heaven.

Let us ponder over 1 John iii. 8-10, "For this purpose the Son of God *was manifested*, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. In this the children of God *are manifested*, and the children of the devil: whoso doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." God is ever seeking a manifestation of what inwardly exists. Righteousness He has implanted, and that a righteousness which grows up in love. Hence the warning against Pharisaic righteousness which falls short of love and mercy. The righteousness of God which has to be imitated is this, that He blesses alike the good and the evil, and therefore commands us to love our enemies that we may be His children indeed.

These first characteristics however do not embrace love or its holy activities. This is the subject of the following beatitudes; but these we have been considering have introduced us by God's royal road of self-abnegation, nothingness, and emptiness, into that condition which marks those who are prepared to follow the Lord: they have denied themselves and taken up the cross, and stand ready to go wherever the Lord may lead.

Exalted high on God's right hand,  
 Nearer the throne than cherubs stand,  
 With glory crowned in bright array,  
 The wond'ring soul says, "Who are they?"  
 These are the saints belov'd of God,  
 Wash'd are their robes in Jesu's blood;  
 More spotless than the purest white  
 They shine in uncreated light.

## THE LAST PASSOVER.

THERE is yet one more passover which we may find it profitable to consider, at which the Lord Jesus Himself was personally present, and at which He instituted the Lord's Supper, as the continual feast to be observed by His disciples.

Let us tread softly, and with unshod feet, for it is holy ground. The scene is a very hallowed one, and we need the solemnising power of the Spirit of God to enable us to meditate on it aright.

Our blessed Lord is presented to us seated with his disciples in that upper chamber around the paschal lamb; but ere they partook of the feast\* He rose from the table, laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Wonder of wonders! The Lord of glory, the Creator of the universe, at the feet of such worms of the earth, and with His own hands washing them from all defilement.

They were *His own*, and He loved them; and His love was so intense that there were no depths of humiliation and suffering He would not willingly undergo for their sakes. Verily, He humbled Himself! He had come down from the highest glory, not only to be the servant of the Father, but also to be the servant of our necessities, and to do anything and everything that our souls require to make us meet for fellowship with God. *Therefore* He washed their feet.

\* As is well known, the washing of the feet took place *before* supper, and the words "supper being ended" should be rendered "when supper was come."

Under the law no one could partake of the passover unless they were *ceremonially* clean ; but *now* the Lord Jesus was about to introduce the new and better covenant, established upon better promises. The law, with its forms and ceremonies, was passing away, for the antitype had come. The commemoration of the passover, with all its hallowed memories and precious teachings, was about to merge into the Lord's Supper, and no *ceremonial* cleansing would suffice for *that*. Christ *alone* could fit the soul for such a feast ; the Son of God Himself must condescend to wash the sins away ; and nothing but His blood—His own life's blood, had power to remove such deadly stains.

Well may we wonder at such matchless grace, and as we wonder, worship at His feet, and sing with joy unspeakable—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The scene is so marvellous that we can well understand the exclamation of the impetuous loving Peter—"Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" and again—"Thou shalt never wash my feet." But how precious and full of meaning our Saviour's answer : "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me ;" and again—"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."

How blessedly true this still is ! Our beloved Lord has ascended on high ; He has entered into heaven by His own blood ; and having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Even now, by faith we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and from the height of

that glory we hear Him say, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Unwearied in forgiveness, He ever lives to make and keep us clean, to purge our consciences from every sense of guilt, and so restore our souls that we may be at ease before our God, and sit and feast upon the flesh and blood of Christ.

We so constantly prove that fellowship with God is hindered by sin upon the conscience, that it is a real joy to have the Lord Jesus presented to us thus, as the One who is ready and willing to remove all defilement from us. He has entered into heaven as our Great High Priest. He is *there* as "the minister of the sanctuary," and in the intensity of His love for us He delights to meet our every need. He has already washed us in His blood, and made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; and when through carelessness or feebleness we again defile ourselves with the evil both around and within us, we have but to bring our sin and failure to Him, and He is ever ready in His grace to cleanse us afresh.

This is part of the daily provision He has made for us, and which He delights to see us continually using, so that there may be no hindrance to the inflow of His grace and truth into our souls. We might well linger here, but time would fail, and we must pass on to another phase of this blessed supper.

The disciples seem to have had but little apprehension of the solemnity of the occasion, and were slow of heart to sympathise with the deep sorrow that evidently pressed upon their Lord. There is much excuse for them, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given,

and their understandings were still darkened. He spoke again and again of His death, but they understood Him not. He startled them with those solemn words—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray me;" but though greatly moved for the moment, they did not apprehend the sad reality, and could even turn from listening to His gracious and loving words to dispute among themselves as to which of them should be the greatest.

What a picture of ourselves! How slow are *we* to enter into the sufferings of Jesus! How easily *we* are turned aside from contemplating Him! How cold and callous we oftentimes are, even when seated at His table to remember His dying love! How often occupied with seeking some thing or place for ourselves, instead of pouring out our heart's adoration and praise before Him!

But mark the riches of His grace, His boundless never-failing love. We can but stand amazed as we consider Him, and see how tenderly He deals with such selfishness and cold indifference.

We hear Him first correct their thoughts as to the path to greatness, and then He turns aside to praise *their* faithfulness to Him, and tells them of the rich reward He has prepared for them, for following Him that little while. No room for jealousy; for *each* should have a throne! (Luke xxii. 30.) No need to vie with one another; for HE would give to *each* a full, yea, double recompence!

What gentleness! what matchless grace! 'Tis thus He seeks to overcome their proud ambitious thoughts, and make them joy in one another's gain. He shews them He has thrones assigned for *all*; a full unmea-



sured cup of everlasting bliss for *every one*. His power and might surpass our highest thoughts; nor can the riches of His glory be exhausted; and ALL is *ours!* all the free gift of God to us in Christ! and *all* to be enjoyed by *every one* to all eternity.

What an effectual yet gentle way of overcoming the natural selfishness of the human heart! Let us but receive this truth in its fulness, and it cannot fail to produce in us a deep and grateful love to Christ, and must fire us with energy and zeal to yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him. Well may we exclaim with the inspired apostle—"O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

But we will pass on to another of His precious words. We hear Him say, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."

How much these words unfold! They seem to lift the veil from off that holy heart, and give us just one glimpse of what was hidden there. They tell us how the cross had filled His eye all through His weary sojourn here. He saw the torture He was nearing every step, and yet He shrank not back. The deep strong love that filled His heart still urged Him on, and nerved His holy soul with strength and steadfastness to tread the fearful path which lay before Him. A baptism of fire indeed awaited Him; the fire of God's own wrath must be endured; but His words are still—"Lo, I come . . . . I come . . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God! Yea, thy law is within my heart!" He had counted the cost; He had measured the suffering; and for the joy that was set before Him

He willingly, yea gladly, yielded Himself as the ransom for many.

He seems to have hailed the near approach of His sufferings, for His holy soul was straitened. There were rivers of mercy and grace and love, unsearchable boundless riches pent up within Him, which could not flow forth consistently with the holiness of God, until His blood had been shed, and His soul poured out as an offering for sin.

The hour was come. The passover was to be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The true paschal lamb was to be slain, and as He contemplated the cup of wrath He had to drink, He thought of the ineffable joy He was purchasing for them. We see Him take the cup of wine in His hands, and thank His Father for permitting Him to give them this joy; and then as He passes the cup to them He says—"Take this and divide it among yourselves."

Blessed unselfish love! The cup of joy was not only His by right as the Son of God, but He could claim it as the due reward of His perfect service while here; but instead of drinking it Himself, He passed it to *them* with those words, which still sound in our ears—"Take this and divide it among yourselves." The reward of His righteousness, the recompence of the cleanness of His hands—*all*, ALL given to us; and He delights to see us drink deeply of the joy and gladness which have cost Him so much to obtain for us.

Then came the crowning act—the importance of which was so great that a special revelation of it was made to Paul. (See 1 Cor. xi. 23–26.) "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it,

and said, Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

Such was His love to us, poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinners, that He thanked His Father that He had a body which could be broken for our sins—a body *prepared* for HIM, in which He could lay down His life as a sacrifice for us! The waves and the billows of God's wrath went over HIM, and the enmity and malice of men and devils combined to torture that holy and blessed One; and now He passes the bread to us, and bids us—Take eat in remembrance of Him.

"The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It is the feast which He has ordained, that His death might be continually brought before us, and that thus collectively feeding on Him we might receive increased strength and nourishment from Him.

"Do this in remembrance of me." It is no invention of man, no fable or superstition; but the dying command of the Lord of glory, as He went forth to lay down His life for us; and dare we neglect it?

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." Wonderful words, so simple, and yet so full!

"His precious blood was shed,  
His body bruised for sin;  
Remembering this we break the bread,  
And joyful drink the wine."

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" The Lord Jesus Himself passes us the cup, and bids us drink it in

remembrance of His precious blood. It speaks of the blood of the new covenant—the blood which has sealed the covenant, and brought us into the enjoyment of the exhaustless blessings of that covenant. Our sins are cancelled; the holiness of God is satisfied; everlasting righteousness is brought in; and we may sit down and drink of the new wine of the kingdom, and love and praise and adore the One who has brought us into this unspeakable and everlasting joy.

Nor is this all—“for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death *till He come.*” The bread and wine speak to us of that bright morning without clouds, when *His* joy will be full, and we shall sit down with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb. No more sin and failure then; no more careless wandering hearts; no more ingratitude and forgetfulness of Him we really love; but with and like our Lord, we shall bask in the full sunshine of His love, and delight ourselves in Him for ever and ever! Well may we say with all our hearts: Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

How precious the Lord’s Supper should be to us; and how we should welcome each opportunity of thus gathering together to remember Him.

We have only glanced at a few of the sentences the Lord Jesus uttered at this wonderful feast. The teaching of the different passovers is very full, and the more it is meditated on the richer it is found to be, and the greater the joy and blessing which flow from it into our souls. May the Lord lead us into a deeper and fuller apprehension of the truth and grace thus unfolded.

## THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE.

As those for whom Christ died, who died in Him, and live because He lives, as holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, let us yet further consider the subject, "Crucified with Christ." (*See page 242.*)

In the twelfth chapter of John there are several verses (21 to 26), the connection of which one with another will not be apprehended unless we have in measure learned the relation of the believer to Christ, and the path in which we are called to follow Him.

Certain Greeks desired to see Jesus, and Andrew and Philip tell Him this. His soul is carried forward by this incident to the day when all shall know Him, when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and looking through the cross and the shame to the joy that was set before Him, He exclaimed, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified."

The way to glory is, however, only through the cross and shame. It was because He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant (a slave, bond-servant), and humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: and as He would bring many sons to glory, He states the law of God—applicable alike to the natural and the spiritual—that there is no increase, no fruitbearing, but by death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

The next two verses are, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall also my servant be." What is the explanation of the transition? Why does the Lord pass from the contemplation of His own death to that which was involved in discipleship? It is because as in all else, so even here, in coming under the law that to bring forth fruit we must die, we are one with Him. "As He is, so are we in this world." We cannot work out atonement for any. We cannot justify ourselves. But redeemed and justified by His precious blood, we can bring forth fruit, yea much fruit, and herein is our Father glorified. But we can be fruitful only by dying.

This then is the Christian path. The thought in the conclusion of the passage is in no wise as to the precious truth that the children of God have died in Christ, so as to be free from condemnation: it has to do altogether and exclusively with the solemn responsibility of the saved and loved ones to follow Jesus, to walk as He walked. The path which He trod we too must tread, if we would "please" God, if we would be obedient children. We too must die, die daily, live a dying life, carry on earnestly, and diligently, and unceasingly that crucifixion to which we have consigned the old man with his affections and lusts. How great, how grievous is our failure here. We rejoice that we are Christ's. We know something of His love and of the blessed deliverance which He has wrought for us. We know little, it may be almost nothing, of the life in which alone the disciple can have fellowship with Him.

“Except a corn of wheat *fall into the ground and die*, it abideth alone; but *if it die*, it bringeth forth *much fruit*.” Yes, this is the unchangeable law laid down both for the outward and the inward creation by Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will. Through death—death in Christ—we have passed once for all into spiritual life, and it is of infinite moment to the quickened child of God to know, to lay to heart, and to carry about with him as the law of his inner life the solemn truth that it is by the same process only—by a daily dying to all that is of the old creation, that in it which is most refined and attractive, as well as that which is gross and repulsive—that the heavenly life progresses, that the work of the Holy Spirit within is carried on, that the natural gives place to the spiritual, and the spiritual goes forward in its development from the babe to the perfect man. It is as “the outward man perisheth,” and only thus, only in this mode, in this proportion, and by this as a means, that “the inward man is renewed day by day.” Here as in all else, as in the whole work which but commences when the breath of spiritual life in Christ is first breathed into the dead soul, and which it is the purpose of God (see Phil. ii. 12, Heb. vi. 9–12, Rom. xiii. 11–14,) that we as fellow-workers with Him should be diligently advancing during each day and hour of the little while of our sojourn in this wilderness—here, as in all else, “the foolishness of God is wiser than man.”

What then are we each one doing, beloved brethren in the Lord? What are *we*, God’s dear and infinitely precious children, doing? The question is a very solemn one, and its serious consideration by each one of us is

of unspeakable importance. Never, probably, was there greater need that it should be put than now. We live in a day of profession, a day of much knowledge (I speak only of the children of God), a day in which "all mysteries," let it be admitted, are understood, but what is our walk before God? Life has been imparted to us not merely that we may know, but that through the knowledge of the things which are freely given us of God we may be constrained and strengthened to follow Christ. The only use of knowledge to the child of God is this: unless it presses home the love of Christ to the soul as an effective motive for a heavenly, earnest walk in fellowship with Him, the despised and rejected One, it is vain, it profiteth nothing. The judgment of the believer (consider 2 Cor. v. 10) will have respect not to mere knowledge (though the child of God is responsible to know his Father's will in all things) but to his walk, to his obedience, his crucifixion of the flesh, his growth in conformity to Christ. "Whatsoever a man (a man redeemed by the precious blood of Christ) soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." What a solemn word—a word how needed in these evil days when the believer is so seriously infected by the spirit of lawlessness prevailing around him, and when "the flesh," the old and natural man in his entirety, not only his desires and passions, but his mind and emotions, and intellect, and taste, and reasonings, and hopes, and fears, and objects, and pursuits—can be unsuspectedly "sown to," in ways almost infinitely various and increasing in number daily.



“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die”—as respects the outward world, the truth is recognised by all. Keep from God’s sun and rain the precious seed in which He has implanted the vital germ, and it may live a kind of life far more prolonged than if it had been committed to the earth, but though we preserve it with all the care we can its end soon comes. Eventually it dies. And it dies alone as it abode. It brought forth no fruit, and its opportunity now is passed. The wiser husbandman trusts the seed, living and full of energy, to darkness, decay, and death, in hopeful anticipation of the abundant increase—thirty-fold, sixty-fold, a hundred-fold,—which it is the gracious manner of a bountiful God to give to those who respect the appointments of His wisdom and confide in His goodness and love.

Our place, beloved brethren, our wisdom, our blessing is to act thus. We may save our life so as to find hereafter that we have lost it: we may by now making it over to death find in the day which is drawing near that we have saved it. By consigning to its fitting and appointed place of death and corruption all that belongs to that old nature—the corrupt mind, and judgment, and affections, and understanding—to which we died in Christ, which is under the wrath of God and is enmity against God, and is yet borne about by the believer, we shall help forward the growth of that inner life which is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, which approves and delights in all the thoughts and ways and orderings of God, and which can bring forth fruit abundantly, to be to Him a source of joy and a sweet savour in Christ now, and to abound to our account when “each one” of us “shall receive the

things done in the body." That will be the reaping time, that the time for "the recompence of the reward." Of every aspect of the Christian walk, whether serving, or giving, or suffering, or doing, or dying, the truth will then be seen that "he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Also that, "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and that "he that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, *bringing his sheaves with him.*" And then also that other fundamental principle and abiding law of the household of God will be found to operate: "The husbandman THAT LABOURETH must be FIRST partaker of the fruits." Before God "the evening and the morning" make the day. It is not as man reckons it, a bright beginning closing in with the shadows of night. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." How soon may the day star arise, and the morning break. Let us "be diligent, that we may be found in peace," by Him whose we are, that we be among those "who love His appearing," among the watchful, not the sleepers, and that we "be not ashamed before Him at His coming."

Holy brethren—holy because ye are Christ's—the night with its weeping has not yet passed. It is sowing time, and the seed must be exposed to sun, and rain, and cold, and wind, and tempest. Thus our Father has ordained. This is the law of our growth. We have not yet come to the end of the waste and howling wilderness, and the discipline of it is needed to fit us for God's rest. The whole armour of God is needed now, that we may fight the good fight of faith, be good soldiers of Christ Jesus, withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Let us not

murmur that it should be so ordered by our loving and all-wise Father. Do we, or does He know what is good? Do we indeed desire to be "filled with our own ways," and to set up our own fallen and blind and perverse wills and understandings, rather than to prove what is the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God?" "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." This is God's way of dealing with His children. Whom He loves, to them He assuredly appoints nothing but good. Whom He loves He chastens. How surely then is chastening especially *the good*, pre-eminently that which is helpful, if we be but duly exercised thereby, in carrying on the good and gracious work of God in each one of us. Let us not take man's estimate of chastening, or the estimate of our own blind hearts. They will set it down as an evil to be avoided. Our Father sets it before us as the most blessed discipline of His beloved child. It hurts only the old man—to this indeed it is death—to the new man it is life. Instead of shrinking from our conflicts, and sorrows, and sufferings, and perplexities, we should be careful chiefly not to let them pass by without yielding the fulness of their blessing. Is it outward prosperity, or trial, affliction, and distress that usually casts us upon God? Which then is the real blessing? Which brings us into fellowship with the Lord Jesus? Which makes us feel our need of His sympathy—a need never felt but to be met? Our blessing is to become daily *more acquainted with God*, and this happy end is brought about by all that teaches us how weak we are, and makes us to find by experience that our strength and our sufficiency are in Him. And our blessing is to be brought into fellowship with the Crucified One, with Him who led a life of suffering for us that we should follow in His steps. Our place is to be with Him, esteeming that good which knits us to Him, which casts us in conscious helplessness on His infinite tenderness and love, which

leads us in the paths where alone He walked. Let us strive more earnestly, more heartily, to learn of God where our true blessing is, and in the school of God let us cultivate a spirit of increasing willingness to suffer with Christ, increasing ability to count it all joy when we fall into our various trials, to "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."

Let us be *patient* under this discipline—patient, earnestly, hopefully patient, though the fruit may not be maturing as we would. Our part in it is to yield ourselves up unreservedly, thankfully, rejoicingly, that God's gracious purpose may be wrought out in us. The work is His. He is doing all. Our care is but to see that we put no hindrance in His way, to wait, to trust, to be satisfied in Him. Shall our failures, shortcomings, and sins discourage? Infinite grace, if its guidance is submitted to, will make even these the means of leading us to an abiding resting-place in Him in whom alone we have power against them.

Though our daily path then lies through the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evil. All these things are not against us, but for us. They were God's appointment for His Holy Son, the Captain of our Salvation, made perfect through sufferings, and they are His appointment for us His children also.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . As it is written, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' . . . **NAY, IN ALL THESE THINGS WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS** through Him that loved us. . . . For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. . . . nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

"WE preach Christ crucified," said the apostle Paul, "unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 23, 18.)

"The prophets spake of a crowned Messiah," cry the Jews—"of a kingdom; of Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth. Why not preach as they did?" "Let us hear you reason of the immortality of the soul, of the theories of the school of philosophy," exclaim the Greeks. "Your 'cross' is folly," says the philosopher. "Aye, contemptible," joins in the Pharisee.

"But I am 'determined,' says Paul, 'not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.'"

Such was the controversy of those days, and such is it, with little change, to this day. Yet upon the cross—the doctrine of the crucified Saviour—rests the whole superstructure of Christianity. Displace it in your doctrine, and you corrupt the gospel. Set it aside to the least extent in the church, and you destroy her light and weaken her testimony. Omit it from the centre and forefront of your soul's meditation, and you starve. Therefore it is that in the Scriptures God has set it forth, in almost every page and every line, that by the prominence given to it we may learn its true worth and value.

In Numbers xxviii. the opening words are full of significance: "My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season."

In this general command with regard to the typical sacrifices and offerings we find beautifully shown the estimate set by God upon the cross of Christ.

He calls the cross of Christ "*my offering, my bread, my sacrifice.*" He says, as it were, it is in the cross I am well pleased; in the death of my crucified Son I am satisfied; and by it I am justified before the universe.

What a large circle of results revolves around the death of the cross, we do not at once discover when first we become believers. Then we are naturally occupied mainly with its wondrous blessing to ourselves and to our fellow-men. Even as in the verse I have quoted, God speaks of the sacrifice of Calvary in type as *His*—"my sacrifice, my offering"—so we from a very different point of view speak and think of it as *ours*. As we sometimes sing—

"Guilty and worthless as I am,  
*It all for me was given;*  
 And boldness through His blood I have  
 To enter into heaven."

Or again—

"O Lamb of God, *my sacrifice,*  
 I must remember Thee!"

We say with grateful affection, "He loved *me*; He died for *me*; for *me* He bled. My sins are His, His blood is mine." In blissful faith we appropriate His death, and make it ours, in all its rich, abundant blessing. Our sins, and their just punishment, was that which troubled us the most, and in the death of Christ we found relief for our distress. What wonder then that we should speak of that sacrifice as ours! It is the utterance of living, spiritual, scriptural faith.

By-and-by, however, and as we grow in knowledge and our views expand, and as the full bearing of the

whole question of sin and its settlement unfolds to our eyes, we find that other need beside our own had to be supplied, and other claims to be satisfied.

*God* had need of such a sacrifice as that of the cross of Golgotha.

His laws had been broken for centuries; His name blasphemed; His worship prostituted into that of idols of stone, and wood, and gold. In long-suffering He had borne with all this since the days of Noah, not willing that any should perish. But to all appearance He was unmindful or indifferent. Men began to say there was no God (Ps. liii. 1), and yet He had kept silence, and held His peace, and been still. (Ps. lxxxiii. 1.) They thought He could not see their deeds, and regarded not their outrages. (Ps. xciv.) Long had the prophets, harassed and perplexed, cried to Him to awake, to interfere, to show Himself and overthrow the wicked. In due time He heard their prayer; but answered it not as they expected. Instead of destroying the blasphemer, He poured out the wrath that was due to this guilty world on the head of His Son.

God thus declared that He had seen and measured all this enormous sin, and yet while thus declaring it He opened a way for its forgiveness!

But furthermore the inhabited universe above, angels, and principalities, and powers, had seen numbers of sinners admitted to Paradise! They knew and rejoiced that God was righteous, holy, and just. They knew that the blood of bulls and goats could never satisfy the claims of His irrefragable justice; and yet they found sinners from earth admitted to God's presence, whose sinful ways they had often themselves been employed to restrain or overrule.

God's holiness needed to be vindicated, the apparent inconsistency to be cleared up. There was harmony among the works of His creation; each revolving world held its appointed course; and all the vast field of His handywork declared His glory. But there was one discordant sound discovered, long continued, still permitted. Sin crept in, grew, developed, and overspread the whole fair surface of the earth, and yet its judgment lingered. Souls who were guilty of it were admitted to God's presence, and yet an adequate atonement was not found.

At last, from an unexpected source, the voice is heard: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Now the mystery will be solved, and the harmony be restored. God will be justified, sin will be judged, and the just ground on which the sinner may enter heaven will be explained.

The Lord Jesus dies! before the universe "set forth (a propitiation through faith in His blood) to declare God's righteousness, in consequence of His passing over the sins of past ages, through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." The only One whose death could avail to solve so vast a difficulty, or to make a sufficient atonement for the outrage done to the holiness of God, was He who had never known what it was to obey.

Yet He freely presents Himself, and fulfils the will of God. Therefore the words in Ephes. v. 2—"Christ also hath given Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." This shows the meaning of the two goats offered on the great day of



atonement. As it is written: "One lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." (Lev. xvi. 8.) The Lord's lot was to make atonement for His holy place (v. 16). Therefore we have these beautiful words: "MY offering, and MY bread for MY sacrifices, for a sweet savour unto ME, shall ye observe to offer unto ME in their due season." Christ died *for God*. He satisfied His claims; He cleared Him before men, and angels, and the devil; and in His death God has smelled a SWEET savour of rest and eternal satisfaction.

Thus God and the believer are in this marvellous fellowship, that the same death avails for the need of both. He died for God, He died for me. His death restores harmony in God's universe, and spreads peace over my soul. It justifies God in receiving me, it emboldens me to draw near to Him. In that death God rests, and in it I rest.

God calls Christ "MY BREAD;" Christ gives us the broken bread, and says, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you." Thus God and the saint have fellowship together in feeding on the death of Jesus. And it is very wonderful and blessed to realize, at the celebration of the Lord's Supper where this is shewn forth, that so long as we are occupied (as we should ever be at that scene) with the Lord Jesus in His death, we with God the Father are in marvellous fellowship one with the other. What a revelation! Can you grasp it? that you and I should be raised to such a height as this! to be feeding on "the Bread of God!"

Oh, never let us weary of this blessed subject of meditation—the death of Jesus! It was a stumbling-block to the Jew, folly to the Greek. But let us never

imagine we can get anything higher, or anything more full and rich in blessing than it is. My brethren, whatever truths you dwell on, however you may be occupied with your heavenly privileges or blessing, never fail to recall, at the beginning, in the midst, and at the end of your meditation, that the cross is the ground of all your blessings, and that as a forgiven, blood-washed *sinner* only can you enjoy them.

In the same chapter of Numbers we find what bears much on this, and is beautifully connected with it. We have in the second verse God's appreciation of the death of Christ, and from verses 12 to 14 we have that of man, and its fruit.

The bullock, the ram, and the lamb may be understood to represent various measures of appreciation of Christ in sacrifice. The man who brought a bullock stands for a believer of strong faith and spiritual intelligence; the one who brought the ram for one of less; and he who brought the lamb may represent a very pure but yet a simple faith. Now observe, that as was the value of the victim so was the quantity of flour and wine for the meat and drink-offerings. In which figure we have this solemn truth set forth in exact proportion as we value, and appreciate, and delight in CHRIST *in sacrifice*, in such degree shall we be enabled to feed upon Him as the daily bread of our souls, and to hold communion with Him; and also in that degree shall our hearts rejoice with the wine of the gladness and joy of the Lord.

Do we find our joy in the Lord less full and overflowing than it was when first we knew Him? Is our communion less constant, our appetite for the heavenly manna less keen? Here we find the secret cause—we

have not kept the death of Christ in its true and proper place in our hearts. We have sought, it may be, to get away to what we call higher truths. Perchance "the Head" has been displaced from His preëminence within our hearts while we have been striving about "the body." Whatever it is, God be praised for the ever-ready remedy. Only let us acknowledge our delusion, take the place of sinning children before Him, remember the blood as our only plea and our only glory, enjoy our place indeed as those who sit with Christ in heaven, but remember that the ladder by which we have reached that eminence rests with its foot on Calvary, and while sitting sing, as by-and-by we shall in perfected glory, "unto the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood."

In conclusion, may we ever be preserved in the triumphant determination of him who named himself the chief of sinners: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Amen.

---

## "WALKING IN DARKNESS."

### ITS CAUSE: ITS REMEDY.

ALL clouds and mists are earth-born; and so is all the darkness and sadness which at times seem to envelope some of God's children, arising from their own dim-sightedness and want of faith, and not from any sovereign withholding on the part of their loving Father.

The bitter cry of the forsaken One on the cross, telling how fully He had gone down to the depths of our low state, seems to tell also that "forsaking" was

part of that wrath, which can never be our portion, *because* He bore it for us.

Can His Father's face ever again be turned away from Jesus? Impossible! But it is in Christ Jesus that we, as saved ones, stand before God, and therefore no shadow of the wrath can rest upon *us*.

Many, however, who know that their "life is hid with Christ in God," and are not likely to listen to the enemy when he whispers that God is afflicting in *His wrath*, will yet be beguiled by him when he represents our Father as chastening us by *withholding* the light of His countenance. They know that they are walking in darkness; they feel chilled by the shadow of the cloud; and they think the sun has ceased to shine. He shines on others, they admit, but not on them.

Can it be so? If the sun should cease to shine, surely some great *change* would have taken place in it. And we know that in our God there is "no variable-ness, nor shadow of turning." "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

What, then, are the causes of this darkness?

They are many. Is it not often the enemy's black hand that is held before our eyes? If he can only make us think the shadow comes from God, it is a snare in which we may be long held captive. Cut off from the source of light, and admitting a doubt of His love, whence can help come?

Again, the world may come in, and step by step we may insensibly wander, till we are turning our back upon the Lord; and can we wonder *then* that

we see not His face? Here also the tempter is ready with his lies; we feel we are astray, and we grope about in the twilight, trying to mend the rags of the far country, instead of at once saying, "I will arise and go to my Father." And because these efforts at self-mending do not bring back the joy and sunshine of His presence, Satan whispers, "Your Father is angry; He will not have you back; *you* have tried, *you* are willing, but He is not."

Or there is some sin indulged—some evil weed tolerated; a stagnant pool, from which the earth-mist rises, and soon our hearts grow cold.

Is it our Father's *will* for this to shut us out from His presence? Surely not. But He loves us too well to let us be at ease while this sin is being yielded to; and to awaken us to the evil, He lets us feel the chilling misery of the mist it has produced—a mist through which we cannot see His face, but which hides us not for one single moment from His watchful care, nor from His eye of love.

Want of faith is at the root of all. We do not *know* our God, and therefore do not trust Him. If we only believed that THE ONE CHANGELESS THING IS *God's love*, we should seek for the origin of all darkness in ourselves, instead of charging it upon Him.

It is an awful thing for a Christian to say or feel, "I am willing to be saved, restored, set free from this or that, but *God* will not release me;" but how constantly in speaking to anxious souls, or Christians in darkness, it is found to underlie almost all they say!

But "He doth not afflict willingly (margin, *from His heart*), nor grieve the children of men." (Lam. iii. 33.) He would, if it were possible, spare us the

bitter unlearning of false thoughts about HIM and about *ourselves*, and would have us walk with Him as happy, trustful children. He would have us learn His thoughts and His ways from His own written word, and accept His judgment of the flesh, and sin, and Satan.

*Then we should no longer walk in darkness.* We should shout aloud for joy—"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine . . . yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet as hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." (Hab. iii. 17-19.) We should "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 11.) We should know and believe that "GOD IS LOVE."

---

## THE HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM ; THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR PLACE.

### PART II.

IN the first four beatitudes the Lord was leading us, as we have seen, down into the depths, among the *poor* and *lowly*, the *weeping* and the *hungry*. This has ever been God's preparation for blessing. In this way He led Joseph into the pit, into Egypt, and into the prison, that he might be fit to become "a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." In the three concluding beatitudes, we shall have to ascend into the heights; and amidst the *merciful*, and the *holy*, and the *peace-making*, we shall enter into those divine activities of grace which manifest the features of the Father who is in

heaven—the Merciful, the Holy, and the Peace-making God.

The first four blessings brought us into the place of the creature; and the last three raise us up into the place of God, where, like Him and for Him, we realize the Lord's perfect law of liberty, and, following His footsteps, obey Him when He says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." And why are we thus commanded but because God has set us an example, and we are to seek to become in manifestation "the children of our Father which is in heaven"?

All below that falls within the measure of the world outside; for Jesus says, "If ye *love* them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye *do good* to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye *lend* to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But," He continues, "love ye your *enemies*, and do good, and lend, *hoping for nothing again*; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke vi. 32-36.)

These quotations are needed to show us the exceeding *broadness of the preceptive blessings we are now about to contemplate*, wherein no lower example is set before us than that of God Himself, who, to reveal *Himself* to us, has sent us Him who is the brightness of His glory, and His own express image. We will now consider these beatitudes in their order.

1st. "*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*" God's mercy is manifested in that He is kind to all; for He commends His love to us, in that, "when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" that, "when we were without strength," yea, "when we were enemies" "God so loved us, that He gave His only begotten Son." This is the character of the mercy of which we have been made partakers; and the command is, to give as freely as we have received, yea, to give back what we have ourselves been given.

The question is often asked, What is meant by being merciful? and, how far is it to go? One had already put to the Lord the same question, when he asked, "Who is my neighbour?" for he thought therein to justify himself. The Lord laid bare the hypocrisy of the lawyer who thus tempted Him, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan, gave him in reply far more than he had ever contemplated. "Which now of these three was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves?" the Lord asked; and on his answering, "He that shewed mercy on him," He brought to his conscience an answer, not to the theoretic question, "Who is my neighbour?" but to the personal and practical one, "*What is it to be a neighbour?*"

God's measure must ever be our measure, if we are to be practically His children; and as in the ways of the Good Samaritan the blessed Lord has drawn a full length portrait of Himself, His word to us all is, 'Be ye what I am.'

And what of the *promise*? To some does it seem legal? It may to those who regard grace as something to be received only, and not as something to be given also; but to those who glory in the righteousness of



God's mercy, it will be sufficient to know the character of God, to be assured that there can be no blessing but as that character is realized. If He is merciful, there can be no blessing but in being merciful as He is; and as we are to Him and for Him, so shall we realize Him to be to us; for "to him that hath shall more be given." "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace"—grace in us corresponding to the grace that is in Him, and manifested in us according as it has been given to us.

Thus Paul prays for his faithful Onesiphorus: "The Lord grant unto him that he may obtain mercy of the Lord in that day;" for he had oft refreshed the apostle, and was not ashamed of his chain, nay, in Rome itself he had diligently sought the suffering imprisoned man of God, and had found him; and in Ephesus also he had ministered to him in many things.

We are ever needing mercy from God, and perhaps often finding it withholden from us, because we have withheld it from another. Let us not forget the retributive righteousness of love, that seeks to keep the edge of our consciences keen, which, alas, are so prone to become dull. "The liberal soul shall be made fat," and "he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The world is the sphere of this call for *mercy*, which the children of the Father are called to meet, not in the sense of their own poverty, but as those who hear that word sounding in their ears, "Give ye them to eat. 'Take compassion on the weary and the hungry, as I do,' says the Saviour to His people, as He sends them forth with all power, and all blessing; and as He sends them, He says, "Be ye merciful, for I am merciful."

How far we have recognised the precept, and how far we have consequently realised the blessing, let us examine ourselves by the light of God's word to us, and of His dealings with us, and let us answer for ourselves before Him; and if after examination we feel constrained to take a far lower place than hitherto, it will not have been in vain. There will be hope then; for "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

2nd. "*Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.*" Before entering on this subject, it will be well to contemplate a little what God says of the heart of man, that we may extol "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe," and magnify the riches of that grace which has brought a clean thing out of an unclean, and turned the pandemonium of the natural heart into the garden of the Beloved, the orchard of heaven, whence the King gathereth "His pleasant fruit."

There are no pages in the inspired word darker than those wherein the finger of God depicts the fallen heart of man. We have it opened up to us in the pages of the sacred record, as no hand but the hand of God could lay it bare. We see it in the lives of the wicked whose histories have been given us. Cain and Judas, Caiaphas and Herod, give their revelations to us of the terrible character of sin in the heart of man.

The lives of the holiest also, often reveal outbursts of evil that make the spirit quake, and lead us all (if exercised aright before God) to mingle our tears with David's as he went up Mount Olivet, "and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went bare-foot." The place was holy; it was the place of

discipline, and he went bare-foot in the presence of his God. The poor penitent, with covered head, weeping eyes, and unshod feet, bare witness to the awfulness of sin in the believer; and he who wrote prophetically of the Righteous One, "Thou keepest all his bones, not one of them is broken," writing personally of himself says, "Thou hast broken all my bones."

Who can fathom the depth of sin, corruption, and death that lie within the compass of the human heart? Who but He who describes it: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" and asks, "Who can know it?" Who? God demands, and Himself alone can answer. "I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins."

Paul taught the Romans what the heart of man was by the life and conduct of the Gentile world, where the mouth was true to the heart, and mouth and heart were equally far from God. But there is a deeper darkness than that, and that is the darkness of those who walk in the light of Satan as the Angel of light, and mistake the *ignis fatuus* of hell for the living Light of heaven. This, Jesus reveals in those ever memorable words wherein He describes the washed hands and the unwashed heart of the Jewish Pharisee, the world's religious man, whose antitype is the unclean swine, only doubly unclean because of its divided hoof, the symbol of that which is outwardly clean. He says of such—"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Blind Pharisee! clean first that which is within, that the outside may be clean also."

Let us hear also what Jesus says of the heart of

man, not of some men, but of *man*; and as we read, let us ask again, Can God bring a clean thing out of an unclean? and let faith cry aloud a shout of victory, and say, He can and He will, for He recreates in Christ Jesus. Jesus said unto His disciples, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, *out of the heart* of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark vii.) Let us observe, it is not so much the act that defiles as the outgoings of the heart.

The Lord now lead us into the calm and holy contrast that we have before us, and then in admiring gratitude we shall exclaim—"What hath the Lord wrought!" The heart represents the nature and the will, and on both of these we see the divine power of the Spirit of God brought to bear; first renewing the heart in regeneration, and then writing on the renewed heart the law and will of God which becomes henceforth the law of the Spirit of life in the believer, thus making first the new bottle, and then filling it with the new wine of the kingdom.

The laver of regeneration is Christ, in whom by the Holy Ghost, the believer is begotten again of God, but He is also the laver of renewing, as meeting the daily need of the believer in giving present power over sin. He is not only the source of life but He is the bread of life, and therefore the daily nourisher of that life which by the Holy Ghost He has imparted. He is not only the fountain in which the bathed sinner finds forgiveness and redemption, but He is the source of

the supply of that daily washing which the saint needs in order to become moment by moment "every whit clean." In both faith is the power that lays hold; for having begun in the Spirit, we are not perfected in the flesh. It enables the believer to see his standing and his calling in Christ Jesus, and to live day by day so as to make that standing a reality, and that calling a fulfilment.

Cleansing in Scripture is always connected with death and resurrection—an old thing laid aside and a new thing taken up; and in the daily life of the Christian the power of the hand and feet washing is needed, not in Pharisaic outwardness but in divine inwardness, whereby the "every whit clean" condition is attained, enabling the cleansed saint to behold the King in His beauty, and even now by faith to "see God." "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

It is this revelation of God to the soul that we need to seek after more and more. Not a vision reserved for some hallowed moment in some favoured dying hour, but that near communion with God which results from a conscious living in His presence, which is the present position of the "pure in heart." It is this present enjoyment of the divine presence which, as an earnest of the future glory, quickens in the soul the desire for that hour when face to face, and not as through a glass darkly, we shall see Him whom having not seen we love, and seeing Him shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Holiness of heart is the great need of the church of God, and without it no one shall see Him,—a holiness the measure of which is contained in that precept, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Here then is the miracle of the grace of God, that He is in Christ, preparing holy ones to walk with Him in white, out of those who once were dead in trespasses and sin—those who are not only imputatively holy in the holiness of Christ, but who have an imparted holiness in the power of the Holy Ghost, the present proof of faith's victory.

To this end all the discipline of the Father's love is directed and is beautifully summed up in the Hebrews: "to make us partakers of His holiness." And thus, while longing for that which shall be consummated at the coming of the Lord, may we now seek more and more to be sanctified wholly, having our "whole spirit, soul, and body preserved blameless *unto* the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." Alas! how far more prone are we to rejoice in the fact of the future, than to glorify God by a realization of the present. Holiness is of such overwhelming importance to the Christian, and in its attainment so little understood, that we have dwelt longer on this beatitude than we had intended.

*3rd. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.* This is the seventh and last of the characteristics of those who are heirs of the kingdom, and presents them to us in the activity of the grace of that God, who as the God of peace has sent the message of His love, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Rightly to understand the full meaning of this beatitude, we have to contemplate the character of Him whose children we are here called, and so called because we represent and are like Him, when as peacemakers we act for God.

All was peace and harmony once on earth when

God looking at all the works of His hands pronounced them "very good." Sin came in and marred the harmony, and for peace brought in enmity. First of all enmity as between man and God, for man became the enemy of God; and secondly, as between man and man. Enmity henceforth became the ruling characteristic of the earth.

Into this scene of discord God has come, sending His angelic host to chant the heavenly song, of "Glory to God in the highest," and "Peace on earth." The minister of this peace and the all-sufficient procurer of peace to a guilty world is Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, the sin-offering and the burnt-offering, and therefore also the peace-offering. He is God's gift to the world, received by those who believe, and who receiving Him have power to become the sons of God.

Those who have themselves obtained peace become thenceforward God's peacemakers in the world, going far and wide with the gracious invitation to God's enemies, "Be ye reconciled to God." They have this ministry of reconciliation, even the ministry of the new covenant, placed by God in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of Him. This is their highest vocation and their greatest glory, and to this they are pressed forward by the reflection that to them have been given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the opening of which stands in the blood-shedding of the Son of God.

The believer goes into the world with this glorious responsibility resting on him, a responsibility that finds its motive and its power in the fellowship of the cross of Christ, to which he has been called; so that he who in the discharge of this ministry converts a sinner,

“shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.” (Jas. v. 20.)

As the Father sent Christ into the world to preach peace, so Jesus sends His disciples into the world that they may do the same. Their witness is the same, that “God is love;” their ministry is the same, even reconciliation and peace; and their fellowship is the same, for they are all in their measure made partakers of the sufferings of Christ for His body’s sake, which is the church. They “suffer all things for the elect’s sake, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

All ministry and all service tend directly or indirectly to this eternal end, and those who begin with the possession of the kingdom in the first beatitude, end in the last in fitness for it by fellowship in the service rendered by God and by the Lord Jesus to a guilty, fallen world. God is now as ever, if Lord, servant also, to man in his need as a creature, and in his double need now as alike weak and sinful.

God serves and God reigns, and those who are made heirs of His kingdom, and appointed to reign with Christ, must first be qualified for rule by being made perfect as ministers and servants to the wants and need of all. And it is in this throughout eternity that we shall manifest the most glorious of all titles—the children of God.

These seven beatitudes close with another to which no personal characteristic is attached, but which comes in very fittingly after that which we have been last considering. The eighth beatitude is this—“*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” It contains no fresh



promise, for it is the same as that attached to the poor in spirit with which the Lord began. The result in the world of that heavenly character which in its personal enjoyment and in its ministration we have been considering, is to raise up hatred and persecution. It was so with the Master; it will be so with the servants just in proportion as He is followed, and therefore on them rests the blessing of the persecuted and rejected Lord, whose glory as He dwells on the throne of God, is that He was "slain."

Here then ends the sevenfold characteristic of the heirs of the kingdom, and the sevenfold blessing which results to them therefrom, and the whole winds up as we have seen with a blessing to those whose heavenly character and God-like features have made them the objects of the world's scorn, persecution, and hatred. They had followed a crucified Christ, and they were crucified with Him in the world by which He had been crucified. It now remains to be considered what is *the place* occupied by the heirs of the kingdom in the world.

---

## THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM.

I CHRON. xi. 15-19.

DAVID, weary and thirsty, longed for a cup of water from the well of his own city, from whence he had often drunk and been refreshed. He uttered his longing aloud, never dreaming, I am convinced, that any who overheard his words would attempt, in the face of such a host, to gratify his desire, nor wishing them to do so.

But there were three mighty men beside him, by whom he was beloved. One of them had before slain

three hundred men with his own hand in his master's defence (ver. 11); and all three were ready to die for his sake. What was a Philistine host to them, when David was thirsty?

They broke through the hostile ranks unscathed, dipped their pitcher in the fountain, and faced the great host again. Can they repress the startled multitude alive? Perhaps not; but how could they better shed their blood? They were not afraid to die, but would very gladly lay down their lives in the service of him they loved.

Picture for a moment the thoughts that must have overwhelmed the heart of David, as he watched in security the fearful struggle. His choicest warriors, who had clung to his side through thick and thin, and followed his steps to the caves and dens where he took momentary refuge, who had never forsaken him in his darkest extremity—these men were now at the brink of an almost certain destruction, and all to gratify a passing wish thoughtlessly expressed.

Oh what self-condemnation must have wrung his heart as he peered into the distance fearfully, and followed them through the raging, heaving masses of the enemy, where the swords of his followers clave a passage to his side. Never till this moment did he know how much he was beloved. What if this drink of water be paid for with the life-blood of his heroes!

The feat is accomplished; the last lines of the foe are discomfited; the outposts are passed; the mighty three, victorious, are welcomed back. Their prize lies before him, and now he can drink his fill.

David is ashamed. He knows not how to act. He would not for the crown of Saul that these men had

made this reckless journey. Though they were safe, he felt that having been the unwitting cause of their thus risking their precious lives, to drink the water would be like consenting to their deed, and almost like drinking their blood; for it might have cost their blood. He could not, he would not drink it. "My God," he cries, "forbid it me. Shall I drink the blood of these men who have put their lives in jeopardy? For with their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it."

Happy resolution! What! consent to such a sacrifice just to quench his thirst? Never! "He poured it out to the Lord." In all the rites of the temple, the richest and best of all the offerings was the Lord's. "All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat," and the fat of the victims, were laid upon His altar. And David felt that that pitcher's contents were too precious, too costly, for human lips to taste of. *The blood of his noblest heroes had been freely offered for it.* Jehovah alone was worthy of so rich a gift. So he poured it out to the Lord.

It was not waste. The offerings of the temple only cost the lives of beasts; this might have cost the lives of three most mighty men, and to God it was fitly given. It were waste indeed to spend it otherwise.

What a beautiful illustration for us! At the cost, not of the jeopardy only, but of the precious life itself of our most loving Lord Jesus Christ, the waters of eternal life are ours.

He knew our need before we had felt it; He undertook to satisfy and save us. The great deliverance could not be accomplished at a trifling cost. The threefold host must be met. The arrows of God's wrath against our sin must stick fast in Him, and His waves and billows pour over Him; the devil and his angels were on this side; the malignant hatred of man, even of His own chosen people, was on that. Yet if

the waters of Bethlehem are ever to reach the longing soul, the host must be passed.

He fell in the fight. The precious blood of God's Son was spilt on earth—for you and me. And every drop of comfort we taste, and every draught of heavenly joy we drink, and all the overflowings of that unfailing fountain of which we partake, have been purchased by the blood of our mighty, loving Lord, the Captain of our salvation, the now risen and triumphant Victor over sin, and hell, and Satan.

Oh, my fellow-Christians! how have we received the prize so painfully won, so dearly bought? Have we taken it as a matter of course that the Lord Jesus should lay down His life for our sakes? David was overcome when he thought of what this coveted draught had cost; ought not our whole soul to be overwhelmed with admiration, love, and praise as we taste of Christ's precious gift of life eternal?

If we realised the awful sufferings of Gethsemane, of the cross, yea, the sufferings of the whole life and death of our Redeemer, could we not with David almost desire the sacrifice had never been made for such worthless creatures as we are? But it is done, and we are saved; now let every day we live bring forth a harvest of rich praise to His dear and blessed name.

David poured out the water to the Lord, and so may we pour out upon the altar, as our reasonable service, the life we have thus been given. That great sacrifice has this purpose, that "we which live should henceforth not live unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us, and rose again." This is the way we shall prove to our Lord Jesus that His great love is appreciated, by spending the energies of our new life in His service, pouring them forth as it were unreservedly to Himself.

Words, hymns, creeds, are worthless. What He looks for and delights in is the whole spirit, and soul,

and body, actively, wholly, poured out in His service. If we live now to ourselves, to our own gratification and ease, it will be as though David had carelessly quaffed the hard-won luxury which the jeopardy of his servants' lives had bought for him. We shall thus make light of the death of Jesus, and act as though we counted it "a common thing." (See Greek of Heb. x. 29.)

David's men thought only of his gratification; he with a higher intelligence found a nobler purpose to which to devote the fruits of their valour. So with us; when first we learn the wondrous story of the gospel we have no higher conception than that the great work of Calvary was accomplished for our gratification and blessing. By and by we learn the higher and principal purpose of it was to present an acceptable offering to God—to win glory for God in the world, where His glory was little cared for. The angels sang in harmony with the divine plan when they said, "Glory to God in the highest," as the first purpose in view, and then blessing to man as the second. Thus also in that beautiful chapter, John xvii., the Lord shows what His chief desire and ambition had been,—“I have glorified *thee* on the earth.”

If we cannot rise to this understanding, our faith and then our walk will surely be defective. Some are seen resting and rejoicing in the knowledge and comfort of sin forgiven, with no further ambition; as though this were all the purpose to be fulfilled. They drink the water of Bethlehem, but have no offering to pour out to the Lord. But let "this mind which was in Christ Jesus" be in us. "As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world;" and then we shall feel, as did our Lord, that God's glory, not our comfort or gratification, is the main object for which we have been saved.

He "pleased not Himself." He lived for God; He died for God, that on earth, where sin and contempt

for God were perfectly displayed, God's glory might be perfectly established, first through His life of obedience, and then through His death under the judgment of God. May we be enabled to follow His footsteps, seeking first the glory of God.

To the Lord's Supper too this touching narrative may be instructively applied. When we eat the bread and drink the wine, we partake in figure of the purchase of the death of Jesus. David called the water from the well of Bethlehem "the blood of these men," and would not drink it. The Lord Jesus Himself says of the wine, "This is my blood." And if in wondrous grace we *may* venture to drink of it, how reverently, how solemnly, with what deep, unutterable gratitude should we do it! It is a drink-offering of which God Himself partakes. He delights, and is satisfied, and *rests* in the results of Calvary. We partake with God in this mystical and hallowed feast. What profound emotions then should move us as we are thus engaged!

Let David teach us, that if we partake of that which is precious enough for God Himself, nothing short of the deepest and most sanctified emotions of love and praise are worthy of the occasion. Thus shall we be preserved from that of which St. Paul speaks—"eating and drinking unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. xi. 29.)

---

### THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

'WE must first have a discovery of Christ's love, manifested to us by the Holy Ghost, before we can love Christ; for "we love Him because He first loved us." When the love of Jesus is abiding in our hearts, there will be a walking in Jesus, and an abounding in the work of the Lord.

How precious Christ is to a believer, it is impossible for anyone to describe. He is the believer's meat and drink, his physic, his garment of salvation, his all-

sufficient Saviour, his fountain of happiness, his foundation, and comforter. The whole of his hope and confidence is built upon the doings and sufferings of Jesus Christ the righteous.

There is no friend like Christ! He is a friend indeed! He shewed His friendship towards us, in engaging as surety for us from all eternity. When our case was desperate, He engaged for us. When justice was ready to give the blow which our transgressions deserved, He interposed and averted it by taking it on Himself. When He knew that we should run through all our stock and become bankrupts, He became our bondsman, and engaged to pay our whole debt. When He saw that we should fall into the depths of sin and misery, He undertook to bring us out of them, to cleanse us from all our sins, clothe us with His righteousness, and bring us safely to glory. His dying for us, paying our debt, purchasing our persons out of the hands of law and justice, and procuring all things needful for us, is indeed a wonderful proof of His friendship. Oh, let us look to, and live upon Jesus as our all in all.

It is most blessed to be viewing over by faith, what Christ *hath* done and finished upon earth, and what He *is* doing for us in the courts above. His love brought Him down from heaven, yea from the heaven of heavens. It blazed forth in its transcendent glory upon the cross; it breaks forth from the Redeemer's heart now that He is in glory. It burns and flows forth in acts of everlasting mercy and compassion, now He is at the right hand of the Father, where He maketh continual intercession for us. It is good for us to be engaged in meditating on the love of Christ, until it warms our hearts and influences our souls.

We should wrap ourselves up by faith in the garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness, and present ourselves at the throne of grace therein. In Christ's obedience and atonement the Father beholds us com-

plete without spot or wrinkle, unblameable and un-reprovable in His sight.

God cannot behold us out of Christ with the least pleasure or delight; nor can we look to God with any love and delight, but as we believe Him to be everlastingly well pleased with us in His dear Son. It is as Jehovah the Father beholds us, as eternally united to His dear Son, as wearing His righteousness, and cleansed from all our sins through His most blessed blood-shedding, that He loves us, blesses us, and rejoiceth over us to do us good. Blessed be the Lord, His love toward us changeth not! It is always the same, without increase or decrease.

O my friend, make constant and daily use of the Lord Jesus for every purpose of salvation. Do you need pardon? Go to Jesus for it. Do you need righteousness? Go to Christ. Are your corruptions strong? Go to Christ for the subduing of them. Whatever you need for soul or body make use of Christ and His fulness, and you will find that He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Cast, therefore, all your care upon Him, trust your all in His hands, and you will find Him more than sufficient to supply all your need, and able to do for you above all your expectations.

You cannot trust the Lord Jesus too much, nor yourself too little. The more you trust the Lord Jesus, the more you will honour Him; and the more you go out of yourself entirely to Christ, so much the more do you glorify Him. All fulness dwells in Jesus for this purpose, that out of His fulness we might receive, and grace for grace. He is the fountain from whence all grace flows, and it is always high tide with Jesus Christ!

“A fulness resides in Jesus our Head,  
And ever abides to answer our need;  
The Father's good pleasure hath laid up in store  
A plentiful treasure to give to the poor.”



## DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN.

1 CHRON. xi. 10-47.

THE Spirit of God delights to unfold the hidden riches of the word of God. It is indeed a wonderful book, like its Author—divine, and we can neither fathom its depths, nor measure its breadths.

Like the living waters described in Ezek. xlvii., these precious streams of grace and truth, which flow forth from God Himself, gradually deepen and deepen, until they become a river to swim in, where our souls may continually and increasingly delight.

Truth is stored up for us under every variety of form; type and symbol, the great events of history, and sometimes apparently trivial incidents, are all turned to account; and so rich and so full are these descriptions, so skilfully selected or designed, that several distinct lessons are often taught in a single portion.

It is so in the little history of the heroic act of three of David's mighty men, who brake through the host of the Philistines that they might obtain for David the draught of water for which he longed.

In our former pages (see page 301) we have learnt from it the adoring gratitude and love which should fill our hearts as we drink of the living waters which our beloved Lord has obtained for us at *such* a sacrifice. Let us now consider it from another point of view, and may the Lord use it as a stimulus to enable us to yield ourselves as a living sacrifice to Him.

This incident took place before David had been accepted as King of Israel, and while he was hidden in

the cave of Adullam—an apt illustration of this present period, when the Lord Jesus is seated at the right hand of God waiting for the time when He shall come forth to reign gloriously.

These three mighty men, among many others (see 1 Chron. xi., xii.), went down to David at this season. So now there are, through God's grace, countless thousands who acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and seek in some measure to be faithful to Him in this time of His rejection by the world at large.

David had many mighty men, and many devoted followers, and wonderful acts of valour and self-sacrifice were performed by them. But when David was seated on the throne of his glory, and called his faithful servants together to distribute his rewards among them, and give to each his due meed of praise, we find that none stood so high as "these three mightiest."

Abishai won great honour for himself; he lifted up his spear against three hundred and slew them, and was the captain of three, and was above "the thirty," but, it is added, "*he attained not to the first three.*" Benaiah was another noted man, who, among other valiant acts, "went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day," and "slew two lion-like men of Moab," but of him also it is written, "*he attained not to the first three.*"

And why was this? Ah, why? but because "these three mightiest" not only excelled in strength and valour, but above all they excelled in *love*! Their love was of no common order. It was a deep, fervent, burning love, which made them care for nothing so that they could minister to David. They waited for no command, they needed no command, but gladly

seized the opportunity of gratifying the one they loved. They measured not the risk, they counted not the cost, but were willing to sacrifice everything, yea, even life itself, if they could but give pleasure to David thereby.

Oh, what a lesson to us! Is this the character of our love to Christ? These three worthies did not ask whether David absolutely *needed* the water, it was enough for them that he *wished* for it. And shall we be behind them in alacrity and zeal in seeking to please our beloved Lord? Shall we dare any longer to put aside His *declared wishes*, and say, "He has not absolutely commanded it, so I *need* not do it." Shall we not rather seek to be on the alert to do anything and everything that would give Him joy?

A day is coming when our David will sit on the throne of His glory and distribute His rewards among those who love and serve Him *now*. And will not loving, devoted service be publicly owned and praised by Him *then*? Will not the acts of love—pure burning love to Him—stand highest then? Shall not we find that He who tries the reins and hearts has prized the widow's mite—her *little all* poured at His feet—far more than costly offerings which sprung from mingled motives?

Is not His praise worth striving for? Should we not long to hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," applied by Him to us? And may it not be so? We do not run uncertainly. The prize is *sure* to all who labour for it. The path is open, the way is simple, and Jesus ever lives to give the needed help to fit and strengthen us to run the race.

His service is not hard. His love is such, that He

marks and treasures up each little thing we do for Him. Not a cup of cold water given in His name will lose its reward. All is remembered, prized, and *will be* recompensed; and shall we not arise with increased energy, and seek to yield our hearts and spend our lives for Him?

David well knew there was a time coming when he could drink to the full of the water of Bethlehem, but *he longed for it then*. So there is a time coming when our Lord Jesus will indeed be satisfied with the full grateful response of love from His redeemed ones, but *HE longs for it now*.

This is the time when He is continually pained and grieved by the coldness and disobedience of His saved ones. It is *now* He asks to see our countenance and to hear our voice, and in the intensity of His love for us, declares our voice is sweet and our countenance is comely; and yet how often are we indifferent about fellowship with Him!

It is *now* that He says to us as to one of old, "Give me to drink;" and adds, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse; how much better is thy love than wine;" and yet how often are we negligent and careless about granting His request.

No doubt there was that in David which attracted and knit his followers to him; and is there not everything in our Beloved to attract and bind our hearts to Him, and so to satisfy and fill each longing of our souls that we can only declare of Him—"He is the *chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely*"?

Then mark how David received and used this water. Their act of love was so precious to him that *it* quenched his thirst, and satisfied his longings; and in

the joy of his heart he counted it no longer water, but a drink-offering meet for God, and he poured it out as the strong wine before the Lord. (See Num. xxviii. 7.)

And is it not true—blessedly, wondrously true—that we poor, foolish, and oftentimes wilful, rebellious children, are now put into such a place of glorious privilege and blessing, that we can bring forth fruit well pleasing and acceptable to God?—fruit that Jesus can receive from us, and having cleansed it from all defilement in His precious blood, can present it perfumed with His own perfections as an offering to our God and Father?

We read of spiced wine for our Beloved, of myrrh and spice which He gathers, of wine and milk which He drinks, and pleasant fruits in which He delights. We also hear Him say, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear *much fruit* ;” and “These things have I spoken unto you, that *my joy* might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

We also read of one simple act, which is perhaps more highly commended by the Lord than any other. It is the act of a woman who, in the adoring love of her heart, brought an alabaster box of ointment, very costly, and poured it on the person of the blessed Lord. Like David's mighty men, she thought not of the cost. Others might call it waste, but she knew something of His worthiness, and joyed to pour out all she had on Him. And if *we* but learn what Jesus *is*, we also shall be constrained to give up all for Him. Obedience will not *then* be irksome; but filled with love, our souls will gladly seize each opportunity of showing out that love.

*Now* is the golden hour for love to *prove* itself. There will be no room for sacrifice of self above. All *there* will be ease and rest, and pure unmingled bliss. No conflict then; no sins to crush; no flesh to mortify. But *here* the battle rages still. *Here* there is constant call for faithfulness to Christ. The world comes in and seeks to draw away our hearts, and only *love* can make us truly *steadfast*. The flesh is always seeking some reprieve, and only as we find our *joy* in pleasing Him shall we maintain the fight.

Oh, let us keep our eye on Him, sit at His feet, listen to His words, and learn His ways. So will our love be fanned and kept alive. The love which Jesus seeks from us is *not* the fruit of nature, nor will it grow in nature's soil. It is a heaven-born plant, and needs a heavenly atmosphere, and nothing short of fellowship with Christ Himself can make it flourish in our hearts.

May the Lord use this little history to stimulate our affections, and to stir us up to more thorough devotedness to Christ; so that instead of asking, "How much does He *require*?" our language may rather be, "How much is it possible for me to sacrifice for Him?"

"Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my heart, my life, my all."

## THE HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM; THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR PLACE.

### PART III.

WE now have to consider the *place* that the heirs of the kingdom, the children of God, are designed to fill in relation to the earth. This is described in Matthew v. 11-16.

We have seen their characteristics, and the result, in regard to the earth, that they were hated and perse-

cuted. This is further dwelt upon in verses 11, 12; but the Lord's address is now changed from an abstract contemplation of the Christian character in the *third* person, to a *direct* appeal in the *second*: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." This was fulfilled in the Hebrew Christians when they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. (Heb. x. 32-35.)

It is no bare contentment with a misfortune that the Lord contemplates; but, knowing what faith could do, He transplants them *above*; that risen beyond fear, suffering, or loss, they may be able to rejoice and be exceeding glad in Himself as their shield and their exceeding great reward. This is faith's estimate of the Christ, the Holy One of God, an estimate so intensely real, that the apostle Paul, in contemplation of it, was enabled to say, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ."

As we read these glowing words, written under the authority of the Holy Ghost—words not of vain bombast, but of living truth—we are taught that there is a power vouchsafed to the "man in Christ," which enables him to put all suffering, all sorrow, all loss, all pain,—yea, torture and death itself,—into the balances of the divine sanctuary, and having taken the sum of *all*, to estimate it as "light affliction, which is but for a moment." The same heart can put

into the other side of the scale the reward that is reserved in heaven, and estimating it in all its untold glories, is enabled to sum it up as "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," with which all on this side is not worthy to be for a moment compared.

Paul's whole life was a realization, and what the church needs in the present is above all things *reality*. It is this, and this alone, which will fulfil the requirements of those statements in which the Saviour likens His disciples to *salt* and to *light*, symbols which mark the place He designed the heirs of glory to occupy in the world. He would not that we should live in a hyper-spirituality, that disclaims and disdains contact with the world; but that with His mighty power, penetrating and enlightening all by holy contact, we should impart a blessing and contract no defilement—"separate from sinners," and yet "receiving sinners" to lead them to God.

We are too apt to forget our place in the world as the only representatives God has of His name, His character, and His grace. Such was Jesus as long as He was on earth, and now that He has gone away, He has, in the power of the Holy Ghost, left the impress of His own likeness upon His people, and thus marked with His image and superscription, He sends them broadcast into the world.

This is a deeply solemn consideration, fit to call forth the most earnest heart-searchings before God. We need to exercise our consciences before Him, that being purged and enlightened, we may be able to see as God sees, and by the light of the sanctuary and by the blood of the altar, have our consciences so



quicken that we no longer put bitter for sweet, or sweet for bitter, as, alas, we are so prone to do. The veil will soon be taken from our eyes before the judgment seat, when all will be made conscious how they really stood before God.

Profession is not practice, and the talk of the lips is not the consecration of the life. The men of the world look at the religious professors around them, and too often their profession appears to them a sham, a deception, and a fraud. When taxed with this inconsistency, how common is it for the unspiritually-minded, with self-complacent utterance, to screen themselves behind the words of the apostle, that "he that is spiritual is judged of no man."

Let us not confound that which is moral with that which is spiritual; the former *can* be judged by the world often with a truer judgment than by the child of God, whose mind is ever in danger of being warped in moral questions by an uninstructed *supposed* spirituality, which often makes blind human nature doubly blind; for "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." They are free from the bewildering influence of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, which often raises such a dust on this mysterious battle-field, that right and wrong are often confounded, and exchanged for one another, and the poor erring one becomes a byword among those of the world, who, with an impartial eye, judge aright and justly condemn. There is no conscience so dark as the perverted conscience of a child of God.

To be required by God to be anything *to* the world implies that there is a moral sentiment in the world enabling them to appreciate that which is presented to

them—a conscience *able* to commend that which is good, and to deprecate that which is evil: It is to *this* that God addresses Himself in the gospel, not dealing with man on a ground that he cannot understand, but placing Himself in the presence of His fallen creature, as He presented Himself to Cain, and reasoning the question of right and wrong with him on a basis that his conscience must justify.

Our relation to the world's conscience deserves our deepest attention, because it cannot be denied that the Church of God as a whole has lost hold of the world's conscience to a very great extent, if not altogether. Amidst the semi-spiritualised antagonisms within the borders of the redeemed, and between the unintelligible profession of what is infinitely high, and the intelligible pursuit after what is unspeakably low, they are altogether confounded, and charge religious life with cant and hypocrisy, because the professed object and the manifest one are so opposite.

Let us now consider the place the heirs of the kingdom are called to occupy in the world under the figures of salt and light.

First, of the *salt*. The Lord says, "*Ye are the salt of the earth* : but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

The mighty savour of this spiritual salt prevents the world from falling absolutely a prey to corruption. The salt's savour consists in those heavenly characteristics of which we have been speaking—characteristics that can at once be appreciated, seen, and felt, in the world as a power from God, which, when brought to

bear upon the world, tends to mitigate its evils and to preserve it from decay.

To what extent the church has answered this divine end the Lord alone can say; but all can see that just in proportion as the hallowing influences of a real and holy Christianity have been brought to bear on any part of the earth, its amelioration has been manifest and its blessings multiplied. This is true in nations and true in families. It is well to see this, for though *national* Christianity is an utter delusion, we must not forget the immense effect of God's salt, the *real* Christianity, in elevating the tone of the national conscience, and in giving a truer conception of right and wrong than man by nature possesses.

God also notices how far each believer fulfils this place of deep responsibility, and each believer should direct his own thoughts to the same solemn enquiry; and in order rightly to estimate his standing in this matter, he has only to compare himself with the Lord's description of His disciples in the preceding beatitudes.

There is however an intimation of salt losing its savour. Salt in Palestine loses its saltiness either by lying in contact with the ground, or by exposure to the weather; and from this we learn that we can only retain the consecrated savour of the salt of the covenant of our God by separation in heart to God from all that surrounds. It is only as *thus* separated that the savour of Christ is retained, and His holy characteristics remain in us; for what fellowship hath Christ with Belial, and what friendship hath the Father with the world? Alas! for the professed Christianity of Christendom that calls itself the Church, and yet

having lost its saltness, awaits the judgment of that day when it shall be "trodden under foot." Scribes taught in the word will know to what this points; and it becomes us all to see that we have salt in ourselves and are at peace one with another.

The *second* figure is that of light. "*Ye are the light of the world.* A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it shines for all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

The rays of the glory of divine regeneration are seen in the seven characteristics already spoken of, and these constitute the light wherewith we are to enlighten the world. Light is not knowledge; it is character, it is life; and what is the summing up of all *light* and *life* but *love*? For "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

The light we have been made partakers of is "the light of life" (John viii. 12); and the light a believer is called to manifest in the world is not a doctrine, a truth, a theory, but the personal light of life; for it is written, "Now *are ye* light in the Lord." It is not that we *have* a light, but that we *are* light; not that we can tell the world of a Father of Lights, but that we are revealed ourselves as children of light. We have to bear witness to God, and to His character, by the image and likeness of the *Father* impressed on *His* children.

When the *life* bears witness to the *light*, there can be no charge of hypocrisy. It was so in the blessed

Lord, and therefore His every word told. While laying bare with an unsparing hand the sins of the hypocrites surrounding Him, He stands up before them all, and says, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"

Light has both a spiritual and a moral aspect: in the former it lies solely within the cognizance of God and of the spiritual mind, but in the latter it appeals to the world; and to this the Lord refers when He says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your *good works*," and seeing them may glorify your Father whose image you bear.

So of Jesus, He came with spiritual light and glory which none saw but those who through faith beheld His glory as the glory of the "only-begotten;" but there was the moral light of His life and walk and ways, that bore witness to the consciences of all alike; for "He went about *doing good*."

So of God; He dwells in that light which no one can approach unto—the infinite spiritual glory of Him who is Spirit; but there is the witness of the moral light of God's goodness, beneficence, and grace manifested in all that surrounds us. By *this* God appeals to the natural conscience, dark as it may be to all spiritual good, and in these things leaves not Himself without witness. This is true not only in creation, but in the cross of Christ. The cross is no mystery, it is an open declaration to man of what God is; and the Son of God dying for rebel man, is an intelligible witness to man's moral consciousness that God loves him; for He has given "His only begotten Son." This is the gospel, and this is what is addressed to the ear of the unsaved sinner, still spiritually dead, though morally alive and responsible, knowing good and evil.

God seeks of us that our life in the world should be a light to the world which it might understand—not shining on it from afar, but shining in its midst, in those very things, small and great, which would give a daily witness that “God is light.” This is pure religion and undefiled—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world, going down with a loving heart and a helping hand into the depths of all its need, and yet contracting no defilement in our own souls.

If we want to know what it is to cause our light to shine, let us read the life-portraiture of the Lord Himself in the parable of the Samaritan (Luke x. 30–37), the good and heavenly stranger, who did not pass by on the other side. Our light is in much danger of becoming so “spiritual” (falsely so called) that the eyes of the poor world cannot see it, keeping to ourselves what they *can* appreciate, and giving to them what they know not the value of. We are often much afraid of making hypocrites; but there is a greater danger nearer home little thought of, that of being thought hypocrites ourselves; and nothing more certainly puts the extinguisher on the light which God has lighted to give light to all that are in the house.

There is a rich significance in the little word *so* in the command with which this subject closes: “Let your light *so* shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Nothing perhaps more glorifies God than the world’s testimony to the holiness of the life of His people. Thus Pilate said of Jesus, “I find in Him no fault at all.” “The city set on a hill cannot be hid.” So it was in Christ; but, alas! *we* often

come down from the mountain top; we rise little higher than those good and amiable ones of the world around us, and therefore amongst the crowd we are too often lost.

While, however, we can but mourn over our lamentable failures, whether as the salt of the earth or the light of the world, we can look forward, and in prophetic vision contemplate the time when on "the great and high mountain" the Bride of the Lamb will be seen—"that great city having the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." May this comfort our hearts in the assurance that Jesus will be fully glorified in us in a very little while; and in the present may it nerve our too often weak and fainting spirits "to put on the armour of light," "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," that so we may be able more fully to manifest our divine characteristics, to the glory of our God and of the Lamb, and to the blessing of the world, among whom we should walk as lights, "holding forth the word of life."

To our God be all the glory for that regenerating grace that has made us a new creation in Christ Jesus, and given to us the characteristics of His Son, that we might be conformed to His image.

---

## THE TEACHING OF THE ARK.

GEN. vi.-ix.

THERE is no faculty of the natural man which may not find scope for its exercise in subjection to the Spirit of God. Fallen as he is, every tendency of his heart is indeed to evil, but each endowment of his mind, all his emotions, all his powers, may, when breathed upon by the Holy Spirit, be sanctified and

made fit and able instruments for his own blessing and for the service of God. Among these faculties—the gifts of God—is his *imagination*. Perverted and corrupt, how effectively it serves the flesh; with what pictures of the untrue, the unreal, and the unsubstantial, does it delude and lead captive the natural heart, holding out to it a satisfying portion of earthly hopes and earthly joys that are ever eluding its grasp, making a rest where all is fleeting and uncertain, and doing its best to set up the prospect of a paradise in a world of sin and death! But when consecrated as the handmaid of the renewed soul, what a helper may it be made to give form and substance to all that faith reveals, to keep before the eye as a reality every danger to be avoided in the Christian course, every object and hope that lies beyond, to lead us even now, as Abraham when a pilgrim and a stranger in the land that was his, through the length and breadth of our inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, to take us out of the things that are seen and temporal, and enable us more and more to live in the apprehension and under the power of the things that are unseen and eternal. The worldling abuses his power by limiting his view to earth, giving substance to shadows, and a false colouring to the deformities of sin. May we, God's beloved ones, mindful that our Father has given us no faculty in vain, press it into the service of faith, and for the present enlist its aid to take us back to the days of Noah, to lead us by his side through the solemn scenes which passed before his eyes, and to teach us some of the lessons of his eventful life.

And what a spectacle opens to our view! "The



earth was corrupt before God," and "filled with violence;" "for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." The God of mercy "*waited*" (1 Pet. iii. 20), not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; but when at last the Ark was ready, and the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering had been despised to the uttermost, the flood came and swept away all except the few whom infinite grace had shut up within that Ark, to be borne securely in it from the world of wrath and destruction to the cleansed and renewed earth in which God again could bless.

Brethren in Christ, do we see *ourselves*—do we see the dealings of unspeakable grace with *us* in all this? We were dwelling in a doomed world—a world whose judgment is delayed only because the arm of righteous retribution is as yet stayed by that mercy which endureth for ever. We were by nature children of wrath, even as also are the rest of our fellow-creatures, and among these children of disobedience we all had our conversation in times past in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the wills of the flesh and of the mind. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were *dead in sins*, quickened us, made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Out of that fearful world of impenitence and lawlessness the God of grace took us, in that Ark He shut us up, and thus secured He raised us above the stormy billows of destruction, and carried us in safety to the place where there is "no more condemnation," but "peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let us linger here awhile, and contemplate the details of the scene. And first, as it is seen by Him by whom our deliverance has been wrought. Let us see it as He sees it. What is its teaching as to the counsels and the work of God with respect to every redeemed soul as to the place in which the child of God now stands? It is that "*we have passed over from death to life,*" from a world on which vengeance waited to descend to a world on which the sun of God's presence can again beam brightly, all clouds of wrath having been left behind. We have passed from the one to the other unhurt. The waters of God's holy indignation against the sin of His polluted creatures, instead of destroying us as we deserved, have been the means of carrying us across the gulf which separated us from Him. They fell on Christ, our Ark. He bore them, and His soul only knows what they were. He, and He alone, could say, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." We bore the tempest, but in Him; we were safe within when death fell upon all without. He died that we might live. Look out of the Ark, children of God, and see from what you have been delivered, and at what a cost.

Will this be read by some saved one who is yet full of misgivings lest the haven may not after all be reached—by some child of Noah fearful of miscarriage by the way, of being washed from the Ark by some billow of the storm, or seeing it shattered by the fury of the winds and waves? Dear, doubting child of God, cease from this sin—this folly. The Ark was made under the direction of Him who knew what

the tempest would be. The strength, the length, the breadth, and the height were all planned and laid down by Him. *He* could make no mistake. And the security of the Ark was the security of Noah, for "*God shut him in.*" Where the Ark went he must go. No failure, or folly, or weakness on his part could endanger him. There was a window "above" through which he might ever be looking heavenward, but the door "at the side," which God had shut, could be opened again only when God said "Go forth," after the Ark had "*rested*" high above the regions over which sin before had reigned. Our Redeemer is the Lord of lords and King of kings. He has risen from the dead. Death hath no more dominion over Him, and against Him all the weapons of our adversary were hurled in vain. In Him the vilest sinner, the weakest of His redeemed ones, is secure. None can harm us: none can pluck us out of His hand. We are where He is. The region of death is passed: our life is hid with Christ in God.

So much as to the unchangeable standing-place of every believer before God. But in what different degrees do we apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ! How few can see (though it is true of all) that the ark has carried them to its "*resting-place,*" to the place of the "altar" and "sweet savours" (Gen. viii. 20, 21), to heaven itself and the very presence of God! Some, falling short of this, not looking away to Jesus in whom all is peace, but letting the eye and the thoughts be in greater or less measure occupied with the things that are seen, like Peter, who was afraid "when he saw the wind boisterous," can yet thank God that the ark, though they see it not yet

landed beyond the reach of storms, has lifted them upwards on the bosom of the troubled deep, far above the valley of the shadow of death in which the flood overtakes the despisers of God. Some, it may be feared, have hardly attained to this—the raging elements around, the cares and trials of life, the mists of unbelief or the darkness of conflict with the evil one, have shut out the bright beams of the love of God from above, and obscured the prospect of the inheritance soon to be entered on. Brethren, our strength is to live in the apprehension of the truth in all its fulness that our place is *now* with God. So far as we fail to know and to hold to this we are weak and easily dismayed.

Let us now turn to another aspect of this subject, to other teachings of this momentous record. We have considered it as testifying to the completeness of our salvation, to the deliverance once and for ever of the weakest and most failing child of God from that whole sphere of the natural man which abides under the wrath of the holy God. Let us now endeavour to glean from the narrative some part of the instruction which it affords as to the walk and conversation to which the redeemed ones are called, of what manner of spirit we should be while at home for a time in the body and absent from the Lord, how we may “walk *worthy of God*,” who has called us to His kingdom and glory.”

Let us learn through closer fellowship with God more and more to take His estimate of the world in the midst of which for a time we sojourn. God has given us its character before the flood—“God saw that *the wickedness of man was great* on the earth, and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually.*” (Gen. vi. 5.) Do not suppose that

such a description would be inappropriate now, or too harsh and severe for the more refined and civilized world in which we dwell. We differ only in having proceeded to a greater extremity of lawlessness, and in having, it may be, more effectively whited the outside of the sepulchre which conceals the death and corruption reigning everywhere around. Do not expect to be helped by your natural intelligence, or by the surrounding world, or by him who is its prince, to any right judgment of anything upon which the eye can rest. Expect even now to find the "energy of deceit" (2 Thess. ii. 11) everywhere at work. Satan's business is to deceive, to blind, and to cause to be highly esteemed among men all—yea, *all, everything*—that is abomination in the sight of God. In what need then does the child of God stand of the light of truth in the midst of such delusion and darkness, where good is made to appear evil and evil good? of the faithful word of God, to show him the true character of *all* that in which the natural man prides himself,—his various instrumentalities for reforming and embellishing the world, for reforming it without Christ, for embellishing it while under the curse,—his education, refinement, taste, and intellect, his arts and accomplishments, his inventions and discoveries, his wars and his peace, his engrossing occupations, his heaping up of wealth, his philanthropy, his morality, his civilization, his religion? Wondrous advance had doubtless been made in these things in Noah's days, and pride and boasting abounded on all sides over the desires of the flesh and of the mind, the desires of the eye and the pride of life; but what were God's thoughts of it all? "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,

until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and *knew not* until the flood came and took them all away." Take note that their abounding, active wickedness is not here stated against them, but that which is at the bottom of and the essence of all sin—their simple godlessness, and with it their utter unconcern.

God was not in all their thoughts. (Ps. x. 4.) What more fearful description of human beings whom God made *for Himself*, to live to Him, to serve Him, to have *no other thought* than that of pleasing and obeying Him? And what description more true of the world of our day—the restless, selfish, luxurious, poverty-stricken, wealth-abounding, pleasure-seeking, misery-crushed, intellectual or commercial, idle or business-oppressed, religious or irreligious world? What character so painted to the life? "God is not in all their thoughts"—no *love* for Him, no *heart* for Him. Doubtless there was abundant *religiousness* among the men of Noah's day, and they doubtless thought—taking their own estimate of themselves and of God, of His holiness and of their sin—that He had much cause to be satisfied with them; and surely this is the thought of man's heart now.

Brethren, a worse destruction than that of the old world is hanging over impenitent man now. How clearly does the description of Noah's days pourtray to the opened eye the days in which we live! Is the warning turned to daily and hourly use by us? Is the solemn truth pressed home to our hearts and consciences? "We are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," is the testimony almost unvarying in the world and in the professing church around us. Do we know that we—we, God's dear

children—have greatly failed? that all is failure? that all that calls itself the church on earth is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” and ready to be “spued out” of God’s mouth?

*Prove all things*, dear children of God, with reverence and fear as in His holy presence. Recollect that that which all commend and follow may be utterly opposed to His mind. On what single point in the days when the flood was impending would the verdict of humanity, or of the proudest part of it, have been otherwise than in direct antagonism to the mind of God? “SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.” Meditate on these words, dear brethren. They were “written for the admonition of us upon whom the ends of the ages have met.”

Learn further in what absolute separation from all that is of the world our Father would have His beloved children to walk. We are not of the world, we have been taken out of it and placed in a new world of life and light. That Noah’s history might adequately foreshadow this, mark well the language used by the Spirit of God in 2 Peter iii. 6, 7. Noah passed but in type from one world to another, yet the scene of destruction which he left is described as “*the world that then was*,” and what he saw when he stepped out of the ark as “the heavens and the earth *that now are*.” In type all old things had passed away, all things had become new. And if this language witnesses with no uncertain voice to our perfect redemption, surely it sounds loudly in our ears the question, “What have we to do with the world from which we have been delivered? How shall we *who died* to sin continue any longer therein?”

The world and the child of God should have nothing in common. If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature. If we have passed over to the world "*that now is,*" we have no part in the world "*that then was.*" How completely has God severed us from it. And what an obligation is laid upon us to walk in this holy, watchful, and complete separation. What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness. In the new world Noah could have found none of the things which had been the joy and sustenance of those among whom he had lived in the old. Desolate indeed to the natural eye must have been the scene in the midst of which he found himself, and from the ark alone for a time must he have drawn all that was needed to supply his wants. Such a desolation should all that man or Satan can offer be to the soul that is renewed and called to fellowship with God. Christ henceforward is his food, his life, his all-sufficiency. The believer has no continuing city here, but he seeks, or should be seeking, the "one to come." And then only do we "declare plainly" that we "seek a Fatherland"—a country *of our own* (Heb. xiii. 14), when we confess by our lives that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." In the new earth in which by grace we are, we must not expect to find that which was yielded by the old. This is not our Father's appointment for us. But with sin put away, He can now dwell, as it is His delight to dwell, with us, and nothing hinders uninterrupted communion with Him. Shall not this suffice, dear brethren, till the day dawns and we *fully* know His love? Shall we exchange this fulness of joy and blessedness to go back in spirit to the world that Noah left?