Additional Writings of J. N. Darby

Volume 1
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Preface

Additional Writings of J. N. Darby, vol. 1, is an added volume to the Collected Writings of J. N. Darby and is composed of articles, taken from magazines, that are thought not to appear in the collection. If the Lord will, this volume will be followed by another volume.

The title was chosen in order not to conflict with the volume numbering used in the Darby Disk, which uses volume numbers 35 and 36 for a collection of papers found in two books that had been printed by Bible Truth Publishers. If the Lord will, the papers in those books will appear in vol. 2, as well as other papers.

Some spelling has been modernized, some Scripture references have been added in braces { }, and Scripture references have been standardized in order to facilitate indexing.

The reader should keep in mind that various articles herein were not edited and corrected by J. N. Darby.
THE MISSION OF THE COMFORTER

JOHN 14-16

SCRIPTURE READINGS AT MALVERN

J. N. D. 1873

NOTES BY ONE PRESENT

There are two ways in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of in John 14 and in the two last verses of John 15. In ch. 14 it is the Father who sends the Holy Ghost in Christ’s name; in ch. 15 it is Christ who sends Him. In ch. 14, He is putting us in relationship with the Father; in ch. 15 and in the beginning of ch. 16, you have the revelation of the glory of the Son of Man; towards the world in ch. 16; and towards the saints in ch. 15; looking up in 14, and looking down in 15 and 16.

In the beginning of ch. 14 He is comforting them about His going away, and the first thing He mentions is, that He is coming back again to receive them to Himself; and He shows them that in virtue of what He was down here on this earth before the Holy Ghost came, they knew where He was going, and they knew the way.

In this second part the Holy Ghost would become the Comforter, and they would know what they could not know when Christ was upon the earth --

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

When the Comforter was come was the point. Christ could not abide with them. He had to do the work of atonement and go away; but this other Comforter would abide with them -- “Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,” &c.

That is never said of Christ, for He was presented in the world to be received, and they would not have Him; but there He was. (One sees the fruit of it in the disciples.)

Seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, and the reason is that He abides with you, and is in you. That is in contrast with Christ, for He could not abide, and though He was with them He was not in them. He will be in you which I cannot be while I am down here.
Ver. 18 -- “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” That’s in spirit. It’s put together in Rom. 8. By the Holy Ghost we see Him by faith -- “Because I live ye shall live also.” Christ being our life, because He lives we live, and before we can die spiritually He must die.

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His,” {Rom. 8:9} he is not in his place as a Christian. Egypt was not Israel’s place, but God had come down and taken them up, the blood being on the doorpost; but they were not with God till He brought them out of Egypt.

The leper was washed before He was anointed. You must fit the knowledge you are bringing in to what is there already. Salvation is a positive actual deliverance out of the state I was in before.

The Holy Ghost gives me the consciousness of my relationship with the Father, and is the earnest of the inheritance which I have not got at all; I am going to get the inheritance.

The Christian is a person who has got the Holy Ghost between Christ’s first coming and His second. The work is perfect, for it has saved me, and put me in acceptance with God; but I have not an atom of the effect of it. I look back and see all the value of the cross, and for the present I am in Christ, and what have you got? God can’t be in me, and not give me a number of other wonderful things besides. Of course it must produce a wonderful effect.

Till Christ as man went into heaven the Holy Ghost never came down on earth. Till He went and presented His blood, and took man’s place, the Holy Ghost could not come down as a witness of it. The Church is founded upon the denial of Judaism.

I don’t know I am “in Christ” till I am sealed with the Holy Ghost: I may know I am forgiven. When I talk of my guilt, I talk of what I have done; but when I talk of being lost, I talk of what Adam has done. I know I am in Christ by the Holy Ghost which He has given me. What I get in Christ is this, that there is none righteous, no not one -- not a righteous person in the place. Are we all that God would have us according to His thoughts of Christ?

Where am I to find righteousness now? I will tell you; there is a Man sitting at the right hand of God; He deserved it, and God has set Him up there. The world will never see Christ again except in judgment. It is God’s righteousness instead of myself. I get the Lord Jesus Christ giving me the transcript of what the law is -- “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” &c. Christ has come, and He has glorified God, and has shown what God is at all cost; it cost Him His life, and drinking that dreadful cup, He has shown what God is, and perfectly glorified Him, and that in the place of sin. When He was made sin, that was the very time when obedience was perfect, and love was perfect, and all that God was in His righteousness and hatred against sin and love for the sinner. -- “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.”

He sets Christ as Man at the right hand of God. Now you go and imitate
God. What is your example? Christ. You must give yourself up entirely, because Christ did. If they were always grieving the Spirit, the Spirit must occupy them with your own state, and very well He does, too!

If I say I am in Christ, I say Christ is in me, and my business is to show out Christ, and nothing else. It is having Christ always before us, and really walking in the presence of God. The great secret is to be more with God than anybody, and if not, we shall go astray. The moment I get away from the conscious presence of God, self has a certain place; whereas, if I am really in the presence of God, I am nothing. I am more what I am before Him, than what I am in His power for others. You are not competent to discern the will of God if you are not with Him: “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” If power rests upon me, that does not put me in the presence of God as to my conscience or heart. It may be for others, but we have to be before God Himself, or else we shall never keep straight; and for that we must be in the path of God for Him to lead us. I cannot realize God’s presence out of the path of His will. The instant we lose the sense of dependence we are in danger. Obedience and dependence, those are the two living principles of the new man. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

I do get another principle to help us through, and that is, confidence in God. I cannot depend if I have not confidence. We do need confidence, or we have not courage to go through sacrifices, if I have not confidence in God’s faithfulness. It is everything; whatever I do, I ought to do it as serving Christ — “Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” I believe the presence of the Holy Ghost is important in the whole path.

In this part of John you don’t get sovereign grace dealing with the sinner. What you get is the Father dealing with the children. “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him,” &c. If a man love Christ, he will keep His commandments, and then there is all this manifestation of Christ to him — “We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” All this is connected with Christian responsibility. I could not abide in Christ if I was not there (i.e., “in Christ”). The Lord keep us in His presence, and give us the consciousness of it, and possession through the Holy Ghost!

The British Herald, pp. 78, 79, 1875.
PERFECTION OF CHRIST AS MAN IN TEMPTATION
Matt. 26:31-56

That which is so striking in all this history is the entire contrast between “flesh” and Christ in every sense; not so much the wickedness of man rising up against the Lord, as the entire failure of everything around except Christ Himself.

It is not divine power, as in John, where they all go backward and fall to the ground (John 18:6); but here it is entirely a man, the wonderful divine perfection in a man. What I see in the Lord is, that His Spirit enters into it all thoroughly, as it was from God. I get two things: I see Him completely before God; and, on the other hand, He feels all that a man feels as a man. He goes through it all so entirely with God, that in dealing with men there is not a trace of it in His spirit, quiet and gracious. It is a wonderful thing, the perfection, thorough sincerity and truth, in Him!

There is another thing that strikes me here as very peculiar, that the blessed Lord comes out with all His feelings in the garden of Gethsemane. When He was going about, working the works of God, it was not the case: there was the Divine person; they could not enter into it. But here He tells them everything, -- “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

Another thing is beautiful, -- the confidingness of His heart in His disciples, even when they were so miserable and wretched. He could not do it when He was going about in the world. Wonderful, the divine working in a man! The Lord has it all in His mind, and yet speaks to them as if nothing was happening. “After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.” There He is telling them as quietly as possible. You do not get ascension in Matthew, it is Galilee.

What is so striking in Matthew, and especially here, is the place that the Scriptures hold. The moment He takes His place in the difficulties of man, He takes the Word of God and appeals to it (Matt. 4). We have to overcome the wiles of Satan; but when it is resisting, he flies. It is in resisting we feel it. I do not feel the wiles; when they come, I am not aware it is the devil. The Lord, of course, was perfect in obedience. He had just been owned Son of God by the Father, and the devil takes that up, -- “If Thou be the Son of God,” &c. It was all over simply by quoting a text. The way in which for Christ, the Son of God, a text was sufficient, was because it came out of the month of God. The weapon by which He overcame was simply by quoting texts. I am led to take God’s Word, and the devil can do nothing.
We have the historical order in this Gospel, the spiritual order in Luke.

We require “all the armor of God” for the wiles of the devil; not for his strength, because “resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” When he comes openly and says, “Worship me and take the world,” then He says, “Get thee hence, Satan.”

In meeting him as man, He shows us how to meet him; only we meet him as a beaten enemy. Before this question of Satan comes in, He gets His place (Matt 3, 4).

Bunyan is all wrong here, because he did not see redemption clearly; he gives experience without starting with being “in Christ,” “strong in the Lord.” You do not get a person in his “Pilgrim’s Progress” quietly at peace saying, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” We have to go through the world, but we are “in Christ,” a real place -- a new position we have got into; you never get that in Bunyan. I get in him the pence but not the pounds in the account.

You always get the Person of Christ safe; that is what is so beautiful in Scripture. He came to obey, not to command. When I say I am “in Christ,” redemption according to God’s counsels has put me “in Christ,” and the Holy Ghost is given me to know it too; but that is no journey -- it has nothing to do with my overcoming. The moment Christ took His place, the conflict and storm comes on. There is no conflict with Satan until we are saved: difficulties doubtless there are, but no conflict. Till you have crossed Jordan, you will never have conflict with Satan; then “as captain of the Lord’s host am I now come.”

You never get armor in Romans, for there, I am a justified man on earth; but the moment you get into Ephesians, you are in “heavenly places,” and you want the armor there. I believe there are very few consciously in Canaan: you must cross the Jordan in order to be there.

What characterized the wilderness was God testing man. We are brought into the wilderness by redemption; but it is not Canaan; it is the part of the Christian life in which we are walking down here through the world. In Egypt a man is in slavery. In the wilderness he is redeemed, but still in the world (as to circumstances of trial, difficulty, danger), and that is Romans.

The Red Sea is Christ’s death and resurrection, by which I am delivered. The Jordan is still death and resurrection, but my dying with Christ, and I am risen with Christ which I never get in the Romans. Till I am dead, I cannot take the place of being risen and gone up. In Ephesians man is treated not as dying to sin, but as “dead in sins,” and therefore it is a new creation -- “Created in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:10). When we are dead in our sins, Christ comes down into the same place, and then takes us all up together. The same power that put Christ there has put you into Christ. He gives us the Holy
Ghost; and I know thereby that I am “in Christ.” Scripture never talks of our dying to sin, it speaks of our being dead (and of our reckoning ourselves so, Rom. 6). You never get anything about justification in Ephesians, for you are a new creature, and this needs no justifying.

From the Red Sea to Sinai there was nothing to do with their responsibility as under law. It is all absolute grace, and then at Sinai they get the law and start entirely afresh. Before Sinai God glorifies Himself before the people in blessing them in spite of their naughtiness; after Sinai He kills 20,000 of them.

When you get the manna -- really to us Christ -- you get the Sabbath, that is, rest in Christ. When you get to Rephidim, you get Amalek. When you get the Holy Ghost you get the fighting of flesh and spirit -- victory through priesthood, Aaron. They spent a whole year at Sinai; they start afresh, and get tested, how far their obedience lasted. You get in the whole history as far as Sinai, from redemption up to the millennium: bitter water -- you must drink death; the refreshing palm-trees and wells of water. Amalek was harassing, to prevent their getting into the land. A little anticipative picture: Amalek is Satan acting.

The flesh is tried with God, thirty-eight years going through all this process instead of eleven days. Brought through the Red Sea out of Egypt to God, but then there was all the wilderness to go through. “Thou shalt bring them in”; they were brought to God. The manna is Christ meeting us in our wants, as in the wilderness; whilst “the old corn” of the land is a heavenly Christ. If I say I am dead, where is the flesh? God is just as holy in all the conflicts as in the path we have to tread. To Joshua and Moses, He says “loose thy shoe from off thy feet.”

The hidden manna -- when we get to heaven we shall know what Christ was down here. All those promises, if we are spiritual, we may anticipate what they are. We cannot use the word as a sword till we are in Canaan; and we must have all the defensive armor before we can use the sword at all properly. I must have passed over Jordan before I can get that at all. Then comes supplication, dependence.

The having conflict, in my mind, is to bring me to the confession that I cannot succeed against myself. When you say, “I cannot,” then God takes you out.

What I learn there is, that I have died with Christ. Supposing I was always faithful there, how can Satan tempt a dead man? I go through death by faith in Christ. The moment I say, “I am in Christ,” I am “perfect” before God: “as Christ is, so are we in this world.” I look up to God and find Christ there, and it would be impossible for God to impute sin to me. As long as I am looking to find it done in myself, it is not done. Where it was condemned, it
died. Then I say, “Thank God.” I have the experience short of that in Rom. 7; after that, in Rom. 8. We are in Christ, and we know it: that is the thing. I am in Christ before God, loved as Jesus is loved.

In the beginning Satan tempts Christ with all that is alluring. He meets him with Scripture. But, then after the spoiling of the strong man’s goods, something more terrible comes: -- God in goodness and man in enmity. “The prince of this world cometh”; he is come back again after departing for a season. In this solemn moment He says, “Oh, the Scriptures have said it, and must be fulfilled.” He meets Satan now with the power of death; much more, besides the cup. Everybody is at His command, except the disciples, and they run away. He meets it all alone with God, and is so much a man that He asks His disciples to watch with Him, and they sleep. He is thinking of “the cup” with God and according to God, but as a man. You get in Him a man; but no thought in the man but what came from God. It is a wonderful picture, a wonderful fact He goes through the whole thing, in absolute calmness with His Father; and it ought to find us with God, in our little sufferings. Everything goes wrong with man, even with disciples, sleeping when he ought to have been watching, fighting when Christ was being led as a lamb to the slaughter. To do right and get horribly wronged, and take it patiently (1 Pet. 2), this is what God likes -- a hard lesson for us all.

You do not get the healing here of the servant’s ear (v. 52); it is simple patience, Christ brought out in contrast to man; “I, the leader of all, am suffering and bowing.” Oh, how blessed it is! What lessons He teaches us besides saving us!

The “flesh” listens to the devil instead of resisting him. If you do honestly resist him, he runs away. Pride dominates instead of passion, unless Christ is there. It just shows what poor creatures we are without looking at Him. “Sleep on now and take your rest,” &c., the time for watching is over, the time for suffering is come! He might have walked away in the dark, but He did not. The Lord give us to think of Himself!

The British Herald, 1875, pp. 86-87.

THE DIVINE EXODUS

Ex. 15

In a certain sense the Red Sea had closed the whole history, if you take it in itself as to Egypt (it begins the life in another sense); but it closed the history by redemption and judgment (for the Egyptians were judged), for death
which was *salvation* to Israel was *judgment* to the Egyptians.

As regards Israel, the Lord comes down, “I have seen the affliction of my people,” and He sends Moses. In coming to the passover, the blood is put upon the lintels and the doorposts. There God comes judicially and passes over, but still He has the character of a judge. He does not touch Israel, but that is all; He does not *come in*. It is not deliverance, though the ground is laid for deliverance. There was no knowledge of God *for them*, it was only that He spared them. When they set out in haste to get away and save their lives, they are brought to a point where they cannot get any farther, Pharaoh pursues them, and the Lord led them on purpose down to the sea with Pharaoh behind them. Pharaoh thought he had gained his point, and if it had only been Israel, he would have done so.

Then you get a second thing -- not the *blood* that meets the judge, but the power that delivers. “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” Then the Lord says to Moses, “Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” And this is not the blood that meets the righteousness of God, but it is death looked at as deliverance, completely clearing them out of the place they were in. To us it is Christ’s death. It was death and judgment which really secured Israel. The sea that let Israel out swallowed up Pharaoh and all his hosts; that to believers is in fact the judgment that came in Christ. Death and judgment are what has saved us; only Christ took it for us, of course. You see people now commonly saying, There is death and judgment before us, and they think they must behave themselves to meet the judgment, whereas when I get death and judgment in Christ, sins are swallowed up. It is redemption, which is a great deal more than forgiveness. The blood met the case of imputing sin, but there was not deliverance out of Egypt; in point of fact they did not get out of Egypt till they passed through the Red Sea. It is not the forgiveness of sins only, it is a great deal more. Two stages for us, but not in the work done. I think the death and resurrection of Christ go farther than His blood-shedding as to that; it all goes together *as to fact*, not as to application; it is all the same work of Christ, but there are two distinct things. They were really more guilty than the Egyptians, for they ought to have known better. You see in Ezekiel they had been worshiping idols.

I may be a responsible child of Adam, and I get forgiveness; but this is not all. But here I get the fact that Christ has been there under death and judgment, and delivered me. In Rom. 5 you are not supposed to have crossed Jordan. I am a child of Adam there, but a child whose sins are put away: peace is made, and you get the grace of God towards us which carries us on to glory (vv. 1-3). You get God in more grace than you do in Rom. 8. There I get the believer’s standing before God, an advanced position for the believer, but not so much for the grace of God, for grace is towards a sinner. You bring me before God in Christ, instead of God before me when I was in
sins. Our old man has sinned, but I do not want forgiveness, for my evil nature, I want condemnation for it. And this is God’s word regarding it — “Condemned sin in the flesh.” There is no forgiveness of a nature. None of the past sins can be on my conscience. Supposing I were converted this moment, it is the sins I have committed that are on my conscience; but when I come to the work of Christ, it would be simply improper to speak of that as if He bore only “all the sins I had”; for all my sins were future when Christ bore them, and of course He bore all; in Him there is no future or past at all. But there is the difficulty as regards me. If all are not atoned for, Christ must suffer again. But there is no forgiveness of a nature; it is condemned in Christ -- of course He had it not, but it is dead in Christ, for the condemnation of it was in His death.

Here (Ex. 14:24) it is redeeming the people as well as blotting out their sins. Satan pursues them right up to death and judgment. I am redeemed out of that state in Christ’s death. Then this ch. 15 -- “Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation.” That is more than forgiving them, they are brought to God. “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,” and to God in His “holy habitation.” I find death and judgment on Christ. It is the ruin of those who attempt to go through it in their own strength; and the saving of those who believe in Christ -- deliverance to God through it by faith in the work of Christ. They had not got the inheritance yet, but you get it here; if we were as simple as when a person first knows redemption, it would be, -- “Oh, if God has come in and is for me, it is not much matter if Satan is against me.” They had not got to “the dukes of Edom” or “the mighty men of Moab.” The thing is to have our faith as simple and our eye as clear as when we were only starting. Here is God delivering us and God for us, what matter about anything else? The “holy habitation” is where God was. We are completely brought to God out of Egypt, not merely forgiven as guilty sinners -- “Joying in God.” In Rom. 5 it is the same; you are actually with God there. “I have borne you upon eagle’s wings and brought you to myself”; v. 17 looks on to when they are across Jordan. We have not got a bit of the inheritance; but I am just as certain I shall be in glory as that I am justified. I am not yet brought to the place “which Thou hast made for me to dwell in,” but I am there in spirit in Christ. I am in Christ, but not with Him.

I do not think you get consciously into Canaan, until you have the consciousness that you have no strength at all, as well as that you need redemption. To realize “heavenly places,” you need to know you are weak, besides your knowing redemption. People say, If you have only faith you need not go through the Red Sea at all -- This I do not believe. It is another question -- it is experience.

It is not a question of experience, but God has delivered me (v. 13). I
am with God; Christ has brought me to God. Paul, in three days, got through much of the 7th of Romans. Paul, as the persecutor, was the highest expression of what God was judging, -- more so even than those that killed Christ; through ignorance they did it. When Christ died, He interceded for them. Peter preached to them: Now do you repent, and God will send Him back again. If you repent, and believe in a glorified Christ, He will come back then and there. Well, they would not listen to that, and Stephen rehearse all this, and shows them what was their awful condition, and that closes entirely the whole history of man. “Now, once in the end of the world,” &c. The world ended morally in the cross. Saul is then found, for the first time, joining in killing Stephen, and he must be active, as he is the representative of the Jewish enmity to Christ. Not content with persecuting at Jerusalem, he must go elsewhere! The Lord stops him as a persecutor, and says, “You must be an apostle of God’s grace in Christ.” He takes the person who was most active in destroying Christ’s name to go and preach it. He was neither a Jew nor a Gentile, -- “delivering thee from the people (the Jews), and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.” He knows nobody after the flesh, not even Christ. He was connected with a glorified Christ, a new creation; it was a new ground altogether. He went through the 7th of Romans in the time he was blinded at Damascus. What an awful thing it must have been. Take his conscience: he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and that made him an enemy of God. The law? And that was worse, trying to put down Christ. He had all the religious authorities, and he found that his conscience and all the religious authorities had brought him into enmity with what God delighted in, in His Christ. He has to start completely afresh; it must have been overwhelming. Every principle he considered as thoroughly good he found out to be perfectly bad. In those terrible three days, he lost all the things he had leaned on during his whole past life. What had he to lean on? conscience had taken him all wrong -- law, chief priests! It was not merely the sins he got conscious of, but everything that was called good made him an enemy of God. And God turns him inwards, for He makes him blind, and leaves him there for these three days. He did not get out of the Red Sea until Ananias came to him. But we learn the revelation of Christ in glory that Saul got, that all the saints are one with Christ Himself. He could not touch Jesus in glory; but these saints were all members of Himself. The great work in the conscience was done rapidly in him, and I suppose he got through the Red Sea and the Jordan in those three days. A man may be some time about it. He was laid by afterwards for three years.

You may know the change as true, but you do not get into it; and until you have gone through the process which makes nothing of you, you have not gone through it. Self has not been learnt so as to be disowned and
distrusted. A saint who has not experienced the terrible evil of self, and got freed from it, has never got its back broken; and when it comes to the practical point, he does not distrust himself as a man who has learnt himself in God’s sight. When you get a positive distrust of self, when self is learnt, the man is in a totally different state; though, after all, one has to watch.

Take the case of Moses: he gives up Pharaoh’s household; but what is he going to do? He takes an Egyptian and kills him. This is human strength, and Pharaoh is greatly stronger than Moses on that point. After forty years his flesh was cowardly. Before, he carried his natural energy with him. When I find I have no strength, not merely that I am ungodly, but that I cannot do the right thing, I despair of self.

Now they get into the wilderness: a new history, a practical experimental fact. Now you have Israel with God, and God says, “I have brought you to myself, and now I have something to teach you.” They had to learn their own hearts. They had learnt what was in His heart in seeing Him come down to deliver them; now they must learn what is in their hearts after being delivered. God withdraws not His eyes from the righteous, but He goes on dealing with them in grace. The first thing mentioned with regard to Israel is -- they come to Marah, and they must drink the water of the Red Sea though they were saved by it. That is what is meant by the bitter waters. They had been saved by the Red Sea, but they with must learn death too; they must drink it experimentally: only that when Christ, the Tree, is put into it, the waters are made all sweet. They esteemed the Spirit reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. It is death to sin really. The moment you get Christ brought into the reproach, I am reproach for Christ’s sake -- that brought in the sweetness. The moment you put Christ into all those kinds of suffering, it is glory in it, and for our good too. “Glory in tribulations.” A people is brought to God, but He must instruct them. It is the death of the flesh, but the life of the Spirit. “By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.” When I see Christ, it is sweet, though at first bitter.

Then afterwards you find that they come to the sweet waters, as also the twelve wells of water and the seventy palm trees. Marah is practical tasting of the cross; Elim, the refreshings of God, in a certain sense complete in itself.

Now, in Ex. 16 and 17 there is no chastisement at all, but grace entirely above in all; Ex. 15:27, where you get this fresh water, you get the principle of obedience, but the Lord in grace healing. There is discipline in the fullest grace. In ch. 16 the people murmur, and the Lord meets them in sovereign grace with bread and water, and says not a word against them. In ch. 17 there is no water at Rephidim. Just as I got the Sabbath with the manna: when
I get the waters or refreshings of Rephidim, I get conflict, and then dependence. If I get the power of the Spirit of God, that is, His refreshings, I shall have to fight Satan. The first time we get Joshua mentioned is in ch. 17. “Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek.” Amalek is everything that was contrary to God -- the power of Satan -- they were in conflict with Satan always.

There we have the two great elements: Christ, as the bread of God, come down from heaven to feed us; and the Spirit of God, in the water from the rock, in conflict. Amalek is not the flesh only: there is a great deal more that Satan acts in than simply working on the flesh. Such are chs. 16, 17.

In Ex. 18 come the Gentiles. Zipporah then is a type of the Church we are getting now. The two sons are not the Church, only Zipporah, v. 11: “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods.” We see the Gentiles owning Israel and Jehovah. “Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people.” The Gentiles are as much at home with Him as Israel. They own Israel to be Jehovah’s own people, and they are not. Jehovah is greater than all the gods.

Thus I have got the deliverance, with discipline and healing in the wilderness, and then I get the manna, Christ come down from heaven, and rest -- the Sabbath; then I get the waters, the Spirit of God refreshing, but there also conflict. It is entire dependence that is depicted in this. Lastly, we find the Gentiles and Jews all together.

But in Ex. 19 you come to law, and the whole thing is changed. Hur means purity. Moses’ hands are held up for blessing. The purity is looked for in us. If I am not walking according to God’s will, I shall not have strength in conflict. You have nothing to do with God here except to get His blessing. You get discipline and conflict, but then it is all blessing. Every Christian knows that, unless he is walking with God, he cannot have strength. It is striking that “the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation,” but it is in Israel that He keeps the conflict up. It gives a very blessed character to Israel’s wars; he is fighting a battle for Jehovah, only now “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” In that sense Hur would represent the Spirit, because He is the power of purity: Aaron’s hands, priestly intercession.

After this they come to Sinai and undertake to have their blessings on the ground of their own obedience. The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Gal. 3). The moment I get a mediator, it cannot be in the hand of one, “but God is one”: so it all came to nought, for man’s side broke down. The moment you get the law, God raises the question of righteousness, -- not by giving God’s righteousness, but by requiring man’s. Blessing and promise depend on God’s faithfulness. In Nehemiah it goes back to Moses. The promise to Abraham was without any condition whatever. That is the
very thing that in Galatians the apostle says: you cannot add the law to it, for you have the promise in Abraham to Christ “the seed,” and Christ is there and must have it; then the law was added to raise this question of righteousness. God raises the question of righteousness on man’s side. The question of righteousness was not raised in Abraham; all through Scripture the difference is made between Moses and Abraham. The law never in itself detected sin in the nature. Live for ever; eat of the tree of life. Christ comes and takes the responsibility and is the life. A perpetual sinner would have been an unnatural monstrosity. God could not have allowed it.

In the desert you must go to Numbers. In Exodus, after a few chapters, you get the tabernacle. In Numbers you have every form of unbelief acting -- the history of the journey in the wilderness. They start in Num. 10:33. “The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them,” &c., that was not its place. Num. 11, they fell a-lusting, the same thing that they did before. Christ would not do for them; the manna was dry stuff. Verses 32, 33, give discipline under the hand of God. There you get a people tired of Christ, and going back in their hearts to Egypt and getting judged. Then you get Miriam and Aaron, the prophetess and priest, rising up against Moses, who is king in Jeshurun. Num. 14, you get them despising the pleasant land, and the difficulties of the way, and getting judged. The spies bring a glorious report of the land and Eschol grapes, saying, “This is the fruit of it.” But the cities are walled up, and the Anakims are there; and they give an evil report; and the people are angry and vexed. Then they get disheartened; and the positive hostility against God and they speak of stoning Joshua and Caleb. Still in Num. 15 the Lord’s purpose goes on quietly. Num. 16, you get the murmurings of Korah, and then meek Moses fails, and he is not able to get into Canaan (Num. 20). Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips. They had been put (Num. 17) under Aaron -- that is, priestly superintendence in living power, the only thing that could bring them through the wilderness.

Num. 19 is extremely interesting. You get a sacrifice (Leviticus gives us all the sacrifices). In the middle of the journeyings you get this sacrifice, for it is for us in our journeyings. There is no sprinkling of blood; it is ashes and running water they sprinkle with. Supposing I have touched defilement in any way, the Spirit of God takes the ashes, which is the remembrance of Christ having put away all the sins, and puts them into the water, and sprinkles the person. Now there is no question of blood shedding or blood sprinkling, but the Spirit of God comes and deals with my conscience where I have failed: and communion is restored. I have allowed what cost Christ His agony on the cross; but the same thing, the ashes, show there can be no imputation. What are the ashes there for? Because the sin has been consumed in Christ.

In Num. 20, He smites the rock, and this finishes the history through the
wilderness. Then, if you go to fight in heavenly places, you must go to Joshua and the Jordan. There you get not Christ dying for me, but my dying with Christ. The ark down in the bottom of the river, and I going through while it is there. It is all dry-shod. He dried it up. There is no ark in the Red Sea. Red Sea is Christ crucified for me: Jordan is we have died with Him, are crucified with Christ (2 Cor. 1:9); “but we had the sentence of death in ourselves,” testing whether it is done -- to see whether he was out and out in holding himself dead.

I think it is wonderful when you look at the inspiration of Scripture: the moment I have faith in Christ Jesus, the whole thing is the most detailed exposition of it.

MALVERN, 1873.

The British Herald, 1875, pp. 109-112.

FRUIT - BEARING, OR THE VINE
AND ITS BRANCHES

John 15
Notes of a Bible Reading

In John 14 responsibility is brought out, and in this part it is the path of the saint; our blessings in connection with the path of the saint. He puts our part in John 14:21, not “we love Him, because He first loved us,” but “he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father.” The relationship is established, but this is the way of getting the blessing. In every case obedience and dependence are the principles. The thing that people make a mess of is mixing it up with acceptance.

Our responsibility depends both on the position we are in and the advantages we have; you have no Christian responsibility until the man is a Christian. Then you get a much higher responsibility; but it is always our duty. Our duties are dependent on the relationship we are in. You cannot have them otherwise. You must be children of God before your duties begin as children. The moment you come to the blessing and enjoyment they begin If I see a person habitually walking out of the relationship, of course I cannot say he has it. It is the moral government of the Father (v. 21).

In ch. 15 He comes to the relationship that they are already in. He does not say, I shall be the true vine when I am gone on high; but He was so already “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” Israel was
not the true Vine -- God had brought a vine out of Egypt and planted it; Christ has taken the place and supplanted all that was put in the first Adam in any shape.

Christ is seen as the Servant in Isa. 49. From Isa. 50 all hung upon that term servant. You get up to ch. 49 their duties in connection with Jehovah, and this begins the question of their unfaithfulness in connection with Messiah. It was Lord up to the end of Isa. 48, now it is the Anointed. Verse 4,

Then I said, I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely any judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

That is Messiah. He puts Christ as the Servant in place of Israel; they failed utterly; but Christ takes it up in place of Israel. He takes the place of the Vine, He takes the place of Israel, He is the Servant, and you get the true Vine where we are now. “I am the true Vine.” Having come as man into this world, He is the true Man that God owns, the true Servant, and the true Vine too. All that was put into man’s hand, He takes up and accomplishes in true power. It is Christ on the earth. It is all responsibility; it is not the Head and members united in heaven; there is no fruit in heaven, and no pruning in heaven, all is perfect there.

Here you get “My Father is the Husbandman.” The thought of a Jew would have been that they were the true Vine; and Messiah the best branch in it. It has nothing to do with the Church, for the Church is what is united by the Holy Ghost to Christ glorified; but here you have Christ on the earth; and the Holy Ghost not come. Discipline does not quite refer to bearing fruit, it applies to wickedness. Chastening is in order to purge us, either to discern some root in us that is likely to produce some evil, or a positive fault. If the branch bears no fruit it is taken away; it is a question of fruit and not of acceptance. The word was applied, “Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you”; the word is water not blood.

Perfectionists drop out water altogether. You muddle the question of acceptance by continually repeating the blood-sprinkling. “The worshipers once purged, should have no more conscience of sins” {Heb. 10:2}. It is confounding the question of imputation with the state of my soul. We never really have holy affections until we are sure we are saved; we may have holy desires but not holy affections. When you come to conscience, our conscience is perfect -- “They could never makes the comers thereunto perfect,” &c. If I go up to God I have no idea of imputation. That enables me to judge myself thoroughly, for everything that is not consistent to the place I have got into.

Here it is looked at as a question of fruit, because it is on the earth. As Christ bore fruit perfectly, we are called upon to bear fruit.

John 15:3. “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” This is another important truth, and that is, in order to bear fruit you
must have a subjective work in your soul: you must have the branch clean, you
must have your soul right in order to bear fruit. Still it is responsibility here.

John 15:4. “Abide in me and I in you.” Christ’s abiding in us comes
second.

John 15:5. Here I get “I am the Vine and ye are the branches.” He has
laid aside the thought of the old vine. There is no fruit borne except by abiding
in Christ. We are looked at as down here in all this: there the disciples were
while He spoke to them. There is not so much difficulty in the heart in
realizing it, but it is difficult to define what abiding in Christ is; it is not
leaving Him any way; it is being constantly with Him -- it is continuity. It is
a little difficult to define, though we know what it means -- it is never
interrupted. The difficulty is in keeping with Him. Sometimes in singing that
hymn --

“Each thought of Thee doth constant yield,
  Unchanging fresh delight,”
we know it is true, but how often do these thoughts come. If he is a Christian
it certainly does give delight; if not abiding in Christ, it may be a constant
rebuke. In a way whenever a Christian does have a thought of Christ, it yields
unchanging fresh delight; but Christians sing it as if they were always thinking
of Him, and in that way it is not true. “The diligent soul shall be made fat.”
You must get the will broken and humbled to start with; it is the positive
realization of the presence of Christ to the soul: that is the thing. Steadfastness
in faith is the thing, and you will find that if you could only be half an hour
with Christ, at once, you would find it an immense thing; and if you could stay
there a quarter of an hour it would be rare. How far does one’s mind remain
in it continually, even when we set about it: for there are various things we
have to be occupied with for Christ. It keeps the soul in a totally different state.
There is always an ἄντωπος ἐξία in the soul, if we are not in the realization of
the presence of Christ in the heart; a self-sufficiency, dependence on self, I do
not mean wilfulness. You never get out of the sense of Christ’s presence that
that does not spring up. A person who really knows he is dependent on Christ,
yet if he is not actually realizing God’s presence, would act and think from self.
He might be intending to do right perhaps -- I do not mean anything bad.

“As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that
eateth Me, he shall live by Me,” i.e., live on account of Me. “Because I live,
ye shall live also”; that ought to be true in details, just as it is actually true as
regards life itself. We are sanctified to Christ’s obedience {1 Pet. 1:2}, not
merely to bow; His obedience was, that He never had a will to do anything but
His Father’s will. Constantly our will has to be stopped; Christ never had a will
that had to be checked; His motive for acting was His Father’s will; that ought
to be the way with us. If we are abiding in Christ, we get motives from
Christ’s will and mind, and there is a subduedness that you do not find in us
naturally. Law supposed a will that had to be checked.

We come out of pitch darkness, and when the light comes in it dazzles us and we want some help. Doing right is of itself nothing right. If I did everything right, I should do nothing right yet; the principle of obedience must come in; for if I did everything right, and did not own God in His authority, it would be wrong. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, 0 my God." I like the word commandment, for there is the recognition of the authority of Christ over me, but I must have a nature that delights in these things.

Now, John 15:6, the language changes. When He comes to ruin, He does not say ye, for He says “ye are clean,” but, “if a man abide not in me,” &c. He takes the broad thing, He had told them that they were clean. Not as in ch. 13, “Ye are clean, but not all,” for Judas was there; now he was gone out. He goes back in v. 7 to the “ye.”

There is an additional element in John 15:7, “and my words abide in you.” I have the mind and will directed by Christ’s words; the words of Christ abide in me; that being the case, I ask what I will and it shall be done for me. Divine power is at my disposal if I am directed by Christ’s will, if what He says is what I am doing and nothing else. Asking what we will is when these words have power, not asking amiss as in James; if He answers then, it is in chastisement like the quails. Still it is an immense thing, if I am doing God’s will to have God’s power at my disposal, to be able to wield His power in the path of obedience. It is a great thing in the sense of dependence to have God’s power. If I find a difficulty in the way and my mind is in divine order here, God takes it away. It is all fruit, not going above and thinking of Christ at God’s right hand. In this I am down here on the earth, and it is a question of fruit.

John 15:8. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” This is what He is looking for now. The character of the Master is stamped upon you if you are bearing much fruit, for that is what it means; you bear much fruit because Christ did. In v. 2, Judas was spoken of as “taken away,” and the disciples who walked no more with him.

Another principle is given in John 15:9, that is, positive enjoyment; not merely abiding in Him, staying with Him in heart, in spirit; here it is having His love constantly with us; and then He tells as how (v. 10) we keep His commandments. So far as we walk acceptably we abide in Christ’s love, so that the heart is always going out to Him. It does not say His love abides, for that never changes. The “commandments” are what Christ has taught us, and told us and the apostles too. I must take in every word, or I may have something wrong in my mind by leaving out.

John 15:10. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.” This shows how practical it is. It is remarkable His comparing it with Christ. A
father’s love which is really drawn out more when his son is going on wretchedly than when he is going on well. “That your fruit should remain.” We are their fruit, for we are profiting by John’s truth now. If they had not kept their bodies under, their testimony would have been weakened. I may be blessed to a soul, and he may become more powerful in preaching to others, and so the fruit remains. If a man is not walking faithfully, of course there is no fruit.

John 15:11. “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” That is the joy, -- always what Christ is at -- is to put us in the same place with Himself. Now He had already said, “My peace I give unto you”; here it is, “that My joy might remain in you”; that is, that we are to have the same joy and peace as Christ had with His Father in going through this world. Christ gives, by bringing us into the enjoyment of all He has; He does not go out of it, or give it away. I do not think we ought to be satisfied. For instance, a person in Rom. 7 could not have Christ’s joy abiding in him. It is all false this notion of perfection. The Christian having the life of Christ in him, has no perfection before him but Christ in glory, no object at all but Christ glorified. He looks at Christ in glory, and says, when I have that I shall be content; nothing short of that, and never before. A person who has realized Christ glorified, has laid hold of that which is his only true portion. These perfectionists have come down from the perfect man in glory, and are trying to make another perfect man down here to themselves. Always occupied with themselves is the sad effect. Some oppose it, and put this struggle with self under law after justification, and leave them in Rom. 7. If my mind is full of Christ I am not thinking about the flesh. “My joy fulfilled in themselves” is not very low down. If I have the joy that Christ had, it is putting me in wonderful liberty; for what was His joy with His Father? If I have the sense of being loved as He is loved, I get into His joy. In everything His love is bringing us into what He has Himself. He has put us into the place, and so He has also as to testimony.

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” {John 15:12}. It is not merely that I have loved you as the Father loved Me, but ye are to “love one another as I have loved you.” The Father loved Christ as from heaven, and also in His humanity here on earth. Christ loved His disciples in a Divine sense from above, but, at the same time, as a companion on earth. Infinitely above them, morally speaking, but, at the same time, He puts Himself on a level with them in their trials and difficulties. “I am among you as one that serveth.” He had to bear with all their infirmities; so have we. Our love is to rise above all the weakness of others and brothers without feeling their servant. I have to be in the infirmities of the saints, and yet so entirely above them that I can feel for others in them. I should be so out of it that I can understand them all, and yet feel for the person in them. It is a wonderfully perfect state to be able to do that -- to be in the things, but yet so
entirely above them in the spirit and power of my mind, so as to be out of them and above them, to feel for others in them. That is the character of love one to another. (We had better all get into that as fast as we can!) If you walk after Christ, after all it is abiding in Him enables us to do it.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” {John 15:13}. This is entirely a different thing to laying down His life for sinners; here it is for His friends; it is the intenseness of His love; I sacrifice Myself for him. He does not say, I am your Friend, but we are His friends, He was the Friend of sinners, when He gave His life for them. We are His friends when we enjoy His confidence. He is showing how we walk in and keep the place of friends, He has treated them as friends. If I have a friend I tell him what is in my mind that is not concerning him at all. I impart all my thoughts to one who is my friend. The obedient one is the depositary of Jesus’ thoughts. God told Abraham the things that concerned Sodom. And Abraham was called “The Friend of God” {James 2:23}. The Lord always treated His disciples according to the place they were brought into; that is, as possessing it all. He speaks to His disciples as in possession of the things, though they had not realized them in the least. This was their own stupidity. Here the Lord comes to the source and certainty of grace in order that the practical responsibility under which He puts them should not cloud: for they were there. He had put them in the place of “friends,” so He says, “If you want to walk in the place that is the way”; “ye are My friends, if ye do whatever I command you.” He had chosen them for this.

Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you {John 15:16}, the Divine grace which acted towards them and placed them there. He puts them everywhere in His place as regards the world, just as He does with the Father. The sense of this position and love go together. “These things I command you, that ye love one another.” John gives us our individual place as connected with Him down here. The world’s hatred sealed their association with Him.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you {John 15:17, 18}. The world loves that which is of the world: this is quite natural. The disciples were not of it; and besides, the Jesus whom it had rejected had chosen them and separated them from the world: therefore it would hate them because so chosen in grace. There was besides the moral reason, namely, that they were not of it {John 17:14}; but this demonstrated their relationship to Christ, and His sovereign rights, by which He had taken them to Himself out of a
rebellious world. They should have the same portion as their Master: it should be for His name’s sake; because the world -- and He speaks specially of the Jews among whom He had labored -- knew not the Father who had sent Him in love. To make their boast of Jehovah as their God suited them very well. They would have received the Messiah on that footing. To know the Father revealed in His true character by the Son was quite a different thing. Nevertheless the Son had revealed, and both by His words and His works had manifested the Father and His perfection.

 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also {John 15:20}. You had much better go and do on earth what Christ did on earth. If God had left anything undone, He would not have charged them with the guilt.

 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin {John 15:22}. It is a terrible thing when you think what the world is that people should be hankering after it. You see we go on living, taking for granted the things that our eyes see, whereas the world is really, every part and principle that is acting on it, positive enmity against God. God does not forget that the world crucified His Son; nor should we. If Christ had not come and spoken unto them God would not have to reproach them with sin. They might still drag on, even in an unpurgéd state, without any proof that they would not have God, would not even by mercy return. The fruit of a fallen nature was there, no doubt, but not the proof that that nature preferred sin to God while God was there in mercy, not imputing it. Grace was dealing with them, not imputing sin to them. Mercy had been treating them as fallen, not as wilful creatures. God was not taking the ground of the law, which imputes, or of judgment, but of grace in the revelation of the Father by the Son. The words and works of the Son, revealing the Father in grace, rejected, left them without hope (cp. John 16:9). Their real condition would not have been thoroughly tested. God would have had still a means to use: He loved them too much to condemn them while there was one left untried.

 If the Lord had not done among them the works which no other man had done, they might have remained as they were, refused to believe in Him, and not have been guilty before God. They would have been still the object of Jehovah’s long-suffering; but in fact they had seen and hated both the Son and the Father {John 15:24}. The Father had been fully manifested in the Son -- in Jesus; and if, when God was fully manifested, and in grace, they rejected Him, what could be done except to leave them in sin, afar from God. If He had been manifested only in part, they would have had an excuse; they might have said, “Ah, if He had shown grace, if we had known Him as He is, we would not have rejected Him.” They could not now say this. They had
seen the Father and the Son in Jesus. Alas! They had seen and hated.

But this was only the fulfilment of that which was foretold them in their law -- *they hated Me without a cause* {John 15:25}. As to the testimony borne to God by the people, and of a Messiah received by them, all was over. They had hated Him without a cause.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me: And ye shall also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning {John 15:26, 27}.

The Lord now turns to the subject of the Holy Ghost, who should come to maintain His glory, which the people had cast down to the ground. The Jews had not known the Father manifested in the Son; the Holy Ghost should now come from the Father to bear witness of the Son. The Son should send Him from the Father. In John 14, the Father sends Him in Jesus’ name for the personal relationship of the disciples with Jesus. Here Jesus gone on high sends Him, the witness of His exalted glory, His heavenly grace. This was the new testimony, and was to be rendered unto Jesus the Son of God ascended up to heaven. They could not be eye-witnesses of Christ’s *heavenly glory*; they would be eye-witnesses of His *earthly walk*, of the manifestation of the Father in Him. The Holy Ghost was their strength in being witnesses, and came down revealing things that they had not seen -- to tell them the heavenly glory. John 16 is more the actual fact of His being come, not the sending. In ch. 14 they are brought into communion with what is above; here (ch. 15) it is the testimony and witness; for we have got into fruit-bearing and witness here. Christ the exalted Man sent Him down. It is well we have such a pattern in the Scripture. I don’t mean merely Christ, but Christ’s ways, for it takes us to task as to how far we are living like Him, abiding in Him as those that are chosen out of the world. He leaves us in the middle of it all to exercise our hearts. We need to have purpose in the midst of it all to exercise our hearts by them. He leaves us here to be tested as to the state of our hearts and affections, whether we do live by faith or sight.

Malvern, 1873.

*The British Herald*, pp. 136-139, 1875.
IS THERE A RE-APPLICATION OF THE BLOOD?

I feel the, subject of the greatest possible importance, and therefore do not let it drop: Many dear souls do not see clearly the truth on the point, and suffer by it. They have not the liberty before God they might have, and true holiness suffers by it; but it is want of light, and that is not a subject of reproach.

To be reduced to such an argument, taken from a possible but uncertain illustration, as one coming up from bathing having to wash his feet, dirtied in coming up, to prove that since the first washing was by blood the second must be, is to show that a person has not much to say.

There is a cleansing or washing by water as well as by blood. I have little doubt that the real allusion is to the priest, whose whole body was washed when they were consecrated, and afterwards washed hands and feet -- here only the feet. But weak as it is, the whole of the argument is founded on the first washing in John 13 being with blood, which it surely is not. All blessing is founded on the value of Christ’s precious blood, from the cleansing of our conscience from sin, to the new heavens and the new earth; yea, the glory of God Himself and the Son of Man’s glory above. God’s glory, our peace, and the immutable stability of all blessings depends on it. That is not the question, but whether our consciences are cleared once for all by the sacrifice of Christ, known, of course, by faith. [The article in question insists, though enveloping the matter in a mist, in substance, that we are not so cleared once for all -- that the blood must be re-applied for this purpose.] The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that we are perfected for ever, and that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more; that there being only one offering, implies that the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins -- that if it were not so, Christ must have often suffered. Now I do not call in question the putting or sprinkling of the blood on us. He has washed us too, it is said, from our sins in His own blood -- only, He has done it. In the Old Testament we have the covenant sealed by the sprinkling of blood, or putting it on the person -- the leper cleansed by it; the priests consecrated by it; but these, once
for all. But there is another aspect of the blood; which is that insisted on in the Hebrews, namely, its being presented to God. You have not the application of it in the Hebrews, but its being taken within the veil. No doubt the value of this is enjoyed by faith, but the great subject of the epistle is its being presented to God. On the great day of atonement referred to (Heb. 9:12), there was no sprinkling of blood on the people, but on and before the mercy seat, where God sat between the cherubim, and the transfer of the sins to the scapegoat {Lev. 16}, and this, note, was what cleared their sins; and it is this these chapters insist on, adding an allusion to the red heifer, of which I will speak. Hence, note, so far from the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats in the first part of Heb. 9:15 necessarily involving its being the sprinkling of blood in the latter part (as both included in the anti-type in v. 14), there was no sprinkling of the blood of bulls and of goats at all, on the great day of atonement referred to, except on the mercy seat; it was not any sprinkling of the blood on the people which cleared them. There is no foundation for this argument at all. Sprinkling of blood on us is not spoken of in the passage. The whole argument in it is founded on Christ being offered only once, and then sitting down, having entered in once by His own blood. The only sprinkling with blood in the chapter is in v. 19 -- the blood of the covenant at Mount Sinai; which was certainly not repeated, and is not the question indeed before us. In the 14th verse even, no sprinkling or application is spoken of, but of the value of it to purge the conscience -- He having offered Himself without spot to God. It is always this that is insisted on. Shedding of blood is what is urged -- the value of the sacrifice, not its application by sprinkling. From vv. 24 to 28, we have carefully urged, in a manner that leaves no question as to it, that it is Christ’s offering Himself and entering into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, which is the subject the Holy Ghost insists on; suffering once, appearing once in the end of the world to put away sin, bearing the sins of many, and being now at the right hand of God -- in the presence of God for us -- after accomplishing it once for all, or He must often have suffered. This is what is set before our minds -- the value and character of the one act, and Christ being gone up on high -- and this only.

The 10th chapter is equally clear. It is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all that sanctifies by God’s will. Christ is not, as the Jewish priests, ever standing occupied with a work which can never finish. He is set down when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, having no more to do for His friends till His enemies be made His footstool -- “for by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified”; and to this the Holy Ghost testifies. God’s will, Christ’s work (now set down), the Holy Ghost's testimony concur to give constant assurance in coming to God. There is no thought of sprinkling or applying the blood to us in the passage. It is another order of thought -- many offerings, which can never take away sins, or one,
offered once by Him who is now gone to God. Another remark is needed here, the force of “for ever.” It is continuous or continual. It is translated rightly in v. 1 -- “offered continually.” It was constantly going on. Now, Christ having offered one sacrifice of Himself, sits down continuously, and we are continuously perfect: our conscience is as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at God’s right hand. The solemn warning which follows confirms, in the strongest way, the same truth, and the true sense of the passage. If this sacrifice be given up, if we sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no more an offering for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment {Heb. 10:27}. It is not re-application -- the value of the blood sprinkled on us being lost -- but an impossibility of repetition of what has been done, because it has been done once for all. The whole passage is the urgent insisting on this, that this blessed efficacy cannot be repeated. Indeed this is universally the case in the Hebrews. Sin, if returned to, is always looked at as finally fatal. It is drawing back to perdition -- impossibility to renew to repentance. At any rate, the point here is not repetition of sprinkling to cleanse, but the impossibility of repetition of that which cleanses, as that which is done once for all. Nor is it exactly justification, though akin to it; justification has judgment in view -- is judicial in its character. This contemplates entrance into the holiest, and a present and constant cleanliness suited to and necessary for it -- a perfect conscience -- no more conscience of sins -- or a new sacrifice must be offered, and repeated suffering of Christ, which is impossible. By one offering He has perfected forever -- for a constant state -- them that are sanctified. I do not see how anything can be clearer or more definite and positive. I am as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at the right hand of God -- and, indeed, because He is appearing in the presence of God for me, the perpetual living witness that all my sins are gone, for He is there who bore them, and all the value of His blood who has cleansed me by it.

But I am told that the washing of the feet in John 13 is by blood. The simple answer is, the chapter speaks of water, not of blood -- “The Lord poured water in a basin”; that is not blood. What Peter looked for when the Lord said, “If I wash thee not,” was water, not blood; and to this the Lord answers, “He that is washed,” replying to Peter, who referred to the water He had in the basin, “needeth not, save to wash his feet.” The whole chapter speaks of water and of nothing else. It is what He had in the basin -- what He was cleansing their feet with, and what the whole chapter is about, the Lord actually using it then, and referring to it. I speak of the word, as signified by it, because, as the Lord, referring to this water-washing which was before their eyes, says, “Ye are clean, but not all,” Judas being there; and in ch. 15, Judas being gone, “Now (already) ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” It is a gratuitous and mischievous alteration of the
passage to apply it to blood, when the Lord had the water there and was speaking of it. A man cannot be converted and born twice of the word, any more than he can be justified and cleansed with blood twice.

The Red Heifer remains (Num. 19). One thing is perfectly clear -- there is no sprinkling the man with blood in the account given. The blood was sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, seven times, as it was on the mercy seat on the great day of atonement. As a fact, the man was sprinkled with running water with the ashes in it. If it is merely meant that the blood of Christ is the basis of all cleansing, I receive it fully. But the sprinkling of the blood is brought in here definitely and positively, elsewhere than on the man the blood was sprinkled with perfect efficacy, seven times, at the door of the tabernacle, where the people met God. There was no sprinkling with blood to cleanse, and what was noted was, that the sin had been dealt with long before, and consumed, so to speak, when the heifer was killed and burned. The thing the man was cleansed with was running water, and the ashes which were a witness that this was so. There was no application or sprinkling of blood as blood, but the witness that that had been done long ago, the blood was gone in the fire, shed and sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle -- the sin gone -- according to the holiness of God’s nature, and the efficacy of Christ’s offering, and the value of it, perpetually before God, at the place where the people met him. There was no sprinkling with blood, but the witness of the unbearableness of sin to God, according to that which had consumed and put it away as to us long ago; and the blood had disappeared in the sacrifice which had been consumed, and in which sin had been judged, while its efficacy remained constantly under the eye of God, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where, and where only, it was sprinkled as shed blood. For the rest, as made sin, all had been consumed in the fire of God’s judgment.

This is all they have to say to deny the plain statement -- the blessed statement -- that we are perfected forever (Heb. 10:14). No instance, no word of re-application of the blood, or re-sprinkling with blood, can they find. That is quite certain. It is only an effort to make out that what is expressly water, in Scripture, means blood, in order to deprive us of what Scripture gives -- a perfect conscience -- no more conscience of sins when once purged.

As to the remarks on our washing one another’s feet, forgiveness has nothing to do with it, that is only as to what concerns ourselves. We cannot apply blood to another, but we can, by grace, apply the word and not suffer sin on our brother. What is said is hardly worth the words I have spent upon it. The statement that the passage quoted from the Hebrews applies only to the objective efficacy, not the subjective condition of the soul, is met by the simple remark, that the passage speaks of the objective efficacy in its effect
on the subjective condition, namely, no more conscience of sins.

I never saw a more hopeless effort to get rid of the direct statement of Scripture, a more utter absence of apprehension of what it says, in any comment in my life. I insist on its being its objective efficacy, not application, here; but the whole object of the passage is to show that this, known by faith, has complete efficacy on the subjective condition, namely, that it purges the conscience; in this sense making us perfect for ever -- continuously. Is not that a subjective condition? I wish for no greater testimony that the opponents of this blessed truth are denying what Scripture states, and have not apprehended God’s testimony at all. If you want a proof of the incompetency of unbelief, you have only to read this paragraph and compare it with the 9th and 10th of Hebrews.

A purged conscience -- a perfect conscience. This, they say, is "conscience as to objective efficacy of the sacrifice, not the subjective condition of one’s own soul." The whole object of the passage being to show that faith in the objective efficacy has this subjective effect. Such is unbelief. That should draw out only gracious diligence to remove it. The effort to cultivate unbelief in the blessed word, and hinder souls receiving it is a graver thing.

As to hypothetical circumstances for a Jewish conscience, as is alleged as to Heb. 10, they are Christianity, as it there goes on to explain. This is all very bad. But I repeat here, the question is not treated judicially in Hebrews. It is a question of boldness to enter into the holiest, and that is always ours. Psa. 32 just proves the contrary of that for which it is cited. The confession spoken of -- led to being forgiven, and no imputation left. The confession was not of sin committed subsequent to the forgiveness spoken of in the first verse, but what led to it, as plain as words can make it, and then no sin was imputed. He had kept silence, was at last brought to confess, and so had forgiveness; and the apostle uses it to show a state of no imputation of sin. There, too, the Apostle urges, the objective faith gives the subjective state of peace with God. The whole paper, then, is simply a denial of the truth of the purging of a believer’s conscience -- a perfecting us for ever in an uninterrupted state as to this before Good. It seeks with vain efforts to make the water mean blood, leaving no place for the scriptural use of the water -- plunging the believer back into uncertainty of conscience before God, instead of applying the judgment of failure to a question of holiness, for one who walks in the light as God is in the light, never allowing the soul to get beyond the question of guilt, and making it content when that is settled, falsifying, as has been done ever since the Scriptures have been closed, the whole truth of Christianity for the souls of men. Unbelief in the true force of Heb. 10, and the truth contained in it, as to the true subjective condition of the Christian, was the real origin of all the superstition and corruption of the
I knew the case of a charitable institution in Ireland, where New Testaments were left to be read by those for whose advantage it was carried on, where Heb. 9 and 10 were torn out, and when the guilty ones were discovered, they said if that were true the priests misled them, and that they did not believe. And now Protestant teachers are trying to do away its force; but this began immediately after the Apostles’ decease. The utter weakness of the effort here to get rid of the truth is more manifest than usual, by the attempt to say that the conscience being purged, and we perfect as to it, is not a subjective condition of the soul. It is tantamount to a confession that they have no ground to stand upon.

Other points I might notice, but my object, and only object, is to keep, by answering this paper, this great truth before the soul — that by one offering Christ has perfected us for ever; and that the worshipers once purged through that offering should have no more conscience of sins.

Christchurch, New Zealand.

The Bible Herald, pp. 43-45, 1876.
WHAT DOES THE COMING OF
THE COMFORTER MEAN? ¹

I have no pleasure in mere controversy, and as I noticed G.’s previous article ²
on the church only at the request of those interested in the subject, I take notice
of his reply, for the same reason, but only of what refers to the main subject,
which is all important.

I have no doubt, though unacquainted with him, that Mr. G. is a good man,
and I have no wish to violate in any way the amenities of Christian charity with
one who is a brother in Christ, as controversy tends to do. One should ask
oneself now, “Is this what I should wish it to have been when I come before the
Lord?” If I should fail in this I must, anticipating, beg Mr. G. to forgive me. I
have no consciousness of an ungracious feeling, but Mr. G. will not deny that
“What is the Church?” is an important question for us all.

I will reply, then, to his article in Our Banner of April 16, in what touches
that question, and even, so, I do it reluctantly. Positive truth is happier service.
Mr. G. insists that the Church was Israel. That it was at first composed of Jews
no one denies. God, as I said before, waiting on Israel in gracious patience,
consequent withal on Christ’s intercession on the cross (Luke 8:34); the third of
Acts, not the second, being the reply of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Peter
thereeto. This was not only addressed to Israel but about Israel, calling them as
a nation to repent and Jesus would return, the words of the Holy Ghost
answering to Jesus’ prayer. “When the times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19), should
be “so that the times of refreshing”; ὅτι πόρισαν ἂν has no other sense in Greek. The
Jews’ repentance would be the occasion of God’s intervention in their favor, and
then the blessing and peace of the world promised in the prophets would be
established, commonly called the millennium. But in this case there was no
gathering. The Jewish authorities would not even allow the Apostle to finish his
speech. But Mr. G.’s argument as to Acts 2 has no force whatever. The
Apostle’s sermon was addressed to the Jews, to Israel, if you will, but what has
that to do with the Church being Israel? The effect of the sermon under the
power of the spirit was to gather out of Israel, three thousand, to form, so far,
the church -- to begin it among that people, though the doctrine of it was not
taught till Paul’s time. He was a minister of the church to fulfil or complete the
word of God (Col. 1:26). But to argue that the church was Israel, because Israel
was preached to, and many gathered out of Israel to form it, has no possible
force. If a missionary gathers a body of christians from among the heathen in

¹. Serving as a reply to the second article on “The Church in the Old Testament” in Our Banner (an
American Periodical), April 16, 1877 {ed. of The Bible Herald.}
². {See Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 31:281-289.
India, converted to God by grace, are they still heathens, and Christianity a continuation of their religion? No doubt they were by natural birth, as the Jews were Jews, but to say that the church is heathen is absurd. Those called out from Israel who were saved from that untoward generation, were the church, or assembly of God. Israel remained Israel, and was, for the time, hardened in the heart and cut off.

Mr. G. must allow me to complete the quoted prophecy of Joel, “The promise is unto you and to your children.” There Mr. G. stops. The Apostle adds “and to all that are afar off; even to as many as the Lord your God shall call” {Acts 2:39}. Now that God did not reject the Jews till they had refused to receive a glorified Christ, as well as crucified a humbled one (a measure of sin and unbelief completed in the stoning of Stephen, who sums up their conduct from Abraham to that day; where also Paul, the minister of the church, first comes upon the scene), is quite true, and hence that God waited and did not reveal all His counsels as to the union of Jew and Gentile. But the language omitted by Mr. G. throws it open in principle, and if it does not, why does he omit it?

The promise was given to Israel especially, but by adding all flesh, the prophecy was in prospect carried out farther. It is the accustomed term for this in the Old Testament. “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.” “By His fire and by His sword shall the Lord plead with all flesh.” The “specially to Israel” does not exclude this. He was to be a light to lighten (to reveal) the Gentiles; and the glory of His people, Israel. Let my reader consult Jer. 25:15-33, where the Lord declares He will plead with all flesh, beginning with Jerusalem (18-29, see Num. 16:22). So to Christ, power is given over all flesh. But let the reader only take a concordance, and he will at once see the force of these words, its absolute universality, and where needed, contrast with Israel. He will readily understand why Mr. G. omits it, and what is far better, how God uses it, and how, while preserving the promises to Israel, it extends blessing and judgment to all, and putting the Jew first, goes out to the Greek.

Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem. So even Paul, who knew no difference, for that all had sinned, yet went to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, saying that Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written. Till the Jews rejected a glorified Christ the patience of God dealt with them as a nation for repentance, and gathered the members of His assembly from that people, calling then Cornelius by Peter, that all might be one, but using Paul as the instrument for unfolding the doctrine of the assembly and the ministration of the Gospel to the nations, a mission the others gave up entirely to him (Gal. 2).

Did Mr. G. see the Lord’s coming and the setting up of Christ’s kingdom by power, I might go further into this. Let him here only ponder this, that the
little stone, cut out without hands, did not become a mountain to fill the whole earth, till after it had executed judgment {Dan. 2}. The knowledge of this would help in the understanding of Joel \(^3\) and interpret many passages now obscure and falsely applied by those who do not see it. But I must now confine myself to my reply.

As regards my alleged mistake of taking organization for privilege (and christian privileges do occupy the greatest part of my paper), I shall only quote Mr., G.’s words,

To them (the Jews) pertained the adoption, glory, covenant, giving of the law, service, and the promises (Rom. 9:4). Nothing more can be said of the church now. Any one can decide whether this applies to organization or privileges, and whether it is not an assertion that they had all that the church has now.

As to the coming of the Holy Ghost, the most essential point of all, I do mean to say that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, did not come till after Christ was glorified. The word of God is positive and express as to this {John 7:39}, and it is what is at the root of the question. What I have said about this, or rather what the blessed Lord and the word have said of it is quite plain. The Holy Ghost as God, is everywhere. “He inspired,” I said, “the prophets, and wrought all through the divine history.” But and if Christ and the divine word tell us the truth, we must so believe, the Comforter could not come until Christ went away and was glorified. “Christ,” I remarked, “had created the world, but He did not come till the incarnation.” “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father” {John 16:28}.

I shall repeat what the word of God says on this point as it is the real and vital question. It is a scriptural fact which constitutes Christianity, and the denial of the plain scriptural statements on the subject, or the neglect of them, is what has judaized Christianity, plunged the assembly of God into the world, and made it as it now stands, the powerless prey to infidelity. The death and resurrection of Christ are the foundations of Christianity, the presence of the Holy Ghost as personally come into the world, that is, to believers in it, is the essential living power and characteristic of Christianity and the Christian.

And I add now, that Christ glorified as man received Him (the Holy Ghost) afresh when so glorified, to shed Him forth on His disciples. Christ had not received Him to this end {i.e., for this purpose} till after His ascension, Acts 2:33. “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.”

I am not going to reason as Mr. G. does, but to quote the word of God.

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\(^3\) Thus in Joel it is before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes that there is deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and with this ch. 3 is connected.
Mr. G. speaks of “pouring out,” as giving in abundance, and that such only is the difference. When was the Spirit of God poured out before Pentecost? But I will quote the texts, and to them I can claim the submission of every child of God. I have done so, but I press this point as a cardinal one, constituting Christianity as revealed in the New Testament.

In John 7 Christ not then showing Himself to the world according to the yet unfulfilled type of the feast of Tabernacles, says on the special, last (eighth) and great day of the feast, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,” and the Evangelist adds: “This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given), for Jesus was not yet glorified.” Compare Acts 2:33 already quoted. There is no question of a greater or fuller measure. What is said is the Holy Ghost (πνεῦμα ἅγιον) was not yet. That is, as come and dwelling in believers. So the baptizing with the Holy Ghost was the second of the two great works of Christ. He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but He on whom, as man, the Holy Ghost descended and abode, He it was who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. This took place, as regards the one hundred and twenty, on the day of Pentecost, according to Christ’s word (Acts 1:5), and Christ being exalted and glorified according to John 7 shed forth the Holy Ghost according to the promise in Joel. 4 The difference of the Spirit in the prophets, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as come down from Heaven, is clearly marked in 1 Pet. 1:11-13: “The Spirit of Christ which was in them testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory (glories) which should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” There was a testimony beforehand, by the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, but with the gospel the things were not brought, but reported with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and then we are told that the things will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, for which we must wait. The distinction, then, is perfectly scriptural, and the distinction made in scripture, that distinction being marked by “sent down from heaven.” But further I add the positive texts (John 14:16),

I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever;

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things” (John 14:26);

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the

4. {The reader should note that the point in Acts 2 is that there was something similar in the pouring out of the Spirit, as spoken of in Joel. However, it was not a fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy, which fulfilment awaits the future. Acts 2 is not the fulfilment of the promise in Joel.}
Father, even the Spirit of truth” (John 15:26);
It is expedient for you that I 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 when He is come {John 16:7}.

And the Acts and Epistles confirm these plain testimonies. The former I have quoted. I add (Acts 19:2),

We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is.
The same words as in John 7. So Eph. 1:13,

In whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise –
till Christ was glorified, promised, but not come; but now come, and given to believers as a seal. Their unity was the unity of the Spirit; there was one Spirit and one body. They were not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by which they were sealed to the day of redemption (Gal. 3:2).

They had received the Spirit, by the hearing of faith (1 Cor. 12).

All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will.

By one Spirit they were all baptized into one body.

Christianity is the ministration of the Spirit, in contrast with the law (2 Cor. 3).
And it is a great mistake to suppose that miraculous gifts and prophesy were the special and most important effects. The disciples were not to rejoice that demons were subject unto them, but rather that their names were written in heaven. Men might have supernatural power (1 Cor. 13), without being converted, and in the Old Testament we have instances of it, but if sealed with the Holy Ghost, it was as believers, and for the day of redemption. They could then (Gal. 4) cry Abba Father, being sons by faith in Christ Jesus, they (John 16) know they are in Christ and Christ in them (1 John 4:13). They know, and that by the Spirit given to them, that they dwell in God, and God in them. His love is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given to them (Rom. 5:5). Their bodies are temples. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, helps our infirmities; we are led by the, Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit: He which establishes in Christ, and has anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. 1:21, 22). He who hath wrought us for the self-same thing (the glory), is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:5). All this is more than power and prophecy. It is the Christian state, and is contrasted (Gal. 4), with Jewish believers, consequent on accomplished and known redemption. The more the reader examines the Word, the more he will find the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer and in the assembly, essentially and distinctively characteristic of Christianity.

I may notice one passage, as it makes a difficulty of some (John 14:17). It does not touch the question, if we take it as Mr. G. and others do, namely, that the Holy Ghost had come down on Jesus as man after His baptism, and dwelt
with them in that sense, but was not in them. This only confirms what I have insisted on. The Holy Ghost coming and being in them, was future: “and shall be in you.” That was not yet. But the truth is, I do not believe this to be the sense of “dwellings” with them. The translators had an avowed and unhappy practice of translating the same word differently in the same sentence, as “judgment,” “condemnation,” “damnation,” are one identical word in Greek. So here “dwell” in v. 17 is the same as “abide” in v. 16. The Father was to give another Comforter who was to abide for ever with them. Christ could not; He was to go away to the Father. When sent, He was to abide with them and be in them. Christ was there with them, but He could not abide with them; was with them, but not in them {while here on earth}. This other Comforter would abide, and be in them. The “cannot receive” of the world is as much the present time as “abide.” It is when sent. And the truth is, abides or dwellings, is just as much future as present. It depends on an accent (μενέι or μενεῖ) and in the, early MSS. there were no accents. But taking it in Mr. G.’s sense, the Spirit was there in Christ as man, and so with them, but in them was, on the contrary, future.

The word of God, therefore, testifies positively that the Comforter did not, and could not, come, till Christ went away and was glorified. There is nothing about any previous pouring out, but a promise of doing it in the future. Nor does even shaphak mean giving in abundance, particularly, but simply pouring out. Further, in speaking of less and more, His personal coming is denied; a very weighty point. “When He shall come.” He is sent, comes, wills, distributes, works, and, I repeat, Christianity is distinguished by that presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. I repeat here the immensely important truth that God’s dwelling with man is the consequence of accomplished redemption. He did not {dwell} with Adam, nor Abraham, nor other saints. When He had redeemed Israel out of Egypt He did. “He dwelleth between the cherubim” (see Ex. 29:45, 46). So the Holy Ghost could not come, till man sat at the right hand of God, the glorified witness that an eternal redemption was accomplished. Of this we have seen in John 7, Acts 2, John 16:7, the positive testimony. The whole character of christianity depends on it. We are not yet in the christian state and standing if we have not the Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11).

Mr. G. says that the work of instituting the church is nowhere ascribed to the Spirit in scripture. That the church was not yet built or building when Christ was on earth is certain, for He says, on this rock I will build my church. Till Christ died the foundation was not laid. Here only is the church spoken of in His lifetime and as a future thing. But He died to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, and the two characters in which the church is spoken of, body and house, are both attributed to the Spirit, baptized by one Spirit into one body, and the habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

In whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι). There is one Spirit and one body. 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. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into
one body, Jews or Gentiles, &c. (1 Cor. 12:12, 13).

Even if we come down to the low ground of external organization, Mr. G. says, “Christ instituted the Lord’s supper, Christ instituted baptism.” Well then they did not exist before Christ, as so organized. But when Mr. G. says, “Christ gave the organization of the New Testament to the disciples,” though the expression “the organization of the New Testament” be somewhat unintelligible, will He tell us when He did so? I read in 1 Tim. of such organization, and historical facts elsewhere connected with it, but for saying that any such were given by Christ, there is not a shadow of ground.

If by organization he means baptism and the Lord’s supper, it is a proof that as He instituted them, such organization did not exist before, and it was when the Holy Ghost came they were carried out. Baptism to Christ’s death could not be till He had died, and the Lord’s supper is a symbol of the unity of the body of which an exalted Christ (Eph. 1:19-23) is the head. As to Christ not loving the church till it existed, it is false doctrine. In its fulness and completeness in God’s purpose it does not exist yet, at least we trust that souls will yet be brought in. “Yet to be made and defiled,” says Mr. G. Did He not love the souls He saves now, before they existed? They were defiled in their own nature, and of these the church is made up, loved before they existed, defiled as sinners, and Christ died long ago for their purification, and they constitute the church when sealed. Christ did love the church before it existed. Did He only give Himself for what existed then? This is very sad. He gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church without spot. What He will present to Himself certainly did not exist when He gave Himself for it. There could be no church but by His giving Himself for it. Its cleansing, in time, comes after this. He loved the church that He will present, glorious, to Himself.

This only shows how if one truth be given up, others, if touched, will crumble with it. If Mr. G. had given himself the trouble of examining the Greek in Eph. 3:4-11, he would have found that as the English proves nothing of the kind, in Greek there is no ground for what he says as to the Jews being the body (a monstrous assertion, really) at all. The word is σύνοσωμα, which could not exist till both were formed in one, according to ch. 2, to make of both one new man.

The concluding remarks scarcely require any on my part. There is not a word in scripture about any people using Melchisedec, not even Abraham, though he owned his greatness. Abraham acted as priest for himself continually setting up his altar, as did Isaac and Jacob, and the family altar has been generally recognized by christians. There is not a shadow of any assembly of believers, or professed believers, before the exodus. Meichisedec is introduced as a mysterious personage whose priesthood and life were coincident, not what priests were, or the great high priest is now, to intercede for the ignorant or out
of the way, or to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin as the apostle insists; but to give, and to bless the Most High God, and Abraham from the Most High God, when through His power he was already wholly victorious. And if Mr. G. had taken the pains to read that one of the songs of Zion (Psa. 110) to which he alludes, he would have found that it was setting Christ at God’s right hand till His enemies should be His footstool; and that the sending the rod of His power out of Zion is future. Then His enemies will be made His footstool. Hence when the apostle shows that there arises another priest not of the order of Aaron, Christ being that priest, he makes the present exercise of His priesthood exclusively according to the analogy of Aaron’s, though He be not of his order (Heb. 8:9), because Christ is yet sitting at the right hand of God, and His enemies, if scripture is to be believed, not yet made His footstool. A priest is not the priest of a church, 5 unless in popery, that I know of. The essential character of the present time is that Christ is not sitting on His own throne, but on His Father’s {Rev. 3:21}, at God’s right hand, till His enemies be made His footstool and the Holy Ghost sent down while He is there expecting,” having by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified through it. I do not admit that there was an order known as elders when Moses returned to Israel in Egypt. There were elders, but no order known as elders. If there were, let the institution be shown. There was one established when Jethro came (Ex. 18, Deut, 1), but this was subsequent; and a special one of seventy (Num. 11:17). But as to this I am quite indifferent. The congregation was not formed, but they were a separated people, and if there be no testimony of it, for aught I know there may have been some known elders, but no such order is spoken of. Nor even in the New Testament is any appointment of elders spoken of amongst the Jews.

But if there were a congregation connected with Melchizedec, of which there is not the slightest trace, or that there were elders in Israel organized as an order among the people, which is not said either, what has that to do with union with Christ by the Holy Ghost, with the glorious head of the body, or even with the habitation of God through the Spirit, formed consequent on Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition, and set aside Judaism? Were Melchisedec’s fancied congregation members of Melchisedec’s body? Yet that is what constitutes the church in its truest character: “the body of Christ.”

How the habit of mere human arrangement blots out of the mind the divinely given revelations of a glorified Christ at God’s right hand, and a body united to Him by the Holy Ghost! A priest must have a church, an utterly unscriptural thought, instead of a glorified Christ and union with Him by the Holy Ghost; Christ, too, fancied to be exercising His power as King now, instead of sitting at God’s right hand expecting till His enemies be made His

5. The church is never spoken of unless in Heb. 12:22, where the whole heavenly and earthly order is spoken of.
footstool.

I trust no harsh word has escaped me. I do not deny it is an exercise of patience to go over and over again what constitutes the characteristic existence of the church, and christianity itself commencing from Pentecost. My only consolation is that it brings out, clearer and clearer, for christians, great fundamental truths of their own standing. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His {Rom. 8:9}.

*The Bible Herald*, 1877, pp. 223-231, 250-256.
SINS BLOTTED OUT AND GLORY SEEN

The knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ gives perfect and entire peace.

There is often great difficulty in the minds of men in seeing how a person can have “no more conscience of sins,” when at the same time he is conscious of fail lure and of sin. But it is when the soul is fully purged, then it is there will be most consciousness of sin, and past and present failure; but no sense of imputation before God, or sense of Christ’s work.

We see in this chapter (Acts 17) how perfectly conscious the apostle was of his sins, and yet how completely purged was his conscience; and that it was which enabled him to be most conscious of his former sins. We see the same purged conscience in Peter (Acts 2:14). He charges the Jews with what he had done in a worse way himself. The soul cannot bear to rest distinctly on that which it knows will condemn itself, and therefore there must be always more or less guile in the heart where there is not certainty as to forgiveness. When our transgressions are seen by us to be completely “blotted out,” we have no interest in extenuating our sinfulness. If I am bankrupt I shall be ashamed to look at my books, because they will show me that I am a ruined man; unwilling to own all my indebtedness, if one came to see my affairs or claim payment; but if one in exceeding kindness had paid my debts for me, I could go and look through all my books, and if I found that I had owed a thousand instead of one hundred pounds, it would only enhance my sense of the greatness and value of the love that had paid all for me, and thus increase my gratitude and joy. This would produce guilelessness of heart. If he came to pay them I should tell him all.

In this chapter the apostle refers to all the things that he had done (see vv. 19, 20). He puts the Lord in mind of the greatness of his sins as his suitableness for giving testimony to the Lord’s grace. Nobody can tell of grace like the man who has experienced grace. An angel has not known the value of grace for his own forgiveness, and therefore could not testify of it like a poor sinner who has been saved by grace.

When Peter stood up and accused the Jews of the very crimes of which he himself had been guilty, of denying the Holy One and the Just, do you think that Peter was not conscious of the sin which he had done? That was not it, but with a purged conscience he stood before God in the knowledge of his acceptance, because Jesus, the risen Lord, had brought him into the presence of God, and made him know the greatness of the sins that had been blotted out, and the greatness of the love that had blotted them out. Jesus had died for it meanwhile, and He had received the Holy Ghost.
Observe (in Acts 9:10) the familiarity with which the Lord talks to His disciple, opening His mind to him as to a friend, mentioning to him the circumstances that affect His own mind. Then Ananias answers in the same blessed confidence, “Lord, I have heard by many of this man,” &c. Of course Ananias had to obey the Lord, but it shows the unbounded confidence with which he could open all his heart, because of the intimacy of Jesus with him.

The Lord has been pleased to give us glory with Himself, and He enters with the fullest interest into every subject that concerns us as with us. The Lord revealed, especially to Paul, that truth that He views His people as Himself, saying, “Why persecutest thou me?”

In regard to the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing we see manifested is the love of God -- it was not only the Son of Man lifted up, but the Son of God given. In the person of the Lord Jesus there was the exhibition and expression to the world of that which was suited to man’s heart and feeling. Every expression of all that was grace in God we see in the Lord Jesus. It is quite true that, as regarded the natural man “we saw no beauty in Him that we should desire Him,” but wherever His person was understood it was, “we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The Lord Jesus clothed all the glory of God in a condition that was suited to sinners. It was not only that they “wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth,” but there was that confidence produced in Him which, when the heart was broken with grief, it could open what it was that broke it more easily to Him than to any friend or relation; but Christ being so full of grace and righteousness, only made Him to be more alone in this world of sin. If His heart was satisfied as with marrow and fatness in communion with the Father, it made Him but the more understand what it was to pass alone through this world.

There was in Jesus all the expression of Divine fulness and of human graciousness, but this only proved that man was far from God. It was neither the mind of Jesus nor the counsel of God that He should abide alone. If the Lord Jesus had taken the “all things” that were His on the earth, He must have taken them “alone” {cf. John 12:24}. He might have had twelve legions of angels, and have returned to the Father, but He must have then returned “alone.” This could not be -- the counsels of God would not then have been fulfilled; and He drank the cup. He takes the circumstances of glory after He had finished the work of redemption alone on Calvary.

In the first place, there is the power of death, and atonement for that which hindered our entrance into glory; and then we get a new life, that we may be able to enjoy that glory. The promise made to Abraham was confirmed to Isaac after he had been received in a figure from the dead, and
so with us. The power of atonement has blotted out our sin, and the life we have consequent on the resurrection of Jesus is beyond the power of Satan, for it is life in the risen Christ.

The first grand testimony to the world by the apostles was, “God has made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” This gave distinct confidence to the disciples that God had made Him, whom man had spit upon and rejected, Lord of all.

Peter’s ministry invites the people to return, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted”; and thus Jesus would return; but Stephen’s charge was, “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” He was looking up into Heaven, and seeing the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Soon after they had rejected a humbled Christ, on the intercession of Christ on the cross, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, and proposed to them a glorified Christ, calling them to repentance by Him. Thus they finally rejected Stephen’s charge, bringing it all to an issue where all things that had a beginning, began. He was (εγενετο) God the creator, but a distinct person “with God.” Before the Cross, in the person of Jesus, there was something on earth on which the glory of God could rest; but now, Jesus being no longer on earth, but in heaven, Stephen turns his eye up to where Jesus was.

Paul could give no testimony to what Jesus was during His life on earth, but his ministry begins with the glory of Jesus, as the Lord in heaven. He appears to him in the glory of His Sonship, and Lord is the title by which Saul addresses Him -- “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” is the expression of Christ and the Church, being one. The interests of the Lord were thus shown to be centered in His poor, rejected, and persecuted people. In this we see what the place of the Church is on earth, to have the same heavenly interests with Christ on high which makes us willing to suffer with Him here, that we may also be glorified together with Him.

That which is the daily comfort of the feeblest saint is that he has a glory above the brightest glory of all dispensations. That Christ and the believer are one is the very highest glory, and yet this brings him into fellowship and intercourse with Christ about common things. The knowledge of the Lordship of Jesus keeps the mind in quietness, and enables the believer to leave all to the Lord, that is the certainty that in the world to come all the promises of God will be “to the glory of God by us.”

While we have full interest in the glory of Christ, He has an interest in the smallest thing that concerns us, and our portion is to suffer with Him, as having a common interest with the Lord -- “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” -- suffering here because the world is against the Lordship of Jesus.
We are not only accepted because of what Christ has done, but accepted as *children*, having the very same interests with Christ, being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have personal interest with Christ about *Himself*. (If my finger is hurt I am hurt, I do not say that my finger is hurt as if it were some one else.)

The very glory that is given us is that we are loved as Christ is loved; but the glory is not the greatest thing, but the blessedness of union with Christ. The Holy Ghost is the witness of this. Through the Holy Ghost, Christ is formed in us, and we are made one with Him in presence of the Father. Union with Christ Jesus separates me from the world by giving me identity of life and feeling with Christ. We being “in Christ,” and “Christ in us,” if we come to look at suffering and trial, He is in us, and suffers and sympathizes with us in it, “and when Christ who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory.”

The glory that is given to Him is given us by Christ as the token that the Father loves us as He loves His Son. It is consequent on that on which it is founded, which makes Him love us as He loves Himself; and union with Christ gives the full blessedness of the heavenly character to the believer. May we walk in the full blessing of the confidence that all things are ours, and we are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. “In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” Our union with the Lord gives life and communion to our souls. The unity of the Church must be solely of the Holy Ghost -- “by one Spirit ye are all baptized into one body,” &c. As the sanctifying power, He gives its character to the sanctification of the Church, leading it “to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.”

*The Bible Herald*, 1877, pp. 332-337.
SORROWS AND TRIUMPHS

There is no comfort like the thought that Jesus has entered into all our sorrows. This is the very way God has met the need, and want, and wretchedness of our nature. Supposing that Adam had never fallen, we could not speak of God with the comfort that we now can, since He has come in sympathy to us, through the means of the incarnation of our blessed Lord. The Lord Jesus having become a man is the source of all comfort. The Lord has entered into all the depths of sorrow, so as to give us all the depth of comfort, in order that we may know that God knows the very secret of our case. He lets us see the feeling of Jesus in entering into it, and in the expression of His thoughts and feelings whilst in this place; so we come to see how He entered into all our sorrows. And this is the channel for all His love to flow into our souls.

The book of Psalms brings before us Christ entering into the depth of our circumstances, and making them His own, saying, "Mine iniquities have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up." Some of His sorrows arose from His holiness. "Mine eyes gush out," &c. All the depth of sorrow was in Jesus. His putting Himself in this place makes us understand the depth of His love towards us. Jesus brings the capacity of God to feel, in the circumstances of man that were to be felt about. His feelings were therefore those of holy sorrow. If we see any expression of sorrow in the saints, it is only the expression of the Spirit of Jesus in them.

We find some passages in the New Testament showing what was passing in the mind of our blessed Lord, such as His conflict in the garden of Gethsemane, and when upbraiding the cities in which His mighty works were done. We then see what the Lord felt, the outbreaking of that which was pressing on our Lord’s soul. But, ordinarily, in the Gospels, while glimpses often break through the veil, it is the grace and perfection of Jesus in the midst of, and in spite of, His sufferings that is shown -- the perfect grace of the Man; and all the scorn and sorrow which was heaped upon Him we see only made His love shine the brighter. But the Psalms bring out what was passing within. The individual soul often finds comfort in the Psalms, in a measure in having something of the same feeling; and God can look at these very expressions of sorrow with delight, even though they are often mixed with unbelief, though they may be groanings that cannot be uttered. He that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God; but we must look at them in Jesus to look at them aright, to get all the comfort of them. It is an evil thing to be always groaning, but it is a blessed thing to know that Jesus groaned. Those who are weary and heavy-laden in a world of misery are in
circumstances to understand the blessedness of Jesus feeling with them.

The perception of Jesus being the Son of God in these sufferings is shown, in Matt. 11:25, to be, by the grace of God, revealing these things to our souls. Jesus having come into this world of sorrow, and having found no rest in it, says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” “If there were any rest here I should have found it; if there had been any spark of love to be found in man’s heart. But there is not, therefore you must come and bow; but know the sympathy, too, of Him who bowed first.” Jesus says -- “I sought the Lord and He heard me,” &c; the Spirit takes it up -- “This poor man cried,” &c. God does not say, “Stay in sorrow till I bring you into a condition where there is no sorrow,” by and bye, but comes down into the sorrow; but His love is found where the want of it is so much felt.

There was in Jerusalem the concentration of all wickedness -- there was Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the one, so to speak, next to our blessed Lord -- Judas, just the type of Antichrist. Amidst all the sin and sorrow of the world -- sin, but sin when God had taken all the pains outwardly to bring man out of it, when “God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that would understand,” &c. -- where should He look if not to that nation whom He had chosen for His own? “a nation so great who hath God so nigh,” &c. Where expect anything good but here?

But when He came there was no man -- when He called there was none to answer. The place where the Lord Jesus was, as among these, was a place of special grief, for all the pains that God had taken with His special people only brought home to the Lord the perfectness of the enmity of ias creatures towards Him. “What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have not done!” &c.

The Lord’s name, too, was in Jerusalem, and the place where His name was He saw trodden down by the Gentiles, and He could not interfere in the matter; and why? Because God’s people had departed from Him and His ways -- they were become worse than the heathen, and therefore, by virtue of His own character, it was impossible for Him to deliver these, His own people, on the earth, because He would have been vindicating depravity. The feeling of holy indignation there must have been in our blessed Lord in seeing His Father’s name so dishonored, was shown when He made the scourge of small cords, anticipating the day of judgment, and drove the sellers of merchandise out of the temple, saying, “Make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.” This was truly being angry and sinning not. Because of the iniquity which was defiling His Father’s house, judgment must begin at the house of God.

The spirit of Jesus was bowed down under the universal depravity --
“the wickedness of His own people,” &c. -- and He could not, in one sense, deliver His own people but by giving His back to the smiters. He found His spirit pent up -- entirely shut up in Himself. There was nothing to meet or answer it -- none in whom He could find an answer, even His holy feelings of love none could enter into, which really is sorrow; and they found vent only in prayers and supplication to God. And all this wretchedness and sorrow was felt according to the purity and love of Himself.

In the Gospels we see the unfailing exhibition of grace toward man. In the Psalms we get the expression of His pent-up feelings of love and holiness and righteousness to Jehovah, when for His love He only received hatred. When the spirit of Christ is in us, we enter into all this, though feebly, perhaps. The heart that felt this is just the same. Our hearts may spend themselves in feeling, God’s never can; we are only the stream -- God the source, unexhausted, inexhaustible. His love is ever fresh. When we get to the Lord we find one who now enters into our feelings of sorrows because He knows and understands them quite well. According as we know Jesus, daily we find sympathy. He is the pillow on which to rest the aching head. But it does not end here. Jesus was still looking out for the great result of all these sufferings “for the joy that was set before Him he endured the cross, despising the shame.” Our proper portion is joy, but as in a world of sin and Satan we also find sorrow.

These two Psalms are the expression in two different ways of the interest that the soul of man could take in Christ and His deliverance (Psa. 21). The spirit of Christ, the remnant of the Jew hereafter looking to Christ in sorrow and suffering, see Him through the resurrection in joy and glory (Psa. 21) and look to him as coming back again in glory -- we identified with Him. This shows the place we are in -- the Church begins after the resurrection of the Lord. The Jews looked in amazement that Messiah should suffer. The thing that met all this was Jesus being received up into heaven. The Holy Ghost then comes down from heaven to form the Church, witnessing that the atonement has been made, that, “having by Himself purged our sins,” &c., the place of the Church, begins in the joy and glory of Christ.

Of this Paul was the type -- he had been no companion with Jesus in His sorrows, but the first thing that was shown him was the glory, to show the riches of grace, called in his sins to be an apostle. The Church is one with Christ in glory; like Paul it begins by the revelation of glory, and then it is taught that it is to be a partaker of His sufferings. Ananias had to show Paul (after he had seen the glory), how great things he must suffer for Jesus’ name’s sake. He was able to testify that his calling was all of grace -- This Jesus whom I have been persecuting and killing in His members has taken me and made me an apostle -- this must be of grace. Here (Psa. 20:11), the remnant of the Jews are looking at the Lord in trouble, and they say, (v. 2),
“The Lord hear thee out of Zion.” Zion had been the place where they had been accustomed to look to for help, as God’s being there; but all there was very dark -- he found only trouble. Zion was the place where the heart’s core was shown to be enmity against God. The council-chamber of Jerusalem was the place where counsel was taken against God and His Anointed. Then in the next Psalm we have Thou hast given Him His heart’s desire.” The desire must have been in Christ’s heart, or there would never have been any desire in our hearts towards Him. “Grant Thee according to Thine own heart.” This could be said of none but Christ, “We will rejoice in Thy salvation.” In our hearts there is too much evil. They could ask this, but knew not what His counsels were. The resurrection began to be understood. They look now at the resurrection as the sign of the exercise of power on His behalf, and say, “Now know I that the Lord saveth His Anointed”; from thence He will hear, though not from His earthly Zion. “Save, Lord,” &c. And then we have all the expression of the joy of the Jewish remnant in the discovery of the manner of their deliverance by the resurrection of their king.

The Church begins with the knowledge of this deliverance and salvation. Having the testimony that Jesus is on the right hand of God, we can tell what His counsel is -- that He came to give Himself as a ransom for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. What the remnant will be looking for, the Church has -- knowing Jesus as ascended gives the Church its peculiar character, “as He is, so are we in this world.” This makes them know the glory to be theirs, and makes them willing to suffer now. The Church stands as the representative of Christ on earth (and it should be so practically), and bearing His reproach as united to Him in glory, as Jesus bore His Father’s reproach, as united to Him in the glory. The remnant see Him coming back as King, we by faith see Him now. We see Jesus crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God. The Jews shall see Him then. Thomas is a type of the Jews; “Blessed,” &c. -- the Church. God’s mind and thought is to set out Jesus in this blessed glory, and the thoughts and counsel of His heart shall be fulfilled. “His glory is great in thy salvation, honor and majesty hast thou laid upon Him.” But v. 8 will be in righteousness on those who have rejected all His love. It is not till men become adversaries that the fire of the Lord destroys them (v. 9). We were once the children of wrath, even as Thy grace only makes us to differ (v. 10). Judgment of the quick specially. Now is the time between those two psalms, that, as regards us, the glory is ready and the Lord not slack; He waits -- “long suffering,” &c., “not willing that,” &c., “now is the accepted time,” &c. It is hard for the saint to say whether he delights most in the cross or in the glory, in the sufferings of Jesus or the glory. He looks at the suffering, and can say, “It was for us -- this shame and grief of heart to see His suffering, and the saint looks at the glory. Still it is John 13:31, and he can say “it is for us.”
The Bible Herald, 1877, pp. 322-328.
DELIVERANCE;
OR, THE POSITION OF
THE BELIEVER BEFORE GOD

Deliverance has been much confused with the pardon of sins. Two things are united as to the Christian position -- the resurrection, and the position of the Lord in the glory where He is. He is a man beyond death, beyond judgment, beyond sin, and beyond the power of Satan. In Him risen, we have life and an entirely new position. In the person of Christ there is the new man. Thus the man is not only accepted and ascended, but has the glory. “We rejoice in hope of the glory” (Rom. 5:2). As soon as Christ was glorified, the Holy Ghost came down. Here Christianity begins. We already have divine life, but not yet the glory; nevertheless, the Holy Ghost comes down as a testimony to that glory of the Son of Man; and we await it to be glorified with Him. It is the possession of the Holy Ghost which constitutes the Christian position.

Many want to make out that Christ united Himself to us in incarnation; but this is false, destroys Christianity, and begets many other errors. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). Christ did not unite Himself to fallen humanity.

Others want to make out that there is a divine nature in the natural man. But man in his natural state is condemned; and the other man, the Second, is well pleasing to God; and the proof of it was that He raised Him again from the dead. The gospel commences with a glorified Christ; and with the Holy Ghost in us.

His coming in flesh is indeed a good piece of news. But, properly the gospel does not begin till all His work on earth was completed, so that the gospel is no longer a promise of something; but a testimony to the completed work of Christ. The Holy Ghost is come down; and He enlightens the believer with respect to that perfect work, and with respect to his position by means of it; and He is also the earnest of glory.

There is besides the work of the Spirit in us, not only by us, which is a distinct thing. Subjectively, as to us, the Holy Ghost works to convince us of sin, shows us in the first place our sins, and makes us see that by the blood of Christ we have pardon and justification of the sins which we have committed. But up to this point there is no deliverance; the joy of pardon is not deliverance. And it is an error to consider it as such.

There is another thing: discovery is made of what we are in the flesh. It is discovered that the tree is bad; that not only are we sinners, but that in the flesh it is impossible to please God. When we know that the flesh is bad --
irremediable, and we find out by experience that we are without strength, then comes the knowledge of the truth (Rom. 4) that we are dead with Christ (not only that He died for us -- that is pardon); and then we are delivered (Rom. 8). We are in the new creation; and we hold ourselves dead -- “dead indeed to sin”; and “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” The consequence is, that we are “not in the flesh but in the Spirit,” the Spirit of God being in us, -- sons of God and heirs with Christ; that we are bound up with Him in the new position; and the Holy Ghost, dwelling in us, makes us who are still in the mortal body groan with this groaning creation, making us feel in what a miserable world we are.

This last part of the truth of the gospel of our salvation is a matter of experience; not so the first part. The pardon of sins is found in the first part of the Epistle to the Romans (up to ch. {5;}11); and death to the old man, to sin, is found in the second part of the Epistle (up to ch. 8). 6 This experimental knowledge is divided into three parts.

1st. We are dead to sin, to that bad nature: the old man having been crucified, we are dead in {with?} Christ, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. That goes together.

2nd. We have the consciousness of being risen with Christ, and this is the effect of His resurrection. But it is a second step more in advance. Since I am dead and risen, I have finished with the world although still in the world (Col. 2:3).

3rd. We are seated in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 2). This last experience is founded upon a more deep and spiritual knowledge of the preceding bad state, and our deliverance from it. We were found dead, not living, in our trespasses and sins; but now we are quickened together with Christ, raised up together with Him, and we are a new creation. The pardon of sins is an experience of what has been completed.

These three points are scattered in the Epistles. In the Romans we are dead with Christ; that is deliverance. In the Colossians we are also dead with Christ, but besides, we are risen with Him. In the Ephesians the subject goes further, because we are seated in heavenly places in Christ, saved and sealed with the Holy Ghost. The Epistle to the Colossians does not speak to us of the Holy Ghost, but of Christ as our life. Also, the exhortations of these Epistles are in accordance with their respective doctrines. In the Romans, being dead we are exhorted to give ourselves to Him, as living sacrifices. In the Colossians, being risen we are exhorted to seek heavenly things, things above where Christ

6. {The reader will be helped to understand this article by keeping in mind that Rom. 1 - 5:11 is a section of the book that deals with sins committed. Rom. 5:12 - 8 is a section that deals with “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:2), i.e., sin as being in the soul, and deals with the state, and the new state into which we are brought (Rom. 8) by the deliverance out of the state described in Rom. 7.}
sitteth, and not earthly things. In the Ephesians, being seated in the heavens (in Spirit {spirit?} of course) we are exhorted to go out, so to speak, from the presence of God, to manifest His character in the world (Eph. 5:1-2). It is an entirely different class of exhortations from those of Romans. In the first part of the exposition of the gospel by Paul, liabilities are met and discharged; that is not entirely a matter of experience, although it produces contentment and peace; but if I say to any one, You are dead, it is another thing, it is a matter of experience. It is my subjective state in Rom. 6, not my judicial clearance. That is the second part. “We are crucified with Christ.” We must not confound the pardon of sins with the state of deliverance from sins. In this transition state you experience three things --

1st. That in me no good thing dwells -- not that I have done evil, but that the flesh is bad and will not submit itself to God -- is enmity against God.

2nd. I experience that I have not strength to do better. I am “without strength” to do the things the quickened soul approves of.

3rd. That it is not I who do the evil, but sin that dwells in me.

Up to this point, there is not deliverance, although I may be relieved by the discovery that it is “not I, but sin.” This last is rather light than deliverance; but the evil is stronger than I. I am a man bound and the slave of another, and I cannot do good though I will it. Then, when I experience this, I find that I am dead, give up in despair, and I find Christ as my deliverer -- “I thank God through Jesus Christ.”

Now I pass to Rom. 8. It is a new position: “there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Now I am not only pardoned, but sin in me -- my bad nature -- was condemned at the cross. Condemnation is passed; and death is come: now I am delivered. The law could not accomplish this object.

In the first part of the Epistle, men have done such and such things; but here in the second part (Rom. 5:18) we have -- “By the disobedience of one, the many have been constituted sinners.” Individually, we have each our sins, besides this we have in common, sin. Some want to jump over this experience, but then they are ignorant of what we are.

In Deut. 16 we have instructive types on these subjects.

In the Passover (vv 1-8), we do not find either joy or communion: Christ is dead for us; we are not condemned.

In the feast of weeks (vv. 9-12), they were to “offer free will offerings of thine hand, and give thanks before Jehovah with all those of the household,” and vigilance is enjoined; “observe and do these statutes.”

Then at the feast of tabernacles (vv. 13-15), which will be the repose of the millennium, Israel is wholly blessed in all his increase, in all the work of
his hands, and wholly joyful.

Deliverance is neither conversion, nor pardon; but it is when the flesh is held dead, and when Christ is our life; and we know it in our own consciousness when we are sealed with the Holy Ghost.

It is not a question of what we have done, but of what we are: Christ is dead, and I am dead. We must get to know ourselves from the bottom of the heart to be delivered. This is the death with Christ to sin. It is the passage out of Egypt and bondage. We must distrust ourselves. Moses went in his own strength to kill the Egyptian; but by so doing he effected no deliverance, but fled himself from Pharaoh. The flesh is worthless; but he required forty years alone with God in Midian to find out that it was good for nothing, and to know that God would be his mouth and power for deliverance from the Egyptian. He had to learn God’s way of deliverance; not by fighting with him, but death to him. The flesh is little known.

The starting point of Christianity is that Christ is risen and glorified. Paul began here (Acts 9). Christ is substituted for man in the flesh. There are two characters of this deliverance: that is, when we are perfectly free before God. When I speak of justification, I think of God {as} just, but I have peace in my soul. Then you come to the knowledge of the love of God, which in one sense is deliverance, but not entirely so. The great men of the Reformation of the 16th century saw the believer justified before God; they saw justice satisfied, but they did not understand the other fact that it is God in His love who gave His only begotten Son. In Egypt (Ex. 12) God had the character of a judge. But at the Red Sea God presented Himself as a Deliverer -- “Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.” If these subjects are put out of place, then you lose sight of the two sides that are found in John 3; the righteousness of God in v. 14, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” and the love of God in v. 16, “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son,” &c.

In the religious movement that is at present taking place in Sweden, they are going to the opposite extreme from that of the reformers; they take the love of God, and lose sight of righteousness and propitiation. In this case they have not thoroughly the sense of sin. If I am delivered, sin will no more have dominion over me. I am no more under that yoke, I am under grace, and I know the love. If I live with God, I do not sin, and I have no need to accept that doctrine of perfection, by which you are supposed by an act of faith to jump out of the experience of the 7th chapter to enter that of the 8th {of Romans}.

To become Christians, we must pass through Rom. 7. In that chapter there is certainly life, but the question is to know which is the husband -- the law, or Christ -- for the renewed soul. Now in this chapter you are still under the first husband, like the prodigal son (Luke 15), who was already converted in the far
country; but he was not yet fitted to enter into the father’s house, he was so to speak, in the 7th of Romans. The state in which we ought to be, is that God should be all to us, we thinking only of Him. When once the prodigal is with the father, it is only a question of the father’s joy. The father is on his neck and kisses him while he is yet in his rags, but in that state he does not bring him in. He must be stripped and reclothed. “As He is, so are we in this world.” This is boldness, full security for the day of judgment (1 John 4:17, 18).

In order to be happy, we must know that God has made us the righteousness of God in Christ. It is necessary to have the consciousness of this state towards God; then we have the secret of God with us. The practical state of the soul must be in this condition. He who labors for the Lord ought to keep himself nearer to the Lord than to men, and to the work. There are three steps in the practical state of the Christian.

1st. Rom. 6 and Col. 2:20, and 3:1-3. Here you see things as God sees them: you are dead, you are crucified with Christ, and living with Him.

2nd. Faith takes that as a starting point to consider oneself dead (Rom. 6:11). And

3rd. 2 Cor. 4:10,11, which gives us the realization, “Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” If I do not bear about in my body the dying of Jesus, the life of Christ cannot be seen in me.

Our aim is Christ glorified; therefore, we shall never arrive at perfection on the earth: we always get nearer to it, but we shall never have it but in the glory. Christ is dead, therefore I am dead also; Christ is risen, I also am risen. In Acts 2:33, we see that we cannot be sealed until after Christ has taken His place at the right hand of God.

_The Bible Herald_, 1879, pp. 11-18.
DELIVERANCE AND HOLINESS

There is a difference between liberty, or deliverance, and the realization of it. Since deliverance is not a matter of intelligence, but experimental, you cannot be delivered without having first felt the yoke of sin. It is possible to have the pardon of sins, without having been much exercised in your own conscience. The love of God may be seen in pardoning our sins, but without having the consciousness of what we are, without feeling sin.

When we judge things according to our state, we are always under the law, in one way or another. The law gives the duties of our relations, but when it says, “Thou shalt not covet”; then it touches the root, the seat of evil in the heart. Nevertheless, the law does not say that man is lost; only the result is, that we cannot fulfil it. Some people quote James 1:14,15, and pretend that “concupiscence” is not “sin,” unless the will consent to it; but in this passage sin is outward sin; whilst, instead, in Rom. 7:8, it is sin which works “concupiscence” and here sin is the cause and the root.

When I discover what I am; it is not only knowledge, but an experience which I make of myself. I have indeed the will to do good: but I find that I am incapable of doing it.

In Rom. 7:14, “We know” is the intelligence, but “I” is individual experience. I cannot have the understanding of deliverance without its being in an experimental way: I cannot die simply by the intelligence of it; there must be the reality, the practical experience. When one dies, there is “no strength”; then one cries out -- “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?” And when I perceive that I cannot do good, I find that I am dead in Christ. If I can really say that I am dead, (not only that I am pardoned, which is another thing), then it is something in me.

The seventh chapter is not death to sin; but that I cannot get the victory. You get to deliverance by experience: and then I am convinced that I can do nothing; that truly there is “no good” in me. If I am not brought to the experimental knowledge of my incapacity, this seventh chapter of Romans will be a long experience. But are we contented to discover what we are? Do you realize practically that which you have learned?

This seventh chapter, then, is not the Christian state; for in this chapter one is only thinking of oneself; instead of which we ought to be thinking of Christ, and of what we are in Christ before God.

There is much confusion made between holiness, and justification. Not a few stop at those words, “follow holiness without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). But in seeking this holiness, they do not perceive that they are seeking justification; since, if a person is not at rest before God, it is
justification that one would need: but holiness is the judgment of the evil.

When we are justified, we hate evil; that is exactly holiness. Holiness makes me say, That is an evil thing, detestable! The question therefore of justification must first be settled, before there can be holiness. You confuse the two things till you are delivered. It is not possible that there should be true holiness until justification is well established. My acceptance with God in the negative sense consists in this, that my sins are annulled; and in the positive sense that I am “accepted in the Beloved.”

The Father loves me as He loves His Son Jesus, not only because He is love, but because He is just in virtue of the perfect work of Christ. If I were accepted by my own holiness, then it would be through something that I am, and not through Christ; but I am “accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:7).

The sanctification in the Epistle to the Hebrews is different from that which is found in Peter and elsewhere. The Spirit sanctifies by the work of Christ; then comes practical sanctification. It is said “As he is” (not as He was) “so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). Christ in heaven is the practical measure of what ought to be; and in this sense it is always progressive. At every step I make in this life, I always discover more of the glory of Christ. In the Old Testament (Lev. 14), for the purification of the leper the blood was put on the tip of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot; which signified that in my conduct I ought to do nothing in disaccord with the blood of Christ.

According to the Epistle to the Rom. 6:11, etc. I am already become a dead man, and living the life of Christ. According to 2 Cor. 1:8-10, the apostle esteemed himself as a dead man; and such he was before persecution. The apostle always bore about the “dying of Jesus,” so that there was only “the life of Jesus” that worked in him. If death is necessary for us, it is a sign that there is always evil in us. If you compare 2 Cor. 4:10, 11, with 1:8-10, you will see that when death was there present to Paul, he was already dead.

“Life in you” (2 Cor. 4:12), means that his life was in relation with the Corinthians. Christianity was a reality for Paul; Christ, being rejected, all his relations were in heaven (2 Cor. 4:18). That does not mean that he never failed. For the cultivation of practical holiness there are means, such as prayer, watchfulness, the study of the Word, etc. But the principal thing is to get thoroughly hold of the measure of it.

Have you, who hear the name of the Lord, made your reckoning that you are dead? Many Christians have not commenced their course as being dead. Let us seek to realize that. We often suffer, not because we are faithful, but because we need to be mortified; “If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19). The Lausanne translation has badly translated this passage, for it lets it be supposed that Christ does not
suffice. In general this translation wants spiritual intelligence. Certainly if this life only were in question Paul was the most miserable man in the world; beaten, persecuted, with death always before him. Do we want anything else? Money, position, honor, or something else? Then, as a fact, we do not desire death. To “always bear about in the body the death” is as much as to say that Christ is our all. We all fail, it is true: but let us study, at least, to realize these things. Do we find that we are dead? and do we conduct ourselves as risen men?

In Gal. 2:19-20, “By the law I am dead to the law.” The law had put Paul to death, but Christ had taken His condemnation. Paul had taken death, but not condemnation. Then comes the positive part, “Christ lives in me,” etc. We must have Christ before us in order to live with this object and to have a course to run. There is action, and reaction having death in order to live, we ought to live in order to realize death. The level of christianity has been lowered by bad teachings.

It is asked what is the difference between the anointing and the sealing. It is the same thing. Christ was anointed, and also sealed. The leper (Lev. 14) was first washed with water, then sprinkled with blood, and finally anointed. It is not possible for any one to believe fully in the value of the blood of Christ and not be sealed. They may hope, but do not know the position that the blood of Christ gives us before God. I have said to Christians who told me that they were not sure that they were children of God; then why do you call God your Father, if you are not sure of being his children? then don’t call Him Father. There are thus souls who joy in God as Father and in their relative position without being able to explain it; but the important thing is that they possess the thing itself.

In Christendom, the presence of the Holy Ghost is not believed in; His operations are confounded with His presence. There were always believers before Pentecost, but they had not yet received the Spirit as it is spoken of in Eph. 1:13. God seals faith. As the Son of God was sent, and came down here, so the Spirit was sent, and is come. It is certain that all that ever was done or created, was always by the operation of the Spirit, but His indwelling is another thing. When the Lord breathed on His disciples in John 20:22 saying “receive ye the Holy Ghost” after His resurrection, it was not the promise of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, because Christ was not yet glorified. It was a breath of the life of resurrection, “life more abundantly” as it is said in John 10:10. That is a reference to the breathing of God upon Adam. The work of Christ was already accepted when He breathed on the disciples; but He was not yet in the glory. You see in Acts 1:8, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” In Rom. 8, life and the Holy Ghost go together. That He is the spirit of life is true in v. 2, but He is also the Spirit of God in v. 9, and also the Spirit of Christ; and it is like “Christ” the spring
and its stream, you can't separate them. People, who only take one view of truths when they learn or teach in the things of God, change their nature.

_The Bible Herald_, 1879, pp. 29-34.
THE BASIS OF DELIVERANCE

It is the seal of the Spirit which sets free; “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). But, further, the basis of deliverance is the work of Christ. By faith, and the Holy Ghost, we reckon ourselves as dead, although living on the earth. As a matter of fact, I am not dead, but I reckon myself as dead. During the forty days that Jesus was on earth, after His resurrection, He was a risen man on the earth; and such ought we to be also, although our bodies are not yet risen.

The epistle to the Romans makes me understand redemption: the blood is therefore before God. I have crossed the Red Sea, that is, in the death and resurrection of Christ. The Holy Ghost makes this plain for the believer. In Ephesians we are seated in heaven. I need to cross Jordan to find that I am dead with Him -- in type. The desert forms no part of the counsels of God; it is the occasion of exercises through which we pass, and where we discover what we are and what. God is for us. The desert is a school. You see from passages in Ex. 3:8; 6:7, 8; 15:16, 17, that the desert is left out when the counsels of God are treated of. The Israelites are redeemed from Egypt to be introduced into Canaan; the desert is not spoken of. This happened to the thief on the cross; from his conversion he passed into paradise without having the experience of the desert. He had the experience of that passage: -- “Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians . . . and have brought you to myself”(Ex. 19:4). We also from the first have been brought into the presence of God; although we have not yet got the glory. In this sense, as to salvation, there is not progress.

We are between these two positions, redemption, and the glory, having the Holy Ghost in us. The Israelites were thirty-eight years in the desert for chastisement, because they would not go up into the land of Canaan (see Num. 13, 14:25). And then God said: “You do not want to go up? Very well, turn back.” The thief was fit for paradise, the very moment that he had believed: God “hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12). The desert commences at Sinai -- as making part of the ways of God -- and finishes with the death of Aaron; for, up to Sinai, all was grace. If you want to know what the desert is, read Deut. 8, and you will see two things: man put to the proof, and besides, the care and patience of God towards the redeemed people. It is what God does towards us.

When we have understood that the blood is between us and God, God presents Himself to us as a judge; and when death and resurrection is treated of, God is a deliverer. “See the salvation of the Lord which He will show to you today, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you.” By the deliverance of
Christ God puts man in an entirely new position before Him, although not yet in the glory. Not only is God no longer against me, but He puts me beyond death and judgment. No sooner have I known and believed that Christ died for me, than I at once get the Spirit; and I am sealed of Him in virtue of the blood. Then I am free in my relations with the Father. Christ was sealed on account of the excellence of His own person; but we, as we are sinners, are sealed on account of the blood of Christ. The seventh chapter of Romans gives the experiences of a man who is imprisoned; and the eighth, those of a man set free. There are souls who think that they are delivered, saying that they are dead and risen; but as a matter of fact, they are not.

Rom. 5:1-11 goes farther than the whole epistle, because it goes as far as the end of all (v. 11); as it was said to the Israelites that they were brought to God: it is impossible to go farther than that, it is the end of all. When we are at this point, we know what God is in Himself, in His nature as God, and we rejoice in Him. In Rom. 7 comes the experience of what we are; and in Rom. 8 it is rather my position, and my privileges which are spoken of, and not of what God is in Himself for us. It is one thing to know what I am, and another thing to know what God is.

In the religious systems they are taught to say, “I feel this, I experience that,” in such a manner that I is always found at the beginning of the sentence, instead of its being God.

This was the case with the prodigal son before he got to the father: “I perish with hunger: . . . I will arise . . . I will say . . . I have sinned”; but when he is with the father, he is no longer taken up with his I, but only with the father, -- with what the father did and said: what in short the father was. The prodigal son ought indeed to be happier; but it is only a question of the father, of His love, of His grace, and of His joy. Go and say to many Christians that they are the temple of the Holy Ghost; you will frighten them.

From v. 12 of the fifth chapter of Romans begins a completely new thesis. First, it was a question of individual sins, of the conduct of man; but, after that, of the state of man, of the sin of Adam -- that is, of the disobedience of one.

When I think of my sins, I fear the judgment of God; and when I think of sin, I recognize that I am lost. If the Spirit is in a believer, the fruit will be seen. You know the Father, as a child knows its father and counts upon him for everything, although it will not know how to explain what father may be. Since Pentecost the new life ought not to exist without the Holy Ghost; but I myself was seven years without the Holy Ghost, and I knew a person who was thirty years without it. But I do not give myself as a good example. If there is not liberty with God, it is a sign that I have not understood the gospel, or that I have let my hands fall down, -- “the shield of faith”; that is, that I have
given place to Satan.

It is important to judge oneself constantly: those who do not do so are not free, or happy, when they think of the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

Paul did not fear it for himself; he feared it for others, for those who are not converted; for unbelievers. This is the normal state of the Christian life. He walked as if he were already before the judgment-seat of Christ; he was already manifested. You must have a good conscience in order to be manifested before the judgment-seat. That urges you to evangelize others. My soul is in the light, as God is in the light, and before the judgment-seat all will be manifested in the light. The doctrine is, that we shall be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, and therefore Paul set himself before it constantly. But the heart may not be clear about its position before God; it may be uneasy at the thought of the judgment-seat, because it is frightened for those words, "that everyone may receive the things done in his body." If I were sure of receiving a handsome reward, I should not be frightened. Are we happy in thinking that we shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? If I know that then I shall be like Him, I cannot do less than be happy. It is possible to understand the doctrine; but if the conscience is not good, you are not at liberty. The conscience must be exercised. There are, it is true, souls that tremble all their lives, and then are very happy when at the point of death. Fear at the thought of the judgment-seat may come from two causes; either from a want of deliverance, or from the lack of a good conscience.

It is necessary to do as the Apostle did -- buffet the body, and lead it captive (1 Cor. 9:27), if we want communion not to be interrupted. If we judge ourselves, the Lord will not take pleasure in chastising us; otherwise He will chastise us. And it is not enough to judge the evil deed: we must see what was the occasion of it, as the Lord did with Peter (John 21).

If we do not investigate the source, and if we do not judge the root, it will produce the same evil things. The Lord does not say to Peter, "You have denied Me," but "Lovest thou me more than these?" The root was, that Peter had had confidence in himself.

There are ifs in the word; but not when our salvation is treated of, for this is perfect, and we possess it. This we have; all is completed; but we find the ifs when life for heaven is spoken of, as in Col. 1:23, Heb. 3:6, &c., although we have the promise that God will keep us to the end. With my responsibility, I have the certainty that I shall get to heaven, although I may be often in danger. It is the faithfulness of God up to the end of our course. The wolf takes away the sheep, but not from the hands of the Lord. The ifs bring out the fact of my constant dependence on the Lord, who never takes His eyes off the just, as He acted with Job even when he walked badly.

The priesthood of Christ for Christians is exercised in two ways. In the
Hebrews, it is for our weakness; a provision to maintain us in the joy of His presence. Besides, in 1 John 2:12, we have an advocate with the Father when we have sinned. The Lord prayed in order that Peter’s faith should not fail, not that he should not fall; and the result was that he did not despair. He did not go and hang himself as Judas did. The throne of grace is for want, for succor; and I can always go there, and always draw near to God (Heb. 4:16). As to mercy, we always have need of it; it is always necessary for us weak creatures. (See Jude 21; 2 Tim. 1:18; and all the epistles written to individuals).

Many brethren are not clear as to the difference between the operation of the Holy Ghost and the seal of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and we are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

That which distinguishes Christianity is not the fact that there are converted souls, for there have been such always since Abel’s time; but that there is a divine person, the Holy Ghost, sent from heaven to seal the believer, and to dwell in him. “Ye are sons,” there are converted ones; then “he has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts” (Gal. 4:6). It is not right to ask for the Holy Ghost; it would be like a man who was looking for his hat, not knowing that he had it on his head. It is another thing to ask to be filled with the Holy Ghost. There is an important word in Rom. 8:9, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” It is not the Christian position, if he has not the Spirit. God does not recognize such a state {i.e., as the Christian state}.

You are taught, in the Catechism, to say, “Our Father”: but suppose these are not the relationships? You must have the pardon of sins in order to have the Holy Ghost. Scarcely had Peter said, “Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins,” when they “received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 10:43; 44); and also in Acts 2:38, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

If you are well instructed, you soon pass through the seventh chapter of Romans provided that your conscience has been exercised; otherwise, sooner or later, you must pass through it.

The law judges of God according to what we have done, but grace reasons from what God is, as from above, downwards; on the other hand, the conscience reasons from below and upwards -- that is, according to what I am.

As in 1 Cor. 3:15, so in 1 John 2:28, it is a question exclusively of the dealings of the Lord with respect to their labors, and not in respect of their righteousness. To those who fear that pure grace, and the certainty of salvation, would give free course to their own will, to the flesh to do what it
listed; you would answer thus: Suppose a father said to his son, “You are my son; you will always be my son, and you never can absolutely be anything but my son, whom I love tenderly”; do you believe that he would add, “Well, in consequence, you can do what you wish?” Nay, he would rather say to him, “You ought to behave yourself as my son.”

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:16).


THE PILLAR OF CLOUD

The pillar of cloud guided Israel; but we are not guided by providence. Yet, blessed be God for it, we surely are guided of Him; and we know there is not a single thing He allows to happen to us, but what shall prove to be one of the “all things” for our good, though there may be much sorrow and trial mixed up with it, which may be needed to break us down. We often are guided by providence in a great many ways; but then it is a proof we are not guided by the knowledge of His will. If I discern God’s will, I shall not be guided by providence, which is at best only being “held by bit and bridle.” It is better to be guided by God’s eye. It is a great mercy, however, if I have not the spiritual eye, to be even thus held in. If I am going off by a certain train, and get too late, so that I cannot go, this is providence which tells me I am not to go. Christ never found His guidance by providence; nor the Apostle Paul in general, except when he went to Rome. Then he went as a prisoner; which was very different from being warned by the Spirit of Jesus not to go into Bithynia. “Guide me with Thine eye,” is our privilege.

The Bible Herald, 1879, pp. 52, 53.

GOD’S RESOURCES FOR HIS PEOPLE’S NEED

Deut. 8 gives us an outline of the resources, by means of which God supplied the need of His people while passing through the wilderness; they were resources unknown to the flesh, and such as the flesh could not picture to itself. God often puts his children in positions where every human resource fails: His object is two-fold --

1st, that they may know themselves;

2ndly, that they may learn God’s ways towards them.
God never varies in His government; that is to say, He never acts on a different principle in one case from that which guides Him in another -- e.g., He hates sin, and always acts consistently. Thus, a spiritual Christian may often know beforehand, what line of conduct God will take in a given case. It is most important for us to remember this truth -- that God changes not. His ways may change: thus, He had put His people under the law; now, He has put the Church under grace, and hereafter He will place her in glory. Yet there are principles which never change; and therefore the prophets could say that it was not for themselves but for us that they ministered those things (1 Pet. 1:12).

Circumstances may vary: Israel may have been driven out of their land, etc.; but, after all, God does not change; and if the means vary, the end (that is His own glory) is ever the same. As to salvation, for instance; God has always saved upon one principle. For Abraham and every saint, to the most distant ages, is only saved, as we, by blood.

God takes knowledge of everything, and judges us according to the light we have received. He says to His people, “Ye shall surely perish, as the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face” (Deut. 8:9, 20). This is God’s principle of government when sin has come to its height, then He punishes it.

It was thus He had dealt with the Amorites, and other nations; and it was thus He would deal with His own people. Thus we see that God acts evenly in His government here below; He cares for His own glory, and acts so as to show it forth. Not one action is unimportant; for the most insignificant may deprive us of blessing, on account of the government of God which is at all times in action. It is true, that often one who walks unfaithfully receives many blessings, because God loves to show forth His mercy; nevertheless, everything bears its fruit, either inwardly in the soul, or outwardly in chastisements.

That which strikes me as most precious in this chapter, is God’s desire that Israel should not forget their wilderness position, which was a state of entire dependence, for Israel had no resources in itself, and received the supply of every need by means of a miracle We are saved, and led into the wilderness; and there we are surrounded with blessings, as, for instance, the enjoyment of brotherly communion, instead of being in a position of isolation. But, as with Israel, God’s blessings might lead to two-fold evil, in separating them from Him, and making them forget their dependence upon Him (v. 17); so we have to take care lest the blessing we enjoy should produce the same effects on us. This world must needs be to the Christian a land of drought -- a thirsty land, where no water is -- and he should seek all his enjoyment in heavenly places; if he find any here below, it is because his flesh is not mortified; he is in a bad state, and ought not to remain in it. Surely God has given us enough spiritual blessings to satisfy our hearts! We may rejoice in that word of God which opens out to the spiritual man the thoughts and counsels of God towards us. If
only we draw from this treasure, our souls will have enjoyment enough, and will be able to do without that which the world offers. Let Christ become our all, and let us strip ourselves of all that is not Christ, that He may reign alone in our hearts. This is real progress, and here is true enjoyment for the Christian.

Verses 11-15. Israel was not to stop short in the enjoyment of the gifts of God, nor to take occasion from them to forget God himself. The Christian, too, must watch, lest, in the enjoyment of the blessing, he should forget Him who has given it, and lose sight of his own dependance upon God. The heart may depart from God, long before God’s blessings are withdrawn; and we may still enjoy them when far from Him. But if we ask ourselves, “Have I the enjoyment of such and such blessings? But is my heart really in communion with Jesus? Is it in Him, I find my joy? Do I realize my own weakness? etc., etc.” How often would the the upright soul answer, “No!” Let my outward circumstances be as favorable as they may, if my heart is not in communion with God, I shall be unable to meet temptation. This is an important truth, for the consequences are immense.

We see, in the history of Israel, the proof that the heart may backslide from God, long before He withdraws His blessings. How long it was, after Israel had forgotten the Lord, before God came in judgment, to show what was their state! How often do we enjoy brotherly communion, and the word of God, long after we have forgotten our own weakness and dependence! It is by walking in communion with God, that we can be preserved. This is what Moses expresses to the people (v. 11-19); it is -- “Take heed!”

How often have we been made to feel that the object of our daily journeying is to humble us! How much that is painful have we learned of ourselves! And how often have we discovered our unbelief when brought into trial! God has led us through the wilderness, to humble us, {to} prove us and to know what is in our hearts, whether we would keep his commandments, or no.

See v. 3. Manna was a thing unknown to Israel, when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it, and they themselves could do nothing towards producing it. They were dependent. Had God omitted to send it, even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performs another miracle, for a cloudy pillar is their leader. But it was not only in great things that God took care of them, or that He does so for us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular as well as a general providence (v. 4). “Thy raiment waxed not old.” It may be that the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is
with us. How many details of God’s care for us pass unobserved by us!

We find in Isa. 40 immediately after the description of the greatness of God, and the wonderful effects of His power, the expression of this care in small things. “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?” (v. 27). God does not forget us, and that we might know how dear we are to Him, the Lord Jesus said -- “Ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matt. 6:26). The Lord would have us remember these two things in the wilderness: -- first, that it is He who has redeemed us from the world, as He did His people out of Egypt; secondly, that it is He who sustains, moment by moment, in the wilderness. It is when we realize this direct dependence upon God, that we are strong to resist the devil; but when we lose sight of it, we feel less the necessity of communion with God; we neglect it, and soon attribute our blessings to ourselves. “Lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth” (v. 17).

Verse. 11. “Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments.” When in the presence of God, the conscience keeps His commandments, for in His presence they are neither hard nor forgotten. How can we forget the desires of one who is dear to us, when with that person? Let us remember, that apart from communion with God, even His blessings become a snare to pride. We are in the desert, but we are there under the care of a tender Father.

The Bible Herald, 1879, pp. 151-155.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST

The descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost characterizes the interval between the ascension of the Lord to the right hand of God, that He might take His place of Head over all things to the Church which is His body, and His coming again to receive her to Himself. As the promise of the Father, He is the witness of the glory into which the Son of His love has entered; and of the Father’s delight in Him, into whose hands He has committed all things, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. As sent from the Son, He is the glorifier of Christ, testifying to us of Him, and taking of His things and showing them unto us, assuring us that we are loved with the same love wherewith He Himself is loved, and blessed as He is blessed. As proceeding from the Father, and the Son, He gathers out the members of Christ and quickens them into life, giving them conscious union with Christ in whom they are one. As the Spirit of adoption, He witnesses to us that we are the sons of God; and as indwelling, sheds abroad the love of God in our
hearts, enabling us to joy in Him, and rejoice in hope of the glory. As the Comforter, He is the companion and sharer in all the exercises and right experiences, to which He guides the Church as the spirit of truth, in the path where we walk as led of the Spirit, and as in fellowship with the Father and the Son in the light where God dwells. Beside these personal operations as the indwelling Spirit, we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit {1 Cor. 12:13} -- "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Individually, too, we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak; moreover, we are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, and are the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart, known and read of all men.

In this circle of God’s delights, and of the Son’s joy, the Holy Ghost has taken His place, and works out the counsels of the Father’s good pleasure given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world -- “to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” One with the Second man in heaven, head of the new creation, in life and righteousness, we are a new people upon earth, sealed by the Holy Ghost, and waiting for the shout that shall bid us rise up to meet the Lord in the air -- to be with Him, and be like Him, and to see Him as He is. Born out of death -- out of the deep sleep which fell upon the last Adam -- and one with the risen Lord in a new life and nature, we are redeemed unto God by the blood of Christ, to live for Him here till He comes.

The great outward and visible creation has given forth its secret to us, not in the first Adam, the sinner, but in the Second man, “the Word made flesh.” The corn of wheat has fallen into the ground and died, that it might bring forth much fruit: Christ is no longer straitened, but has passed through His baptism of sufferings and of blood. He came up into His garden in the title of resurrection, and went out of it in the undisputed rights of ascension, having the keys of death and of Hades. “I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore,” are His new styles and dignities, by which He has passed into a sphere beyond the vulture’s eye, and which no fowl knoweth; which the lion’s whelps have not trodden, nor the fierce lion passed by it -- who, “for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” -- as the glorifier of the Father. What a place for man, and yet it is there that the Son of man is -- the Head and the beginning of the new creation of God. “He was made sin for us who knew no sin -- that we might be made the righteousness
of God in Him.” Thus we pass out of these mighty ruins below, into the eternal glory where He is, to see Him, and to be like Him, and to be with Him for ever.

THE SPIRIT’S PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH

Notes of a Lecture by J. N. D., in 1860, on 1 Sam. 6 and 2 Sam. 6. 7

The ark, the symbol of God’s presence, is the great thing here -- the symbol of the Spirit’s presence in the Church, not in heaven but on earth. The grand argument of the apostle in urging us to cleanse ourselves, &c., is the divine presence in our midst (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16, 7:1). The Holy Ghost down here is the fruit of the solicitude of Christ for His people. He had a deep sense of the high and holy ground on which His disciples were placed, one on which they cannot stand but by the power of the Holy Ghost. No sin, no coldness, can wear out His perseverance. He abides with them for ever (John 14:16). Have you learned the mystery of oneness, the unity of Christ’s members with Himself? “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?” (Acts 9:4). “He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye” (Zech. 2:8).

Anxieties must be in the heart in order to faith and trust, to which they give place. Looking into the future, Jesus committed His mother to the care of John. “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother” (John 19:26, 27). He anticipated all her anxieties (cp. Phil. 4:19). Transcendentalism, so much in fashion now, is not faith, it is not of God. We have to walk by faith, not through sublime illusions of the imagination, but amid the solid realities of the scene and circumstances we are in, and we need what is of God, real and immoveable, to lean upon. The Holy Ghost descended in consequence of the going up of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is that other Comforter who shall abide with us for ever; the witness and the expression of the sympathy of His heart toward the weakness of His people. Before the interests, so dear to the Lord’s heart, for His people were met, He went about among them forty days. He then went up, and for ten days God, personally, was not on the earth. No wonder they shut the door! (John 20:19 and 26; Acts 1:13). His fortunes were left to them, and to us, too; we are His representatives, though so very weak. The world would hate them as they had hated Him, and they should be put out of the synagogues (John 15:18; 16:2). Nevertheless they had this, they loved Him, and were loved of Him. He spake peace to them; He had also promised to send the Holy Ghost; they waited in expectation, and He came, in answer to the name of Jesus Christ, and to give Him glory. Where does He abide? Where does He act? Do you really believe in the Third Person of the Trinity as actually here on the earth? If you do, you will

7. The Notes are very fragmentary, but the truth is precious, and calculated to help souls. Though the sentences want finish, they are sufficiently clear and very suggestive. -- Ed. {of The BibleHerald.}
walk carefully, and look to hear Him speak in your midst (1 Cor. 12, 14; 1 Pet. 4:11).

The second chapter I read, calls us up to the exceeding high place He has set us in; calling forth emotions toward the object of love; for the acts of God’s love, taken hold of and appreciated by the soul, become creative, and by the power of the Holy Ghost produce the feeling that responds.

Do you believe in a Divine inhabitor of the church, and that for the name of Jesus Christ nothing can drive Him away? And do you hold this truth dearer than any, save the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The coming of the Holy Ghost was in answer to the purpose of the Father, and the prayer of the Son. True, but it was also connected with the prayers of His people. All the promises of God are the awakeners of prayer and expectation in the souls of those to whom the promise belongs, before it is realized. The acting of God’s grace are in answer to faith. Faith does not stagger at truth, yet I am free to say, that no one knows what faith is who has not staggered. True faith removes the staggering, but if a soul has not staggered at the immensity of the thing revealed, it is because he has narrowed it up into some little object that human thought can reach. What! He a worm and no man, yet God! Some object to the expression “blood of God.” What else? Was He not as truly God as man? All the acting of divine love and grace become true only to faith. The grace of God must needs be invincible, and irresistible, too, or we should come badly off.

The multitude in the upper room were believers, they were in the Father and in the Son, yet they waited for another. The Holy Ghost was an object of faith, “whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him” (John 14:17). He is the object of knowledge, too, not merely the power of knowledge. He recalls the sorrows of the Lord Jesus Christ, and unfolds His glories. He is not less the object of faith since He has come, than He was before. His acting are in the name of Jesus Christ. He is here to repeat Jesus Christ, and so emphatically fulfils the word -- “I will come to you” (John 14:18). The Lord Jesus Christ was the unsolicited gift of the Father’s love (John 3:16). Who could ever have imagined such a gift? Faith and the Lord attract each other. The leper came to Him, He went to the house of Jairus. The woman’s touch (Mark 5:28) became the pulse of life between them. This is found repeatedly in the Gospels. Never let us help one another to unbelief. I know that God is the Creator of faith, but He uses human hearts and human lips, therefore let us encourage one another. “Smite,” -- “smite” (2

8. This expression, which is nowhere found in Scripture, is derived by inference from Acts 20:28. But vv. 22 to 27 inclusive, are a parenthesis, and by reading the passage in that way the antecedent to “He” in v. 28, will be found to be “Our Lord Jesus Christ” in v. 21. Tr. (See also New Trans. by J. N. D., Acts 20: 28, and the note. Ed. {of The Bible Herald}.)

9. {No one was “in the Father and in the Son” until after the Lord’s resurrection.}
Kings 13:18, 19).

The Lord when on earth surrendered Himself to faith, and acted according to the measure of it, when it was great, “As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee” (Matt. 8:13). “O, woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt” (Matt. 15:28). When faith was small, He acted according to Himself, see Matt, 8:26, where the disciples’ “little faith,” was answered by a “great calm.”

Faith is not a human virtue, suspicion and distrust naturally grow with our growth. We are all liars (Rom. 3:13), and because we are so, we think all men liars, and believe no one. But faith is the gift of God, faith in Him (Eph.2:8). The Holy Ghost is here, but how we use Him is another thing. My consciousness of His presence depends upon His acting, not upon the fact only of His divine presence. If I don’t believe it, I lose the blessing. His presence does not depend upon our behavior, but our perception and enjoyment of it do.

Love never cavils, never reasons, never argues, but runs to obey, and would have nothing to do with what is not according to the will of its object; it delights in the words of Him it loves. Jesus Christ must reign supreme, love says so. He would not be one among many gods, as the heathen would have placed Him, nor would we consent to such a thing.

The church was never crucified for me, and though very dear, I’ll not put her in His place. Love seeks to dwell in its own place. Oh, how grievous, that when He makes such a promise as “there am I in the midst of them,” {Matt. 18:20} we don’t esteem it more. He who is present in love is holy, and we may not trifle with His holiness. What is the table? What but the highest communication of a living love, “Do this in remembrance of me”? The holiness of God is never overlaid by grace. The character of the grace of God is, that it makes a way to lift you up to be partakers of His holiness. Remember all the workings of the Holy Ghost are in answer to the name of Jesus Christ. Would you have that divine person to be less holy? Rather would you not have your hearts lifted up to understand that divine presence in all its holiness. The incarnation is for life and worship, not for reasoning about.

The temple, exceedingly magnifical, was left desolate (Matt. 23:38). Though the priests were very busy, all was hollow, the substance was gone; but in the upper room (Acts 2:2) the Spirit was the glory. A wretched place comparatively, but the scene of the divine presence. The dove had its home there.

*The Bible Herald*, 1883, 74-79.
BRIEF NOTES OF A READING WITH J. N. D.
ON "THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT"

Eph. 2:18 is not yet the one body, but both Jew and Gentile are together before the Father in communion, and this is "the unity of the Spirit." It begins here, but from this it goes a great deal farther.

The three great principles of the unity of the Spirit are: (1), one new man; (2), access to the Father by the Spirit; (3), builded together for an habitation.

It is the power of the Spirit which keeps saints in the realization of the whole of the relationships in which they exist in one body. This secures the manifestation of the one body on earth.

The unity of the Spirit is gone -- was in Acts 5, 6, but the power for the manifestation of it is here.

It is an abstract idea, and the difficulty comes from making it an absolute fact.

It is when your mind and mine go on together with the mind of the Spirit. Where we do not see together, it is not realized, but one could not say it was broken.

If you and I are quarreling, are we doing it in the unity of the Spirit?

But, apart from all ecclesiastical ideas, I am to go on with you, and if you are naughty, I am to forbear with you in love. Then the unity of the Spirit is kept on my part, whatever it is on yours.

Two godly Baptists might be morally endeavoring to keep it, but they have broken it by being strict Baptists.

Taking it in its completeness, you cannot separate it from the one body.

There are three unities in John 17: (1), apostolic—“one as we,” one thought and purpose; (2), “one in us,” like 1 John 1:1-4 -- the true fellowship of saints -- is the unity of the Spirit viewed practically; (3), entirely future -- unity in glory -- “perfect in one.”

Croydon, September, 1882.

J. A. T. G. H.

Words of faith, 1883, p. 126.
UTTER RUIN THE GROUND OF COMPLETE BLESSING

I believe that which greatly keeps us from the strength of our joy, is our ignorance of the utter ruin of man. Not merely should we be acquainted with the evil into which the ruin has brought us, but also with the ruin itself. The moment that this ruin came into the world, everything went wrong. Not only has man gone wrong, but all his activities have gone wrong also.

Now, Christ has provided for us a way wherein the activities of the new man have their exercise. This is our own proper and peculiar portion; to have the mind of Christ, and to be brought into fellowship with God. But for the enjoyment of this, it is essential that we should be introduced into a knowledge of the complete apostasy of our own natural will. The purpose of God for His children is, that they should be associated with Him in His own joy, and to this end we must know Him. Now, the main sorrow of Christ’s life was man’s ignorance of God. God was never understood; but the poor sinner understood Him much better than the self-righteous Pharisee. Jesus came forth from the bosom of the Father, having the knowledge of His mind, knowing that God loved the poor sinner; not merely the sinner’s joy in being blest, but God’s joy in blessing him; and this is the joy in which God would have us to be associated with Himself. Another most blessed truth is, that we should be associated with Christ in His sufferings, “That the trial of our faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7).

The first departure of the believer from God, is a departure from the knowledge of his fulness in God and nearness to Him, his conscious sonship with God. If I am one with Christ, I must be as He is. If I have anything at all it must be what He has -- what He is. There is no medium between being nothing in ourselves and being everything in Christ.

If I have no title of my own, if I am nothing but wretchedness in myself, and have no natural understanding of God’s good-will to man, where is my claim? Therefore true humility is the knowing what I am in Christ. So the moment I say, I am not as Christ, I lose the knowledge of my glory in Him, and I stoop down to the flesh. This we see in John, when he fell down and worshiped the angel. Here was that voluntary humility and worshiping of angels which the Apostle warns us against. Had John remembered the glory he had in Christ he would not have done this; for “As he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

Words of Faith, 1883, pp. 258, 259.
THE CHARACTER OF
THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL
NOTES OF A LECTURE ON 2 COR. 4:5

The character of the ministry of the gospel, is, that the things are possessed for ourselves, before they can be ministered to others. In the Old Testament it was not for themselves, but for us, “did they minister the things.” (See 1 Pet. 1:10-12.) We stand between the suffering and the glory, with the Holy Ghost, come down from heaven, shining in our hearts, to give out the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. “When it pleased God,” says Paul, “who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles” (Gal. 1:15, 18). Mark, Christ was revealed, not to, but in, Paul. It is the light of the gospel of the glory of God, called the gospel of the glory -- Christ is speaking from heaven. We have got the last things, the last revelations, connected with the glory of God in the Man Christ Jesus, now in heaven. “Therefore, having this ministry, we faint not,” &c. (2 Cor. 4:1-6.) He is speaking of the contrast with Moses, who put a veil over his face.

There is no glory to be compared with that in the face of Christ. Man could not look at it, if it came with a legal claim on the heart of man. You never get the light of the glory of God shining into the heart of man, without the conscience being awakened, if under law. I cannot stand in the presence of God; it tells me what I ought to be, and if I am not that, I cannot look at the glory -- He must hide Moses in the cleft. But when I see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, where do I see it? It is in heaven, in a Man, in the Man that hung on the cross for my sins. The meaning of the glory seen there, is, that sin, death, and Satan have all been put away together. He, being made sin, died, and went into the grave, was raised, and is gone into heaven, and the only part in it man had was sin, and hatred to Himself.

The glory of God is the witness that there is the complete cleansing away of all sin. That Person at God’s right hand, who was made sin, went under death, went into the grave, and has passed it all, and is now in glory; and, in virtue of the work being accomplished, the testimony comes to me, the One who bore my sins is in glory, and all is done with. There we get the full testimony of the glory of Christ -- the testimony of God’s value of it. All this I get in the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Having been brought by Him to believe in God, I see the glory of God -- I can look, and delight in it. The testimony of my salvation is the glory, and seeing it with an open face, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

I say, Let me see that my Sin-bearer is in the glory of God, and I have the certainty that all sin has been put away, and then the Holy Ghost comes down,
and, because I am thus cleansed, I am sealed by Him. A Christian stands, and looks at the accomplished sufferings; looks back at the accomplishment of the work that has put away sin; looks up, and sees the One who did it all in glory, and that is the way the glory attains its full effect in the heart. It is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It confounds one when first one sees it; but what am I waiting for, if He owns me as one with Himself? I am waiting for Him to come and take me there -- to bring me into the thing He has made mine.

Power has come into this place of death; I do not want to die, but to be clothed upon -- death swallowed up in life. I do not want to die, I want to be changed into the body of glory, without dying at all. It is a present living power. We shall not all die, but we shall all be changed; the power of death is broken. If I go up to the judgment-seat, in what state shall I go? The Lord will come, and take me there. Christ, having such delight in me, comes for me; changes me; and takes me there glorified, and I shall have to give an account of myself there, and a very great blessing it will be to have all brought out in the light -- how Christ kept me when I fell; how He lifted me up. The fulness of redemption is manifested when we go up to the judgment-seat in glorified bodies. When He appears, we shall be like Him, and what can I fear in regard to judgment now? My Sin-bearer is at the right hand of judgment having put away sin at His first coming, and He appears the second time, without sin, unto salvation, to take us to Himself, as made like Him.

The wise virgins were asleep {Matt. 25}, as well as the foolish. What changed it? The midnight cry waked them -- the testimony of the Lord’s coming; they had oil (grace), and awakening at the cry, they were ready, and went in. When asleep they had given up expecting the Bridegroom, and when the cry came, they woke up. At first they went out full of the thought of His coming, and then got into ease and comfort, and went to sleep, more or less, in the world.

If the Lord Jesus came tonight, would you all be found, with bright lamps, ready for Him? It is the state of your souls. We are to expect, in the last days, perilous times, but great blessings, in the midst of it all, in the path of faith. We find the form of Christianity, but denying the power. In Timothy it is the scriptures I am directed to, because, if I say, “The church teaches this, or that,” the question is, What is the church? But if I say, “The scripture says it,” I know where I have learnt it -- “From a child thou hast known the scriptures,” &c.

The word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword,” &c.; it deals with the conscience, not with the intellect. If I touch it, it deals with my conscience; it comes in with invisible power, and, like the woman of Samaria, I can say, “Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did.” Faith’s root is in the conscience. People talk of apostolic succession; there is no
succession in God’s word. Just before Laodicea is spued out of Christ’s mouth, the word to Philadelphia is, “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut.” Not a great deal to say about Philadelphia, but it is characterized by what God delights in -- the word of Christ has authority on their hearts and consciences, they hold to His name, and are looking for the promise, “Behold, I come quickly.” He is waiting, sitting at the right hand of God, till His enemies become His footstool. His friends are perfected for ever, and He is coming to receive them. He does not take a bit of the inheritance till He has gathered up the fellow-heirs; then all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered together in one, and all to be under Christ.

Our place is a peculiar one, like Eve’s. She was not lord of the earth, she was, in all the creation of which man was lord, his helper. The being associated with the Lord Jesus Christ is the one thing marking our peculiar place. He is given to be Head over all to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and we, the joint-heirs of Christ, we wait for Him -- the Eternal lover of our souls!

The thing that characterizes Christianity, is, the knowledge of the unveiled glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and “if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” A veil may be on man’s heart, but the fact of man being in the glory of God remains equally true, and when the veil is taken away, there is nothing to come but Christ coming in judgment to the world. Then the trials and afflictions of the present time are all connected with the earthen vessel -- its weakness. If an apostle, you can only be kept, day by day, by the power of God.

The vessel is one thing, the treasure is another. The vessel must be nothing, if the treasure there is to shine out. The old man is judged, and crucified with Christ; I have to look at myself as a dead man. I may light up a lantern, but if the glass be not kept perfectly clean, the light will not shine out. I have a glorified Christ in my soul, and if my flesh rules me, that is not the treasure shining out; I must ever reckon myself dead before God.

A Christian stands a new man in God’s sight. To reckon myself dead is a privilege for myself, and a necessity for my testimony, to put it simply. Suppose a mother heard her son was half-killed, would she stop on her way to him to look at the shops? So, if a Christian is full of Christ, he will not be distracted by anything of the world. Where the earthen vessel is right, the light will shine out. There must be no rest for the flesh; nothing but sorrows and trials -- always “delivered unto death,” and bearing about in the body the dying,” &c. The Lord put the apostle through all sorts of circumstances. If anything of the flesh sprang up, the red-hot iron must be put to it, to destroy the sprouts; death wrought in him, that nothing but the life of Christ might appear.
There is such a thing as a man being superior to all the circumstances he may be passed through; Paul gets the sentence of death welling through everything, yet “bold to preach,” &c. We find the most complete superiority to circumstances in Stephen. Whilst the stones are flying about, he kneels down, and prays for his murderers; he is a copy of Christ, of life in the midst of death.

*Words of Faith*, 1884, pp. 5-9.
THE FULL IMPORT OF CONVERSION

1 Thess. 1:9, 10

It should ever be borne in mind that the Lord Himself must be the center in testimony, however blessed it is to put forth the gospel of God’s grace. Here, in Thessalonica, these souls were brought out to serve the living and true God. The whole man turned to God -- a totally new state from beginning to end; not merely getting relief to conscience, but God Himself in Christ become the object before the soul. This is the full import of conversion, as we get it in 1 Thess. 1:9, 10 -- a man being turned round to God; there is repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

When you believe, you get an entirely new life and you judge the past -- you repent because you believe; it all comes together, like the prodigal, when he turned to his father’s house, there is a totally new life, state, and object. “They who are of the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit,” &c., and “Our conversation, is in heaven,” &c., is the doctrinal statement of this. You must get such a knowledge of self as to get rid of it. If you faithfully said, “I am dead,” Satan could not tempt you. You may not always be able to do this, but it is yours to say, as one “born of water and of the Spirit.” The water cleanses, but being born of the Spirit gives a new position and a new life.

We know we are born of God -- that eternal life that was with the Father is my life, and that is Christ; He has become my life. The Lord breathing on the disciples was not the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven {John 20:20}. When Christ ascended to heaven, He received the Holy Ghost afresh for us {Acts 2:32, 33}. He had it before, but He received it for us when He went up on high. It is through the second Man, gone into glory, after having put away our sins, that we get the Spirit. God comes down to us in our sins as Man, and as Man He goes up, and receives the Holy Ghost for us. Man in Christ takes a new place in resurrection.

The work of Christ on the cross clears the conscience; then Christ Himself becomes our life. This is a totally new state -- a new creation.

The first thing needed, is to have the question of sin settled, and to know that all our sins were borne by Christ, and put away. If you charge me with my sins, God declares that the blood that cleansed me is always under His eye; He cannot impute my sins to me, their imputation was to Christ. It is what God sees that clears me, not that I have accepted Christ, but that God has. What gives peace, is, that the work of Christ has perfectly settled the question of sin.

Practically, if I sin, not only am I miserably failing, but I am doing the
thing that caused Christ’s agony, but if it did that, it cannot be imputed to me. We have the teaching connected with our practical state in the type of the red heifer (Num. 19). The ashes—sin consumed on the cross—with the running water, were sprinkled on the unclean person. The ashes are applied to the soul in testimony of the whole thing having been consumed -- sin put away. If I indulge a foolish thought even the Holy Spirit is grieved, and I am uncomfortable, but I cannot judge myself for sin, unless I am certain that it is not imputed. The answer to everything is the work done on the cross. That work sets us in the presence of God, in the light, without a stain, our sin having been laid on Christ, according to God’s knowledge of it.

Nothing tests the heart so much as realizing that the worshiper “once cleansed, has no more conscience of sins.” There can be no real or right sanctification till a man is clear about sin. Until I know my perfect acceptance, and am perfectly assured of salvation, through all sin being gone, I am mingling up my state with my standing. The holy nature is there, but there can be no proper sanctification till I see that Christ has not borne my sins up to such a day, but that all my sins are gone, and, besides that, I have a perfect acceptance in Christ.

There are three things: peace as to sins; present grace; and glory to come. Not merely no condemnation as in Christ Jesus, all sin having been cleared away, but a position -- a new place in Christ Himself -- is ours. All, as to the first Adam, was settled on the cross, and I have a new place in Christ, and I am called to walk now as Christ walked, but I am to be conformed to God’s Son in glory. I am to walk as Christ walked, not to be as Christ was. He was without sin in Him, we have sin in us, but sin in our walk is never to be allowed.

“We all, with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” Not only are my sins cleared away, but I see a Man gone into glory, and now, not only I would not sin, but I want to be like that Christ in glory -- I press on towards the mark. “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.” I see Christ in glory by faith now; I know I am to be like Him by-and-by, and I want to be as like Him as ever I can be, even now. It is like a light at the end of a tunnel, the nearer I get, the brighter the light. I see the flesh in me never changes, only appears worse and worse; but if my eye is fixed, and my mind is occupied with and full of Christ, I shall get more like Him at every step -- “changed into the same image from glory to glory.”

There must be nothing in the heart or walk not like Christ -- all must be given up to Him; and, as to walk, I am to walk as Christ did. The account we get of the flesh is lawlessness, before the flood; then, under law it makes a golden calf; then, Christ, come in grace, is rejected and crucified; then, the
Holy Ghost is rejected through Stephen; and lastly, if a man goes into the third heavens, as soon as he comes down the flesh must have a thorn. There is no changing it, but that is no reason why we should let it act; there is no present consciousness that the flesh is acting at all if the soul is full of Christ. I am not thinking of it if I am thinking of Christ, I reckon the flesh dead. If a man is dead, you cannot charge him with a wicked will and lusts. Not only Christ was crucified, but I have been crucified with Him. I have always that death of the cross to bring in, and I have Christ as my life -- “If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him.” I get the power of Christ acting in me with this new life. The sin I find in my flesh was put to death in Christ, and I have done with it. But another point, I get Christ as the object of my life -- “The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

You find many who know their sins are forgiven, yet do not know what it is to have been crucified with Christ. You can never get rid of self till you know this. In Rom. 7 the soul is quickened, but not delivered; it is under the first husband, renewed, because of knowing the spirituality of the law, but it is learning that it has no strength. It is harder to learn that you have no strength, than that you are ungodly. The last stage is, “I thank my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is deliverance. The moment Christ comes in there is power, but I must learn my weakness; not a balance between flesh and Spirit. God in Christ having condemned sin in the flesh, I am dead to it. If I am told of a fine concert, or anything else, I say, “I am dead to it.” A gardener has no idea of pruning a crab-apple tree, he cuts it down, and grafts with a new thing altogether.

People do not recognize the fact of their having died with Christ, as well as of Christ having died for them. Many a quickened soul does not know the full value of the work of Christ, and that “as he is, so are we in this world.” When the blood was on the lintels and door-posts the Israelites were safe, but when they came to the Red Sea, and were told to stand still, and see “the salvation of God,” there was positive deliverance -- they were taken out of one place, and put into another.

My standing is, that I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit: “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” -- is not in a right standing at all. “Ye in me, and I in you,” that is where I get my standing in Christ before God. I am quite perfect, if I am in Him, and He in me; and I have, as to the body, to reckon it dead.

The way the Thessalonians lived, as to testimony, was most blessed. One can never present it by trying to do it. If my heart be full of Christ, I shall not merely be avoiding evil, but, as Paul prays in connection with the Philippians, desiring to be filled with the fruits of righteousness; and, having got God’s mind, I shall yield my body as a living sacrifice to Him. Paul did but one
thing; he ran after Christ in glory. This is what conversion really is -- Christ
_everything_ to the soul.

*Words of Faith*, 1884, pp. 36-40.
NOTES OF A READING ON WORSHIP

John 4

Some desire to have a definite thought as to what worship really is. First let me say that preaching the gospel and hearing a lecture are quite distinct from worship, but one thing I would remark in passing, salvation is first needed for it.

In this chapter the Lord says, “Salvation is of the Jews” -- amongst them the true God was known; there was no true knowledge of God save among the Jews. Wherever God put His name, there was the place of worship. Now Christ declares, “Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” {Matt. 18:20}. It can only be in His name. Paul says to the Athenians, “Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.” Only those who know God can worship. This chapter takes the place of worship away from amongst the Jews, and it supposes accomplished redemption. I get into the place of perfect acceptance through the work of Jesus Christ, and there I can worship; none can worship unless in this place of divine favor; if I can sing in the sense of the acceptance of Christ, I cannot be out of tune.

The essence of worship is that the Holy Ghost can take up our praises and prayers to God in perfect association with Christ. In the wave offering in Deut. 26, we find a beautiful picture of holy worship offered by the individual, but worship in the assembly supposes the Holy Ghost uniting all together in joy and praise -- “they lifted up their voice to God with one accord.”

In Deut. 16 we get three feasts: the Passover; Pentecost; and the feast of Tabernacles, which is not yet accomplished. The passover is the sacrifice of Christ for us, and Pentecost is the Holy Ghost already given us, but the feast of tabernacles is still future. There is very little joy in the passover; as soon as it was done they returned to their tents. At Pentecost I find, “Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord and remember,” &c.; but in the feast of tabernacles there is something more, they here have got into the fullest blessing, and worship flows because of being in that fulness of blessing.

In worship you will find often exclusively the notion in hymns of our having escaped judgment through the blood, but what is so beautiful, is the thought that, “praise waiteth for thee, O God” -- their voices all ready, and their hearts all tuned to praise. Certainly I must get my conscience cleansed first, but Christ wants children to be with the Father. Is all I know of God this, that He is satisfied about my sins -- satisfied with the blood? No, He wants to get my soul into the sense of relationship with Himself when I worship, and this, too, as the Father. In Luke 15 I get God’s own joy, “Let us eat, and be
merry,” &c. When I come up to the cross I do so only about my sins, but when I have passed through the rent veil I have got to God’s side of the cross, that is, God is Himself known as well as the blessed truth that “the wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.”

My place of worship is the holiest, where all the value of Christ is put upon me. In Ex. 12 they feed upon the sacrifice -- redemption accomplished. Worship is the return of the heart to God for all His blessings in Christ. The Holy Ghost gives me God’s feelings about the sacrifice of His Son, and worship goes up to the Father. All our joy and peace flows up to God in praise.

Worship is the best part. When we get to heaven we shall not want gifts. I do not like lectures at worship meetings; such meetings suppose the Holy Ghost there to lead our praises and prayers. If my state of heart is not up to praise it will not do at the Lord’s table; it is not in a right state. All who praise ought to walk so that praise should readily burst out -- God must have worship in truth; and there must be unity -- all one loaf.

We cannot worship without prayer, because desire goes ever beyond our present ability to worship; restricting it to mere praise is impossible, it is never unmixed with prayer; it is not the place properly for prayer, but you cannot separate it, it would not be genuine, and that is the thing God wants.

You never get the Father in the Psalms or in Revelation. Our place is that of children with the Father, and our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Praise belongs to both. If all do not come into the unity of the body praise is imperfect. Christ’s heart ought to move mine, and He never leaves out any. It is the first circle, and love must flow to all the saints in it. Some may be going wrong, but I am to love them still.

What I get by the Holy Ghost, is a child worshiping the Father. I am standing with the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, between the first and second coming of Christ -- a worshiper waiting for His coming. The {Lord’s} table is the center of all worship. The force of that word in 1 Cor. 10:22, “provoking the Lord to jealousy,” is, that if one went with heretics it would provoke Him, or if one were to admit evil persons to the table it would do this.

Words of Faith, 1884, pp. 71-73.
A WEIGHTY WORD ON
“THE PRAISE OF MEN”

My dear friend and brother in Jesus Christ,

It gives me much pleasure to see your translation of ____. I reserve the pleasure of reading it, or rather of having it read to me, for moments in which the Lord says to us, as He did to the apostles, “Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile.” But I cannot refrain from telling you, my dear friend, that the pleasure that the appearance of your work gave me has been somewhat abated by the far too favorable opinion which you have expressed in your preface respecting me. Before I had read a word of your translation, I made a present of a copy to a very dear and sincere friend of mine, who brought me word that you had spoken in praise of my piety in your preface. The passage produced the same effect on my friend that it did on me, when I afterwards saw it. I hope, therefore, that you not take it in ill part what I am about to say to you on the subject, and which is the fruit of a tolerably long experience.

Pride is the greatest of all evils that beset us, and, of all our enemies, it is that which dies the slowest and hardest; even the children of the world are able to discern this. Madame De Staël said, on her death-bed, “do you know what is the last thing to die in man? It is self-love.” God hates pride above all things, because it gives to man the exalted place that belongs to Him who is above, exalted over all. Pride intercepts communion with God, and draws down His chastisement, for God resists the proud. He will destroy the name of the proud, and we are told that there is a day appointed when the loftiness of man is bowed down, and the haughtiness of man laid low. I am sure, then, you will feel, my dear friend, that one man cannot do another a greater injury than by praising him, and feeding his pride. “He that flattereth his neighbor, spreadeth a snare for his feet,” and “a flattering mouth worketh ruin.” Be assured, moreover, that we are far too short-sighted to be able to judge of the degree of our brother’s piety; we are not able to judge it aright without the balance of the sanctuary, and that is in the hand of Him who searches the heart. Judge nothing, therefore, before the time, until the Lord come, and makes manifest the counsels of the heart, and renders to every man his praise. Till then, let us not judge of our brethren, whether for good or of evil, but with becoming moderation, and remember that the surest and best judgment is what we form of ourselves when we esteem others better than ourselves.

If I were to ask you how you know that I am one of the most advanced in the christian career, and an eminent servant of God, you would, no doubt, be at a great loss to reply. You would, perhaps, cite my published works, but do you not know, my dear friend and brother, you, who can preach an edifying sermon as well as I can, that the eyes see further than the feet go, and that, unhappily, we are not always, nor in all things, what our sermons are; that we have this
treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. I will not tell you the opinion I have of myself, for, in doing so, I shall probably, all the while, be seeking my own glory; and while seeking my own glory, appear humble, which I am not. I had rather tell you what our Master thinks of me -- He that searches the heart, and speaks the truth, who is the Amen, the faithful Witness, and has often spoken in my inmost soul, and I thank Him for it; but, believe me, He has never told me I am an “eminent Christian, and advanced in the ways of godliness.” On the contrary, He tells me very plainly that if I knew my own place, I should find it that of the chief of sinners, and least of all saints. His judgment, surely, my dear friend, I should take rather than yours.

The most eminent Christian is one of those of whom no one has ever heard speak, some poor laborer, or servant, whose whole is Christ, and who does all for His eye, and His alone. The first shall be last [Mark 10:31]. Let us be persuaded, my dear friend, to praise the Lord alone. He only is worthy of being praised, revered, and adored. His goodness is never sufficiently celebrated. The song of the blessed (Rev. 5) praises none but Him who redeemed them with His blood. It contains not one word of praise for any of their own number -- not a word that classes them into eminent, or not eminent -- all distinctions are lost in the common title, the redeemed, which is the happiness and glory of their whole body. Let us strive to bring our hearts into unison with that song in which we all hope that our feeble voices will one day mingle. This will be our happiness, even here below, and contribute to God’s glory, which is wronged by the praise that Christians too often bestow on each other. We cannot have two mouths -- one for God’s praise, and one for man’s. May we, then, do now what the seraphim do above, who with two wings cover their faces, as a token of their confusion before the holy presence of the Lord; with two cover their feet, as if to hide their steps from themselves; and with the remaining two fly to execute their Lord’s will, while they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, all the earth is full of thy glory” [Isa. 6].

Excuse these few lines of Christian exhortation, which I am sure will, sooner or later, become useful to you, by becoming part of your own experience. Remember me in your prayers, as I pray that the blessing of the Lord may rest upon you and your labors. If ever you print another edition -- as I hope you will -- strike out, if you please, the two passages to which I have drawn your attention; and call me simply “a brother, and minister in the Lord.”

This is honor enough, and needs no addition. Your friend and brother,

J. N. D. 1847

THE COMING OF THE LORD

Uncorrected Notes of An Address on Luke 12
My purpose this evening is to speak of the coming of the Lord, but not in order to prove it from scripture, but to show how it is interwoven with the whole fabric of Christian thought, so that if you take it out you rend the whole fabric to pieces. I do not say that there may not be saints resting on the foundation that do not see it; but if I come to the word of God, it is interwoven with the whole scheme (I do not like the word), and that all scripture, in the various thoughts, feelings, and affections of the Christian, are woven and mixed up with it.

You see that the Lord Jesus, beloved friends, has been rejected in the world, and that cannot go on for ever, every knee must bow to Him. Just take the fact as it is: He has been rejected by the world altogether, the world through which we are passing is a world that has rejected the Son of God, whom God has taken to His right hand. The Holy Ghost has come down consequent upon His exaltation, as the Comforter, but the closing of all that state of things is that the Lord comes again and takes His power and glory; therefore the coming and exaltation of the Lord is that without which Christianity is not complete; I cannot believe in His first coming and not see clearly the necessity of the other.

As an illustration, we have the passover and the passover fulfilled; “Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us”; and the feast of Pentecost fulfilled too -- the Holy Ghost came down; but when you come to the feast of tabernacles, where do you get it fulfilled? it is not fulfilled, and is yet to come. That is the real meaning of John 7; the feast of tabernacles is there, but He cannot go up to it. His brethren said to Him, “If thou do these things show thyself unto the world” (John 7:4), but He said, “My time is not yet come”; then at the end of the feast He says, “If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38). That is, that He substitutes for the {present} time the presence of the Holy Ghost instead of His being revealed to the world, and that is what we have in Christianity, the Holy Ghost come down from heaven and dwelling in the saints.

The Christian looks back upon what has been done, and looks forward for Christ to come to take him up to heaven; if you leave that out you leave out the thing that completes it all. The Holy Ghost points us forward to Christ, and leads the soul out to the thought and apprehension of His coming. The world having rejected Christ, the Holy Ghost comes down meanwhile; “we see not yet all things put under him.” There is this double aspect of it -- the world has rejected the Son of God; He must come and execute judgment consequent on His rejection.

But there is another, and blessed side of it, that when He was rejected He accomplished redemption, and having done this, and given the Holy Ghost to those that believe, He is not coming to execute judgment, but to take us to be
with Him to execute the judgment with Him. The more we look into scripture, the more we shall see the way in which this expectation of the Lord’s return is identified with the thoughts and feelings of the Christian. You may get the general thought if you look at the end of Titus 2, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared . . . looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory,” &c.; the grace of God has appeared and brings salvation, teaching us to walk soberly, that is in self-restraint; righteousness towards others; and godly -- with God; it embraces the whole Christian life. Grace has appeared; glory, which is the hope, has not. We are saved in hope, not we hope to be saved; we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness, that is the hope that belongs to faith. Grace hath appeared and brought the salvation, thus showing us how to walk in this present world, it teaches us this blessed hope, the appearing of the glory.

In Heb. 9 we see the same thing, v. 24, we find that “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” I look at Christ as in God’s presence for me. “Nor yet that he should offer himself often . . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” The cross was the end of the world, morally speaking; God had finished with man, and therefore He says, “Now is the judgment of this world,” &c.; it was the end of the world in that moral sense, the tryings and testings whether righteousness could be got from man are over; the righteousness has come down to us in the gospel. The apostle says he is not ashamed of the gospel, because the righteousness of God is revealed; that made it the end of the world.

Then you see how he speaks of it, “As it is appointed unto men once to die . . . so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Just as grace has appeared once for the putting away of sin, so as regards us, as Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, so to them that look for Him He will appear the second time without sin -- He has done with sin the first time, that is all over, so completely done with it that to those that look for Him He will appear the second time without sin. What for? To take us to glory -- “unto salvation.” In Heb. 2 it puts in a distinct way what we find as to His present position, “One in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him . . . thou crownest him with glory and honor.” We do not see that He has got the power, but we do see Him crowned with glory and honor, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool, and we are waiting for Him.

I just say here, Suppose people die before the Lord come, well, they are with Christ waiting; “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” “to depart and be with Christ which is far better,” they are waiting too. The promise we
have got is to be conformed to the image of Christ, when He comes. The body is to be raised and changed, to be conformed to the same image. “As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly . . . and as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” I turn to these passages to show you that what characterizes the Christian is, we are waiting for Him.

In John 14, when the Lord was comforting the disciples when He was going away, they had given up everything for Him, and now they were losing Him, He says, “believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you.” I am not going back to glory as Man and leave you in the lurch down here. I cannot stay with you (John 13), but I am not going to give you up, and therefore I must have you with me. In ch. 13, Peter would not let the Lord wash his feet, it was what slaves did in great houses; then He says, “If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me.” Peter was rejecting it, but then He says, I am not going to give you up, but if I go to God you must be fit to be there. They were really converted and clean through the word (Judas, of course, excepted); He says I have not given up serving you, I must have you to be with me. In John 14 He tells them not to be troubled meanwhile, the Comforter was coming; then He goes on, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.” He was going to prepare a place up there, not being able to stay with them here, but would come back again to take them to be with Him. “Unto myself”; that word “myself” is everything. He does not say “to heaven” or “the Father’s house.”

The coming of the Lord has this special blessing, that it does not leave heaven a vague place. I have found the greatest blessing in the doctrine of the Lord’s coming as it brings the Person of Christ before one, He is the object before the eye. This is the way scripture always presents Him. “To depart and to be with Christ is far better.” I am speaking of the way the Person of Christ is what fills the eye. “Absent from the body, present with the Lord,” and again “Lord Jesus receive my spirit.” It is perfectly true, but it is not the vague thought of going to heaven, it is going to Christ; it is of course going to heaven too, but what fills the soul, is that Christ who loved them, who won their hearts through grace (they had given up everything for Him), says, I shall not be satisfied till I bring you up there.

That is the first way He comforts them, and they had seen the Father by seeing Him; then the rest of the chapter speaks of the Holy Ghost who would come and show that they were in Christ, and Christ in them. When the disciples went out to Bethany to see Him going to heaven, the angels 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,” &c. (Acts 1:11). There it is His appearing, it is the same general truth, though not His
coming to receive us. You cannot talk of death there, Christ is coming in like manner as He went, “so coming,” is not a person dying; the angels say He is coming. The Lord was imprinting all this upon their hearts, that when He was gone, the Holy Ghost was here, but what they were looking for was His coming; meanwhile they would be taught by the Holy Ghost, and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, crying, “Abba Father,” by the Holy Ghost, but what the Holy Ghost brings specially before souls is His coming again.

In 1 Thess. 1:9 we have “they themselves show of us . . . ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven. The world was saying, “here are these people, a new thing that has come, they have left all their idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait,” &c.; they were converted not to hold the doctrine merely of His coming but to wait, &c. They had learned of Him, by the Holy Ghost, testifying of Him in the gospel, and therefore they loved Him; there was no conversion then except to wait for God’s Son from heaven. Where do we find that now? Many hold it, and see it thoroughly but who ever talks now of being converted to wait for God’s Son? and yet the apostle had not been more than three or four weeks there. In 1 Thess. 2:17-19, notice the way it is connected with the thoughts and feelings of the Christian, “We, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, . . .for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” “Crown of rejoicing,” (they were won to God) -- “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now it is his ministry, he cannot even rejoice in that without thinking of the coming of Christ.

Now, take another thing which belongs to the Christian, that is holiness, “the Lord make you to increase and abound in love . . . unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c. (1 Thess. 3:12, 13), in holiness, when? Now? No, at His coming. At His coming it will all appear, and be manifested.

Let us look at the first Epistle of John, it is also in connection with holiness, 1 John 3:1-3, “Behold what manner of love . . . [puts us in Christ’s place], we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him,” &c., we have not seen the glory yet, “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” &c., “but we know,” &c. If we know that we are to be like Christ (conformity to Christ is in the glory, we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son) we are to walk as He walked, but there is no full conformity till then; it is not being conformed when the body is in the tomb, and the spirit in paradise; the time to be conformed to Him is when we get to the glory, and see Him as He is. “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.” If I know that when Christ appears, I shall be like Him, I try to be as like Him as I can now -- purifieth himself even as he is pure -- it is according to that standard. It is very Important thus to see as regards holiness, that it is directly connected
with the coming of the Lord.

If you look, beloved friends, at the ease of saints dying, as in 1 Thess. 4:14, Paul says, “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, . . . for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The apostle, though eighteen hundred years have elapsed, did not say, “the Lord delays his coming.” I believe it is very near, but that is a question of spiritual discernment. I do not press it, though I believe it; everything shows it. “We” -- the living ones will be taken, the dead had not lost it -- “We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them . . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” “With the Lord” -- that is the point. “To depart” is to be “with Christ.” It is not the Father’s house, nor is it the Father’s love only; but we are to be with Christ, and like Him. Suppose they were put to death for Christ, even so God would bring them back with Him.

You say that now this thought is gone from the mass of Christians; I will show you how Christ judges when it is gone; but here the comfort given was that they were not deprived of the blessing, but when Christ came He would bring them with Him, He would raise the dead, and change the living. How it enters into all the apostle’s thoughts, comfort, joy, &c.; here he brings it in specially if a saint has died. His coming is interwoven with all the affections of the Christian. It is not merely that I am going to be happy in heaven; but I am going to be with Christ, it is His joy to take me to be with Himself.

Note, again, how Paul connects holiness with the coming of the Lord in 1 Thess. 5:23: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly . . . unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is looking for holiness and godliness, but he looks for it at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then as regards responsibility turn to 1 Tim. 6:13, 14, and see what he says, “I give thee charge in the sight of God . . . unreproveable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is always the appearing when it is responsibility that is in question, but when privilege {is in question} it is the rapture.

What I have at heart is this, that you should see the way in which the coming of the Lord is interwoven with every thought and true feeling of the Christian. See, too, how James comforts the laborers who had been deprived of their wages, “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord” (James 5:7). The constant expectation of His return was the thing their hearts were to be set upon.

We find the same thing in Matt. 25, in the parable of the virgins. “They took their lamps,” that is at the beginning of Christianity, “and went forth to meet the bridegroom”; this is the same truth as in Thessalonians, “they were converted to wait,” &c. Then what happens? Just what has happened, “they all slumbered and slept.” That is, that the true saints, as well as those that had
no oil, they all forgot the coming of the Lord. It is just what the Lord told us would happen, while the Bridegroom tarried. We know the reason of His tarrying, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,” &c. As long as the work of grace is going on, and the Lord is gathering in souls, we must wait, thankfully wait. At midnight there was a cry, “Behold the Bridegroom.” Some had no oil but there was time enough between the going out of the cry, and the coming of the Bridegroom, to test their state. I do not doubt it is going on now. It was the cry that woke them up, and then they trim their lamps and go out again, but the point I draw attention to is that what woke them was “Behold the Bridegroom cometh.”

As to our affections and as to our service it is the same thing; the talents (the gifts 10 of the Holy Ghost, whatever they may be) were to be used while Christ was away. But what is remarkable is this, that though there was a delay, which has taken place, the Lord never puts the thought that it will be longer than the life of the people He spoke to; the virgins that went asleep were the same that awoke. It is the same servants that got the talents that were in question when He came back; He will not put the thought forward beyond their lifetime. People say, Must not they have known that Peter would die? I say, but would any one dream nowadays of saying he had a personal revelation that he would die? It was an extraordinary exception, which strengthens the rule; to wait for Christ was what they were called to.

When you come to the seven churches (Rev. 2, 3), you find the common thought (it is a just thought) that it is a history of the visible church from the time it left its first love till it is rejected, down to the end. He takes up churches which were exhibitions of a particular state. But Christians were taught to be constantly waiting; when anything happened He put the thing during the life of the person in the parable; so, when it is churches, He takes the churches of that time, but does not say a word that would allow the thought that the Lord was not coming at any moment. People talk of events, but that is confounding the thought of God’s government with the Lord’s coming for His saints.

When I have my individual salvation settled, I get the teaching of the New Testament as to the government of this world. See Deut. 32 -- “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance . . . he set the bounds of the people . . . for the Lord’s portion is his people.” When I come to the government of the world the Jews are the center; afterwards, I get the Beast, Antichrist, Babylon and so on, but that is connected with the government of this world, and there I get events; but as regards Christians, God’s thought was to conform them to the image of His Son; to take poor sinners and put

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10. {Perhaps, rather, responsibilities given, for one servant was a false one.}
them in the glory with His Son; that has nothing to do with events. We have two things. He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, that is now; but we are to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Besides, there is the government of this world which Christ’s appearing will close, but that has to do with promise and prophecy, very interesting in its place; but His coming has nothing to do with prophecy. You get away from all that, and have the consciousness that you are to be waiting for Christ. Any moment He may take us and put us into glory with Himself, that the angels may look upon us and see such ones as Mary Magdalene, the poor woman that had the seven devils, the woman in the city that was a sinner, and the thief on the cross, in the same glory as the Son of God. The Christian has got into his place; he is a saved person, the Holy Ghost dwells in him, and he is looking for the Lord’s second coming. Take Phil. 3; I quote texts that are connected with the thoughts and feelings of the Christian: “Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior... change our vile body,” &c.; that is what I am waiting for.

If I look at the Book of Revelation, first at the beginning and then at the end -- I do not look at the prophetic part of it. Before John commences that part you get the thoughts and feelings of the saints -- the church. “From Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness,” &c., that is upon earth -- he skips over the present time, “Unto him that loveth us, and washed us,” that is our place. It is “Him that loveth us.” Just as if a great general was passing by, and his wife were watching, she would not say, “that is a great general,” but “that is my husband.” Just so here, He is the “Prince of the kings of the earth,” but we say, “Unto him that loveth us.” Then Rev. 22, “I, Jesus, have sent mine angel... I am the root and the offspring of David,” because it is connected with promise there; “and the bright and Morning Star,” that is not the kingdom, but the hope of the church.

You get in the address to Thyatira, “I will give him the morning star.” When Christ comes as the “Sun of Righteousness” {Mal. 4} will be the day when every eye shall see Him, that is His appearing, but that is not the Star. The morning star is not seen when the sun is up, but those that are watching in the night, they see the morning star, it belongs to them.

We have the word of prophecy made sure (2 Pet. 1:19). Prophecy is God’s candle brought to bear upon the world going on its way as fast as it can, the heavenly things lead you out from it: “Till the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” But there is another thing, the consciousness of my association with Christ, He is coming to take me up. He is “the bright and morning Star,” and the moment He reveals Himself in this character, as the “bright and morning Star,” He awakens the desire of the bride, and you get the whole character of the christian walk. “And the Spirit and the bride” --
those that have entered into the consciousness of their relationship with Christ -- He is for them the “bright and morning Star”; then, “let him that heareth say, Come” -- let them join in saying it; and then the Gospel, if you have the water you say, come and drink, “let him that is athirst come”; then it goes out to the world, “and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

I get the whole course of christian affection. 1st Christ, He is the Bright and Morning Star; 2nd, the desire to be with Him, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come”; 3rd, those that are His, “let him that heareth say, Come”; and then 4th, “whosoever will, let him take.”

Notice the way the word of God brings the coming of the Lord before the heart in these addresses. First they are called back to what they were at the beginning—that is one way of judging what we are; but the moment you come to Thyatira, you get the kingdom, and the words “hold fast till I come.” In Sardis it is, “I will come on thee as a thief.” He treats them as the world, because they are so. To Philadelphia He says, “thou hast kept my word, hast not denied my name”; then, “behold, I come quickly.” What was it that brought in the ruin of the church? Losing the doctrine of the Lord’s coming. “If that evil servant shall say in heart, My lord delayeth his coming”; not that He will not come, but, “My lord delayeth his coming” (he did not expect him) “And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants” (this is hierarchical power joined to the world at the end), his portion is appointed with the hypocrites.

I just say a few words on the verses we have read. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning,” &c., that is your character as Christians, you are to be like people that are waiting; the Master of the house has gone to a wedding, you do not know what time he will return. Death is not my lord; Christ is my Lord; “blessed are those servants whom their lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.” “Watching,” those are the people that are blessed when Christ comes -- the affections of the bride -- they are watching for the Lord. If a person says some Turk or Russian is come over, I do not care about that, but how different with a mother that is watching for her son not knowing what moment he may come.

“Blessed are those servants,” &c., their character is “like unto men that wait.” Mark the consequence, it is most blessed. Christ has become a man and taken the form of a servant, He never gives it up -- it is a figure of course; being a Servant, now He serves us, washing our feet, but in heaven He will be our servant to minister all blessing and joy. As I have so often said, Selfishness likes to be served, love likes to serve. Just like a mother with a sick child, she will not let any one else attend to it, her heart is there. You must have your lights burning, &c., that is the character you should have. Christ says, when I get you at home, I shall make you sit down to meat. It is a figure; I will spread the table in heaven for you if I find you watching.
You get now another thing connected with His coming. “Who then is that faithful and wise steward . . . blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” “So doing” -- we serve while He is away. As to the character of the Christian, he is waiting for Christ; then the affections of Christ come out, He gives him all the blessing -- “Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.” There it is the ruling in the kingdom. You have the two things that belong to us; the blessedness of being with Christ, which is far the highest, and we are to reign with Him. Even there I get the character of Christians, they are to be as men that wait till their Lord shall return, then when Christ has everything His own way, He makes them to sit down to meat and comes forth and serves them. Next every man receives his own reward according to his own labor, that is, He makes us rulers, &c., “If we suffer we shall also reign with him” (2 Tim. 2:12). Thus what the Spirit of God puts before us as the hope, is that Christ Himself will come and bring us into this -- the fruit of God’s own love, with the constant expression of it on the way in the intimacy of friendship. Like what you get in Luke’s account of the transfiguration; you have Moses and Elias talking intimately while the disciples are frightened at the cloud; it was the witness of the presence of God: it was there where God had revealed Himself to Israel. The disciples fear while they are in the glory; it is the kingdom part of it; the disciples saw it, they went into it -- Moses and Elias are in the same glory with Christ, but the voice is heard saying, “This is my beloved Son.” For us there is a better thing still, the Father’s house.

We are called to wait for the blessed Lord Himself; He has loved us and given Himself for us, and the heart of the Christian is set upon it -- we wait to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and to be for ever with the Lord. Now I only ask, Suppose He was to come to-night, would your souls find your joy at His coming? Are your hearts set upon Him in the midst of a world that has rejected Him? The whole of Christendom is eating and drinking; but are you filled with the joy that Christ will meet you as men that wait? Are you watching for Christ? Christ is waiting at the right hand of God, and His delight and joy is this, that He will take His people to be with Him for ever.

The Lord only give you in truth of heart so to know Christ and delight in Him, that your hearts may be waiting for Him and watching for Him -- the joy and hope of your souls. There is one thing that is a comfort to me, and that is, that I believe all who are His will be led to look for Him before He actually comes. May He keep us, then, waiting for Him.

Words of Faith, 1884, pp. 143-146, 169-176.
CHAPTER 1

In the first part of this chapter we get abstractedly what Christ was: the Word, the Word with God, and who was God -- life and light. An important element is brought out here, and that is, that when divine light came into the world in grace, the world did not know Him; and then we get quickening -- “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

In v. 14 we have what Christ became, not what He was, essentially; I mean, of course, that this is another part of the truth. We have not His work yet, but His incarnation -- “and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” This is very simple in one sense. He became a Man; and not only that, but He “dwelt among us” -- not like God visiting Abraham merely. In outward form He was like another man -- He was “found in fashion as a man” (Phil. 2:8). That is an immense truth; the Word comes and dwells among men as a Man, (more than a man, of course), “and we beheld his glory,” the glory He had down here, and those who had eyes to see through it could see the Father -- “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” “The glory as of an only begotten with a father”; this is really only a comparison, yet “this is my beloved Son” the Father said more than once.

If you leave out the parenthesis the passage reads thus: “And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace.” But that is not all we get in this statement of His glory; there is a manifestation of the Father, and those who had eyes to see saw the Father revealed in the Son, but it is also the Son’s revealed place as Man down here.

At the end of Matt. 3 we get in this connection a very remarkable passage. There He took His place publicly -- He entered by the door into the sheepfold, being baptized with the baptism of repentance; not surely as needing repentance Himself, but taking this place, as fulfilling righteousness, with the godly remnant in Israel in their first step Godward. When He had taken His place there, as soon as He came up out of the water, the Holy Ghost descended on Him; heaven is opened, and the Father’s voice came from thence saying, “This is my beloved Son.” He stands here the expression of our place before God as our Father. But we must remark that there was no union with Christ in
incarnation; no taking humanity into His Person. We are united to Him in glory; and it was after He had accomplished redemption and was risen that the Lord said to His disciples, “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God” -- He had brought them into the same place He had Himself as Man. What makes this scene in Matthew still more striking is that it was the first time the Trinity ever could be revealed, though we get the Son occasionally in the Old Testament, and the Spirit often. The revelation of the Trinity -- the Father, the Son, and the Spirit -- is identified with His taking this place -- making it -- for us in His own Person, and now ours actually through grace.

But to return to our verse, we get Him here as “the only-begotten of the Father,” not as “the firstborn among many brethren,” and He “dwelt among us” -- it was not merely an apparaition to them -- and it was as “full of grace and truth.” There had been acts of grace before, but here we have a Person who is Himself the thing: “grace and truth came [subsisted] by Jesus Christ.” It was not merely a direction how to walk such as the law was. The law came with a claim on man; it was the perfect rule for man as man. Here we have this precious Person dwelling among us, full of grace and truth -- all divine goodness was there, dwelling in the world, and the truth about everything brought out. It could then be said of Satan that he was the prince of this world, and the god of it, because truth itself was in the world, and brought this fact to light. “Grace and truth” (the singular is used in the original) were one thing in His Person. It was the bringing down to man, the humanizing, in a sense, of light and love; not the abstract nature of God, but the manifestation of that amongst men.

Next (v. 15) we have John the Baptist’s testimony.

Then (v. 16) John the Evangelist takes it up again: “and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace”; it really means grace heaped upon grace, when one grace was given another came upon it. There was in its plenitude divine favor in the world and truth about everything. Truth in a certain sense answers to light, but truth could not have been in the world if grace had not been there too, for it would not have been the truth about God. As believers we have all received of Christ’s fulness abundance of grace; here it is what is in Himself.

Do you ask, “How have we received it?”

Because all that is in Christ is ours; all the riches of grace and blessedness; His nature, too, in one sense, because Christ is our life, the source and the fulness of it. In respect of our being sinners, the way of this we get in, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit” {John 12:24}. Christ is the reservoir of all blessedness, and we are connected with Him through death. Nobody was anointed with the Holy Ghost but Christ during His lifetime.
When the disciples *looked back* they could see what He was, because they had got (through the Holy Ghost, given to them after Christ was glorified) what He was in themselves; as communicated to us, it is said, “which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passed and the true light now shineth” (1 John 2:8). At first the Light was shining in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it, the light shone -- but nobody received it; now the darkness is *passing*, it should be (there are many still in it), and the true light does shine effectively. When redemption was accomplished, and never till then, could Christ say “My Father and your Father, my God and your God.” In the earlier part of John’s first epistle we get life and light, and in the latter part we get *love*.

The life was there objectively before the disciples, they “beheld his glory”; all is manifestation here. “The life was manifested, and we have seen it,” says John.

The law was *given* by Moses (John 1:17) -- nothing came into the world by the law, but grace and truth came and were actually there when Christ was present. He is “the truth” -- He is truth plainly out before us; and *all* grace was in Him, that is love adapted to the state man is in.

We are not saying here how a sinner is presented to God, but how the thing comes down from God; we do not get the sinner’s side at all in the Gospel of John; we do not get the forgiveness of sins in John. It is a living Person in whom all these riches of grace have come down. It is an immense thing to see that Christ is the Fountain-Head, and that all the fulness that is in Him can flow down to us here. In all John’s writings we get the flowing down towards us, not the presenting us upwards to God, that is Paul’s doctrine; this other side is as just touched upon in 1 John 4:17. We have a divine Person coming down and putting others in connection with Himself, so that all the fulness that is in Him flows into and through them.

In John 1:18 we get another thing: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Here we get the Father revealed; we have all the fulness that is in the Son for us, but besides that the Father revealed to us. A most wonderful thing this, that when He reveals the Father it is as He Himself knows Him. If I were to tell you about my father, I must tell you about him as I have known him myself.

Some one asks, “why have we the name of God here?” All through John’s writings, whenever it is a question of God’s nature or of man’s responsibility, we always get God; whenever the operation of grace is spoken of we get the *Father* and the Son. So we have “fellowship with the Father”; “God is light.” “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” — there we have responsibility; “for the Father seeketh such to worship him” — there we have grace.
If you take God abstractedly, that is in His essence, which is the force of this passage, we shall never see Him -- “He dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16). Yet we read “the pure in heart shall see God,” and Stephen saw “the glory of God”; how I do not pretend to say. The angels, too, saw God manifest in the flesh. It would be a terrible thing to spend eternity in my Father’s house, and yet never to see Him {cp. John 14:9}.

We get this expression, “No man hath seen God at any time,” also in 1 John 4:12, but we see a change has taken place in our position there, where the same difficulty is in question, and it is met in a different way. Here in the gospel we read, “The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” In that place where He was the sole and absorbing object in the bosom of the Father where He dwelt alone, He has made Him known to us as He knows Him. Then in the epistle, we read, “If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us” -- by the communication of the divine nature and by the dwelling of God in us we inwardly enjoy Him as He has been manifested and declared by the Son. Christ did reveal the Father when He was upon earth, and, when He had died and risen again, and the Holy Ghost had come, God dwelt in the believer. Thus we know God inwardly -- “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God,” that is, the Father.

Some one wishes to know what place the cross has in connection with the revelation of the Father? All revelation of God, whether in His nature or relationships, is based upon the cross. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, but now since the cross, not being here Himself, He has ambassadors; and in principle this continues always; Christ having finished the work and gone on high, ambassadors were sent -- the present action of God in reconciling sinners is by ambassadors. “God was in Christ”; this refers exclusively to His life -- true all through His life—not His death. What is so very wonderful in the cross is that we get there the complete righteousness of God against sin and the perfect love of God to the sinner.

We have been speaking, up till now, of the divine nature of Christ, now we get (John 1:29) His work. We have His work in two characters: He is the Lamb of God that takes away sin; and He baptizes with the Holy Ghost.

First, He is “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” -- note, not sins. “Behold the Lamb of God,” that is God’s lamb, what specially appertains to God Himself -- “the Lord’s lot.” He takes away the sin of the world, not here the sinner’s sins, but the sin of the whole world; this will be the new heaven and new earth, where there will be no sign or trace of sin. We have had an innocent world, and a sinful world, then we shall have a righteous world depending on God’s Lamb. God’s Lamb He is in every sense: thank God He has borne our sins, too! but here it is abstract. God’s Lamb is
from God, according to God, and for God. In the very place of sin He has perfectly glorified all that God is -- “God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him” -- without waiting for the day of the glory with men. According to the thought of John 17, He goes at once into the glory of God. “I have glorified thee on the earth,” He says, and as a consequence He goes back as Man into the glory He had with the Father before the world was.

As the Lamb of God, Christ perfectly glorifies God in John 13; as the Son, He perfectly glorifies the Father in John 14.

It is a wonderful thing, the cross; there, and there only, was God fully glorified. Where do we find the love of God in all its fulness? At the cross: “Hereby perceive we the love, because he laid down his life for us.” Where do we find perfect righteousness against sin? At the cross: “He made him to be sin, for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Where do we find absolute obedience? At the cross, where Christ was before God in the very place of sin: “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Where was the majesty of God fully vindicated? Nowhere but at the cross: “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” The more we look into the cross -- and we must come to it first as poor sinners that need salvation -- the more we shall wonder at God’s love. We get in the cross man in absolute hatred to God and all the power of Satan; Man, much more than man, in absolute obedience; and God in perfect righteousness against sin. All man was in goodness in Christ; all man was in badness; and all God was in love and righteousness, came out at the cross. Every question of good and evil was settled at the cross. The new heaven and new earth are founded on it. Though all our blessing is wrapped up in it, “God’s Lamb” is for God’s glory -- for Himself and according to what He is.

It is a blessed thing to study what Christ was down here, not that we can ever fathom it. What a wonderful thing that He could say, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life to take it again” -- He could give a motive to God. As to comforters He had none; He went through all sorts of trials, denial, conflicts with Satan, and yet see what His spirit was in going through it all -- how perfect in obedience. It is profitable indeed for us to eat His flesh and drink His blood. Look at the perfectness of the Lord, in another way, in Gethsemane: He was sweating {as it were} great drops of blood when He was only even thinking of the cross, and yet He can go to His disciples and speak to them just as quietly and gently as if nothing was the matter, and then go back again and pray. We get possessed with things, they overwhelm us, but it was never so with Christ, they never took Him out of Himself, so to speak, though He suffered as no one else could suffer. We see nothing but perfectness in Him. There is nothing like it -- of course there is not, but it is well to behold it, and have it always before our eyes.
Second, He is “He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Here, first, we have Christ marked out by God Himself -- by the Father: “Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him”; and then we get Him as the One who communicates the Holy Ghost to us: “The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost”; and in this connection we have: “For him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:27); “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power” (Acts 10:38). Both the expressions, “sealed” and “anointed,” are used as to Christ. The character of all the life of Christ here on earth was by the power of the Holy Ghost: “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God is come unto you” (John 7:39); “After that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandment unto the apostle he had chosen” (Acts 1:2).

Then, after His ascension, He received the Holy Ghost a second time, not for Himself, but for others: “Therefore being by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33). This answers to John 7:39: “But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified”; the Holy Ghost, as personally present in believers on earth, did not then exist.

Thus, first, we get Christ Himself anointed and sealed, as perfect Man; and then, having wrought redemption, which brings us unto His own place -- “Because as he is so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17) -- He gives us, from the glory where He now is consequent upon His work at the cross, the Holy Ghost, so that we are consciously in it. The Holy Ghost is given, notice, to those that “believe”; this is not the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, but what follows the place we are in through faith: “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). Not only are we sons “by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26), but, through the Holy Ghost, we have the consciousness of being sons.

By Christ’s death everything as to man’s relationship with God is changed; the veil was rent from top to bottom; Man -- much more than a man -- has entered the holiest, and, consequent on His entering there in the virtue of His sacrifice for us, the Holy Ghost has come down to give us the consciousness of our place before God, and with this He is the Spirit of Sonship; He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts; and He is the earnest of the glory, which we have not yet got. Hence the possession of the Holy Ghost is what characterizes the Christian: “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9).

The Holy Ghost has always quickened souls, from Adam on, but that is a very different thing to what we have here: Christ as Man -- having wrought redemption through His death, having gone through judgment for us, having been made sin for us, having taken His place as Man at the right hand of God --
sending the Holy Ghost to dwell in believers; so that, “As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:48). There was no accomplished redemption, and no man in heaven to be revealed in the Old Testament.

As a child of Adam I am washed and forgiven; but what place have I got? Suppose I owed a million and it was paid for me, and that was all, I might starve afterwards. There is the work of Christ as regards our old state; all has been totally put away, both sins and sin -- “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3), this takes away the fruits -- “In that he died he died unto sin once” (Rom. 6:10), and we have died with Him, this takes away the tree for faith: then as to the place we have got, we find its full character in Ephesians, where Christ is not looked at as the quickening Son of God, but as Man dead, and then when God raises Him from the dead, He raises us with Him -- the same power takes Him and us up together.

The Christian is a person whose body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; who looks back and sees by divine teaching the value of redemption, and who, possessing the Holy Ghost as the earnest, looks on to the glory he has not yet got. He is not in the flesh; Paul says, “when we were in the flesh” (Rom. 7:5), and “ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” (Rom. 8:9). In Rom. 7, after the first few verses, the man, as in the flesh, is still weighing his place with God by what he is himself, like the prodigal son before he had met his father -- “make me as one of thy hired servants” (Luke 15), reasoning from himself to what his father might be; not from what his father was, as he knew after he had met him. God puts us into Christ, and gives us the Holy Ghost to give us the consciousness of it. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus”; “for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Cor. 1:20). “Us” is always the word of the Holy Ghost.

The difference between “anointing” and “sealing” is, that anointing is the figure of our receiving the Holy Ghost, and sealing that we belong to God. Sealing is for the individual -- I am sealed for myself, you for yourself; but as there is only one Holy Ghost in that way we are one -- “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).

In Rom. 8 we get three characters of the Holy Ghost: He is “the Spirit of God,” in contrast with the flesh; “the Spirit of Christ,” as that by which Christ as Man walked, and which forms our characters; and “the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead,” as the power by which our bodies will be raised.

“If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his” {Rom. 8:9},
means, we are not Christ’s till we have got it; 11 we may be on the way. The operation of the Spirit in quickening is one thing, but that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost is another, and much lost sight of. When the blood was put on the lintels God had really taken the Israelites in hand, and they were safe; saved is a much stronger word than safe. If I am saved I have got out of the flesh into Christ: “There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”; we do not get salvation till Rom. 8. This alters everything. When the blood was on the lintels God’s character was that of judge: He did not come into them; and this was mercy. At the Red Sea He became their Savior: and the Israelites “saw the salvation of Jehovah,” as those who had passed out of the condition to which judgment and all the power of Satan attached.

Christ was delivered for our offences; this clears me as a child of Adam, and in that state it is mercy securing me from the judgment of God. “In Christ” I am before God in Christ’s place of acceptance and blessing.

The natural order of blessing, so to speak, is what we find in Acts 2:38: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The only thing that hinders the reception of the Holy Ghost is the want of simple faith in the work of Christ. The moment the Holy Ghost is received the soul cries, “Abba Father.” If any one can cry “Abba, Father,” he has the Holy Ghost; he has the known place of relationship with God as a son.

(To be continued, the Lord willing.)

Words of Faith, 1884, pp. 284-290.

{Words of Faith was discontinued at this point}.

11. {Until we have the seal of the Spirit we are “not of him” see JND’s translation), i.e., not in the Christian position, though we were quickened before.}
OUR RELATIONSHIP TO
THE FATHER AND TO THE WORLD

John 17

I take this chapter as fully setting us -- the twelve disciples, then those that believe on Him through their word -- first, in our place of relationship to the Father; secondly, to the world; and both in a most distinctive way. We have something of the same character in the Ephesians; but there it is more God in relationship than the Father.

I find four different ways in which the practical path of a Christian is represented in Scripture. First, the object, a glorified Christ, in Phil. 3, giving energy and character to the Christian’s race: “This one thing I do.” Secondly, in Phil. 2, we get a fuller character, in a certain sense, to have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is not that I am running after something; it is the proper character in everyone having a glorified Christ; not going up, but always going down, even to the cross. “He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Thirdly, in Eph. 4, 5, a very different kind of thing, which, however, coalesces with this, where, being brought completely to God, and seated there with Christ, we are sent out to bear witness to the character of God, to give testimony to Him in this world. Fourthly, here in John 17 it is a little different. The point especially is, we are put into Christ’s place with the Father -- put into the Son’s place. My father may be a good man, a great man; it is more this, he is my father. I have a son’s place, duties, &c. I have to imitate his goodness, and to learn his greatness.

The Son being glorified (He goes up to the Father), then His disciples left here, He was to be glorified in them. The Father had been perfectly glorified in Him on the earth; He went up into glory, He was to be glorified in them by their answering to what He is in glory, and they were to be carrying the Father’s word as He carried it. It was holiness, because they belong not to this world at all: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” {John 17:14}. Christ belonged to the Father, was entirely His; He came down and revealed the glory of the Father; came and brought this out before the world, and was in the bosom of the Father all the while (I mean as to His eternal Sonship, of course). He brings us into that place, the bosom of the Father, and
then puts us in His own place down here to manifest Him. He is not only in the bosom of the Father as “the only begotten Son,” but He is there as the glorified Man. In Phil. 2, in the Son’s walk on earth, we get the spirit and mind and tone and temper of Christ, always coming down (in John He is always going up into the glory of God as Son). It is the beautiful and lovely character of the descending path of a Christian on earth, esteeming every one better than himself, he makes something of them and nothing of himself, seeks nothing for himself and considers everyone else. Christ Jesus

being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant,

that He might serve us and glorify God, when He could do it freely. That is what we are called to do, as set free and brought to God; we are called upon as having an immense place (the glory of Christ being ours) to go and serve God as He did. In the rest of Phil. 2 the expression of love is shown in the wonderful consideration and care for others—love opposed to selfishness, self entirely given up and all the spirit of it. One verse I refer to, to show what our walk ought to be, and how a Christian is really brought into Christ’s place (Phil. 2:15). Blameless and harmless, sons of God without rebuke, holding forth the word of life -- each member of that sentence, while it is exhortation to Christians, is exactly Christ. He was blameless and harmless; there is not a single element in a sentence of that exhortation which is not an expression of what Christ was down here: and “I am glorified in them.”

The difference in John is, He is gone up into the glory as Son (John 17:1, 2). There are two parts, or grounds, in the way in which we are brought into this relationship with Christ. First,

The hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. There is the relationship, the moment the Son was glorified as such. Then, secondly, He adds,

I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was {John 17:4, 5}.

The glory is His, but He gets it because He has glorified God. The Son had been in the place of humiliation; and is now raised as man. “Glorify Thou me.” There the glory, into which Christ enters, is founded on His work. In virtue of His having perfectly glorified the Father, the Son has to be glorified with the Father. He enters on that glory in virtue of having glorified the Father. The Son had glorified the Father on the earth, and the work having been finished which the Father gave Him to do, the Father glorifies the Son with Himself. He is Son in it. The place of Christians is to be sons. We get the glory in the place of sons, in result of the perfect work which has glorified
God; not merely being made sons, but put into the same place.

There are two things, the being brought to God as sons -- brought with Christ and like Christ -- and there is the effect of His having perfectly glorified God as the Father, that the Father puts man into the glory of God. Christ is forerunner. This has nothing to do with responsibility, it had to do with the purpose of God. As Son the work of Christ was done, which gave the title of bringing many sons into glory. It is the mystery now made manifest. Forgiven, they are accepted; but why should they be in the same glory as the Son of God? The place that we have is thus brought to the Father, and brought to the Father, remember, through the rejection of Christ from the world. He, speaking of the children, says “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” Then as regards the world He says, “Righteous Father.” It is connection with the Father in contrast with the world’s rejection. Now He was going up there as Son, and the Father had, so to speak, to decide between the world and Him; Christ or the world must be disowned. The moment of decision came -- Christ must be refused by the Father, or the Father must refuse the world. A moral question is at issue. Christ had been faithful to the Father all through His life, especially on the cross, and the time had come when God must choose practically between the Christ who had glorified Him, and the world who had rejected Him.

That is done in a more dispensational way, and brought out doctrinally with Paul. The Lord appears to him on the road to Damascus --

Delivering thee from the people (Jews), and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.

Paul was not a man that belonged to anyone in this world at all. He was sent forth -- where from? From Christ in glory, not as belonging to this world. The great truth that I refer to is, that he was taken out from the Jews -- out from the Gentiles. Who is he? A Christian connected with Christ in glory, and sent out from Him; that is why he says,

Henceforth know I no man after the flesh, not even Christ come among the Jews as being after promise. He sees Christ in glory, and knows that only, and goes out of the world to Him. It is just the same principle with us. We have not only been separated from the world; the message the disciples bring is to put us into the place where Christ is with the Father: the thing that puts us into this glory and blessing is in thorough contrast with all that is in the world. The Father is put in contrast with the world always. “All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father”; He could not say is not of God, because it was created by Him, but “is not of the Father,” it does not belong to the new order of things that is brought in by the Son being rejected here.
While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name.

It is always the Father in John 17; and that is the very thing in the sermon on the mount, and in the Lord’s prayer, as they are called, though they did not understand it. He is declaring the Father’s name, it was the Father’s kingdom they were to pray for. Of course it is more fully now that we have the spirit of adoption. All in the chapter here especially associated the disciples with Christ’s place as gone to the Father, as sons.

I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world.

Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

Not things God had given Him; what the Father had given Him were of the Father. It was not Jehovah setting up something on earth, but as Father He gives to His Son the things which belonged to Him in that place specifically. Now He is unfolding this. Mark in John 17:8 how far He goes with us.

I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me.

That is, He had so put them into the place and relationship He was in as a man upon earth with the Father, that whatsoever the Father had communicated to Him in that relationship He passes on to them; He brings them into all the blessing -- into all the brightness of the hope -- brings us now into all the consciousness of the relationship.

The way in which Christ took that relationship has been greatly on my mind, as illustrated in the gospel of Matthew. It is the very way you get the juice out of the gospels, if you see Christ as the perfect expression of the model of what God had made man on earth. Take the end of Matt. 3, and see how wonderfully He takes that place. John says,

I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

Of course He need not; John was His creature, but He comes and takes His place with His poor people --

For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.

Thus it becometh us! Wondrous lowliness! “You have your part, and I have mine -- to fulfil all righteousness -- not on my part repentance, that I have not needed.” The moment He had taken this place with the poor remnant, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him -- just what has been done to us since the rending of the veil. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and sealed; so are we. He was the Beloved Son; we are sons, and know it. Of course, He had it in His own blessed Person, and we are brought in by redemption. He enters into every position in which He puts us through redemption.

Another thing struck me. In this wondrous sovereign grace, for the first
time the whole Trinity is revealed. When the Son is there revealed as a man, the Holy Ghost cannot stop away, neither the Father. The Holy Ghost descending owns Him, and the Father owns Him from the heavens. We get the whole fulness of the Godhead identified with Christ taking this lowly place as man, and that is our place with the Father. But we have another place; that is, conflict with the power of Satan. He took our place there too in Matt. 4 when “He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” The Lord took this place in this wondrous, blessed way. He binds the strong man. All that the Father communicates to Him in that place as man, He gives us. It is the “word” He gives them, and He looks consequently for them to be kept in His own name from all that is inconsistent with the relationship and place of which He was the pattern Himself in this world.

Mark the practical effect as regards the world in John 17:14. “I have given them Thy word”; that is, word, not words: what should He give them but the word, the Father’s testimony as to the world -- that is, their place as regards the world. “Christ died, the just, to bring us to God.” God’s grace to the world has nothing to do with the Father; that is, the God whom we know in v. 3. It is the Father now, with the Son by His side, whom the world had rejected; that is why I am sent into it, as the Lord Jesus Christ was sent. “To us there is but one God, the Father.” The place God has taken with us is that of the Father who has had a Son rejected on earth. The world has rejected Him, and to Him He says,

Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

There is the Son with the Father who is in the perpetual consciousness that He has the rejected Son beside Him. That is the condition He sees Him in, and us in relationship to Him, and He must look as far from that world as possible -- there is goodness of course, caring for poor sinners.

“I am glorified in them.” He does not say the Father is glorified in them, but it is Christ, whose character we bear, is to be glorified in us. We have got the Father’s word, and the Son’s place on earth. This is the very way He calls His disciples His friends --

All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you; He has brought them into the intimacy of all those things which He received from the Father as a man, and puts them into His place as sons by redemption: He gives them thus the Father’s testimony to carry back into the world -- the place in which they are set. Christ was the perfect expression of what the Father is, and of course the person that is faithful is the perfect expression of the One of whom He testifies.

The beginning of all evil was the devil destroying Eve’s confidence in God: she must bring in her own will. In Christ we see that instead of God
keeping back the tree, lest they should be like God in the knowledge of good and evil, *He gives His Son that we may be like Him in glory*. What was Christ’s life here upon earth? The expression of holy, divine goodness in the midst of evil; and so must you be the expression of God’s nature and character in the world. Christ was not of the world, but of heaven as to His character; and so

they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world {John 17:14}.  

Christ was in the world -- labored for Joseph and His mother, till the time came for Him to be called out to minister. He was walking this world absolutely apart from all the evil in it; He was good and doing good. Then He looks up and says,

Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth {John 17:17}.  

It was the *Father’s* truth they were to be set apart by; there is no real truth whatever without it. Now it was said by Christ, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” In our walk they ought to see every thing that was in Christ.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth.” The world has not truth at all. If I were to say “God is good,” the world would only misconceive it; when the *world* says “God is good,” they mean that they hope He will care as little about sin as they do themselves! The disciples came directly from Christ, bearing His character before the world.

As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world {John 17:18}.  

It is not only that everyone that comes from Christ has a testimony for Christ in the world, but they have His character. We are sanctified by the truth from all evil in the world. “For their sakes I sanctify myself” Christ has set Himself apart as this model man in heaven, the spring and source of all blessing to us here -- that our affections being identified with Him, our eyes resting on Him there, He might be the truth in us: but you must keep your eye on Him there. My heart gets identified with the things that He delights in. The time is coming when it will be manifested that we have this place,

The glory which thou gavest me I have given them . . . that the world may believe . . . may know,” &c.  

*Then* even the world will see that you are loved as Christ is loved.

Then there is the place of testimony. We stand in the world that Christ may be glorified in us; that is His object in leaving us here. I have referred to other of those characteristics. If we turn to Eph. 4, 5 again it gives us the Christian character founded on the blessed truth of the place into which we are brought. There are two great subjective principles in us which are foundations of this walk. First, it is not merely that we are quickened, it is not all that the Christian has a new life, but we must be quickened together *with* Christ. Besides that, Christ having gone down into our place of sin and misery, gone
down there and had nothing. He did not go in and glorify God in that special place without results. God’s Son as risen becomes our life, we have done with the old thing, the life that is gone. I am “quickened together with Him,” and I have left myself, “my old man,” in the grave where Christ was. We have to learn that we have died with Christ, that is the meaning for example of the Jordan. The Red Sea is Christ alone, dying and risen, that is what saves us. But in Jordan it is my share in it with Him; it is not only that I have to see it in the Red Sea, but specifically in the Jordan. We walk through death into Canaan, the heavenly places. We have “put off the old man with his deeds.” Here I get God as the measure of right and wrong, God is the measure I am to take. We have “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.” God is now the measure of my conduct.

Secondly, there is another element of Christian walk here.

Your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Thus we get, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God”; that is, I now get the new thing, God Himself dwelling in me, and I am sent out to walk as Christ walked. It is not here carrying the Father’s word as a testimony, but go and act like God. The apostle goes on to say, “Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.” My path now is to walk as one who imitates God, because I am His child. So in another place, not only forgive, but “love your enemies,” as He did. Did He not love you when you were enemies? Yes. Then go and act like Him. Here it is

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Christ is the measure of it; you give yourself entirely up to serve other people; Christ did. If you want to learn what the character of God in a man is, go and look at Christ’s life down here. He gave Himself up entirely, and to God; that is love. Well, you go and do the same. You are to be like God in love, and now in ch. 5 you are “light in the Lord.” Another characteristic of God is light, God Himself is the pattern of what we ought to be in the world as love and light.

Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Mark, it is “thou that sleepest,” not dead, for Christians cannot be dead, but you cannot get any activity or intelligence from a sleeping man, any more than in a dead one. A sleeping man is no better than a sleeping dog; if you want to put him in a man’s place, you must wake him up. Christ is the measure of your walk, and the light to lighten you in the path; wonderful measure! God has so brought us to Himself in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that He brings us out to walk through the world as the expression of what Christ is. The path of the Christian is altogether above law. The law said, “Love thy neighbor as
“Do not let there be one bit of self in you.” There was none in Christ. The world would be a paradise if men loved each other as they do themselves. I must get a love that is sufficiently above the evil to walk in it, to love people even if they do not love me; that is what the Lord Jesus did. I must have the character of love that can show what God is, when all the people around me are quite the opposite. I may have Christian friends; but His was holy, divine goodness in the midst of a world that was all the opposite. As Christ was the expression of perfect goodness here, so can we be imitators of Him; there is the path, “Imitators of God as dear children.” It is wonderfully blessed that He brings us into a path where we are to empty ourselves and live Christ. In Hebrews Christ is before me; in Philippians, I get Christ come down, walking in this world, not setting Himself up. It is wonderfully blessed to be so brought into the place of children of God, that we are called to imitate Him; to go out from Him in the sense that we have Christ’s place; to walk through this world as the expression of Him. In John, Christ gives me the Father’s word, the word of Him who has received His Son on high, because the world rejected Him.

Then the character of what man sitting in heavenly places is comes out in this world -- an imitator of God, in Ephesians. If you have this place with Him, go and show what He is to the world. The flesh resists, and there is conflict; but you see it does not follow in the least that you are to act on the flesh. There may be something in which we have not detected flesh; but where we have, we are never called upon to act in it, but the contrary. There is no such thing as mending the flesh one atom. In innocence it broke down; without law it is grossly and horribly ignorant; under law rebellious, not subject, neither could be. Bring in grace, and it spits in the face of the One who brings it in; put the Holy Ghost in a man, and the flesh lusts against the Spirit; put a man in the third heavens, and when he comes down the flesh will be puffed up about it -- the flesh is the same all the way down. If I have a thorough rogue in my house that I cannot trust, and I keep him locked up in the cupboard, all well. Why should I let him loose at all? I may be foolish enough to let the flesh out, but I never need. We never can excuse ourselves. If we are foolish enough to leave an open door, Satan will come in. There may be a moment when I am not able to overcome the flesh, when it cannot be checked. Why so? I have been neglecting prayer, or reading the word of God, or have been careless in some way, and then when the enemy comes, there is no power to meet him, and we are overcome, and that is as good as allowing that Christ may be overcome. If I am walking carelessly I shall reap the consequences. Here is the difference, and it is a very real one. Suppose I am not walking in the Spirit, so that my conscience is not good, when I get into the presence of God, and have to think of myself, I am ashamed. I am not thinking of Him, and am forced to think about myself in the way of self-judgment. The effect of the light is to show me myself, make me think of what I am, and wake up
my conscience (and it is well He does make me think about myself in self-judgment). But if I am walking without the least thing on my conscience, I do not think of myself, but am free to be occupied with Christ. It is not that the flesh is any better at any time. I am practically purged, have a good conscience, and when I come into God’s presence I can let my heart out; and this is great blessedness -- it is communion. That is where the real difference lies between a man who is walking in the power of the word of God and in constant dependence, and one who is not. Paul is not afraid of the day of judgment: “Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” He brings in the power of divine judgment as a present thing: “We are manifest to God.” It is having the sense of divine judgment on everything that I am doing, and everything is detected.

We are called to walk in the light, as He is in the light, without doing anything inconsistent with it; not grieving the Spirit, who consequently takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us -- that is communion. We never can excuse ourselves if the flesh thinks a moment amiss. It is not that at any given moment I have power to resist the flesh; if it acts, I have no excuse, for had I been walking with God I should have had power to resist it.


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**THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS**  
**(NOTES OF A READING ON 2 TIM. 2)**

Paul begins by encouraging Timothy in his own service: “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” He was to endure hardness, and not to entangle himself in the affairs of this life. “The husbandman laboring first, shall be partaker of the fruits”; that is, he must labor before he gets the fruit. He is speaking of the ruin of the Church in ch. 1; but a person is to go on working, through grace, in all the circumstances in which he finds himself.

Verse 8. Two characters of the gospel -- the accomplishment of the promises, and Christ raised from the dead. You get the same thing in Rom. 1:3, 4: He was the accomplishment of all the promises; the Jew has lost all title to them, and must come in in mercy like any other poor sinner. The promises to Moses were conditional, to Abraham unconditional.

Then he shows at the end of the chapter the state of things: “Foolish and unlearned questions avoid” (v. 23). How from the beginning Satan wrought, or sought to work, by all these notions! Verse 19: Both sides of the seal, God’s sovereign grace, and the responsibility side. You get the different stages of evil; in Jude they had “crept in,” in the epistle of John they had “gone out.”
The “last days” (2 Tim. 3:1) have come to a head now, and this is a warning how to act when that is the case. God has always trusted the blessing He has sent to man, and he has always failed. God’s grace has gone on working all the time, and “He knoweth them that are His.” He “added to the Church daily such as should be saved” -- made them manifest. While Paul was alive there was spiritual energy to detect these false brethren. False notions are learnt much more easily than the truth. The truth meets with the opposition of the flesh in us, whereas error meets with no resistance. You can learn Irvingism in a week, but it takes years to learn the truth; for the truth sanctifies, and if a person does not bow to that he does not get on. Verse 19: Two sides -- godliness of walk in those who say they are Christians, that should accompany profession; and, on the other hand, they may be hidden among all these foolish people, but the Lord knows them.

Then you get the great house, and he calls upon Timothy to purge himself from the vessels to dishonor. It is not here the exercise of discipline (you get that elsewhere); but here a man is to purge himself, then he will be a vessel unto honor. Then he takes up another thing. It is not now all who profess as at the beginning; now open infidelity has come in; but then what he says is, “Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” You must get this following godliness in every way, and do it with those who call on the Lord. When the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved, there was no need to pick and choose; but here evil has come in, and you have to try people. It may be very plain in some: “Some men’s sins are open beforehand,” &c. Sometimes it requires a good deal of grace to discover only a little grace in another. “Out of a pure heart” is the motives that govern a man; “a sound mind” is that he does not go after wild fanaticism, but is sober in his judgment about divine truth. Till the disorder had come in I could not follow this order, for I should have nothing to purge myself from. All that God has established remains, and we must go on with it. The Church is still “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Christendom is not, though in a certain sense it is; for it maintains outwardly the profession of Christ’s name, and while it does that the Holy Ghost has not left it. Philadelphians are those who keep the word of Christ’s patience, and are looking for Him. The thing is to keep fast hold of what does remain, though we have lost a good deal. Here “calling on the name of the Lord” is not sufficient. I have to see who is trying to walk “out of a pure heart.” The directions of God are as distinct in this ruin as when there was no ruin at all.

2 Tim. 3:14: “Knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” I know whom I have learned them from -- Paul, or Peter, or John, &c.; that is, when the nominal church is all gone into confusion, then I get the word of God which remains. In ch. 2 I find directions for personal conduct, in ch. 3 what they are based upon -- the Scriptures. People talk about “the fathers.” Were they from
“the beginning “? I ask. No; but from near it. Very well then, I can’t have anything that did not come from “the beginning.” Christ never can be unfaithful to His saints, and He is just as sufficient for these times as for those times. All that is in the Word remains; it is not that organization remains as it ought; that may go, but none of this can go. And there is another thing connected with it -- it is never promised that miraculous works should continue. But in Eph. 4 gifts are not spoken of as coming from the Holy Ghost, but you get what are edification gifts there, and they will endure “till we all come,” &c., and that is never said of miraculous gifts such as tongues and healing. You never find the apostles healing any of their own friends who were sick: “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” This very Timothy was to use a little wine for his often infirmities. But when it was a testimony to the Lord, you get all these miracles wrought; but where it was not for that, you do not find them at all. In Eph. 4 the gifts are spoken of as coming from Christ, because it was not merely power; for a person, as to the gifts that are lost, might have power and not exercise it at all, not speaking with tongues for example. There was positive action of the Holy Ghost, and not allowed to be used. But where Christ gives, He gives what will endure “till we all come,” &c. He cannot desert His Church. It is of all moment to have the conviction that Christ, because of His holy, blessed nature, cannot fail the saints to give all that is needed for their blessing in walking down here. You never find the “us” dropped in Scripture: “They went out from us, but they were not of us.” You still get the saints corporately. The “us “are people walking in faith, charity, peace, out of a pure heart, walking together. If there was not the corporate unity, there could not be anything from which to apostatize. There are special blessings attached to the fellowship of the saints which cannot apply to an individual.

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake” (v. 10). Paul was saying there almost what Christ did; he was a witness, but it was a great deal to say. He must live for himself with Christ, to be able thus to live for the saints.

2 Tim. 3:17: “That the man of God may be perfect”; that is, full-grown. I am not a full-grown man in Christ till I realize what Christ is.

Well, with a little patience in trusting Christ, all goes on very simply; I do not mean to say without trial. Things are very much more moral than people think; seeing clearly, and all that, depends on the state of the soul.

Malvern, 1880.

A READING

Ephesians 1

You get that word “faithful” added in the first verse of Ephesians and Colossians. “Saints” means that God has sanctified them; but “faithful,” that is what they were; they were in the exercise of faith towards God and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is having faith, but at the same time it practically comes to being faithful to the position we are in. Faithful is that they have the faith. It is a great principle, not merely here that they were consistent in everything, but that they were characterized by walking in the faith.

The life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God. You will find that that is a principle of conduct all through ordinary life. “I live by the faith,” because it gives a different spring and character to the whole life. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” It is not that each person is exactly consistent in everything, but their life was a life of faith, an object before them which governed their lives. It is an object outside the heart and outside the world, and therefore it carries the heart through the world independent of it.

Then we get Christ presented distinctly in a double character -- as Son of the Father and as Man -- and that lies at the root of our whole condition too. He is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ as Man, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as Son. That runs all through. “My Father and your Father.” During His life He always said Father, because He was a Son. On the cross, when He was dying, drinking the cup, He said, “My God”; but in Gethsemane He said “Father”; and at the end He says, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” But after He is risen (John 20) He uses both together -- “My Father . . . my God” -- as if He would say, “I have brought you in righteousness to God, and into the place of sons with the Father.” And it is the first time He calls them “brethren.” When the disciples found He was risen they were not gathered at all; it was Mary’s message that practically brought that out. They were then gathered, and Christ with them.

You get here “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and then the apostle goes on to unfold Christ. In Heb. 1:8 you find Him first addressed as God -- “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever”; and then, when He is looked at as Man in the next verse, it is, “God, even, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,” and then what makes it wonderful is that He brings in others as His companions -- “fellows”: addresses Him as God in one verse, and calls us His companions at the end. You get Christ in these two characters, as Man and as Son. Being a Son, it is of great moment to us that He is a Man; He did not take up angels, but the seed of Abraham. In Eph. 1 these two names are brought out, v. 4 the name of God, and v. 5 the name of Father. God has
chosen us in Him . . . that we should be holy and without blame before
Him in love.

Christ was holy, blameless in His ways, and He is love just what we are before
God. Then in v. 5 it is as Father; both names used for the character in which
we are before God. But we must not pass over v. 3. There we find the best
kind of blessings, in the best place; they are in Christ, and they are all there.
We have temporal mercies assuredly, but that is just a kind of passing thing,
and not our portion. Here it is all that we shall be in heaven. The Holy Ghost
being here, we get them all in spirit now, everything. Verse 3 is true now in
measure according as we know the power of the Spirit, though of course we
have to wait for our bodies; but what is moral is real to us now.

In Ephesians we get it all as it is in the mind of God. In Romans it is just
the opposite; it begins with man’s responsibility. The only fact you get at all
in the Ephesians is, that Christ was raised up to the right hand of the Father,
at the end of ch. 1 (you get the blessings of course); ch. 3 is special, because
it gives Paul’s administration. By giving the truth to us as it is in the mind of
God, we get it in its absolute perfectness.

Verse 4 is God’s nature, and I see that the thought of God is to have me
answering to His nature and in His presence. We are to be before Him
according to His own nature, and we are in His presence. We have a nature
capable of enjoying this, and are in the presence of an object that is ever to be
enjoyed -- God in fact. It is just what Christ was; He was “holy, and without
blame,” and always before God. We shall have it perfectly when we are before
God, but it is our place now by the Spirit. Then in the next verse you get the
Father, and to give it its full character He says “to Himself”; and there is
another thing very beautiful in this verse: it is “according to the good pleasure
of His will.” He did not say that in the previous verse, because it is not His
will to have an unholy being before Him (there are lots of unholy beings before
Him of course); and that therefore hangs on the nature of God, and so He does
not say, “According to the good pleasure of His will.” But in verse 5 it is this
special kind of love that makes us “children.” Always in Scripture we find we
are predestinated to something; it is some plan God has to bring us into
blessing. We have it here twice (vv. 5 and 11). This is a wonderful passage,
because, we get Christ before God, holy and without blame, and we get Him
as Son; and He takes us into both these places. And that is what He calls “the
glory of His grace” (v. 6), to bring us into His presence in Christ, according
to what Christ is. You get more in the English word “adoption,” for it is
putting us into the place of sons; but the way we get into the place of sons is
by being born of God. Generally John speaks of being children. The nature is
children, but when you get sons in the general it is used for grown-up children.
Children is a tenderer word. In this passage we have nothing to do with
children as distinct from sons. It is having a part with Christ that makes us
sons, and the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness by which we cry “Abba,
The difference between counsel and purpose is, that purpose is more the intention of the will, and counsel the wisdom of the mind. All these thoughts and purposes are “the glory of His grace,” and then He says,

Wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

He does not say “in Christ,” but “in the Beloved”; “for we are loved as Christ is loved. And only in v. 7 does He come to what met our responsibility and ruin. After he has put us completely in the place as it is in God’s mind, then he says,

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

It does not say “the glory of His grace” here, but “according to the riches of His grace”; it is given to us according to the wealth of God. When we come for this redemption we must come according to our wants; but our wants are not the measure of what we have got in the cross. There we have God spending His own Son for us according to the riches of His grace. When I do come to Him, I find I have forgiveness according to what God is, and not merely according to what I wanted. He meets our poverty, but He meets it according to His own riches. It is striking how every word has its weight in this passage. I am “accepted in the Beloved,” not merely that the sins are blotted out.

That closes the position, and then he comes to the dispensation; and he refers to that at the end of the chapter. “The hope of His calling” (v. 18) is what we have been upon now. Then you get that this grace is not merely redemption, and forgiveness, and so on, but that, having put us into this place of perfect blessing, He unfolds all His intentions as to Christ Himself, He has caused this grace to abound (v. 8), not merely in redeeming us, and now He says, “You will be able to comprehend my plans about Christ” (vv. 9, 10). Then he tells us we are joint-heirs with Him. The “hope of His calling” is the first part of the chapter, and then, after He has stated what His plans are with regard to Christ, we get the second thing -- the inheritance. His plan in Christ is to collect everything (not merely people) under Him who is the Head of it, and in this we are joint-heirs with Christ. It is God’s inheritance (v. 18). If you think of Israel, you will understand it; for God would not allow the land to be sold for more than fifty years, “for it is mine,” He says. Israel was God’s land, and yet He inherited it in Israel; and so He inherits all things in the saints. Jacob was His inheritance, because it was an earthly thing down here. He always takes an individual position (v. 18). He does not say the Church is heir. The “mystery” involves for us the Church; but “the mystery of His will” involves the gathering together of everything under Christ, the Church being His body when that takes place. In Colossians you get the reason. There are three reasons why Christ takes everything in Scripture. First, because He created everything (Col. 1:16), and then (v. 18), “He is the Head of the body, the Church.” He is Head over the things, but He is Head to the Church; and
that word “filleteth all in all” (Eph. 1:23) is not simply as God, but “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things.” He fills all things in the power of redemption. That is the first ground of his possessing the things, because He created them all. But in Heb. 1 you get another title (v. 2), “Appointed heir of all things,” and then the third title is in Heb. 2:6, 7. He possesses them as man. Those three titles come in as creating everything, as being Son He is heir, and being man He is the object of God’s purpose, because He has set man over them. And another thing comes in because it is in redemption. Till you get Christ glorified on high you do not get the Head, and so you cannot get the Body.

“Who pre-trusted in Christ” (v. 12). The Jews when they see Him will only get the earthly blessing, but those who pre-trusted will get the heavenly thing. Those who trust before they see Him get the blessing.

Verse 13 refers to the Gentiles being sealed, as a sign that they were brought into the same blessing.

Verse 14 brings in His glory; they have got into it all. “The gospel of your salvation (v. 13); that is, that the sovereign mercy which visited the Gentiles had given them salvation. I do not believe people get sealed who only believe in Christ’s Person. Salvation applies to the two things: “Ready to be revealed in the last time,” and then, besides that, the work by which we are already saved. The Spirit (v. 14) is the earnest of our inheritance which we have not got yet, “until the redemption of the purchased possession”; that is, “to the praise of His glory.”

It is a great thing to see it is “the gospel of our salvation”; for it is a big word.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

A Reading on Luke 12:34-59

The previous part of the chapter is addressed to the world, as to laying up treasure for themselves. At v. 32 the Lord begins with the disciples.

The coming of the Lord does not present itself, when we think of it rightly, as a thing we learn; but I see in Scripture that it is constantly identified with all the feelings and character of a Christian, “as men that wait for their Lord.” It does not say, “As men that believe in the Lord’s coming.” The feeling indeed of those who had grown cold was not that the Lord would not come, but that He delayed His coming (v. 45). Now in the beginning of 1 Thess. they were converted to wait for God’s Son from heaven. He was a living, personal reality to them. There is a great deal more in the passage; but that is the first thing; they were converted for that. Expecting Him in the state that becomes a Christian. I do not say there is no other motive; for the blessed love He has shown in His death would lead us to follow Him too; but still the Christian is a person between Christ’s first coming to save him and His second coming to fetch him out of this scene, and what characterizes him (if he takes the word of God) is, that he is waiting for Christ.

It is gone into in detail in Luke 12. You first get the “watching,” and then, secondly, “doing,” while He is away; that is, serving Him. Those who are watching (v. 37), with their hearts upon Himself, He makes them sit down to meat (a figure, of course), and He girds Himself and serves them. But when you come to doing (v. 43), then it is He makes them “rulers” over all that He hath. You first get the blessedness of heaven (v. 37), and then joint-heirs with Him (v. 44), two distinct things -- one watching for Him, and the other doing. You see, the Christian knows (if he has really got into his place) that he is a person in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, who is the seal to us of the full efficacy of Christ’s work on the cross (and our part in it, too), and waiting for Christ to come, which will put us into possession. Christ enters into possession not of all things in the inheritance yet, but He is sitting on the Father’s throne till the joint-heirs are gathered, and then He will put them into glory.

With regard to the way the coming of the Lord connects itself, not merely as a doctrine, but interweaves itself with all the thoughts and feelings of the Christian, there are only two epistles where it is not put before them as an object. In one (Galatians) they were too low, and the apostle had to begin at the very foundations with them; and in the other (Ephesians) they were looked at as already sitting in heavenly places. In 1 Thess. 1:10 it was part of their conversion. Christ had suffered for them, and was going to come and receive them to Himself. In 1 Thess. 2:19 it is the joy of the apostle’s service in
ministry. These Thessalonians were dreadfully persecuted, and he longs to know how they were getting on. When he thinks of his service and labor and ministry for them he says, “When the Lord comes, that is the time when I shall have my joy and crown.” Then, in 1 Thess. 3:13, it is connected with holiness -- another great element in Christian life. We must walk in holiness now if it is to come out “at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints,” and the thing the apostle looked for was that they should be unblameable at that day. In 1 Thess. 4 it comes in again (vv. 13–18); for the Thessalonians thought that those who had died would not be able to meet the Lord. They were so looking for the Lord’s coming, every moment, that they thought those who died would be out of the way, and not meet Him. Of course, they did not know everything clearly, for Paul had only been a short time with them; yet they had learnt this much, and a good bit more. So Paul tells them that the dead in Christ are not left out; for when the Lord comes from heaven, they will come with Him. If a person died, they were to comfort one another with the words, “Well, the Lord will bring them with Him when He comes.” You see from this epistle how the coming of Christ connects itself with the conversion, ministry, holiness, and sorrows of the Christian; and in ch. 5 it is a warning, still held out as the end they were looking for.

The thing I find most precious in the coming of the Lord is, that the Person of the Lord becomes so prominent. It makes Him more precious. He is coming to take me to be with Himself. It is the Person who is the object of our affections as Christians. But it will be a grand thing when we are with Him, and of course we cannot be separated. It is not our glory that is the great satisfaction, but being with Him. It sets Christ personally as the One before our eyes.

There is another thing it does. This expecting Him every moment detaches from the world; the life of every one would be changed, all their thoughts and plans gone. There are two things needed in order to look for the Lord in that way -- peace with God, and that we love Him enough to care for His coming, and that makes all the difference, of course. If a person was to tell me that some East India-man was coming here, it would produce no effect on me; but if a mother were told that her son was coming, she would be on the look-out for the arrival of the packet. Of course we must have peace with God to be able to look for His coming; but it hangs a great deal on the affection of heart to Christ. “To you that believe He is precious.” It is wonderful how distinctly Scripture makes being with Christ the thing to hope for. Of course it is heaven, because He is there; but except the word “paradise” you never get the expression heaven in Scripture. Of course, if I go to Christ, and He is in heaven, it is heaven I go to; but the thing that is spoken of is going to Christ. To be sure heaven itself is a paradise, but to “depart and be with Christ is far better.” That is what He brings before us as the object -- the loving Savior,
who is going to bring us to be with Himself. It exercises the conscience, of course; because if I was looking for the Lord, evidently it would keep my conscience awake, lest I should have anything that would produce a jar in my own heart when He did come.

It is a striking thing as regards the present expectation, that in all the parables, whether it be Christ Himself speaking, or the apostles by the Holy Ghost, it never supposes beforehand that His coming is beyond the life of the people He is speaking to. It is the present expectation. The virgins that slept were the same that woke. Those who received the talents were the same reckoned with. He would never present to them beforehand a thing that was beyond present expectation. It is evident we should like to be found, whether absent or present, agreeable to Him when He does come. It gives Christ the place. We are poor things; but if we heard Him saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” what a thing it would be to us! Not that I pretend to expect it -- except that they are His own words. There is a little more than waiting in this chapter. “Loins girded about.” These flowing garments were to be tucked up, not loose, in going on with things as they are in the world; but hearts in order, according to the word of God -- “loins girt about with truth,” and then “lights burning” -- a full profession of Christ. The first thing He takes is having our affections on Christ, and our delight in seeing Him, while we are watching for Him.

There is another thing quite distinct, a very blessed, touching expression of the Lord’s love. Here we have to have our loins girded (our hearts in order); but that is now when the Lord is not yet come, but is sitting on the Father’s throne; but then

He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them.

He says, “You won’t have to have your loins girded when you come into my house. I shall make you sit down to meat, and serve you.” He will make us sit down and feed upon the things that are in heaven at the table there, and He will minister the blessings to us -- infinitely more precious. Not merely the giving us things to eat, but Christ Himself ministering them to us. In that sense Christ never gives up the form of a servant; and when we think that Christ the Son of God takes this place, and has taken it, and never gives it up, what a wonderful thing!

If you look at Phil. 2 you see His path. There are the two parts of Christian life -- like Christ in coming down (ch. 2), and like Him, in Him, now He is gone up (ch. 3). He made Himself of no reputation. He was made in the likeness of man, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and He never gives that up. He never ceases to be a Man, and He always goes down. His first act was to come down from “the form of God” to the cross. John 13 gives one step, and Luke 12 another. Love likes to serve, selfishness likes to be
served. John 13 brings out the service He is doing for us now. He could not be the companion of His disciples down here any longer, and what about them when He goes back to heaven? “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” The time was come for Him to go back to heaven, but He was loving them right on {to} the end, and He would have them with Him where He was going, to God, but they must be fit for His presence. He must have them fit to have a part with Him where He was going, so He sets about washing their feet. They were walking about here in this world picking up dirt and defilement, and He washes their feet. He is our Servant now, our Advocate, and, in virtue of that, when we have failed, the Spirit applies the Word, and we get humbled. As regards our practical state there is this daily cleansing which comes when I have let in an idle word or an ungracious thought, and I want {i.e., need} cleansing. The Spirit then applies the Word to our consciences, and we get humbled and broken down.

Here, in Luke 12, it is the blessing: “Blessed are those servants,” &c. (v. 37). He will make them enjoy themselves, for His satisfaction is to make them happy. We do not enough believe in Christ’s heart towards us, and we have not enough heart for Him either. He values our affections:

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

What a Savior He is: It is constant expectation; not waiting merely, but watching. The second part is doing (v. 43); in a certain sense an inferior part. He has entrusted us with talents, perhaps it may he “giving a cup of cold water”; but it is,

Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.

The Lord has committed a service to all. Take an apostle, of course he is entirely given up to service, or it comes down to a cup of cold water. The reward is not sitting down and enjoying heaven here, but it is the kingdom, or more than the kingdom. The Father has set Christ over all the works of His hands, and He makes us joint-heirs. But it is much more blessed to be with God Himself, and enjoy Him, than to be heir with Christ, though, of course, that is a wonderful thing. It is especially in the kingdom that the ruling takes place, because Christ gives up the kingdom to the Father after. There will then be no need for power to be reducing a kingdom to order then, for it is all done.

There are two ways of looking at the inheritance. In Peter and Hebrews, as a man walking in this world in trials and difficulties, and looking out for an inheritance reserved in heaven; and then in Ephesians, where I get into the inheritance, I am looked at as sitting in heavenly places, and going to inherit all that Christ possesses. (See Psa. 2). There you get the counsels of God about Christ, and whatever the heathen do, God will make Him king. It is Christ set up in royalty over the earth. If you look at the promise to Thyatira
you get that, and also the heavenly part (Rev. 2:26–28). A heavenly Christ as well as a royal Christ. That takes the place of what the Church was on earth -- the kingdom. The morning star is Christ, as He is known to us; but the characteristic of the sun risen is judgment. A man that is awake at night sees the dawn of the morning; but when once the sun is risen the morning star is not seen. If you look at the sun risen in Mal. 4:2, &c., you will see it is deliverance by judgment. And that is the reason you get in the Psalms these desires for judgment; that is the kingdom part, Psa. 8 brings out a wider result than Psa. 2: “Above the heavens.” He is crowned with glory and honor, according to Heb. 2:5-8. It is more than the kingdom; for the kingdom rule has to do with this earth. But in this wonderful counsel of God He is getting joint-heirs for the same glory as Himself. When Peter was walking on the earth, the inheritance was in heaven; but when I am in heaven, the inheritance will be on earth. We know ourselves that we are nothing, at least, worse than nothing, badness in ourselves, yet God says that in the coming ages He is going to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus;

but it all supposes we are settled in redemption. It is a blessed thought, that the Father has given us to Christ. The Father says, “Now I want to have my heart satisfied by having them all around me”; and so He gives us to Christ that He may bring us back fit to be with the Father in that way. “Bringing many sons unto glory” -- poor, feeble, wretched creatures that we are that He should take us up, but it shows the greatness of His love. But the best part is sitting down to meat, though the other is wonderful too -- sovereign grace taking up worms like us and associating us with Christ.

The kingdom part you get in Moses and Elias (Luke 9). There was Christ along with the saints in glory manifested to the earth. In Luke (which brings out our present place more than the other gospels) it says “they entered into the cloud.” The cloud was what had separated Pharaoh from the Israelites; it had directed them through the wilderness; it hung over the tabernacle; it was where God was; and out of this shekinah comes the voice -- I may say it was the Father’s house practically -- “And they feared as they entered into the cloud.” It is only in Luke that you get that bit of the transfiguration. The “they entered” refers to Moses and Elias, but it is a difficult matter of interpretation.

Well, there is what belongs to us in Christ. We can sit down quietly at home in heaven, with Christ exercising hospitality to us there, ministering to us -- a wonderful thing I am sure. What little, petty things turn us away from God’s thoughts? We have to go through them; for

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world.

Malvern, 1880.
Papers from *The Christian Friend*

THE NAZARITE

Notes of a reading on Numbers 6

In the book of Numbers is brought out the great principle of the energy of the Spirit of God in us while passing through the wilderness. Exodus shows us redemption and relationship; Leviticus, the way of a sinner’s approach to God; Numbers, priesthood in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Up to Sinai all had been grace on the part of God with the people. Here is the intercourse of God with them in the tabernacle of the congregation in the wilderness of Sinai (ch. 1:1). The principle of the red heifer in Lev. 19 is the ground on which all the sacrifices are taken in this book -- the energy of the Spirit of God in giving comfort to the soul, taking the ashes of that long ago burnt, and applying it with present efficacy to the conscience that has contracted defilement in its walk through the wilderness.

In ch. 6 we have positive separation to God in the energy of the Holy Ghost (v. 2) -- “unto the Lord.” So the Lord Jesus, particularly after His ascension, “For their sakes I sanctify myself,” that we, by the energy of the Spirit in us, should be separate now in the wilderness, walking in white, keeping our garments unspotted by the flesh. Again, the Lord did separate Himself that He might be about His Father’s business, and for this did He separate Himself from “His mother’s children” (Psa. 69:8) -- the flesh, which by sin was under the power of death. He still holds the Nazarite character, because all His disciples are not yet gathered to Him; and now, in a certain sense, with us it is separation from joy -- “the fruit of the vine”; we must not let the heart go. In glory it is the great spirit of rest; there will be no need to gird the heart then. Now the effect of the energy of the Spirit is to gird up the loins of our mind lest we get defiled; but in glory we shall let flow our garments, because we shall not fear defilement there. In the city of refuge the man was safe, but he could not go out or enjoy his possessions.

Verse 3: “Separate himself from wine”; that is, joy. The Lord came in character expecting to find joy among men, expecting a response to His love in the hearts of men, but found none, and so was a Nazarite from the first. To be a Nazarite is to be separated from every natural affection which can be touched by death -- to be separated unto the Lord. No honey could be offered to the Lord, and now the Spirit is a new power come in detaching us from everything natural. The Lord filled with the Spirit for service said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” All nature by sin has come under the power of death, so the Nazarite “shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother,” “because the consecration of his God is upon his head” (v. 7; see also Luke 14:26). The Lord’s tie in nature was with the Jews as Son of David; but all this He gave up as natural, for “when He putteth forth His own sheep
He goeth before them.” Natural affections come from God, and are therefore good in themselves; but they do not tend to God, being spent on the object. John was a Nazarite from the womb. Paul was a Nazarite and Jeremiah also. So we are Nazarites. Our own proper joy is beyond death; therefore all I give up here which savors of death is just giving up that which hinders a deepened apprehension of the joy and blessing of that life which is beyond the power of death. The Lord broke the link in the cross. “By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit” (Isa. 38:16).

“All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord” (v. 8). This is the great principle in the Nazarite -- holy to God, and in however short a degree we may attain to that character, yet in Christ it is perfect. All this is a distinct thing from innocence. Adam was innocent; but not separated unto God. Separated unto God supposes a knowledge of good and evil, and yet separation from evil. Adam got the knowledge of good and evil by the fall; the Holy Ghost is come to take us out of that evil. The Spirit is a new power altogether, separating us unto Christ in glory now that evil and self-will have come in. It is a most trying thing to us to know good and evil; for by nature we are in the evil -- loving the evil and hating the good. The Holy Ghost is now taking us out of the evil, and here is the pain -- His energy in us keeping us from the evil while passing through a world of sin and death. We cannot be innocent now that sin has come in, but we are holy in Christ.

Verse 9: “If any man die very suddenly by him.” Death came in on everything in nature as the sign of God’s hatred of sin. The Spirit of real devotedness to God always was perfect in Christ; but it is failing in us. Wherever the old man works there is the principle of death; therefore we get into death for the time when the old man is working. Therefore the word to us is,

They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;

and again,

Ye have put off the old man. with his deeds, and have put on the new man.

All this is solemn. Not only have we peace, but while we are passing through this scene of sin we need to be kept holy and devoted to God by the energy of the Holy Ghost in us.

Verses 9, 12. If I go back from devotedness to God, it is true the hair may grow again; but the head must be shaved close, and the time lost. It is not a question of sin here, but of loss as to the energy of life. A tree that has been much mutilated and broken down will grow up again; it was not killed, but only injured, yet its stature will not be the same as an uninjured tree. It is letting Satan mar and hinder the work of the Spirit. Samson let his heart go
into the weakness of nature, and when we let in nature our strength is gone. Samson, as a Nazarite, was a type of the energy of the Spirit of God; he let out the secret of his strength, and it left him, and he became weak as other men. True, in due course his strength returned, and with mighty energy he lifted the foundations of the temple. If we are not careful and watchful to keep the secret of our strength in communion with God, and worldliness and sin come in, we may not be conscious of it ourselves, but the truth will appear when we rise to shake ourselves -- it may be in service -- and we find ourselves weak as other men, and when in our weakness, like Samson, the devil will put out our eyes. The Lord was the true Nazarite, and He never departed in the whole course of His walk from His Nazariteship. It was not a light thing for Him to tread the path of suffering; but He prayed. In the garden, “being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly” before the temptation came, and then we see He halted not, He could not. So should we first pass through the trial with God, then God will be with us in the trial. Peter slept and did not pray, and when the trial came he met it in the flesh, and drew his sword. Jesus had prayed that the cup might pass from Him; but when the chief priests and soldiers came, though Satan was in it all, yet He saw the hand of God, and could say, “The cup which my Father hath given me”; then it was no temptation at all, but an act of obedience.

Verse 9: “Die suddenly,” a careless thought, and communion is lost for the moment.

The offerings to be offered. All that was in Christ is presented to God (v. 20); so we really come in the power of these sacrifices to God; but until the Church be gathered the Lord keeps His Nazarite character. 12


12. These unrevised notes, taken many years ago, have never before been published. Their value will be recognized by all. Others may follow (d.v.) from time to time. -- (Ed.).
LIBERALITY OF HEART

Notes of a reading on Numbers 7

In Num. 6 we have had the Nazarite, entire separation from evil, a separation more of constraint, and therefore in one sense painful; but in this chapter another principle is brought out -- voluntary devotedness to God, called liberality of heart. Blessings were to be

on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren (Gen. 49:26).

At the close of ch. 6 we see divine blessing on his head. In Lev. 9:23, 24, there is priestly blessing following upon the offering of the sacrifice, and now, by virtue of the sacrifice, the Priest is lifting up His hands to bless, only, as Aaron, He can now bless in heavenly joy. As Melchizedek, it will be earthly joy and blessing; but He is not yet come out; but the ground of blessing being laid, the Church has it now in Spirit. When the Lord ascended, He lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples (Luke 24:50, 51). “On this wise ye shall bless them” (Num. 6:23). It is by virtue of the priestly office of Christ, blessing them, keeping them, making Jehovah’s face to shine upon them, “they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.” All that comes to the Church in blessing is from the Lordship of Christ; but the blessing that comes to the children is from the Father, on whom the name of the Father has been put, and blessing must follow. Thus we have priestly blessing after the Nazarite, and then voluntary sacrifice.

This book shows us service, not merely doing certain things, but a voluntary offering up of oneself -- a living sacrifice. Prince, in v. 2 of our chapter, means liberality. “My people shall be willing” (Psa. 110). “Willing” and “liberal” are the same word. So in the Song of Solomon (ch. 6:12), “the chariots of Ammi-nadib,” meaning a princely, willing people. Again, in 2 Cor. 8:5, Gentiles had been made willing --

They gave themselves first to the Lord.

Recognized and owned of the Lord, then comes the generosity. Grace wrought it in them, and God calls it their own voluntary will --

The liberal heart deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand {Isa. 32:8},

every man according as he purposeth in his heart (2 Cor. 8:7).

“Take it of them” (v. 5). The Spirit of God suggests to them just what is wanted, and as it is what is in every man’s heart, there is entire community with individual privilege. There is the privilege of taking ordinary and common things, and offering them to the Lord for “the service of the tabernacle.” These wagons and oxen were given to the sons of Gershon and
Merari. Theirs was the most showy and outward service, but was less intimate with God, and therefore had less real honor. Our uncomely parts have more abundant honor. Kohath had to carry on their shoulders. There might be less appearance of service; but we esteem most what we carry on our shoulders. External gift begets external honor. If God has called us to Gershon service, do it well. One priest was as near God as another, there is no difference in priesthood; but in service God giveth to every man severally as He will, and, whatever the liberality, it is just what the Lord wants.

Then, verse 10, came offerings for the altar. National liberality by individual spirituality -- “Each prince on his day.” Here again is the individual energy of the Spirit. The Lord said to Moses, “They shall offer” (v. 11), not, “Take it of them.” Now they come near; the gift is dedicated on the altar. It is the altar that gives the offering its value.

Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. Our outward service, the dedication of our lives, is thus identified with this one offering of Christ. What is thus brought to God, done in faith, offered to God Himself, is a savor of a sweet smell unto God. When the altar is finally dedicated, there is a perfect result, the twelve princes have willingly offered; so when the Church is presented to God, it is, so to speak, a perfect weight offered; and, so far as we are led of the Spirit, the result is perfect; but when flesh comes in there is disorder.

In Num. 6, we have seen, it was priestly blessing for their need; now, in v. 89, it is “to speak with Him in the tabernacle,” within, not on Sinai. God has now intercourse through Moses with a willing people, on the mercy-seat. It is there we get the communion of the mind of God according to the perfect righteousness of God in Christ. What blessed intimacy! He hears a voice in the place of grace, in the tabernacle. The tabernacle began on the ruins of the law without the camp, and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face. For us it is written, “Ye have an anunction from the Holy One, and know all things,” and, “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

SERVICE
Notes of a reading on Numbers 8

We have dwelt on separation from evil in ch. 6, and on willing-heartedness in ch. 7. In this chapter we have the light, and the manner in which it should shine forth. There are little bits of direction in the book of Numbers. Here it is about the candlestick, showing the energy of the Spirit of God in us in passing through the wilderness.

“Speak unto Aaron.” (v. 2.) The Lord is in the midst of the seven candlesticks in Rev. 1. The candlestick represents the Church by the power of the Spirit holding up the light -- “holding forth the word of life.” Gold is divine righteousness connected with or bearing upon what man is. It holds up the beauty and order of God’s truth -- holding forth truth to the world. “The seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.” The light manifested the candlestick, as well as everything else. So should it be now with the Church; not only should the light shine from it, but on it, showing what it is in the mind of God. “According to the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick,” according to the perfect mind of God.

By the Church principalities and powers in heavenly places are to learn the manifold wisdom of God. The perfect mind of God is shown in that which gives light to the world. The seven lamps were not only to light up the tabernacle, but to give light over against the candlestick. Angels are to learn in the Church the comeliness of God’s order, the energy, too, of the Holy Ghost now in the Church, not having the Holy Ghost themselves; so the woman is to have power {under authority denoted in the covering -- 1 Cor. 11} on her head because of the angels; and Paul wrote to Timothy, that he might know “how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15).

The Levites (v. 6) represent the saints in service. Priests, the Church in communion; the Levites are servants to the priests. The Levites are first offered to God (v. 13). “After that shall the Levites go in to do service” (v. 15). Here is the true character of service -- “first gave themselves to God,” then God employs them. The Levites are offered for an offering unto the Lord (v. 13), so in Rom. 15:16, “that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable.” The Church is not only a witness in the world, but an offering to God. Figuratively, Christ was waved before the Lord in Lev. 23:11; so also the Church in vv. 17, 20. The service of the Levites was entirely the consequence of their being the Lord’s. “The Levites shall be mine” (v. 14). For as it is written, “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price” (1
Cor. 6:20). It is blessed to say, “My beloved is mine”; but it is greater progress and a deeper joy to say, “I am His.”

The Levites (v. 19) represented the whole of the children of Israel; they were consecrated by the very act of the cutting off of the firstborn in Egypt. The cross of Christ is condemnation to the world, but deliverance to those who believe on Him. He suffered the judgment that we might escape it. He has bought us with a price, just as, in v. 17, “the firstborn are mine.”

In verse 10 we have another principle of offering, of great importance and blessing to the soul to observe -- the children of Israel putting their hands on the Levites, thereby identifying the offerer with the offering. In v. 12 the Levites laid their hands on the head of the sin-offering, the whole thus standing guilty before God; and on the burnt-offering, completely identifying them as accepted in all the perfectness of Christ’s sacrifice -- a savor of sweet smell to God. Like as He bore our sins, which were laid upon Him, so all our services are accepted through the burnt-offering. Laying my hand on the burnt-offering identifies me with the savor of Christ in the presence of God. In verses 10, 11 they are brought before the Lord, and are offered to Him, that they may serve Him, and all this under the direction of priestly communion. The Church is first brought to God altogether, and then set in service under spiritual priestly direction. Observe, there is no anointing here. The Levites are not only given to God, but to Aaron and his sons (v. 19), identifying them with Christ in priestly communion. We are to be servants of God under the direction of spiritual priestly communion in the sanctuary. There can be no intelligent, no reasonable, service but that which springs from priestly communion with the Lord, not merely intention of obedience. It is communion which gives power and intelligence in service. (See Acts 7:55.) Besides the positive written Word, we get the mind of God by habitual intercourse with Him -- walking with Him, and “proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” {Rom. 12:2}.

Thus shalt thou separate the Levites (v. 14). The blood which guarded the door-posts of Israel within was the token of judgment upon the Egyptians without. A Levite was not a priest, but a servant; they were not anointed, but were servants to the priests. Communion is higher than service, and it enables our service to be with power and intelligence. We are sons of God doing the work of servants here, just as Jesus when on earth was the Son of God in he place of a servant. Prophets were servants; so preaching the gospel is service; but oil inside the bowl is more blessed than the bowl. All service is inferior to communion; so our Lord said of John the Baptist, “He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” Only communion can bring true service; all else is only a flare, and will end in failure.

The age (v. 24) of twenty-five years shows maturity for service; that is, the full energy of the Spirit. Exemption from service was given as a blessing,
but keeping the charge remains. The priestly service never departs, but we get
greater in it. We, the saints now, are the offering up of the Gentiles to God
{Rom. 15:16}. True honor in service is that we are wholly the Lord’s. It is a
saying, that if an angel came down from heaven to earth, he would be as glad
to sweep the streets as to be a king, the only honor just to do what God set him
to do. We should not be seeking ourselves, but the Lord’s glory. God’s order
in His house, in the sanctuary, is the object of admiration and wonder in the
heavenly places -- the light of the Holy Ghost shining down over against the
candlestick, showing of all its beauty and perfectness after the pattern of
heavenly things.


**REMEMBRANCE OF DELIVERANCE;**
**AND GUIDANCE**

*Unrevised notes of a reading on Numbers 9*
Lapse of time comes in here; it is a year since their deliverance, and they are still in the wilderness. When the passover is understood, the present power of deliverance is a very intelligible thing (Ex. 13:3). They had been in bondage, but they were out of Egypt and in the wilderness, though not yet in Canaan. They had memory of deliverance, with toil and exercise as the fruits, because they were in the wilderness. So we have the joy and peace of deliverance, not yet rest. They were out of Egypt, but in trouble and trial. They felt it when they said, “Were there no graves in Egypt?” Herein is the exercise and often failure with us; but there is no failure on God’s part, because He brings us into the wilderness.

The passover is to be kept as an offering to the Lord (v. 7) in remembrance of, and retaining full consciousness of, their being the Lord’s delivered people. We have spiritually the principle of the thing in the Lord’s supper. There is deliverance in Christ, but trial and exercise as to the actual condition here. Unbelief may say, “We shall die in the wilderness,” but faith will always keep the passover; it thus recognizes God’s deliverance, and this is blessing. Spiritually it is an offering to the Lord, and so by communion we have present joy -- a privilege only to faith; for the deliverance has only brought us into the wilderness where we get trouble. We see in v. 9, &c., grace and holiness brought together to meet defilement. Defilement now is specially death, because, by the energy of the Spirit of God in us, sin is known in its actual power as death. God brings in the remedy where the need is, the moment it was a question of being kept back from offering to the Lord. When there is the power of the Spirit working in our souls from day to day, there will be the constant detection of sin; for what is not of the Spirit is flesh and sin, and in its power is not merely defilement, but death. They were delivered from Egypt, which was nothing but defilement, and yet they were defiled so that they could not keep the passover. Where there is any consciousness of sin, there cannot be worship. They could not come to God because they were defiled; for “holiness becometh thine house for ever.” When the Spirit is grieved there cannot be worship to God, still they were not shut out from Israel, though there must be the humiliation that owns the defilement. We can never return to the power of worship without referring to past failure. There must be humbling and purging from the sin before we can really worship, and the Lord judges of cleanness according to the energy of the life of God.

A stranger (v. 14) might keep the passover, but he must keep it according to the ordinance and the manner thereof. Grace brings us to God, but it always brings us according to what God is, and therefore never departs from the principle of holiness -- the eternal ordinance of God’s house in the Spirit. If a man is not spiritually holy, his worship is only an abomination to God. “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle” (Heb. 13:10). That is fleshly ordinances. The real privilege of God’s house is
inward holiness. In this place of worship God’s presence is found; it gives light, guidance, shelter, everything, so (v. 15) “the cloud covered the tabernacle.” God’s presence was there. Israel were to know that God brought them out of Egypt that He might dwell among them (Ex. 29:46). Hence the power of grace; for whatever is inconsistent with holiness is setting aside the purpose of redemption, “that I may dwell among them.” The Lord has given us another Comforter to abide with us for ever; and saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” is doubting the power and presence of the Spirit of God. Tempting the Lord is not mere rashness, but doing something to try whether the Lord is with us or not. The presence of the Lord is always with us for blessing, and being with us must necessarily detect sin. The cloud was always there, so that whatever they did should have been in the consciousness that the Lord was with them; the uncertainty from day to day, the want of water, &c., cast then for dependence on the Lord. The difficulties of the way taught them that God was ever nigh to help them. The Lord in His grace will ever keep us in a place of dependence for blessing to our souls. Entire dependence on God always gives entire wilderness blessing.

At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched (v. 18). So Jesus never went but where the cloud led Him to go; thus when they told Him that Lazarus was sick, He tarried two days {John 11:6}, and yet He loved Lazarus. It is important that we should not be doing what is evil only, but that what we are doing should be done because it is the Lord’s will. Not a step in my journey, but the Lord has thought about it for me, therefore “we have to run the race set before us.” If the cloud does not move we cannot move, our utter incapacity to act is our power against Satan.

Again, if I have no light on any given passage, this makes nothing of me. If we have no word from God, we can do nothing, because it is by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord that man lives. Paul did nothing for Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:27). God healed him in His own way. God charges Himself with this care of us because we are in the wilderness where there is no way, that God Himself might be our way. He will not give us a way that nature can find out; His way is only found out in communion with the Lord. When we say “There is no way,” this will throw us upon God, who will lead us in His own way. In the wilderness there are difficulties, and here is the trial of the spirituality of the saints. The moment we lose the sense of dependence on God we are left to ourselves. Then “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). It is a solemn word, “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” {Hos. 4:17}. With us it should be not merely doing God’s will, but doing it because it is God’s will.

God delivered the children of Israel that He might dwell among them in the
wilderness where there was no way; and His guidance proved that He was among them. The pillar of cloud leads by night and by day, for the day and night are both alike to Him, and to us if led by Him. Peter could no more walk on the smooth sea than on the rough without the Lord. We need willingness of mind to be always led by the Lord. We are children, and so sure of it, that we are willing to be servants. Jesus was Son of God, but took the place of a servant. It was to Him as having taken this place that Satan said, “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down,” seeking to cast a doubt on His Father’s care. The certainty of the Lord’s love gives the confidence of obedience; if I count on the Lord’s love I am cast on the Lord’s will. When Israel settled down by the palm trees, they must get up, because it was not Canaan. The Lord may give us a little rest, but we must not settle here.

By virtue of the first passover we have been brought out of Egypt and are now in the wilderness, and while there keep the passover in the knowledge of God’s love in our deliverance.

When the cloud tarried many days (v. 19) they were to keep the charge of the Lord, so while we tarry here we have but one thing to occupy us -- God; and if our “eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light.”

In this chapter we get the first movement of the armies of the Lord; but before anything is set in motion the trumpets are brought into use. They were for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camp; this was their proper but not their only use. The energy of the Spirit is here brought out in public utterance before all the congregation. As the Levites were given to the priests, so here the priests are to blow the trumpets. The priest is always the type of communion with God, and here is the character of the power of gathering: it is in the power of communion. All the testimony flowed only from the mouth of those in communion with God, the testimony of those in the sanctuary. There were three special uses of the trumpets: first, gathering the congregation together -- not here in figure the quickening power of the Spirit, but gathering; the energy of the Spirit in the power of communion bringing out the utterance of the Lord, and acting collectively, calling the assembly. Next, journeying. And when in the land “ye shall blow an alarm”; also, “In the day of your gladness and in your solemn days . . . ye shall blow,” the utterance of that which is in the mind of God. So when in war; it was not merely supplication, asking God to help them, but a memorial of their calling on God. “Be not afraid of their terror.” They were to blow an alarm; and “ye shall be remembered” in this public utterance of God’s mind; blowing an alarm because God was there to help them -- not to call the people to come and help, but calling on Israel to lean on Israel’s strength. Thus it was the power of faith in the consciousness of God’s strength, God’s presence being already there. In 1 Sam. 13:3 Saul blew a trumpet, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear.” This was not according to God’s mind; for he did not say, Let Israel hear, nor, Let God hear, but, “Let the Hebrews hear.” The Gentiles called them Hebrews; God called them Israel.

The natural effect of the trumpet was gathering them together. While in the wilderness there was no question of oppression. There might be trial, but there could only be oppression in the land. It was no privilege to be in the wilderness, it was a trial; but to have God’s presence with them was a privilege. We are in these days leaving the wilderness; we know very little about war, it is more getting out of the world into the wilderness. The natural use of the trumpet was gathering the assembly together, to move onward according to the power of God’s presence, which was with them, and not for
We may get oppression by unfaithfulness. The apostles were occupied with
the calling of assemblies -- the souls of men. They never said a word against
the high priest; but when they were called before rulers said, “Whether it be
right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye,” giving no heed to the
opposition of men. The saints are not to be “fenced with a spear,” but to
exercise and manifest grace. When the tares were found in the field, the
servants were not to root them up, but let them grow, because they were not
to exercise judgment, but grace. The fishermen gathered the good fish into
vessels; their business was with the good fish. The consequence of blowing the
trumpet, though it might arouse the enemy, was to bring in God.

In v. 10 there is another use of the trumpet, the utterance recognizing God
and the people. “Blow up the trumpet in the new moon” (Psa. 81:3); the old
moon had passed away, and now it is the new moon. “Thou calledst in trouble,
and I delivered thee” (v. 7); but now it is “the day of their gladness,” and they
“sing aloud to God their strength” (v. 1). In Lev. 23 we have first the Sabbath,
then the passover and feast of unleavened bread, the waving of the sheaf of
first-fruits and Pentecost; but Israel is left until the seventh month. “Speak unto
the children of Israel in the seventh month, ye shall have a memorial of
blowing of trumpets,” then the feast of tabernacles, the day of gladness (v. 24).

Note the sovereignty of God in ordering their journeyings; the directions
here are more minute than in the beginning of the book, as showing the energy
of the Spirit more than occupation with outward order. In ch. 2 it is simply,
“Then the tabernacle in their midst”; here more detail. In Psa. 80:2, “Before
Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength,” calling on God to
act as in those days. The proper place of the ark was in the center, but it went
before them; and so in Josh. 3:4, “A way they had not passed heretofore” --
death. We have the power and presence of Jesus with us in our journey and our
worship. If we are resting, it is to learn God; if journeying, it is for the display
of God’s power in ordering. Among them ought to have been the resting-place
of the ark; God’s sovereign goodness takes its own place, beyond all set order,
in seeking a resting-place for them. Thus it is now, when He putteth forth His
own sheep He goeth before them; or resting, “Where two or three are gathered
together {unto my name}, there am I {in the midst of them}.” In v. 35, “Let
them that hate thee flee before thee,” not those that hate us. Faith blows the
trumpet, the battle is the Lord’s. Then, when it is resting, “Return thou unto
the many thousands of Israel.”
THE FAILURE OF THE FLESH

Notes of a reading on Numbers 11

In Num. 6, 7, 8, and 9, we have had the energy of the Spirit of God in us while passing through the wilderness, and in the tenth the ark going before the children of Israel to seek out a place of rest for them -- the only journey of which the Lord in this way was the conductor. In this eleventh chapter we have the history of the failure of the flesh. The whole Bible is just the history of the grace and faithfulness of God, and of the failure of man. The very purpose for which the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt was, that He might dwell among them; and if difficulties arose, then it was,

Rise up, Lord: let them that hate thee flee before thee;
or resting,

Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.

But there was nothing in this to satisfy the natural man; flesh cannot feed on the manna. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” “The people complained” (v. 1). Whenever there is complaint in the heart, the flesh is at work. “It displeased the Lord.” God being present with us, it is evident we are not satisfied with Him when there is complaining of heart. God has now sent down the Holy Ghost, that “He may abide with us for ever.” But the flesh has all sorts of cravings which are contrary to the Spirit, nor can it find anything in the Spirit of God to satisfy it. If, therefore, we have murmuring and complaining of heart, we are not satisfied with what is of the Spirit of God. The heart has got away from God, and has not Him for its portion. Then the flesh is at work. A soul feeding on the Lord will not complain. It may be tried; then it will cry to the Lord.

They cried unto thee, and were delivered.

But complaining is just saying to God, “You are not enough for me.” Trial of heart does not produce complaint; it may bring forth humiliation. “The Lord heard it, and His anger was kindled.” At first it was only a partial chastening, consuming those who were in the uttermost part of the camp. They had got away from the consciousness of His presence, and if they would not know His presence in joy, they must know it in judgment and chastening.

The mixed multitude (v. 4) had no possession in Canaan; they “fell a lusting.” When the saints are associated with the world many thereby are defiled. “The children of Israel wept again.” They were looking for present ease and comfort, good things here, not longing for Canaan. We remember (v. 5); now they were lusting like the mixed multitude.

Evil communications corrupt good manners.

They had in heart turned back to Egypt, and, the flesh working in them, could
recount all the good things which the flesh had in Egypt; and when Satan is thus drawing us back to the world, we never remember the deliverance, but what we lost by the deliverance. *Then* Pharaoh is most bountiful. Instead of crying, out by reason of hard bondage, we remember the fish we did eat in Egypt *freely*. This was deception; for they ate it in bondage. We can remember the things of the flesh, but not the things of the Spirit. I may remember that I was happy in communion yesterday, but I must be under the present power of the Holy Ghost to remember what Christ is. The food of yesterday will not do for to-day. When under the power of present communion, we are sometimes ready to say, “My mountain stands strong; I shall never be moved.” When we’ve lost that communion, all the joy we had in it is gone. It is a constant life of faith in present exercise by the Spirit. When the saint gets into the world all things appear lovely, but then their souls are murmuring and unhappy. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides manna (v. 6). They did not say that the manna was not there, but there was nothing else. So with us. It is not that Christ is not there, but saying that *He* will not satisfy us now in the wilderness, where we have nothing at all before our eyes but Christ to feed upon.

“The anger of the Lord was greatly kindled” (v. 10). Moses said (v.11), “Wherefore hast thou laid this burden upon me?” Wretched me: here his faith broke down. Nor does he now say “thy people,” but lays the burden on his own shoulder and breaks down; for when “I,” proud flesh, did not count upon the Lord’s love, but he began to make himself of importance, he failed. It was true Moses had been sent to deliver Israel, but it was God still; and when Moses got in the flesh, and thought it was his work and strength, he did not count on God’s love. “Have I conceived all this people?” Now in the matter of the golden calf he identified God with the people. Then he did not fail. And when they first murmured (v. 2), he prayed unto the Lord, but now in the general failure his own faith failed. The Lord pitied His servant, and provided for it by putting some of his honor on others and taking it from him. When the heart gets off the ground of love, it counts on sorrow. “Let me not see my wretchedness” (v. 15). Then (v. 17) God takes from the proper honor of Moses (the life of faith), and puts it on others to share it with him. Himself alone in immediate communion with God, such is the proper honor of the life of faith. In the Church, it is to bear others’ burdens. So with the Lord. “All the vessels of His Father’s house laid on Him.” True honor is to suffer, bearing others’ burdens without comfort from any but God. How different the mind of Moses when *alone* with God’s counsels, but now “not thyself alone” (v. 17). In the matter of the spies he said, “Thou broughtest up this people.” “And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word” (Num. 14:20), because he referred it all to God’s glory. There was chastening of the people and merciful dealing with Moses, but with loss of honor, because of the want of the energy of faith. It was not lust in him, but despising the competency of
God to guide and help. Though the Church may have lost the honor of the first glory, the Spirit is competent to bless and guide it now. The Lord may not “restore counselors as at the first”; and though He will not bear with present evil, yet present evil does not put the Lord away. If we are saying, “Is the Lord among us?” it is despising the presence of the Lord among His people, and arises from losing the joy of His presence, and then forgetting the power of His presence.

When Moses’ faith fails, then he begins to reason (vv. 21, 22). In this he limited the Holy One of Israel; for, whatever Israel’s sin had been, the Lord’s hand was not shortened. No matter what the difficulty, we must not limit the present power of the Holy One to carry us through the wilderness.

Eldad and Medad prophesied; it was outside the order God had set up. So when some preached Christ of contention, Paul was glad of it because Christ was preached. “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets!” Whenever the Lord acts by the holy power of truth, let us say, “The Lord glorify Himself.” It is God’s prerogative to act contrary to His set order, and for us to bow to it. In the midst of failure, the energy of the Spirit of God will act spite of the failure.

In vv. 31-33 there is a further testimony that the Lord was among them. It was love gave the quails, and they ought to have said, “How could we ever doubt the love of God?” but such was their persevering lust, that on they go to gratify it. It was this brought the anger of the Lord; for while the flesh was yet between their teeth the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and He smote them with a great plague. Thus we have the failure of Israel, their dissatisfaction with their portion in Christ, their complaining, and the heart going back to the world. Then the failure of Moses; losing the sense of the Lord’s presence, with want of confidence in the energy of the Lord to bear all the burdens of His people.


**POWER FOR CONFLICT**

*Joshua 3*

This chapter begins the testimony about the work of power which the book of Joshua presents to us. The books of the Old Testament bring before our souls certain features or characters of the dealings of God with us. In Genesis we have all the great fundamental principles brought out, such as the first Adam,
the type of the last Adam; Abraham, the father of the faithful; Isaac, the Son in a figure risen from the dead; and we get these types and figures of God’s thoughts all through the book. In Exodus we have the priesthood brought out, and in Leviticus all that is connected with their service. Numbers is the path of faith through the wilderness, though we often see failure in it because of unbelief. In Joshua it is Christ in the energy of the Spirit leading His people through conflicts with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. Here too failure came in through human weakness and folly. And in Judges the failure and break-down of Israel when in possession of their privileges. In Joshua we see the way Christ acts in the power of the Spirit in them, in obtaining their privileges. Saints are now under the leading and guidance of Christ by the Spirit, so in this book (5:14). Christ comes as Captain of the Lord’s host, because the Canaanite was still in the land.

As Jesus was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, so the conflicts of the saints are under the guidance of Christ by the Spirit in us, therefore there are many things, as regards the conflicts we are now in, which it will be of much blessing to our souls to notice, as they teach us our entire dependence on God in every step of the way. The first thing we find here is Jordan standing in the way. This doubtless refers primarily to Israel in the latter day, when the power of evil will over-flow its banks, and Israel will have to be restored as through death by divine power. In Numbers it is patience in going through the world. In Joshua spiritual energy in taking possession by conquest of that which is in the enemy’s hand, thus enabling us to realize those things which we should never have known but through this divine power in our souls. Thus Joshua is the energy of the Spirit, and not the patience of the Spirit as in Numbers.

Redemption brings us out of Egypt into the wilderness through the Red Sea; that is, through death and resurrection. Then, being brought home to God, they have the knowledge of being a people with Him; for “the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them no more for ever.” And they sing the song of triumph and deliverance from Egypt, as brought home to God, before they begin their journey as a redeemed people through the wilderness. There are two points connected with this.

1st. The Lord declares Himself holy, as in the “burning bush” and the bush not consumed.

2nd. Besides the holiness of His nature, He takes a covenant relationship in the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

The proper place of the ark was in the center of Israel, with all Israel around it, “to keep the charge of the Lord.” And this is what we are called to do -- to watch for the Lord’s honor. But when Israel are taking a journey, then the ark quits its place of being kept by Israel, and goes before to seek out a resting
place for them. God thus takes His place as going before them on their journey.

God is not a consuming fire out of His people till the day of judgment, but He is now a consuming fire in His people. The patience of grace is going on with the world now, though “everyone shall be salted with fire” -- His people and the world too. Now in the midst of His people His fire is working. His people are offered up to God in Christ first, and then they are salted with fire. The spiritual energy of divine grace is not absent, but the holiness of God in judgment is now in His house, not out of it. God’s fire, although burning in the bush, did not consume it, neither does the fire with which the saint is salted consume the saint. The Lord presents Himself in the burning bush as the Holy One, but as come to redeem; and they were to come back to the bush -- the place where He was -- and serve Him on that mountain. God started from the bush, and everything contrary to His will must be consumed. The Father judgeth every man sojourning here in the wilderness state; therefore we ought to judge ourselves first in divine intelligence. Redemption was not by the ark, but by the rod on the sea; but when they started from Sinai, where God had made them His people, then the ark of the covenant of the Lord goes before them. So when we have been brought to God and made His people, we are afterwards brought to the place His hands have made. We have come to God, but not yet to the place His hands have made, for we are not yet come to our Father’s house; but being brought to God we start from the place of His presence to go through the wilderness. All the dealings of God are centered round the work of Christ. The God of holiness having brought them to Himself, His ark goes before them a three days’ journey, seeking rest for them, and they follow on as the people of His choice, enjoying the knowledge of His presence with them -- He going before and leading them on, and giving them patience in the way. “For ye have need of patience” to go round this wilderness. We have not got the world, neither have we got Canaan; -- so if we are not contented with the manna we have nothing.

At the end of Numbers we see the Lord declaring, when Satan sought to curse Israel by the mouth of Balaam, that He beheld no iniquity in Jacob, nor saw perverseness in Israel; still they do not come into the land yet. Numbers ends in failure, but in an unqualified determination to bring them into Canaan. Acceptance is past, but getting into Canaan is another thing. Moses could not take them into Canaan, and the book of Joshua goes on practically where Numbers ceased. In Joshua is the fact that they get into Canaan; for in the details of this book we get in figure the heavenly condition of the saints now, as in Ephesians -- “Sitting in heavenly places in Christ,” but having our conflicts there, too, with wicked spirits. The book of Joshua then shows the heavenly path of the saint’s life now, while the book of Numbers is the earthly path. The Red Sea was death and resurrection by which Israel was brought to
God, whereas Jordan is the saint’s moral death -- death and resurrection in spiritual power. As such the saint is under the Captain of our salvation -- the warrior Christ in spiritual energy. The more the saint realizes what it is to go through Jordan, the great power of evil overflowing its banks so that there is no fordable place to put one’s foot upon, the deeper will be the sense of the conflict; but it is all swept away so that there is no passing through the water at all. To have a heavenly life here, or enjoy a heavenly life hereafter, nature must pass through death. When flesh came to deal with Satan then there were giants, and the Israelites were but as grasshoppers, and they could not go up; so God has to take them round another way.

The ark takes the first place on the journey of death to lead God’s people into it, because through death and resurrection is “the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore”; that is, nature or flesh had never passed that way before. But now ye must go through this Jordan with the whole power of death overflowing all its banks. Therefore, when ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God remove, “ye shall remove from your place and go after it”; that is, seeing Christ passing through the very same circumstances first, we must remove from our place of fleshly ease and follow after Him. But there is another thing true to us -- that the power of spiritual life can only be enjoyed so far as we are dead to the world, and entering with spiritual energy into the conflict. Therefore the apostle, having the sentence of death in himself, could go into the conflict saying, “I am a dead man trusting the living God.” You cannot pass through Jordan without going into it; you cannot fly over it. It must be passed through by the feet; but then Christ passed through before us. We do not learn to pass through Jordan when in it; we learn it before. It will not do to enter Jordan by natural effort; it must be by the power of Christ’s presence in the place of death. When we have courage to follow Christ, then we find Christ, and there is no Jordan at all. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were raised in the world by being in Nebuchadnezzar’s court, and therefore got into the fire; but being faithful they found the Lord there, and no fire at all. The moment the priests’ feet touch the waters, the waters cease. Were we to attempt to go through Jordan in our own power, we should be drowned; but when in the power of Christ, when we behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passing over before into Jordan, then we find the water all gone. We are called to take the place in resurrection which Christ has taken, and death has no more dominion over Him. Nearness to God in the place of death is divine power in the saint. The flesh would be drowned by the water overflowing its banks unless there be the manifestation of the superior power of Christ over it.

In John 18, when Judas and the band of men and officers came to take Jesus, He said, “Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth”; and as soon as He said unto them “I am He,” they went backward and fell to the
ground, thus manifesting the superiority of divine life in a man over the whole power of evil. Therefore we do not get the scene in Gethsemane in this gospel, because it is the Son of God passing onward in divine energy; consequently the waters even do not touch His feet, and the whole power of evil falls down before Him. When we find our feet touching the waters of death, it is the power of the divine life of Christ over the waters of Jordan exhibited in us; for the priests were to “stand still in Jordan.” To the people Joshua said, “Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out before you the Canaanites . . . from the land.” It was but enumerating the catalogue of things which were to be the occasion of manifesting the divine power. “The priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan until all the people were passed clean over Jordan”; so the power of Christ is there until every one is gone over. If our souls are occupied about going through Jordan, we shall never be able to venture into it; but if we see Christ there, and follow Him without thinking about Jordan, but only about Him, we shall pass right through, and find no Jordan at all.

To Joshua, when the Lord was acting in the midst of His people as Captain of the Lord’s host, He said, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.”

The Lord does not bring them immediately into conflict, but first gives them the corn of the land -- the natural growth of the country -- and the manna ceases; for they are now at home. Thus we have not merely the strength we need to get through the evil, but the enjoyment of feeding on that which is the fruit of the land itself -- feeding on Christ in heaven. They are circumcised, keep the passover, and eat the corn of the land: the reproach of Egypt is rolled away. When we have the taste for heavenly things, we disrelish that which savors of the reproach of Egypt; but there must always be the getting back to Gilgal. From thence begin their conflicts. Then there is the Captain of the Lord’s host; for if we enter into conflict without the spirit of dependence we shall fail; there may be undetected sin, which dependence and nearness to God would have brought to light and put away. There was more trouble in conquering Ai by stratagem than if they had gone up trusting in God.

May the Lord teach us how to walk in the spirit of lowliness, and as having full confidence in Him all the way that yet remains before us, seeing it is a path we have not trod heretofore.


**THE CALL OF ABRAM**

*Genesis 12:1-10*
The call of Abram, the father of the faithful, is evidently of special importance in this respect, that it is the first public separation of one called out of this world, and this gives a very particular position to the one so called out. The people of God were always morally, and must necessarily be, a people separate from the world. But Abram was the expression of something different. He was not merely to be a godly man in his family, but a godly man called out of his family. It was God exercising and establishing a title over those He had morally and spiritually called which broke the ties of nature, claiming them and calling them out into public testimony of separation. This distinguished the call of Abram -- the public assertion of the claims of God over His people. The call of Israel out of Egypt is somewhat analogous, though it was not said to Israel, “Come out,” but to Pharaoh, “Let my people go,” because it was the assertion of the right of power over the prince of this world regarding God’s own people. Therefore it was said to Pharaoh, “Let my people go,” and on his refusing to do this God shows His power in redemption -- first by blood, then by leading them out by the Red Sea. Thus it was not in the case of Israel the invitation of the power of grace to those who were its subjects, to break the tie, but the assertion of the power of God over the enemy, breaking down every claim of the world. In the case of Abram it was not precisely that, it was an address to Abram himself the claim of God over the person thus called. It was love working, not a claim of power. It was grace made effectual in its working in the heart of Abram.

For a time, however, the tie of nature was not broken: Abram went out with Terah his father. He did not leave his father’s house, he lingered after something; he did not fully surrender himself to the Lord’s will at once, and therefore the Lord could not show him the land of Canaan. Abram had left a great deal, but he stopped short of Canaan. It is true he had left his country and his kindred, but he had not left the nearest tie -- of nature -- his father’s house -- therefore God could not show Canaan to him while he was clinging to Terah, and going but half way with God. Thus he stays in Haran. So it is with us, if there is still cleaving to us a desire after that which naturally belongs to us, there will not be the full entering into those things that God is ready and waiting to show us. All the communications of God to Abram, as to what Canaan was, took place after, or consequent on, his arrival in Canaan. God puts the position he is to be in, in direct contrast with natural ties; He said to Abram,

Get thee out into a land that I will show thee.

He knew that natural ties were mixed up with what Abram had to leave, but he was to leave his country and all, having no other warrant for it but God’s word. God had called him, and the call implied a claim. It was not merely the question of the public government of the world, Abram is entirely separated from that; he is to be a stranger to his father’s house, and a stranger still when
brought into Canaan. It was the Lord’s love resting on an individual, and associating him with all that he had in His mind, and putting him into the place of all the promises of blessing. We see what he was called out from Josh. 24:2:

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

Men were not merely wicked, but God having manifested in the deluge the power of government in the world, Satan got hold of that power in the minds of men, who were thus led to worship devils, to whom they ascribed the power, and not to God.

It was this which formed the occasion of this public testimony for God in separating Abram from all around him; it separated him totally from every tie which was recognized in the world. He was not merely to be righteous and to be a worshiper, all that is true, but he was to be connected in his own person with a glory the world had lost sight of, for it had put the devil in God’s place; thus it says in Acts 7:2, “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham.” God calls Abram out from the world to a glory set before him. Glory is revealed, and one called out by the knowledge of it. We have thus in principle the public call of God of the heirs of glory out of the world; the world is not set right, but left just as it was, and we find now a special link of connection set up between God and Abram. God reveals Himself to him, and says,

Come out unto a land that I will show thee.

The life of Abram depended on a present communication from God, an immediate present connection between himself and God, which was to be kept up by the Lord making good all He has promised. So the Lord reveals Himself to our souls, and gives His word as a sure ground of our conduct; and, blessed be God, we can count upon His infallible faithfulness, and live by faith in daily, constant, unceasing dependence on Him, to lead on to the possession of the desires of our hearts. But we find also that the Lord’s promises involved the acting of Abram likewise, for while he does not leave Terah, God cannot bring him into Canaan. He could not enjoy Terah and Canaan together. God took care of that; if the father’s house be not left, Canaan cannot be shown. The blessing to faith is only found in the path of faith. God’s call gives the warrant for acting, and so far as Abram acts in dependence on God, the promises are made good to him.

In all that is spoken of Canaan, it is not rest that is before us. Look at the book of Joshua; there it is conflict. Does Abram get rest? He had not so much as to set his foot upon, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob -- a heavenly position, but with conflict {which} he gets as soon as he had left Terah, and come into the land of Canaan; for the Canaanites are still there. The thing that
God calls us to do not get now, and that which marks the completion of Christ’s work is that He sat down. We sit down in heavenly places in Christ; but do we get rest? No; we have to fight with wicked spirits in heavenly places. The saint is called into a place of rest, but as yet gets nothing. Thus we see that the worship of devils was not set aside, but that Abram was called out and brought into the promised land; but not to rest, because the Canaanites were there.

“And the Lord appeared unto Abram” (v. 7). He now appears to him in the land. It is not the call which sets us in the place of worship; but as soon as we enter the land, then we can worship, because our relationship with God is known and settled and enjoyed. Before it is the walk of faith; but that is not worship. So we, as seated in the heavenly places, can worship, knowing our relationship as sons.

And there built he an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord.

In Heb. 11:8-10 we get three things as regards the power of faith in Abram.

1st (v. 8),

By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

He went in simple present dependence, leaning on the promise of God. There was the life of faith.

2nd, when in the land (v. 9),

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

The Lord’s appearing to him was the foundation of his worship, the Lord known in the land; and there he built his altar. The Lord further explains His purposes and intentions to him, and how they were to be accomplished. Thus he got prophetic knowledge. But it was not this which sustained Abram’s soul. He could say, “I know now how it is all to be accomplished. It is in my seed, and not in myself. I am a stranger here.” How then was his soul sustained while he was a stranger?

3rd (v.10),

He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Thus Abram’s soul was not merely brought to worship, but he was sustained by a closer communion with that God who had chosen him, in faith that He would build the city Himself.

I have been struck that, in Rev. 4 where, speaking of the throne of God’s government, there are peoples, and angels, and assemblies, and living
creatures, &c., a whole population there; but when I come to the heavenly city (Rev. 21), there is a high wall, and streets, and gates of pearl; but where are the people? No one there, because the people are lost in the idea of the glory of God and the Lamb, and nothing else is thought of (though we know it is the Lamb’s bride), for God and the Lamb are there. It was looking for this city which made Abram a pilgrim and a stranger. The world could not understand him, and might have said, “Now Abram is in the land, what has he got?” Nothing; for he could not explain to them how it was, but he had seen by faith that city of which God was the builder. We see then Abram is called, and having by faith entered into the conditions of the calling, he gets into the land, and when there he has a present revelation of the Lord, which is the ground of his worship; but it is not rest, the Canaanite being there.

If God has called me out, I must leave the world just as it is, and not think of setting that right. God has called me out of the world into connection with Himself, and I cannot connect any natural tie with such an association. You cannot hold relationship with Christ and the world at the same time. The worship of God is founded on the knowledge of the heavenly position we are in, being called out of the world into fellowship with Himself. We have not a single thing in common with the world. We can sit and sing of redemption, just as if we were now in heaven. My relationships with God will not be in the least changed when I get home; they will be just the same then as they are now; and there is no ground upon which we shall be there that we are not upon now. He has set us in Christ, and we can say, as in Deut. 36:3, “I profess this day unto the Lord thy God that I am come unto the country”; not shall come. We are there, and have the understanding of how God will accomplish His promises -- “in thy seed.” Not the earthly rest in the fulfilment of promise to man, but heavenly rest where He dwells, where the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof -- that is where He has brought us.

God says to Abram, “I will show thee,” “I will bless thee.” Thus it is now a particular relationship on a new ground with persons He has called, and has its existence, in separation from the world. It is well for our souls to have the relationship into which we are called distinctly before our minds; that we may know how to worship and be sustained by the strength which it supplies. And if the foundations of the earth are out of course, I am not of it. Having the sentence of death in myself, I shall not fear death; but we shall have the comfort and joy of the place we belong to. The sweetness of a calm is better known when the storm is raging without. May the Lord give us the true revelation of Himself.

There is need of building by the Word, but the earliest fruit of an awakened soul will be feeling, not knowledge, and this will become feeble and unhealthy if not fed by Christ and the Word. But this process went on at first, and has given the Epistles; but we see the weakness which may accompany it -- they would have given their eyes, but did not hold fast justification by faith. All this needs the continual work of the ministry, not to make a fuss about the first feelings, the flowers which precede the fruit, but to labor therein to feed the soul.

As to conversions in singing, there is nothing at all unscriptural. If the truth is in the hymn spoken of with divine affections for souls, affections expressed respecting a truth already outwardly admitted, it is quite within the ways and operation of the Spirit of God to act on the soul in a quickening way by it, not without truth, but by truth so addressed to the soul.

I do not say that the work will be there as deep, or the foundation as solidly laid at the moment for after-exercises, as if it was the direct application of the Word by the Holy Ghost to the conscience, but the heart receives Christ convincingly and lovingly so as to live. I have ever said that the smallest atom of Christ suffices for the Holy Ghost to quicken by, if it be really Him. No doubt a profound conviction of sin by the Word casts off a mass of imaginings of the flesh by a deeper inward work which such a conversion leaves undiscovered. But if God works, He will do His own work, and bring it to a good issue.

THE PATH OF FAITH

Titus 2:11-13

It is a great thing for us to know where we are, beloved -- our place and condition in the sight of God; and then to know what God has declared concerning us, not only as to our condition at the present moment, but as to our whole past in the place wherein we find ourselves. It is not enough to know that God has visited us in grace, but also what is the actual result of the grace that has thus visited us; and while called upon to hold fast the great principles connected with the ground on which God at first set us, we may not be able to apply those principles to our present circumstances. Where the original ground has been departed from they are not applicable; still to the path of faith they have their application. We find this exemplified in the history of Israel. In Hezekiah’s time, when Jerusalem was threatened with destruction, the Lord said of the king of Assyria,

He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there . . . for I will defend it;

whereas afterward, with the certainty of judgment coming upon the city, the man that would save his life must go out of it. In the one case it was the place of safety. God was not dealing in judgment at the time. In the other there is wonderful difference, not that the relation and mind of God toward His people had altered in any way, or ever will alter -- “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance”; but the condition of the people was entirely different. What I want you to notice is, that the conduct of the faithful was exactly opposite. They abode in Jerusalem in Hezekiah’s time. To have done so when the Lord had given it up would have been certain judgment.

We have to know where we are so as to see what the bearing of the word of God is to us in the position we hold. Now suppose we take the beginning of the Acts, and read what is there said about the Church, we find the Lord adding to the assembly daily -- the multitude of believers of one heart and soul -- all things common, and so on. They went about in the power of the Holy Ghost, and when they came together the place was shaken where they were assembled. Do we find such a state of things now? If I take all the denominations of professing Christians -- the Roman Catholic as well -- I find none to correspond to it; all are mixed up with evil. Still God has His Church, and knows His Church; but we need spiritual discernment to see where we are, and to perceive the ways and will of God in the circumstances.

13. This is a verbatim report of a lecture given at Edinburgh, by J. N. D., in October, 1873. The reader will at once perceive its special importance and application. -- (Ed.).
Another thing we have to take into account is, that wherever God sets up anything with which the responsibility of man is associated the first thing man does is to spoil it. Take, for instance, Adam in Eden. There we have man created innocent, and put under the test of obedience. He falls, and is driven out: that, in a moral sense, is a total end of him, though not of God’s dealing in patience with him. Take again Noah after the flood. What is the first thing he does? The world had been put into his care, under his government, as we say, and one of the first things he did was to get drunk. Instead of influencing others for good he makes himself a disgrace, and brings a curse upon his children; upon Canaan and his posterity. Take again Israel in the wilderness. There I get the law -- another of God’s dealings with man in responsibility -- and Moses coming down from the mount to find the people already sunk in idolatry! But enough has been said to show that the whole merit upon man’s side is gone. The establishment of monarchy but confirmed this. When the house of David reigned, strange women took away their hearts; when Nebuchadnezzar reigned, the golden image was set up, the kingdom was taken from him, and the beast’s heart was given to him. So that while we find God uniform in faithfulness, in patient mercy sustaining His people in trial, we find also the constant, uniform way of man is to upset that which God has set up.

Nor, when we come to the Church, do we find it otherwise. Before the canon of Scripture closes the working of this principle is manifest. It is well to mark this. Without doing so it is impossible to walk with any knowledge of our position. The Church had already failed. Nevertheless God has gone on with it in faithfulness and longsuffering ever since. Just as with Israel. In the days of Isaiah we read, “The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing,” and so on; yet the predicted judgment was not fulfilled for eight hundred years. The Lord forbore with them, and even when there was no remedy He still went on with various testimonies to them by the prophets. The faithfulness of God is infallible; but if we apply this truth to existing circumstances, so as to sanction the evil man has brought in, the whole principle is gone, and we find ourselves exactly in the position of those who in Jeremiah’s time were found crying, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.” They were counting upon the infallible faithfulness of God at the very moment He was dealing in judgment with them, and the end of it was ruin, just as it will be with us if we leave out the sense of our responsibility. Again, in Isaiah, the remnant were told to

look to the rock from whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence they were digged --

thus reminded that Abraham was alone when God called him, and gave him the promise that his seed should be “as the stars of heaven for multitude.” So now, although they were alone, God was faithful, and, as He had blessed Abraham, would bless them; but in Ezekiel, when seeking to apply this principle, “Abraham was one,” they said, “and he inherited the land: but we are many;
the land is given us for inheritance," they misapprehended the condition in which God regarded them. *If we leave out the sense and apprehension of our condition we utterly want spiritual intelligence.*

Now I think we are in the “last days.” And I sometimes question if people weigh the full force of that. I could show you from Scripture that the Church, as a responsible system, was -- even from the very outset -- that which had got into the condition of judgment. A mistake that thousands are now slipping into is, that the Church judges, teaches, does this, does that; but if we take the word of God, we find that God has judged the Church. Yet His long-suffering and patience have borne with it as with Israel. What we have to look in the face is this. Man in responsibility is a uniform failure, and the Church has not escaped the effect of that principle. God, in His sovereign mercy, allowed evil to come up; so that before the closing of the Word He might give us His judgment upon it. Look at the epistle of Jude:

Beloved, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

There is the faith in danger already. They were to contend for that which was slipping from them.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, v. 14, “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these” -- that is, those persons he speaks of -- “saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all,” &c.; thus showing, that those “certain men,” who had then come in, were the persons God had spoken of executing judgment upon, and showing too, that, at the very starting-point of the Church’s history, sufficient evil was evinced to call for the revelation that the ground of judgment was already there. Take the first epistle of John, and you get further:

Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time {1 John 2:18}.

Notice, that it is not the coming of Christ, but antichrist, and departure from the truth, that characterizes the last time. The Church of God hardly acknowledges that. In the following verses we read,

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might he made manifest that they were not of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

It is as if he would say, “Do not let these things discourage you; you have got
that which enables you to be for God even in such circumstances.” And what was the practical state of the Church as we find it elsewhere in the Word? Paul, in the epistle to the Philippians, says,

I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.

That is what the apostle says of the Church of God at the time he wrote; a sad testimony indeed. And again, in the second epistle to Timothy,

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

And Peter, in his first epistle, says,

The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.

I have quoted these passages to show that even then -- what was quite true at the beginning, but more manifest at that time -- the Spirit of God could, and did, discern and testify of that which was the ground of final judgment, and testify, too, that the Church was already in the place of judgment. Nothing shows this so exceeding strongly as the epistles to the seven churches in the revelation. There we get the Church in its entire history. I do not refer to that now; but I wish to call your attention to the ever-recurring injunction,

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

There is one thing -- to my mind a very solemn thing -- here. It is this. Christ is not looked at as the Head of the body. (That He is so is nevertheless true. It is His own blessed place for ever and ever, thank God.) But it is not in that character He is here seen; neither is it as the Father and the Son made known to us by the Holy Ghost, as in the epistles; nor yet in the character of a servant, as when “he took a towel and girded Himself, and began to wash His disciples’ feet.” But He is here seen walking in the midst of the candlesticks, judging their state, finding something to approve of and much to disapprove of; and consequently we get that condition of the Church brought out which makes it subject to the judgment. Then our ear is called to listen to what He has said; that is, as an individual I have to consider the state of things in which I find myself, and judge of it according to Christ’s word. A very serious thing it is to find that, even at that time, the beautiful plant that God had just planted was impaired by man. Not that the blessings had been withdrawn; but the condition of the Church was not what it had been when the blessings were put into the hands of men. Now that they had got the blessings, they were responsible for the use they made of them. Look at Thessalonians. There you get their “work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope”; whereas here you get, “I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience.” Where was their faith, their love, their hope? “Ah!” he says, “you have left your first love”; that is, the condition in which they were when He put them into this responsibility. He deals with them in view of the blessings He had given them. “You have left your first love,” He says; “now, if you do not repent, I will come and take
"your candlestick away"; so executing the judgment which Peter said must begin at the house of God. In this the apostle alluded to Ezekiel:

Slay utterly old and young, and begin at my sanctuary.

It was only the beginning of judgment; for -- not the Church merely, but -- the whole world has been judged.

The Church of God was set to be the epistle of Christ in the world, and as such utterly failed. Not but that individuals may be found in the path of faith, and walking blessedly, like Elijah. In his day the whole land was given to idolatry; nevertheless God could find seven thousand in Israel whose knees had not bowed unto Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed him. It is not that individuals are not to be found walking in obedience; but that the state of things in which they walk is totally depraved. Such was the state of things in which Elijah found himself. And God sustained him, and greatly blessed him; and we think of him as one of those two who were taken up to heaven without dying. And such is the state of things in which we find ourselves. Surely, beloved, our hearts ought to be thoroughly bowed with the thought that what was so blessed, so beautiful, so perfect, should have been so marred at the very outset. How much more when we see what it has all come to! And why such failure? The strength of God was there, but they did not count upon it, and they constantly gave way; just like the ten spies, when they saw the walled cities and the children of Anak. But it is very important for us to know that, although the Church has utterly failed, the strength of God does not fail. Christ is quite as sufficient as at first; and though the first condition of the Church be lost, all the strength, all the blessing, is as sure to the grasp of faith as ever.

Now mark another thing -- a most striking principle in the ways of God -- that is, power in the midst of evil. Earth is its sphere of action, not heaven. In heaven there will be no evil, but all will be blessedness and brightness; nothing to overcome, nothing to watch against, nothing to do with evil. But it is now that we have the power of the Spirit, when evil and darkness are on every hand. Take the Acts again. Read the whole beginning of the Church. See how every difficulty brings out the power of the Spirit, as it brings out the need of the saints. They suffered persecution, and had power to endure it.

And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (Notice that it is not said, "Every Christian shall suffer," but, "All that will live godly.") There we get also the power of the Spirit in miracles, as we have it in the person of Christ before His death. He had power in Himself, doubtless; but, as the dependent One, He received power for His walk. We are told that

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

A display of God like this could not fail to draw out the hostility of the carnal
mind. As He said,

They have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

And the end was -- they crucified Him. When He comes again it will be the coming of good in power -- power to overcome the evil, to confine Satan. Then “they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree.” But now we have good in the midst of evil; and so long as Satan is the prince of this world, if the two things get mixed up, the evil swamps the good. You see this in the parable of the virgins. The wise and the foolish go together, and the consequence is, they all sleep; and the moment they awake, and trim their lamps, they go together again. Still linked with evil, they fall under the power of evil. Yet the apostle says,

Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.

For an illustration of this, take Israel in the time of Joshua. Joshua’s time is a time of power. Jericho is taken; but evil is allowed to come in, and before Ai they fail. Then, going back to Gilgal, they get fresh power. Their enemies are subdued; the walled cities, the children of Anak, are as nothing before them -- they overcome all. There we have good in the midst of evil, with power carrying on the good, and putting down the evil. In Judges it is the converse. They are still God’s people; but the power is on the side of the evil. How was this? They had gone up from Gilgal (i.e. “Rolling away”) to Bochim (i.e. “Weeping”). Formerly Joshua and all Israel had gone back to the death of the flesh; for that is what we have in figure in Gilgal. There they received power. It just means this: they had crossed Jordan; had come into Canaan, the place of power; and the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. But in Bochim we get another thing. They were still God’s people. His power was there, His angel was there; but it was a time of weakness. There is a lesson for us here, beloved. If we do not go back to the true annihilation of self in the Lord’s presence, we cannot come out with power. Take the case of any ministering saint. He will break down, he will fail; he must renew his strength. This indeed is the great secret of the Christian’s life. If my intercourse with God be broken, I am utterly empty.

How blessed it is to see that Israel’s God did not give them up! They built an altar in Bochim; yet they were constantly tried in judgment. How was this? The people had lost their place. We have to look to that in the consideration of our present condition. The Church has lost its place, and in the same way the Church is under judgment. We read,

All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.

Is not that losing their place? And losing their place, they lose their power, and must remain in weakness, or else get to Bochim. What is peculiar about Bochim is, that they had to say to God there. In the Church of God we find a like relationship with God. Israel is a picture of it. In the beginning of the Church we have good, and power on the side of the good. In one day three
thousand, and in another five thousand, are added to it. Alongside of this I get the power of evil. Yet God was showing His power in another way; and I doubt not that if we were more faithful, our experience would be more similar. They were filled with the Spirit. When they came together, the place was shaken where they were assembled. As they lived in the Spirit, they also walked in the Spirit, and they went about manifesting the power of the Spirit. All that was going on with the power of evil; and we do not leave this scene till we have the evil brought to light in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Still the Spirit of power is there. The sin is instantly judged; they are cut off, and the result is that great fear comes upon all the Church. There we have the display of it all -- the power of the good in the disciples testifying to Jesus; the power of the evil opposing, and putting them in prison. And then, before the history closes,

the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God {1 Pet. 4:17};

that is, the last of all times till Christ comes in glory, when His power puts down the evil.

In the second epistle to Timothy we get a testimony to the growth of the evil where the good ought to be. We find it positively stated that

in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,

and so on.

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Then follows the exhortation, “From such turn away.” But first we have the positive declaration, that they turn back to evil. Then he goes on to say,

Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of; knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

Notice, that he does not refer him to the Church as a teacher, but to those of whom he had learned these things. Who were they? Paul and Peter and the other apostles. Now, as one who has received the gospel of God’s grace, I know from whom I have learned it, and from them I get the declaration that evil had come in, and would wax worse and worse until the perilous times.

Then as Timothy is cast upon the certainty of the words of those from whom he had received the truth, in like manner I get the word of God, as that on which my soul is cast when the Church has become a judged thing, “waxing worse and worse,” “having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” Nor can it be denied that this is the character of the Church at the present time. It is an astounding fact that we have on every side persons named Christians turning infidels in thousands. There is not, I dare say, one young man in forty free from the rationalistic teaching of the present day. I do not know how you find it here, but it is so in England. Mere formality is turning to open infidelity on the one hand, or to superstition on the other. It is
notorious that such is the case. Christendom, even in the sense of outward submission to Christ, is an impossibility. But what we want is Christianity as it is in the word of God.

One very blessed thing through it all is the presence of the Spirit in power, sustaining the Lord’s people in the midst of that which is just ripening for judgment. We have something like this in the case of Nicodemus among the children of Israel, and that most blessed testimony in the first two chapters of Luke -- Simeon and Anna, and the others who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem. They knew each other, and were found coming together and exhorting one another, just as we ought to be. I felt led to speak thus as to the state of things in which we find ourselves. Whenever we take man’s responsibility into account, we find his principle of action is to depart from what God has set up; then growing corruption manifests itself, and goes on till judgment is necessary. This we find in the days of the apostles, but more obviously in the last days. And mark, they were to know that it was the last time, because antichrist was there, not because Christ was come again. Even then the antichristian spirit was evident; but God’s patience has gone on with them ever since, as with Israel.

What I desire to bring before the conscience of brethren is the direction given as to how we are to walk in the midst of such a state of things --

Continue in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of; that is, we are referred directly to the word of God. It is quite true we are to use ministry. Such is God’s will and His way, as we read, “He gave some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” But the reference here to the word of God is a very different thing from that. As an individual I must come directly to it, and let the authority of God determine everything. “Oh, but,” someone may say, “I may be mistaken as to the teaching of the Word!” “So much the worse for you,” I say; “but that is quite a different thing from denying the operation of the Spirit.” Not but that God is pleased to use some as instruments to bring His word to bear on others, as in the case of a mother with a child, where it may be only the activity of nature, or a school teacher with a scholar, or a friend with his friend. But while knowing that, still we must go to the word of God, and that directly. We have to insist on that in these days. God speaks to us directly in the inspired Word. The mother is not inspired. Those who have the place of teachers in the Church are not inspired in the sense that we are ruled and judged by them, but the word of God is, and we must go directly to the Word, not to the Church. I do not get the Church as teaching at all; I deny it totally. What I find is that the Church is taught, and that it is the province of certain individuals to teach. When you get the Church of God at first, one of the apostles, or some inspired person, was there to communicate directly to the saints. The saints were taught, but not by the Church; the Pauls and Peters and Johns were their teachers. God’s word is the
inspired teacher now. “I charge you,” the apostle says to the Thessalonians, “that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.” The principle we get there is of all importance. It is no less than God’s title to speak to souls directly by His word. This in no way sets aside the exercise of gift in the body. We cannot say of any member, “We have no need of thee.” But all service must be in obedience. Take for illustration a servant who is sent by his master with a letter, and knowing the contents of the letter, instead of delivering it, gives the message verbally. It is the master he is setting aside. What we have to insist upon is God’s title to speak to His people in His own way, and so to judge them. I don’t talk of providential judgment, but of reproving, correcting, and instructing by His word. I must bow to the word of God, not sit in judgment upon it. Judgment is to be exercised in other matters; but the moment I get to divine things I must not think of judging them. Judge the word of God! That is what the rationalist claims to do. The natural man thinks he can judge the word of God; but our place is to hear what God has to say, just as we are all here today to hear what God has to say. Far from judging the Word it judges me, in being brought to my heart and conscience. Judge it and you are all wrong. It is true that God’s Spirit is needful to convince me as to what the word of God is; but the moment I know it as the word of God my heart is drawn, and my conscience judged.

Now the Scripture says,

Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning.

What is it that we have from the beginning? In the beginning I get that which God has set up to be a witness for Himself on the earth. I get the unity of the body of Christ, and I get the inspired word of God with the doctrines in it which were received from the beginning. Again we read,

If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

There is an immense principle here. Nobody who knows ecclesiastical history but is aware of the wretchedness and misery that befell the Church in consequence of failure in this respect. I get now, not that which God set up at the beginning, but what man has made of it. At the beginning I get the unity of the body of Christ manifest upon earth; but do I get it so now? Is it not a fact, that instead of unity there is a constant war going on amongst professing Christians? As far as man’s exhibition of it is concerned the unity is gone. The apostle says,

As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon;

and elsewhere he speaks of grievous wolves coming in. It is thus put on the footing of man’s responsibility and judged accordingly; but where it is viewed as the work of God and His testimony it is a matter of faith. Suppose I find, “Upon this rock I will build my Church” -- there I get the thought of the
Church, not yet built, but Christ building it. “And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Then Peter says, “To whom coming, as unto a living stone . . . ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house”; and in Ephesians we read of “Jesus Christ the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” Here I get divine workmanship.

On the other hand I get, what I was quoting already, God’s building put into the hands of men, and every man warned to take heed how he buildeth. The two things are quite distinct. Why do men confound them, teaching to professed Christianity that which belongs only to the saints, and so adding the wood, hay, and stubble? Simply because they do not give heed to the word of God. We must test everything by the word of God. This is God’s own principle. It it quite true that we have the power of the Spirit for our walk; but if I be called upon to hear what the Spirit says unto the churches, I must discover where the churches are. And if I am warned not to build with wood, hay, or stubble, I must find out what that means, so as to be obedient to the word of God; but I do not dwell upon that. You will perceive that I am dealing with great principles merely. The grand secret of power in these days is faith in the presence of the Spirit of God; and while using the word makes us take notice of the state of things in which we find ourselves, we must see that we are not confounding God’s faithfulness with man’s responsibility; that is what Israel did. But the great thing is to know that there is a living God, and that that living God is amongst us in the person and power of the Holy Ghost. Not that we lose sight of the cross. It is all founded on the cross surely; but what we have to get hold of is this: the Comforter did come. By Him we are all baptized into one body; and, whether it be in the individual or in the Church, the secret of the power of good in the midst of evil, outside or inside, the Word being our guide, is the presence of God by the Spirit. “Know ye not,” is written to the Corinthians, who were going on badly, “that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” There they are spoken to as individuals. “Do you believe your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost? Then what kind of persons ought you to be?” You get it again in the second epistle to the same Church -- “Ye are the temple of the living God.” There they are spoken of collectively; but in both cases we learn that the present practical power of living is faith in the presence of the Spirit of God. Alone I can do nothing whatever for blessing.

“Ye are the temple of the living God.” I go back a little on this. We do not find God dwelling with man but on the ground of redemption. Not with Adam: He came down and walked in the garden, but did not dwell with him, nor yet with Abraham, although he visited him, and ate with him. But when the Israelites get out of Egypt God comes to dwell among them. Indeed we are told in Ex. 29 that for this the Lord brought them out of Egypt. As soon as they are come out of the Red Sea, we find God dwelling in the midst of them. The Red Sea gives the thought of redemption. We find the same thing now, but more
fully. “If I go not away,” the Lord said to His disciples, “the Comforter will not come unto you.” Christ was here, but He was alone; like the corn of wheat -- except it fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone {John 12:24}. At His baptism the Holy Ghost came down and abode upon Him; still He was alone. It was not until redemption was accomplished, and He had ascended, a Man in the glory, that the Holy Ghost came down to dwell in us {Acts 2:32, 33}, that we might be the expression of what He is down here.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God;

and,

Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.

When we speak of redemption, it does not mean merely that a man is quickened, or that he has got life, but that he is washed, and that the Holy Ghost dwells in him, that he is a new man. I only ask you, beloved, if you believe all this. Then what subjection of spirit there ought to be! what manner of persons ought ye to be! what carefulness not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption!

There is one word in 1 Cor.2. In these days it is well to give heed to it. In v. 9 we read,

It is written, 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 God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

The things of the world are always put in contrast with the things of God; but that is not the special teaching here. Nor is it that the things which are the subject of revelation, when put in contrast with our present state, are so great that we cannot conceive them. “For God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.” But the apostle is contrasting the state of the Old Testament saints with that of the saints in the present dispensation. In the time of Isaiah their hearts could not enter into the things that God had prepared for them that love Him; but we are in a different condition. In v. 13 he says:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

This is commonly called inspiration. When the Spirit of God teaches, the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned. There are what may be called three steps in the process of inspiration. First there is the revelation of the things; then there is the word the Spirit teaches; and then the condition of mind in which it is received. We have the living power of the Spirit of God on the one hand, and the word of God on the other, to keep and guide us in our path here. If I take the word of God by itself, and say I can judge of it, and understand its teaching, I am a rationalist.
I would be entirely wrong in thinking man’s mind capable of judging God’s revelation. But when I seek to judge it spiritually, I am right at once. And having the Spirit of God in me to discern it, I have God’s own guidance in everything. That is how we are to walk in our present circumstances. And while God has set forth the ruin of the church, as connected with man’s responsibility, He has shown us that there is, for the path of faith, just as much wisdom and power as at first.

“AS DEAR CHILDREN”

Ephesians 4:20 - 5:3

What a wonderful place the Lord sets us in here, and sets us in the consciousness of it too, showing us how we get to it, with its effects and fruits; but that consciousness is hindered by everything that is in contrast to God -- worldliness, carelessness, or negligence. Still it is where God has really set us, and we are to be “followers of God, as dear children.” To think that such a word should come out of His mouth to us, calling us “dear children.” We are familiar with the thought of being sons of God, “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”; but when we think of the nearness and intimacy of this, and His revealing Himself to us, and acting as such, it is wonderful. It is not what He has done to deliver us from condemnation; but when the sin is all gone, to be remembered no more, He sets us in this relationship of “dear children,” and in the consciousness of it. If He says to me, “Dear child!” what a thought I have of Him, and of the wonderful condition I am in: the expression draws out the consciousness of the love in the place. He may have done all kinds of things for me, but the very word conveys to me where I am. If we come to think of it, and measure it, we have to think of Christ. He says,

I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

He dwells in us to be the power and enjoyment of it, and attracts down from the Father’s heart what He feels for Him and for us, and that is shed abroad in our hearts.

We have been accustomed to look at God as a Judge -- a solemn. truth in its place. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity; but there is such a complete putting away of sin. Looking at the work of Christ, there is such an entire putting away of sin according to God’s glory, that I get into the light, and the only thing it shows is that I am as white as snow, leaving the heart free to enjoy the present “grace wherein we stand.” Being justified by faith, I have peace with God. I can say I am waiting for the glory, and besides that, I have access to this present grace. It is of all importance for our hearts and affections that we should be there with God; we cannot enjoy it if we allow evil, and even negligence dims our heart, and prevents our apprehension of it.

We get the doctrinal part before, and now He says, “You are my dear children”; it is not a mere doctrine, but the address of God to us. When He says “dear,” what says it? It is His heart, what He feels about us, poor creatures as we are; but He says it because He feels it. He is expressing Himself and reaching us, and that is what is so thoroughly blessed. A child is
to be obedient and dutiful, and all that; but it is so wonderful that God should say this, and He reckons on our hearts walking in it. This is the outgoing of God’s good pleasure and delight, and I know I am His delight, poor unworthy creature as I am; it is not a question of worthiness, that is in Christ. The sin has been so put away in God’s sight that His heart can go out. Christ’s love took Him to that baptism —

I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

Till then His love could not go out freely, but then it could flow out in unmingled freeness; perfect love in the drinking of that terrible cup, now the love is free to act. Grace reigns because righteousness is accomplished. His whole love can go out through grace. I get, through the work of Christ, God free to satisfy His love, all the purposes and delights of His own nature. The love is free to flow out in all its fulness. You never get a word about the prodigal when he comes to the father (a great deal about him when he is coming); but you hear about the father, and his joy in having him {Luke 15}. The poor prodigal was happy enough, but it is not “meet to make him happy”; he had the best robe, but it is

meet to make merry, and be glad; for this my son was lost, and is found. He tells it to us that we should know it. It was meet that He should make merry, and have all glad around Him, because this poor sinner had come back. There is no hindrance to the full satisfaction of His soul, His own joy to have this one in.

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We get two great truths -- the work of Christ that was needed to put away sin, and open out this love; there is a new creation, and we are dead. We are to put off the old man and put on the new. Then the love is perfectly free, and I get hold of another thing what did it all come from? what have I got into? It comes from God; the very nature is of God. “Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” We are of God, and the righteousness of God; all is of God, and according to God, and we have a nature capable of understanding it, and of enjoying all God is. All is free and full, and this nature can let itself out to me in love. The thing I am brought to enjoy is of God, and all my intelligence for conduct and feeling and everything is of God. Paul could say, “Be followers of me”; but the Spirit here goes up to the source, and says, “Be ye followers of God”; “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him,” etc.; “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” and love too.

Having the divine nature (sin put away) we are in the light as God is in the light, brought into the presence of God, and capable of enjoying it. It is not of human wisdom or knowledge, but of a pure heart; we learn more and more every day if we are walking with God, but it is not intellect. All the intellect in the world never knew what it is to be loved, never found out God; found
wills and lusts, but never found God. We learn Him by our wants. The one who learns what strength is, and knows the comfort of it, is a poor feeble person who cannot get along a rough road, and a strong one lends his arm. What a comfort strength is to him. The real wants of the soul God has met in every possible way. "When we were without strength, ... Christ died for the ungodly." The perfectness of His love came out, in that when we had no strength to get out of our state He says, I must come down to you. It takes me up to enjoy it in God Himself. He comes down to the sinner where he is, and the sinner learns there is love enough to reach from the holy throne of God to him, and to take his poor heart up to the throne of God. Not wisdom or intellect, but God revealing Himself; and as He thus acts in love, I get the very spring of it, and the root from the beginning to the end as I know Him. The light comes into my conscience, and makes everything manifest, and the love comes too. We have to learn more of the treacherousness of our hearts; of the wiles of Satan, and of the world; but I am in positive relationship with God, and sin outside (by faith, I mean), and there we have to keep it. In the heavenly places as to doctrine, then we get the practical power. He sends us out from Himself to the world that men may know what He is. How close we have to keep to Him, and to judge ourselves, learning utterly unsuspected bits of self and selfishness, and self-confidence in ourselves. There is another thing -- we are brought to God, but not I as a poor human being having to do with God. I get Christ, God revealed in man; He came down to where we were as poor sinners. He can say to Philip,

Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me,

Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father {John 14:9}.

God did not want to exalt Himself; but there was one new thing with God, to come down to us. The love that came down to be near us (as a man, but the divine nature breaking through the lowliness), so that when I talk to the carpenter's son I find the Son of God, the most lowly, humble minister of goodness to me.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich {2 Cor. 8:9}.

Poverty was the new thing with God, and the poverty was that He came among us. I know God by it, I get it by an intimate object; the nearer I get to Him, the more I see the divine majesty. He is close to us, reaches us, touches us; nay, He is become our life.

He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him {1 John 4:16}.

So near us -- not physically, though He was that -- that

He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one {Heb. 2:11}.

All the power and grace in Him, but we brought into this like condition.
I ascend unto my Father and your Father; to my God, and your God {John 20:17}.

The One I can be intimate and at home with I find engaged with myself; and He expects our affections, expects our interest in His glory.

If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father {John 14:28}.

We often sing,

“Jesus, Lord, ‘tis joy to know
Thy path is o’er of shame and woe.”

He expects us, while worshiping and adoring Him, to have our part in His joy.

There is great comfort in putting off the old man, practically in power. I have put it off altogether, though I have to fight it every day; but I have a right to say, through the efficacy of Christ’s death, “I have put off the old man, and put on the new.” It is complete deliverance. I may forget it, and let the old man come out; but ye have

put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness {Eph. 4:24}.

Morally, it is association with Himself. Who is the righteous one? God. And the holy one? God. Well, you are “after God”; no lower measure and standard. Even when He chastens us it is that “we might be partakers of His holiness.” (In us it is a new creation, in Him it is eternal.) That is what I am before God, and according to what God has wrought, and I have done with the old man. I am after His nature, or else I could not enjoy God. We have the new nature, Christ is become our life; and the new creation in me is “after God,” according to what He is. He has not created a thing inconsistent with Himself. In that I am to live. We are weak and feeble, but we have it in virtue of Christ’s work. He being glorified we have the Holy Ghost. Being sprinkled with the blood we receive the Holy Ghost. He comes and dwells in us, takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He stirs us up, leads, guides, and corrects, and rebukes if necessary.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God” (v. 30). Don’t grieve Him.

We know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He has given us {1 John 3:24}.

There I get not only a nature to enjoy, but power suited to my capacity, whether as a babe or father in Christ. Christ having taken His place as man at the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost conies down and tells me, “This is your place, and you are all dear children.” The blessed Spirit of God dwells in us, and we are not to grieve Him. All my sins are gone, I am as white as snow. He has stepped in and charged Himself with the whole thing, drunk the cup, and I am dead and risen, and get consequently this present grace, and the Holy Ghost the earnest of what I shall have when He comes. I have it in a poor
earthen vessel, and learn to discern good and evil, and a deal about myself -- about God too, but I learn it as a dear child. It may be very humbling, as it was to Israel in the wilderness, but they could never have learnt it in Egypt. In the wilderness they had a great deal to learn, and very humbling things too, and so have we; but we are in “the light as He is in the light,” and “as He is so are we in this world” -- before God. Not as He was, because He was absolutely sinless; but, wonderful to say, as He is in glory. As He is, because grace has put us in Him before God. There I am between accomplished redemption and the glory He has won. The Holy Ghost comes as the earnest, and we are dear children, and He speaks to us as such. The spring as to conduct is, “You, as my child, honor your Father.” If He is not my Father there is no sense in it. As brought to God I have learnt what God is as to His ways of grace (vv. 31, 32). Did God come and clamor against you in justice? He sent His Son to give Himself for you, and has forgiven you. You go and do so to others. You are a dear child, go and manifest what God is, He has forgiven you. There is a man who has wronged me; I go and forgive him as God forgave me, if I am near enough to God to do it, to show out what we have been learning is the joy of our souls.

“Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us.” There we see the preciousness of Him who brought it so close to us. Don’t you know what that means? Have you not understood what Christ’s love to you as a poor creature was? Have you not learnt for yourself that He gave Himself -- no light thing -- up? Then you go and give yourself up. He did not give a great deal for us (every thing in one sense), He gave up Himself. The law requires the measure of your love to yourself to be that of your love to your neighbor. In a world like this I want something more than that. I have to do with people who wrong and insult and harass and outrage me. Christ did more than love us as He loved Himself -- He gave Himself up entirely. The perfection of love is measured in self-sacrifice. We may fail in it, but there is no other measure.

“We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Was not God manifested in Christ? Is not Christ your model? He, the blessed Son of God, walking through this world, manifested God with a divine superiority over evil. It is put away between me and God, and I am to be above it between me and man -- the power of good in the midst of evil. If you see unrighteousness, and your spirit boils over, that won’t do; you may “be angry and sin not” {Eph. 4:26} -- righteous indignation at evil. Christ was the expression of unavenging righteousness -- doing well, and suffering, taking it patiently.

One word as to carrying this through v. 2. I give myself up for others, but to God. If I give myself to others, I may not go right, for they may not go right; but the lower and worse the person I give myself up for, the higher it is. The principle of Christ was -- He gave Himself to God, but for the vilest. It was a sacrifice of love -- love that had its motive in itself for God, its object
in God, and that kept it steady in the path. Further in the chapter (v. 14) you get light brought in -- the full light into the conscience, and the full love into the heart, and then you will go right. There our souls should be -- walking in the light, our consciences alive, and our hearts in the undisturbed consciousness of that word of God, “Dear children,” the feeling of affection going out from His heart. So that when I go to Him there is not only the love that sought the sinner, but the love now in the relationship that finds delight in expressing itself. Wherever the world or selfishness gets in (evil too, I need not say), that is not after God, but after the world, and after the devil. That is like a man asleep. He does not hear or speak, he may dream, and the word is, “Arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” If my heart goes with the things of the world, Christ is not shining into it. There may be glimmerings, but I cannot say “Abba” and go to Him with the sense that He will say, “Now, my dear child, go and follow me.”

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER 14

Leviticus 14:10-20

In this passage we find the ceremony, according to the law, for the cleansing of the leper -- a figure of the cleansing which Christ has accomplished for us, for leprosy is a type of sin. There is a distinction to be made between the purification of the leper and that of the priest.

There were but three sprinklings with blood in the Old Testament -- the sprinkling of the leper, that of the people, and that of the priest; they each took place once and were not repeated. There was nothing to be done for the healing of the leper; it was the work of God. In order to prove that the disease was leprosy, the leper was kept by himself, set apart and watched and observed every seven days. When he was entirely white, or when the spot had become white, he was purified. (Compare Psa. 32:3-5.) When sin is hidden, and the leprosy internal, the evil is greater. The manifestation and confession of sin lead to peace, and the heart is set at ease; this is the upright and honest heart. The symptoms of leprosy are described in Lev. 13. The healing came from God; the priest could only ascertain the disease, and perform the acts for purification. Leprosy excluded its victim from the camp; sin hinders communion with God and His people.

After his cleansing, the leper was reinstated in communion with the children of Israel; but the first effect of the knowledge of sin is to take from us the desire for communion with God, the intelligence of that communion, and the seeking after it. Cleansing gives us, indeed, the right of communion with the children of God, although souls often fail to understand from the first that they have this right. Healing often precedes the knowledge of this healing; the converted soul puts itself under law, instead of accepting joyfully the whole gospel.

As to the means used for the cleansing of lepers, they are: First, the birds, one dead -- a type of the death of Christ. It was killed over a vessel of running water. The living bird is a type of Christ’s resurrection (Lev. 14:4-7). Our sins brought Jesus to the tomb, but He rose out of it, and left them behind Him there; He had accomplished all. Second (vv. 8, 9), the leper was to be washed with water. Jesus cleanses us by the Word which He has spoken to us; His Word does for our souls what the cleansing with water did for the body. (See Eph. 5:25-27.) This cleansing was done once for all. Sanctification is once for all, but the Christian must grow in it. All believers are justified in Christ. This

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14. This is a translation from the French of unrevised notes of one of a series of addresses given by the author many years ago in Switzerland. Their simplicity is as striking as beautiful -- (Ed.).
is an accomplished reality; the Holy Ghost puts us in this position. There is the sanctification by God the Father (John 17:17), that of Jesus by His blood, and that of the Holy Ghost, who gives efficacy to the Father’s will and the work of the Son. The Holy Ghost, accomplishes it in individuals. He communicates life to us by the Word, and sanctifies us wholly. Third, after cleansing follows the knowledge of what has been done; the leper must understand it, and receive its efficacy in his heart (vv. 10-20). The leper is presented to God, with a sacrifice for his offence. He was anointed with blood as a sign of sanctification.

The Christian is never to allow anything to enter his ear which would be inconsistent with the blood of the Lamb. The right hand is the symbol of action. The Christian should not do anything which would be dishonoring to the blood of Christ; all that he does every day should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he must not act in any way which would not accord with the measure of God’s thoughts in the death of Jesus. All in our actions which is not holy as the blood of Christ is sin. Blood on the great toe is in figure of holiness in our walk. We are not negative beings; Christ's life should always act in us. Our thoughts, actions, walk, all are under the blood of Christ, and that blood is the measure of what our holiness should be. One must either be under the shelter of the blood of Christ, or outside it. The child of God has on him that blood which can neither be effaced, nor lose its value. There is never need of another sprinkling. Every day our souls are renewed inwardly by the Holy Ghost, and we confess our sins before our Father. Fourthly; blood was not the only thing necessary; oil was also required. The oil, a type of the Holy Ghost, is given because the blood is there. It was not after the water, but after the blood, that the oil was applied.

The Holy Ghost comes to dwell in us because the blood of Christ is on us. If we are as pure in the sight of God as that blood, why should not the Spirit be in us? The blood of Christ has exhausted the wrath of God against sin. There is nothing but love for those who are sprinkled with that blood. The Holy Ghost is a Spirit of knowledge, joy, peace, and love; these are His first-fruits. He is also a Spirit of strength and power, able to overcome the obstacles which arise in our path.

The effect of all was to re-establish the leper in communion with God.

_The Christian Friend_, 1887, pp. 57-60.
THE LORD’S DEPARTURE


All the circumstances of the death of Jesus sum up for us these two great principles: the love of God, and the hatred of man. Here the Lord makes preparations for His departure, but, though absent now, He is ever present spiritually with His own, and His desire is that the children of God should all lean on Him. Our strength comes from our weakness, but we easily over-look the sense of our weakness when God’s grace acts, because we attribute to ourselves something of its effects. It is then that we need to be sifted, for the flesh has come in, and evil with it.

The Church is a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, to show them and to make them know the power of God, the power of the Holy Ghost prevailing over the power of evil, and that even in the weakness of man. But if we abandon the support of the Spirit, the flesh re-appears, regains its strength, leads us into temptation, and does not shelter us from the effects of this last. This was what happened to Peter; the strength of the flesh suffices to lead him into temptation, but not to draw him out of it. Jesus in this way allowed Peter to be sifted, and to make experience of the weakness of the flesh, in order that he should, by this knowledge, be fitted to strengthen his brethren. The Lord says, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations” (v. 28), and yet often they had neither understood Him nor followed Him faithfully.

By the Lord’s departure, He leaves His disciples to themselves, as sheep in the midst of wolves; hence the instruction of v. 36. He gives them also the example of His deep humility. From the moment that we think ourselves to be the benefactors of anyone (vv. 25, 26), we take God’s place; man is glorified at God’s expense in the presence of his fellows. We lose our character as children of God when we lose our place as servants. Jesus was the Servant of all (v. 27); the more we are servants, the more we shall be like Him. Love makes us the servants of others, because of their miseries. A mother is servant to her child, although she is above him.

With regard to the Lord’s Supper, the Lord wished to give His disciples a testimony of His love. But there also He was Servant (vv. 14, 15). The Lord was going to take His place in heaven, to become the Nazarite there, separated from the joys of His disciples, and separated outwardly from sinners. Love cannot be happy without those that are loved sharing what it has. Jesus cannot be satisfied until the Church is gathered with Him in glory. But before He

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15. This is another of the early addresses of the author translated from the French -- (Ed.).
departs, He leaves us a token of love. He had much desired to eat that
passover with them before He should suffer. He made Himself man and
servant that our hearts might have an object for our love, at the same time
human and divine. The link of love is perfect; it is the most intimate
communion of Him with us, and us with Him. Jesus is the first-born among
many brethren, and takes that character as the object of our affections.

He does not command love, but He produces it by the manifestation of His
love for us. Jesus is not changed. He places us in the same position as
Himself; He produces in us the desire for communion with Him. Taking a
meal together is a sign of love and fellowship; the joy which accompanies it
is not at its height, because now the Lord is separated from us, and does not
eat with us in person any longer; He has left us together in love. The Christian
is separated from the world by his love for the One who is far away from it.

How can a Christian stay away from the Lord’s Supper? It is to
excommunicate oneself. The Lord’s Supper is a token of pardon; the memorial
of the love of Jesus. Christ is spiritually present with His own, but He is also
absent, and we wait for Him. By partaking of one loaf, we show that we are
one body, and I cannot cut myself off, excommunicate myself from the body
of Christ. In the Lord’s Supper Christ desired to express His love, to remind
us of His love; it is a necessity of His heart. The token of the love of Christ --
the Friend who has died for us -- the absent Friend -- must be precious to us.
He deigns to be one of us, separated from us for a little while, but finding His
joy in making us happy.

NOTES OF A READING ON COLOSSIANS 1

The word “Lord” is often used by people in a vague way; but here (v. 3) we find those names of God and of Christ which represent relations. If we say “Father,” we speak as children; if we say “Lord,” we speak as servants of the Lord Jesus. The title Lord applies to Christ as Man in the glory. “What is man?” (Psa. 8). Here we see Him as having entered into the divine glory, but not having taken His own throne as yet. (See Heb. 2:5.) He is now gathering the co-heirs to take them up to Himself; and when they are gathered He will take His throne, and we shall reign with Him.

Three points are to be noticed as to the rights of Christ to take possession of all things. First, He has created all things; second, He is the Son -- established Heir of all things, after Heb. 1; third, according to God’s counsels; fourth, there is yet another point, He shall take possession of all things on the ground of redemption. Satan shall be bound, and evil put away; then the Lord shall take possession of all things, and reign.

We find, then, here, these three relations: God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important not to confound them, but to understand what the responsibilities are which flow from them.

We shall have all that Christ has. He will bring us into all that He Himself enjoys, only He has ever His own place, ever the preeminence in all things. Thus, on the holy mount, we see Moses and Elijah in the same heavenly glory with Him; but then, when Moses and Elijah disappear, the Father’s voice is heard -- “This is my beloved Son.” That is the place that is His.

Q. What does the earnest of the inheritance mean in the Epistle to the Ephesians?

A. It is not difficult to understand that, for in our everyday language we often speak of earnest-money (i.e., a part of the payment before the whole be paid). It is the Holy Ghost in us. That we already have; but we are not in possession of the inheritance. As to power, and our enjoyment of Christ by the Spirit, it is evident that when we shall be in the glory our state will be very different. Take, as an example, the case of condensed steam in an engine. All that immense power is spent in dragging thousands of pounds. It is slow and difficult work; but if the steam were free, what elasticity. It is so with us, as being the vessels of the Spirit. The greater part of its power is absorbed in dragging the weight of that which is earthly, but in heaven there will be nothing to drag.

Verse 3. There are, then, these two characters of Christ which are not to be confounded: first, as Man before God; second, as Son before the Father. In Heb. 1 we find yet a third: He is Son of God born in this world. Compare
Psa. 2: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

Verse 5. “On account of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens.” Notice carefully that we are not looked at in Colossians as being seated in Christ in heaven. We have died, and have been raised up; but we are still in this world, and in it with the hope (of glory) laid up for us in the heavens. Compare this with the position of the Lord Jesus during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension to heaven. He was a Man that had died, and had been raised up, but who had not gone up on high. God grant that we may fully apprehend the force of this word “raised up.” There is a great difference between quickened and raised. In John 5 the Son quickens the dead -- He imparts life to dead souls. That is what follows when His Word is received (John 5:24). But how many quickened souls there are who do not understand aught of resurrection. When I speak of having died and being raised up the question is an entirely new position before God. Associated with Christ in His work, and united with Him by the Spirit, we pass into an entirely new state of things. Such is the Christian in the Epistle to the Colossians.

Q. Had the Old Testament saints life?
A. Of course they had; they were quickened, but they had not “died with Christ,” nor had they been raised up with Him, which was impossible, because Christ had not yet died, nor was He risen. Then, again, He has brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings. This is the new thing.

Verse 8. Notice that this is the only instance where the Spirit is mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians.

Verses 9 and 10. Here we have a very important thing -- the walk in this world of a dead and risen Christian, according to the spiritual understanding which belongs to him. “Filled with the full knowledge of His will.” This supposes that the eye is single. Mark the expressions in these verses. What an intelligent walk -- with the full knowledge (ἐπιγνωσίας) of His will. It is not a question here of merely being a good neighbor, a good father, or of being diligent in one’s duties, etc. (any respectable Jew would do quite as much), but of walking worthily of the Lord unto all well pleasing.

Thus we find (Phil. 1:10) things that are excellent, and the point is to be able to distinguish them. There are things which are good, and things which are excellent; the latter still more pleasing to the Lord. There are three expressions in connection with the Christian walk:

Walking worthy of:

God (1 Thess. 2:12), who calls us to His own kingdom and glory;

Christ (here in Col. 1:10) unto all well pleasing;

the Spirit worthy of the calling (Eph. 4:1).

Verse 11. Here is another point: “Strengthened with all power, according
to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy." We see here the character of the epistle -- the full knowledge of a glorious Christ, and thus are we strengthened with all power. To what purpose? For some heroic deed? No; but that we may endure. It is unto all endurance and longsuffering. This is true power. When speaking of proofs of power, Paul always puts endurance and longsuffering in the foreground. It is no such easy matter to endure everything with joy; for this we need the might of His glory.

Verse 12. Here we see the present position of New Testament saints: “Fit to share the portion of the saints in light.” That is our present position. Not only are we saved, but we are already made fit to share the portion of the saints. Compare with the golden altar in the holy place of the tabernacle. The brazen altar prefigures rather the forgiveness of sins and the sinner’s reception; the golden altar was within -- in the sanctuary.

Verse 13. Mark two points here. There are two characters of God revealed in His Word -- God is light, and God is love -- and both are spoken of here. He has delivered us from the power of darkness (into light), and He has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (love).

Q. What is here the meaning of “the kingdom of the Son,” etc.?

A. It is where Christ has His true sway -- the real thing, true believers; a kingdom, because His authority there is fully owned.

Verse 14. Here redemption is mentioned last of all these things.

Verses 15, 17, and 18. There are two headships of Christ here:

1st (v. 15). He is image of the invisible God, He who has created all things. It is a question of the rights and glories of His person. He has not taken His rights yet, as laid down in this verse. All things have been created by Him and for Him.

2nd. This is the second headship (v. 18). He is the Head of the body, the Firstborn from among the dead. He is about to take possession of all things on the ground of redemption. As risen Man, He will take all that He has created as God; and the assembly, the body, shall then be the fulness of His glory. The two reconciliations (vv. 20, 21), and the two lines of Paul’s ministry (vv. 23-25, etc.), flow from these two head-ships of Christ.

(1) All things shall be reconciled;
(2) you hath He reconciled.
Again,

(1) Proclaimed in the whole creation;
(2) the dispensation of God towards the body of Christ, which is the assembly.

Mark now the word “if” (v. 23). Why should the apostle speak of being
kept if there were no danger? The “ifs” apply to the wilderness. We are saved and reconciled, but not yet in glory, and we need to be kept guarded. We should not shun these expressions; for we have need of dependence all along the road, else we shall be negligent. God is faithful to keep us, but it is necessary that we should be kept. Thus, in John 10, the Lord says, “No one shall pluck them out of my hand.” But it is evident that the enemy will endeavor to do that. See further 1 Cor. 1:8, 9: “Who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom” -- we have God’s fidelity to keep us. May we avail ourselves of it.

(1879)

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

Matthew 4:1-12

I desire to speak tonight of the practical bearing of these verses, and also of the grace of the Lord in it all: how man in Him is brought into this place with God; and it is the model of our place, as we get in the previous chapter where the heavens are opened, the Holy Ghost descends on Him, and the voice comes, “This is my beloved Son.” What is remarkable in it is, that where He brings out the model of the place into which He brings us, there is the first revelation of the Trinity. It is in the blessed Lord becoming a man that we have the full revelation of all truth. Redemption alone could bring us into this place. What characterizes Christianity is the revelation of the Godhead -- sovereign grace of course. In virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ becoming a man, comes this revelation, and that gives the place He brings us into by redemption. In the first part I read, the other side of our place comes out; that is, the conflict with Satan down here on the earth; but the conflict does not begin till He gets the place of Son. We must distinguish between slavery to Satan and conflict with Satan. The saint is never in slavery, and the sinner is never in conflict. Here the Lord is binding the strong man; now he is bound, so that if any man resists him he will flee; but at the same time we have to pass through temptations and difficulties, and here He gives us the model of how we can overcome.

We get first the place to which we are brought by redemption; that is, as regards our relationship to God. We are now servants of God, and obedience is our path. Adam ought to have obeyed; everything was blessing around him; there was one test of his obedience, and he failed. Supposing a man is brought to this place by redemption, there is still the disposition to do his own will; temptation is there, and then comes the exercise of heart about this obedience in the relationship of sons with God. In this place of sons -- Christ’s place -- sealed by the Holy Spirit, the place that was His by right and title, I have everything to learn, but the relationship is settled. I have to learn and to judge what is in me; but I have now God’s will as the source of all my conduct, not the rule only, and there is a real difference.

The flesh never has God’s will as the source of its conduct; it may be checked and stopped by it, as the rule. A person may have a will of his own, and the Lord may stop it; it is checked; but that was never the way with Christ. His Father’s will was the origin and source of all He did. We have to

16. These are faithful, but unrevised, notes of an address given in 1872. -- (Ed.).
be stopped sometimes, but that is not Christian obedience. Christian obedience is the will of God being the motive. The Christian starts in the place of a son, and the question comes, How he, being a man, can be consistent with this relationship? and there exercise of heart comes in.

We have to notice, and it is exceedingly sweet, how completely the Lord takes this place with us, how He takes us into His place with Himself as sons, and then comes to our condition and circumstances -- sinlessly, of course -- and to the conflict. We are often led by the flesh, but He was led of the Spirit, just as He tasted death by the grace of God, and we by sin. But it is a wonderful testimony to the grace of the Lord, how He is interested in us and has taken up our cause. On the cross He was alone; in all the rest He takes us into His place, or else comes into ours.

We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (rather, sin apart).

He can give intelligent service, because He has gone through it, and His perfectness came out in it. Mark how thoroughly He came into our circumstances, not {into} sin. When Adam was tempted, he was in the enjoyment of all the blessings God had given him, and he laid it all aside for a bit of self-will. He lost confidence in God; and if I have not confidence in God to make me happy, I must make myself happy. The will comes in, then lust, and then transgression. Men do not trust God’s will for their happiness and blessing, and that is the principle of all sin.

Christians fail in it often, and the exercises we get are to lead us into it. Here Christ is where everything is to try a man -- forty days without food, with the wild beasts, in every respect the opposite of paradise. Then mark, as everything hung on Adam’s obedience (if he failed everything was gone), so here everything hung on Christ’s obedience. He could not fail; but if He did fail in that desert spot -- passing His time with Satan, so to speak -- everything was lost to man. The trial was to be made, and He must overcome. Adam failed in spite of every blessing; Christ comes in grace and overcomes. Then He is hungry; there is no sin in that. God has put hunger into our natures as an intimation when to eat. Then Satan comes (v. 3) and says, “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” Satan takes the ground of His being Son, he does not call that in question; nor does he with the Christian: when he raises that question we have not settled our affairs with God. The place revealed to us is that of sons; redemption has taken us out of the old place and put us into that of sons. The question is what God thinks, not what we think. And God has made us sons. Then it is a question of conduct in the relationship, not of responsibility as to my state. I cannot be a naughty child unless I am a child; and the temptation of Satan here is founded on Christ being a Son.
Note that the snare and temptation and difficulty is how to walk down here in this relationship. See if your souls stand in faith in this place with God. It is the place of every Christian. It is another thing to be in the consciousness of it. Satan assumes it here, and says, “Command that these stones be made bread.” It is a subtle thing; he does not show himself out as Satan. There is no sin in being hungry, and the Lord could turn the stones to bread. It is a wile of Satan; he comes with that which is “no harm.” But it is harm if it is my own will; for I am to eat and drink and do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. If I am doing it merely because it is my own will, it is harm; but the Lord keeps the consciousness of His place as a servant. The devil uses the testimony of His being a Son (Matt. 3:17) to get Him out of the place of a servant; but He had come to obey, and to do whatsoever His Father commanded, and He says, as it were, “It is not my Father’s will to make these stones bread.” The perfection of His place makes the will useless. It is not a long chain of reasoning, but if I, with the consciousness of being a son, keep in the place of a servant, Satan can do nothing. The whole thing was to get Him to do His own will, and that is the whole principle of sin. Having left God, we do our own will. What meets Satan completely is, that I am a servant, and servants are not to command, but to obey. I have no word from God, and therefore I don’t do it. What is remarkable is, the Lord says at once, “It is written.” That word of Scripture, a single text, is enough for the Lord, and for the devil. Satan has nothing to say; he is dumb, and does not attempt to take up the question. The spring and power of life come in: we are begotten by the Word, and we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Satan must either drop his will and show himself Satan, or hold his tongue, and he was not ready to show himself. The Lord is in the place of a son, and does not go out of that of a servant. He does what He is bid, and till the word is there, there is nothing to do; and that is living by it. He says, “I have no word from God about it.” That is the character of Christian obedience; not a rule that checks the will, but the word of God producing it. Do you not like to do your own will in little tiny things, that are “no harm,” as we speak? God has taken up this life we live in the flesh, and He has a will for us all the way along. In the wilderness, where there is no way, there is a way -- a divine way -- that the vulture’s eye hath not seen; but the simplest believer that follows God’s word has this way, and lives by it. The word of God is that by which we live in active positive life.

Satan drops that and takes up another thing -- “Cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee,” &c. (v. 6). It would have been His own will if Christ had done it. Satan takes up scripture, and says, “It is written,” to make Him do His own will. But He says, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” People abuse this often; they use it as the very opposite of what it is. When people talk of “tempting God,” they mean trusting Him too much. Satan says, “Throw yourself down, to see if God will
be as good as His word.” “I have no need to throw myself down. I know He will do it when the time comes. Of course His word will be fulfilled. Why am I to see if it will be?”

In obedience there is perfect confidence in God; no uncertainty as to whether God will be as good as His word, but perfect obedience and entire and absolute confidence. I don’t act to try if God will be as good as His word; but when the time comes, I have entire courage to obey. If I die, I go to heaven. So much the better. But we know little of that -- being martyrs, I mean. If you see some sacrifice before you, this or that to give up, there ought to be such confidence in God that you obey without the smallest question. He makes all things work together for our good. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him. Whatever comes, I have entire confidence in the Lord’s faithful love, and courage to do His will. What matter if the cities are walled up to heaven, if they fall at the blowing of a ram’s horn? No matter what comes, it comes from the Lord for our good. He puts us in the wilderness to exercise us on these points; but I start with His will for the source of my conduct, and I need not hesitate, having absolute obedience and confidence in God.

Satan has no more to say. His wiles are done; and then he shows himself, and asks the Lord to take the world (vv. 8, 9). He likewise presents the world to us, and says, “If you will follow me, the prince of it, you will get riches and honor and position.” But everything is Christ’s, and everything is ours -- “Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Satan wants me to take it from him in this way, by my lusts, as something the flesh desires here; but “all things are ours: life, death, things present, things to come,” &c. Then the Lord (v. 10) addresses him as Satan, and sends him off. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” He knows flesh does not resist him; it is Christ, and he is off.

If you find something that has a claw in your heart, and you cannot tear it out, it tears your flesh too much, you cry to the Lord, and it is gone. It is positive deliverance from another, not progress. In cases where some certain thing has power over the mind, it is not you, you hate it, and you cry to the Lord, and find it gone. Christ has bound the strong man. Could you say in all you have set about and done to-day, it was the will of God set you about it? There is weakness and infirmity in us; but when we get our eye fixed on Christ, all is joy and blessedness in Him.

Satan leaves the Lord, and angels come and minister to Him (v. 11). There was all the host of heaven serving Him, and so they are serving us:

Ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation;

ministering to us in every way that it is God’s will they should minister. We have to overcome; but there is the blessedness of this host -- He directing --
to help and strengthen us in the path.

It is a great thing to get the consciousness of the place we are in. Being in it, we are set to make our way through the world as befits sons in it. We have to learn not to have a will here and a will there, and we are exercised and tried -- and meant to be. The things that Satan ensnares the world with offend the new nature. I would just ask, Are you prepared to take the word of God as that by which you are to live every moment? Content in your heart to say, Whatever pleases God is for me? Are you willing? I don’t ask if you do it. If you are not willing, you want deliverance from that which is between your heart and Christ being every thing to you. We are redeemed out of the power of the strong man, and if we resist, we keep him out. The Lord give us to see the grace of His giving us this place, and the way He showed how the heart is to be exercised in passing through this world. The time is coming when we shall find that every thing, where He has not been, has been folly and wretchedness!

_The Christian Friend_, 1888, pp. 57-64.
SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Deuteronomy 8

The Christian cannot be in a difficulty for which Christ is not sufficient, nor on a long, dark road where he cannot find Him enough. God’s rest is where he can find perfect rest. Do you think God could find rest in this world? Have you ever found rest in it? Though He was perfect love above all the evil, yet He could not rest. When the Jews charged the Lord Jesus with breaking the Sabbath, He says that sweet and lovely word:

My Father worketh hitherto, and I work {John 5:17}.

God wants, as a present thing, our hearts to be in tune with His in our everyday life. He wants that. Therefore we find here: “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart,” &c. Now, God says, “Your heart and Mine want to have a little talk together. I am going to show you what is in your heart, and to show you that I know it.” He has brought you to Himself; and do you think that, if all that is in your heart is not brought out to Him, it will be all right between you? Do you think a father likes to have his heart all different to his child’s heart? He likes that the whole spirit, soul, and mind of his child be suited to his mind. God passes us through the wilderness that we may learn this. You often see a true Christian not knowing where he is at his death-bed, because he has not had everything out with God day by day.

Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men {Acts 24:16}.

The exercise of Paul was whether his heart was in everything attuned to God’s heart. Christ’s heart was. He could always say,

I do always those things which please Him.

Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony, that he pleased God. He was walking in God’s presence, and the effect of it was he pleased God. You could not walk with God without having everything out with Him. If you have something on your conscience you will not be happy. Every step we take we
see Him better, the light gets clearer, and we find things to judge that we had not known must be judged before -- according to that which you know of the glory of God. Are your hearts up to it? And supposing they are not, what is the effect of God’s presence? Why, it has to set my conscience to work in order to bring me into communion. “My son, give Me thine heart.” Now come, are your hearts given to God out and out?

“He humbled thee.” (v. 3.) He brings us to our bearings. He causes us to live by faith. “Fed thee with manna.” Do not our souls sometimes loathe the light food? Is it not often true that Christ does not satisfy our hearts? Of course, if our hearts are cleaving to something else, Christ will not satisfy us. “Man doth not live by bread only.” Christ quoted this to the devil in the wilderness. He had no word from God for the stones to be made bread, and He had taken on Himself the form of a servant. His will was motionless until it had God’s will to make it act. The word of the Lord abides for ever; that is the dependence of faith. Mark another thing, that while God kept His people in dependence on His word to guide them, He did not allow their raiment to wax old, neither their feet to swell all the forty years. He thought of everything for them, for “He withdraws not His eyes from the righteous” -- not for a moment does He cease to think of them.

Then comes another character of His dealings. “As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee” (v. 5). First of all, God passes us through circumstances which exercise us (feeding us and taking care of us all the time), and then there is the positive discipline for the breaking of the will. Every day one sees God doing it; and we often don’t know where we are, and get questioning the love that did it. Look at Rom. 5. God loves us as He loved Christ, and we are rejoicing in hope of the glory where Christ is. And not only so (when he has gone through the whole thing, that is not all), I am not only rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, but I am rejoicing in tribulations also, because God is not withdrawing His eyes from me in them. The hope is so much the brighter; for, oh, I say my rest is not here -- that’s a clear thing! And the hope makes not ashamed, because I have the key to it all in the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. It is God’s ways and work to make us know ourselves. There can be no question of the love because He has given us the key to it all.

How, then, has He proved it? Why it goes on to state that in the next verse: “Christ died for the ungodly.” Then he says again, “Not only so.” What? “But we also joy in God.” I have got to know myself, all my waywardness and forgetfulness of God, that in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing; but in this way of self-judgment I have learnt to joy in God. It is to bring the heart into this tune with God that He has to break it down and humble it. But this being in tune with God is never reached -- that settled consciousness of association with God -- until, through these ways and words
of God, we have got to the bottom of self. It is not that we shall not always have to contend with it; but its back is broken, and I have henceforward no trust in myself. The natural man says, “Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?” But at the end (Psa. 139) he says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart.” Up to the knowledge you have of divine things, is your heart in tune with Him? Could you say, “Search me”? It is a painful process sometimes.

“Lead me in the way everlasting.” Beloved friends, there is a way everlasting, and it is in that way everlasting that God comes and searches the heart. Are you content to have every motive searched out? It must be so if our communion with God and joy in Him is to be full and uninterrupted. We get these three things — the proving of our hearts, the chastening, and the conflict with Satan (v. 15) — “to do thee good at thy latter end.”

Beloved, if your souls would walk in peace and fellowship with God, you must learn that there is no good in you; but you must also learn to know Him in the perfectness of His love. It is present joy and fellowship with God; and if we go on with it, when death comes, then it is “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” and it is the brightest moment in the life. All these exercises of heart are self-knowledge. If you want to walk so as to glorify God in fellowship with the Father and the Son, then you must go through this having the conscience exercised to be “void of offence”; and as to the affections of the heart, having Christ at the bottom, and a walk which no one can blame at the top, but between them are all the thoughts and intents of the heart. You must have the soul practically exercised before God. You must learn the ways of God with you that you may be in tune with Him. The Lord give us to know more of a walk with Him, that we may have the kind of peace Christ had in His walk down here — that peace of heart which the soul knows in fellowship with the Father and the Son. The Lord give you to know what it is to have everything in your heart open before God.

(1878.)

The Christian Friend, 1888, pp.197-201
THE PRESENT EFFECT OF WAITING FOR CHRIST

There are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian, which are his strength on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. First, present communion and fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Secondly, the hope of the coming of the Lord. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them.

If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing that can separate us in the same way from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul, nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world, if there be not this waiting for His Son from heaven.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled by the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. For we cannot be really looking for God’s Son from heaven, without at the same time seeing the world’s utter rejection of Him, seeing that the world itself is going wrong, its wise men having no wisdom -- all is going on to judgment, the principles of evil are loosening all bands. The soul thus becomes oppressed, and the heart sad; but if, through grace, the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but the Christian’s heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, and this carries him far above every circumstance.

Brethren, we all want this; for to walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope. I do not believe a Christian can have his heart scripturally right, unless he is looking for God’s Son from heaven; for there could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen. Moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and for all the Church. It is this which gives its character to the joy of the saint; so Christ Himself say,

I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also {John 14:3}. 
Where I find my delight, there shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me -- for ever with the Lord.

You may think to find good or produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the last Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again there is another thing connected with my waiting for God’s Son from heaven. I have not yet got the Person with me I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world, tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself. Therefore, Paul says, in 2 Thess. 1:7,

To you who are troubled, rest with us.

I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way; for the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still it is not that we are to be “weary and faint in our minds”; it is not right to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! Rather let me be victorious every day, but still it is not rest to be fighting. However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself. I shall know it all better when I am in the glory, my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but it is the same kind of joy that I have now, as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints, only greater in degree.

And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world; for though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world that need the love which I enjoy and desire that they should possess (it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me on through all the conflict), so that our souls will be exercised in both the fellowship and the hope. Thus if I look for Christ’s coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on steadily and properly. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labor of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, although through suffering for His sake. If my soul is wrapped up in the last Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.
When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found. In 2 Cor. 1 there is present blessing in the midst of trial; but in 2 Thess. 1:5 it is tribulation, and not rest out of it till the Lord come --

That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.

In 2 Cor. 1:3, 4 there is present blessing in the midst of the trial -- “who comforteth us in all our tribulation” -- so that if the sufferings for Christ’s sake be ours, there is, at the same time, the comforting of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mine! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself. I get God communicating Himself to my soul, for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, this very joy of God -- God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him.

If, therefore, the expectation of Christ and His constraining love lead us out into service, in the desire that others may share our blessing, and thereby bring us into trials or persecutions, how rich and sustaining are the consolations ministered to our hearts.

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ (2 Cor. 1:5).

May the Lord ever fill our souls with the sense of His own presence, and keep our hearts under the present power of waiting for His coming.


**WAITING**

Psalm 40:1

It is Christ’s perfect life, and sorrows at the close of it, in which He refers to the faithfulness and goodness of Jehovah, so as to lead His people to confide in it, instructing them in this in which His perfection is shown.

I waited patiently for Jehovah.

Patience had its perfect work -- an immense lesson for us. Flesh can wait long, but not till the Lord comes in -- not in perfect submission; and confiding only in His strength and faithfulness, so as to be perfect in obedience and in the will of God. Saul waited nearly seven days; but the confidence of the flesh was melting away -- his army. The Philistines, the proud enemies, were there. He did not wait on till the Lord came in with Samuel. Had he obeyed, and felt he could do nothing, and had only to obey and wait, he would have said, “I can do nothing, and I ought to do nothing, till the Lord comes by Samuel.” Flesh trusted its own wisdom, and looked to its own force, though with pious forms.
All was lost. It was flesh which was tried and failed. Christ was tried. He waited patiently for Jehovah. He was perfect and complete in all the will of God. And this is our path through grace.

_The Christian Friend, 1888, p. 241._

**TRUE NAZARITESHIP**

_Luke 22:14-30_

At the table, where the Lord in the institution of the supper was speaking to the disciples of His humiliation even unto death, they were disputing amongst themselves as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. They did not understand that the principle of the child of God, of the disciple, is to be a servant -- servant of all by the power of the love of God acting in him. To be great down here is the opposite of Christian principle. In the world one erects monuments in memory of human benefactors; the only monument which the world ever raised to Christ was the cross. But in the cross I see grace. Grace blossoms in the valley of humility; it is not on mountain summits, but in valleys, that prosperity abounds.

The flesh always exalts itself; but, more than this, it is never able to meet a difficulty. It knows, as in the case of Peter, how to lead us into the thick of danger, but never how to extricate us. It makes us fall before obstacles, or else go to sleep. And yet of these very disciples Jesus says that they have continued with Him in His temptations.

As long as He is down here, the Lord shows Himself as a Jew and Messiah to the Jews; but, ascended to God’s right hand, everything changes. It is important to understand that we have to do with Christ in glory, not Christ on earth. Even if Paul had known Him after the flesh, he would not afterwards have known Him so. To confound these two things is to apply Jewish principles to the present economy. Riches, which for the Jews were a blessing, are a snare to the Christian. Ours being a heavenly vocation, the less we are tied to earth the freer we are. Glory, honor, and riches are only chains which, binding us to earth, weaken our true link with heaven.

When Christ the Creator was put on the cross, all the foundations were overthrown. This side of the cross, man is henceforth ruined and lost; salvation is his in the cross. But we must go beyond the cross. What the Jews possessed was external and earthly; rudiments of the world. Christ gave Himself for us to deliver us from this present evil age. Thus the world is judged by the cross of Christ. The world condemned itself in condemning Christ, and everything is broken between it and God. Henceforth grace alone is the principle on which God can act.
In the Lord’s supper, Jesus gives a token of love to His disciples; but previously, having enjoyed with them for the last time the memorial of Jewish deliverance, He takes another character. He receives a cup, not that of the supper, and He distributes it to the disciples without Himself drinking of it, adding:

For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come (Luke 22:18).

He takes henceforth openly the Nazarite character -- that of separation from sinners. Himself without sin, He had come amongst sinners, seeking them. Now He takes the position of separation, of holiness, to sit at God’s right hand. It is in resurrection that Jesus has been declared Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. This resurrection is a public proof of the power of the life of God, and of the holiness of Christ (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 7:26). Christ is now openly separated from sinners. When He returns, He will appear “without sin” for His own, and will drive out sin from His presence; whereas on earth He was the Friend of publicans and sinners.

Num. 6 depicts the character of the Nazarene. Wine is a sign of union and fellowship amongst guests. That is why it says,

Wine which cheereth God and man (Judg. 9:13)

but the Nazarite did not drink it. The Christian should love sinners, but be separate from sin; he is, like Jesus, a Nazarite. His holiness corresponds with the place the Lord now occupies, with Him who says,

For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth {John 17:19}

It is by death and resurrection that Jesus has taken this place of separation with regard to the world and sinners. When the kingdom of God shall have come, we shall be all together in the joy of the Lord with Him. To be sure the Christian is joyful now, but afflicted. He cannot be joyful down here with the world which has killed his Savior. A great deal of time has since elapsed, but time does not alter it. The character of the world remains the same. One must be converted not to belong to it. If our hearts belong to Jesus, it is impossible to be otherwise than sorrowful in the world. The world amuses itself; it dances on the tomb of our Savior.

But on the other hand the Christian rejoices in the Lord, and in his heavenly portion of which the world is in ignorance. The joy of the Christian is a hope full of glory; but down here he is always a Nazarite, and cannot share in the glory of this world. He invites and beseeches sinners to be converted, but he cannot have communion with them. Jesus has been rejected by the world, and received in heaven; this is also the Christian’s place. Our High Priest has been made higher than the heavens. He has left us a token of His love in the breaking of bread. If He is no longer present with us on earth,
it is because He gave Himself for us. His absence does not betoken indifference; for the Lord's Supper is the memorial of His perfect love to us.

Christ brings us into the heavenly kingdom by a totally new life. We are not transported into the kingdom of the Son of His love without possessing His life -- that of the last Adam, who is a quickening Spirit. We are made partakers of the divine nature. Conversion is not only a change, but the communication of a life unknown to us before -- a life hidden in Christ, separate from sinners, separate from the world.


**NOTES OF A LECTURE**

**Colossians 2:1-10**

The leading truth of this chapter is, that we are not alive in this world.

If ye be dead with Christ . . . why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?

The Lord having died, death is written on everything, because we have died with Him, and take our whole place with Christ risen from the dead.

When we come to the details, it is touching to see the interest the apostle has in all the saints, and in those he has never seen. They are on Christ’s heart, and as far as we have His heart they are on ours. We are poor, feeble things at it; but the Spirit of Christ in the believer is now concerned with the love of Christ, above all, to those who are His own, though we may not have seen their face in the flesh.

“What great conflict I have for you.” There we see what prayer can be (the same word as that used for the Lord agonizing in Gethsemane). It is not merely going to God with confidence as to our Father with our needs, though we cannot get on if we do not; but this is overcoming Satan. Where we have to move the power of Satan (which we have to do in all service), the word of God is the weapon; but the first thing is for the heart to be with God about it. Paul had never seen these saints, but he got exercised with the Lord about them, and the Lord was as much in one place as another. _He_ was with them, though Paul was not. It is positive conflict here for the blessing of others. We find a lack of that now. There is not that kind of interest with God, and connecting His people with Himself so as to set the heart in this conflict and exercise.

Col. 2:2. “Knit together in love.” The presence of God, who is love, always gives that as the primary character -- “that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be _able_ to comprehend,” etc. I cannot understand and apprehend God’s mind unless I am with Him; and if I am really with Him I am
with love. I cannot be with Him without having the spirit of love, for He is love. “To the full assurance of understanding”; that is, Christ must be the center of all glory, and have everything united under Him; it cannot be otherwise. It is part of God’s counsels. Taught of God, the soul enters into all this, and sees there is no possibility of its being other. The moment our relationship with God is settled, He tells us things that do not simply concern ourselves.

All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you {John 15:15}.

That principle is brought out fully in Eph. 1. In the first seven verses you get the condition of the believer in these counsels. Then, when He has put us there, He

abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of His will . . . to gather together in one all things in Christ {Eph. 1:8-10}.

It concerns us, for we are joint-heirs; but God says “You are completely at home with Me as a child, and now I am going to tell you all My plans about glorifying Christ.” There the heart gets its delight. You must first have salvation; but is that all you are going to think of -- yourself? You must begin there; but supposing God has brought us to this place, and deigns to calls us friends? A friend is one to whom I go and tell what is in my heart -- things that do not concern him at all. That is what God does to us; and do not tell me it is a matter of indifference to you. No matter to be treated by God as His friend? If by Christ my heart is in that place, it won’t be so; as I walk in love and near to God, He unfolds to me what concerns the glory of Christ, and thus the Christian’s heart gets an occupation that makes him grow. Every one must think of something, some more and some less; but God introduces me into a new world, and my heart gets opened and enlarged to all the thoughts of God.

Col. 2:10. We are “complete in Him.” Christ being the Head, the Body completes it. As God, the Divine Being, He fills all in all; but as the exalted Man, we are members of His Body, and He is the Head -- we the completeness of Him, “Christ in us, the hope of glory,” makes us realize it all. That is the mystery of God -- Jews and Gentiles brought together. “Mystery “does not mean something mysterious, but something into which we are only initiated by revelation. It means what we do understand; but should not if it were not revealed. The Christian is initiated. It was hidden, but now is made known, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are there. The sphere into which the believer is brought is God’s world. This is the fallen world of the first Adam; that is God’s world, a new creation altogether. My body is of the old creation, but my soul and spirit, my life as a Christian, of the new. The new is faith; we are living outwardly in the old, with a nature that belongs to the new, and then comes exercise that we should not live
according to the old but the new.

Ye are dead . . . Set your affection on things above.

Then the apostle takes up the two things of the present day: ritualism and rationalism (philosophy). A man may be very clever, but he can only spin his imaginings out of his own mind; he cannot bring out more than he has in him; he may catch flies, and does. Man in the flesh cannot get beyond man’s mind, and that knows nothing about God. His conscience does, and wherever God works, it is with the conscience. If I could measure God by my thoughts I should be equal to Him, and He would not be God at all. In philosophy, if you leave God out, it is false; and if you bring Him in, it is religion and not philosophy.

Canst thou by searching find out God? {Job 11:7}.

The moment I have to do with God, if He is God and I am man, my conscience must have to do with Him. In Christ I get the full and blessed revelation of all my heart can live in and by; all the affections of the heart are drawn out. If a man has a strong imagination, he goes to the poetry of ritualism; if he has a hard head, he goes to the reasonings of rationalism -- all that is not after Christ.

I get a world of folly and wickedness, or philosophy; but (v. 9) I find the fulness of the Godhead bodily in the midst of it all -- God in the midst of this world of sin. The living revelation of God Himself as a Man, one of ourselves, though perfectly sinless.

All the fulness of the Godhead bodily {Col. 2:9}.

What immense blessedness! He who is to be the center of this new creation -- where do I find Him? In all the glory up there? I find Him a carpenter’s Son -- if you take His appearance -- and laid in a manger. He could not take the glory of the world, which was the vanity of man’s heart; but He came in divine grace and love, that man, in his sins, wretchedness, folly, and pride, might have God close to him, and see One who was above all the folly, and showed out the nature of God. All His life was the unceasing expression of God, who is love, in all the sorrows of man. What do philosophers say when they look at the world with its misery, hatred, and corruption? They say misery is necessary to form man’s character. I would rather see a criminal in his wretchedness, than a philosopher saying that misery is necessary. Sin has brought it in, and after the sin God has come into the midst of it all. If I say, “I am too vile for Him to be with me,” that is truth in the inward parts. He has come as light, and brought the conscience to its bearings.

When do I find a man that told me all that ever I did? When the perfect love of God has brought it to me. Perfect in love and holiness, He was carrying love through the world that there might not be an aching heart that did not know it is in God. He was “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” To one
awakened to see what the world is, it is rest to see Him who is perfect grace in it. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” When I have the living God present in this world of sin, I have the key to what God is, and how the evil came in; that man departed from Him. Now instead of theorizing on what the world is, I confess what I am.

“And ye are complete in Him” {Col. 2:10}. He was complete before man in his sins, and those who believe are complete before God in Him. This “completeness” was manifested to man, and now what is man (who believes)? “Complete in Him.” There was the completeness of God before man in sins, and now the completeness of man before God in holiness. All the fulness of everything God could delight in is in Him, and I am in Him.

The moment Christ has come in to be my life, I say I am dead. What He has done is mine, because He is become my life, and therefore I do not own the old man; it is not I; I do not own it as myself. It is in me to hinder me if it can; but I have done with it. Christ is my life. “Putting off the body of the flesh,” &c. (v. 11). In Ephesians Paul takes up the counsels of God, and does not see Christ till He is dead; and he sees us dead in our sins before God. As to God, totally dead; alive as to sin. Christ comes down into death, puts away the sin as He comes down, and then Christ and we are quickened together. In Romans we are seen living in sin; not in respect to God, dead in sin. But man is guilty, for he is living in sin without God; and there you find he has to die, or the old tree will bring forth the old fruit. In Ephesians he is dead.

In this chapter (Col. 2) you get both. As dead, and as living. Both are true; living to sin, and dead to God (vv. 12, 13). “Buried with Him in baptism,” v. 12, is Romans. And “you, being dead in your sins . . . hath He quickened together with Him,” v. 13, is Ephesians. You must go to death, you must get the tree cut down; and then he shows it has been cut down in Christ’s death. Looked at as dead, I want to be made alive. In Romans you do not get the Christian risen, in Colossians you do; but not sitting in heavenly places, as in Ephesians. Here he is in spirit and heart risen with Christ, and he is to set his affection on things above, and the apostle speaks of the hope laid up for us in heaven. In Ephesians he is sitting there by faith. In Colossians he is risen as to the spirit of his mind; he has died and is risen, and has to look up. I do not get the Holy Ghost here. In Ephesians it is full union -- Christ and we one in heavenly places. In Romans it is merely individual, and the Spirit seals. In Colossians you get divine life; for the man is risen. Thus for our instruction we get different aspects in the different epistles. Justification is in Romans, not in Ephesians; for there it is a new creation, and that God cannot justify. Here the soul is going through the world with the consciousness of being risen. Are you passing through the world with the consciousness of being risen? It is a question of realizing it first as a truth, and then getting our affections in it, as the effect of the blessed truth that “the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” in
Christ as a Man, has been down here, and we are in Him before God. He is the Head of all principality and power. Man (Christ as Man) has been exalted to this place, to be set over all the works of His hands. He is the one God delights in, and we are complete in Him. We live in the world as those risen with Him while here, and our affections up there. How far are your hearts living in the objects Christ has brought you to? Christ brings us to another world. Adam and sin brought us to this. Are our hearts living in that? After such a thing as Christ Himself visiting us, and dying for us, how far is He all to us?

(1871)

OBEDIENCE AND MANIFESTATION

Notes of an address on John 14:18-28

It is striking here the way you get the settled knowledge of our place and position, and yet the ways of God with us are put conditionally on our love to Him. I get known life and perfect peace --

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.

He also says,

He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

That is not, “We love Him because He first loved us” -- the work of grace; but here it is, “If a man love Me, my Father will love him.” It is dealing with children; not a question of whether they are children, but obedient children; the Father’s love dealing with His child, and chastening it if need be. A parent does not scourge his child when it is doing well, nor is he pleased with it when it is doing ill. We are under this fatherly government of God which depends on the conduct of the child. Jesus has committed us to Him. He said, “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me.” He keeps us as Father; but as “holy,” He must have a walk that suits Him. We know we are in Christ, and Christ in us; then we ought to be manifesting Him in everything, and reckoning ourselves dead. We are in Him in the power of life before God, and at peace with the peace He gives; so perfect that it is the peace He had Himself -- “My peace.” There never could be a cloud on Him. He was always in the perfect sense of divine favor. We are loved too as He was loved. Then come the dealings of the Father with one in this state. The proof of love is obedience just as a child that loves his father obeys his father.

It is of all importance, if we know peace -- the peace He has made -- and what it is to be in Christ, and Christ in us, how far our souls are walking in this present enjoyment of the manifestation of Christ. When we are walking in obedience, the Holy Ghost is not grieved; if not He occupies me with myself. The effect of His presence is to make me find I have gone wrong. “Your feet are dirty,” He says. Of course anything gross comes to us at once, unless we have become hardened; but I mean carelessness. If I am not grieving Him, He reveals the unsearchable riches of Christ to me, and that is the manifestation of Him. “Now ye are clean,” He says; “abide in Me,” and that in order to bear much fruit. The Father deals with us with respect to our walk. What a blessing to know He takes notice of everything about us. “He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous.” There is not a moment that He is not taking cognizance of our state! Such a perfect settlement of our place with God, that the question is one wholly of walk and communion.

The question of acceptance should never arise; it is settled.

Because I live, ye shall live also.

He must die before I can die. The question you have to occupy yourself with is, Am
I joying in God? Is Christ manifested to my soul? or, Is there anything in your soul, in your ways, that hinders His manifesting Himself to you? “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you.” He comes to be with you spiritually, that you may enjoy His presence. Are you walking in such a way that you are enjoying His presence? Would the effect of His presence be, to bring to light something in my soul that hinders the joy? or simply to enjoy the blessedness of it? Have we that character of obedience -- the power of Christ’s word -- in our habits, ways, our dress, our houses, so that if Christ comes in we have only to sit down and enjoy Him? It is a very solemn question, if our hearts are not dulled to His love, whether our doings or our state are a hindrance to our enjoyment of Christ. Strength is wanting of course; and discernment, to do His will; but these manifestations give a sense of the interest He has in us; and it is that by which all the things of this world -- things that were all gain to us -- are dung and dross, by the sense we get of what Christ is, and His blessedness. They have more than lost their power, they are offensive to the Spirit -- it is not Christ.

The manifestation of Christ gives the consciousness too of what we shall have for ever. If Christ was everything to the disciples, and they felt they could not do without Him, what was the comfort they got? “I will come to you.” The thing is, we get accustomed to live without Christ. Look into your own heart and see if there is not, more or less, the habit of living without that full communion with Christ. It is that we have to watch against, if we desire to glorify Him, and live in the consciousness of the blessedness He has brought us to. It is what will be our everlasting joy. We have now the double joy of communion “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Just think what the force of that expression is!

I would desire for your hearts to have activity and diligence to get into this atmosphere. What is fellowship? Common thoughts and feelings and joys. If we have that with the Father, what a thing it is! His thoughts and feelings and joys will be the spring of ours. That is Christian blessedness; the Father and the Son, thus revealing themselves in grace, bring in their own thoughts and joys -- and holiness to delight in them too -- so that Their thoughts and ways become the spring of our feelings and actions.

If you get to enjoy this real manifestation of the Father and the Son, you will find -- I do -- that there is very little power to keep it. You who believe and trust and reckon on His love, do you find you can look up steadfastly into heaven? Stephen looked up steadfastly, he was full of the Holy Ghost. But it does not last long with us. I find I cannot look up steadfastly, it dies out, some thought or other comes in. There is not the positive living in that place where all else is judged. The Son is the revealer of these heavenly things on which our affections are to be set; but if I let my thoughts go to that which is not of God, He must judge it. If I am keeping Christ’s word, the effect is this blessed revelation of the Father’s thoughts and mind and joys, and that strengthens the heart and spirit, and gives us discernment of all that is in this poor world.

I would speak of the means of being sustained in the condition to enable us to enjoy these things; and then a word on the occasion of our losing it.

Hebrews speaks of maintaining us in it. We are in a world where the tendency
is to distract us from it. What we have to do is to deliver the testimony of Christ in the world.

All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world {1 John 2:16}.

It does not say it is not of God. God made the world -- not as it is morally -- but He did not make sin. He made the trees; but He did not create them for man to make money of. When I see these heavenly things we have spoken of, all this is dross and dung to me; but it is a constant solicitation to our thoughts and senses, and tends to shut out the Father’s world, where the Son is, and that in things where there is no outward harm. Then I get the constant service of Christ. It is a question of communion, and there is grace constantly in exercise toward us. “We obtain mercy” -- which we all need every moment -- “and find grace to help in time of need.” “He was in all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin.” But you cannot walk through the streets of London without the devil having something in every shop window to draw the heart from Christ, and on purpose. Christ was tempted; that was not lust. Satan tries to turn us aside from the way, and tests the fidelity of our inward hearts, if we will follow Christ. “One thing I do.” But Christ is always up there for us; and when temptation or difficulty comes, there is mercy, knowing our weakness and infirmities, and that there are trials in the path of faith. He understands all that; He was thoroughly put to the test; more than we can ever be; and He is perfectly cognizant of it all, not as a Jewish high priest who could not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but He was tempted in all points -- sin apart, that He might understand it all and sympathize.

It is not a question of sins here. I have “no more conscience of sins,” they are gone; nor of failure -- if I make an idol of my child it is sin, though perfectly right to have the affection for it, and woe to him who has it not. The word of God comes as a sword and detects sin; but here it is access to God (Heb. 4) We come “boldly to the throne of grace.” That I do not get in John, there it is fellowship with the Father and the Son; but then the moment I have an idle or an uncharitable thought, fellowship is gone; I have sinned, and if that goes on long, there comes hardness of conscience. Then he says,

If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father {1 John 2:1}.

Not a question of imputation, but of fellowship. “God is light,” and in every detail, if any thought of that which is darkness is let into my mind, there can be no communion; but Christ is in activity to restore the communion. There is neither allowance or imputation of sin; but I have not been obedient, I have let my old nature act, distractions have come in. If I have not kept His commandments, the effect of His presence is to awaken my conscience to whatever is not of God. I have not the abiding of the Father and the Son -- the comfort of it in my soul, and then the effect of their presence is to make me uncomfortable. Grace is there, not to prevent sins being known, or that righteousness fails; but in virtue of the righteousness of that propitiation, not to let this breach continue in the state of communion of my soul. Advocacy comes in; for there is nothing more dangerous than to get to do without communion. Supposing a child is in the delight of fellowship with his father, and sees a cloud on his father’s face, he says directly, “What is the matter?” What
would you think if he saw the cloud and did not trouble about it? If you get hardened, you are away from God, without finding it out! Do you find out if you lose the light of God’s countenance on your soul? Are you so walking with God that you get the consciousness of it if you are not walking in the light of His countenance? -- or have you something creeping in that makes you go half a day -- a whole day perhaps -- without having His presence? Are you content with living without any communications from Christ? Why does He speak of coming to us and not leaving us comfortless? Because He loved us and knew what would be the joy of our souls!

Has that an echo in your soul? Has this fellowship with Him such an echo in your souls that the joy of your path down here is,

I will not leave you comfortless, I will come again to you?

If the love of Christ has power in our souls, it will be so. Is it the need of our souls, because we have tasted His love? How can we manifest Christ, or be really effectual epistles of Christ, if our souls are not thus in communication with Him, and the flesh judged, enabling us to “carry about in our bodies the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal bodies”?

Only remember this, beloved friends, that we are not our own, we are bought with a price {1 Cor. 6:19, 20}. He has taken us up for eternal salvation; but He has taken our hearts up to be for Christ. Then it creates a want in it hearts, and He says, “I will manifest Myself unto him.”

The Lord give us to be so near Him, that the affections of Christ, which He has declared so abundantly to us, may have an echo in our hearts!


UNSELFISHNESS

One thing impressed my mind most peculiarly when the Lord was first opening my eyes -- I never found Christ doing a single thing for Himself. Here is an immense principle. There was not one act in all Christ’s life done to serve or please Himself. An unbroken stream of blessed, perfect, unfailing love flowed from Him, no matter what the contradiction of sinners -- one amazing and unwavering testimony of love, and sympathy, and help; but it was ever others, and not Himself, that were comforted, and nothing could weary it, nothing turn it aside. Now the world’s whole principle is self, doing well for itself (Psa. 49:18). Men know that it is upon the energy of selfishness they have to depend. Every one that knows anything of the world knows this. Without it the world could not go on. What is the world’s honor? Self. What its wealth? Self. What is advancement in the world? Self. They are but so many forms of the same thing; the principle that animates the individual man in each is the spirit of self-seeking. The business of the world is the seeking of self, and the
pleasures of the world are selfish pleasures. They are troublesome pleasures too; for we cannot escape from a world where God has said,

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground, &c.

Toil for self is irksome; but suppose a man finds out at length that the busy seeking of self is trouble and weariness, and having procured the means of living without it, gives it up, what then? He just adopts another form of the same spirit of self and turns to selfish ease.

I am not now speaking of vice and gross sin (of course every one will allow that to be opposite to the spirit of Christ), but of the whole course of the world. Take the world’s decent, moral man, and is he an “epistle of Christ”? Is there in him a single motive like Christ’s? He may do the same things; he may be a carpenter as Christ was said to be (Mark 6:3); but he has not one thought in common with Christ.

As to the outside, the world goes on with its religion and its philanthropy. It does good, builds its hospitals, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and the like; but its inward springs of action are not Christ’s. Every motive that governed Christ all the way along is not that which governs men; and the motives which keep the world going are not those which were found in Christ at all.

The infidel owns Christ’s moral beauty, and selfishness can take pleasure in unselfishness; but the Christian is to “put on Christ.” He event about doing good all the day long; there was not a moment but He was ready as the servant in grace of the need of others. And do not let us suppose that this cost Him nothing. He had not where to lay His head; He hungered and was wearied; and when He sat down, where was it? Under the scorching sun at the well’s mouth, whilst His disciples went into the city to buy bread. And what then? He was as ready for the poor, vile sinner who came to Him as if He had not hungered, neither was faint and weary. He was never at ease. He was in all the trials and troubles that man is in as the consequences of sin, and see how He walked. He made bread for others; but He would not touch a stone to turn it into bread for Himself. As to the moral motives of the soul, the man of the world has no one principle in common with Christ. If then the worldling is to read in the Christian the character of Christ, it is evident the world cannot read it in him; he is not a Christian; he is not in the road to heaven at all, and every step he takes only conducts him farther and farther from the object in view. When a man is in a wrong road, the farther he goes in it the more he is astray.

A "MAN IN CHRIST" AND THE FLESH

2 Corinthians 12

There is a great contrast between the beginning and end of this chapter, between Paul caught up to the third heavens and the Christians at Corinth, between what a Christian should be and what he can be, what he can descend to. In v. 2 we have a great privilege, which it is useful to consider. Paul speaks of himself as a man in Christ, and this is what characterizes every Christian, the whole Church. It was not in his quality of apostle that Paul was caught up to the third heavens, but as a man in Christ, on a level with the rest of the Church. He that is in Christ is a new creation, and has his place in the third heavens, although every man in Christ is not caught up there like the apostle. But we are quickened together with Christ, seated together in heavenly places in Christ. There is no spot which faith cannot penetrate.

Paul did not receive a revelation in the third heavens in order to communicate it to others; on the contrary, he went there to hear mysteries which it is not lawful for a man to utter; he went there to realize the presence of God, and to draw thence his strength. When the eye of faith penetrates God’s presence it finds there, together with communion, strength to walk before Him in all circumstances. Neither is it here as on the holy mountain, the sight of the future glory of Christ; it is communion with God, in which the body cannot share, to which it even becomes insensible. The principle of this communion applies to us all; the degree is not the same as with Paul, but our great and common privilege is this:

That ye also may have fellowship with us (the apostles);
And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Eph. 1:15-20 and 3:14-19 contain two very different prayers. The first has in view the knowledge of the glory of Christ, and what is connected with it; the second expresses the desire that our souls should enjoy communion with God. The apostle asks that we may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that we may be filled with the knowledge of the love of Christ unto all the fulness of God. We cannot realize these blessings when we are seeking after things down here; for then we are grieving the Holy Spirit, and the inner man is at once weakened.

What was the apostle Paul’s subject of glory? Not what he was, nor what he had done, but his infirmities (v. 9). In communion with God he had learnt that his strength was in God. If, in the infirmity of the flesh (Gal. 4:13), he had been the means of the conversion of many, it was that the power of God

17. Translated from the French.
was with him. So that he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake, in all that was not the flesh and that did not countenance it.

Directly the apostle regains consciousness of his presence in the flesh, this latter seeks to exalt itself, and God sends the thorn. The flesh seeks relief; it fears fighting and difficulties, but God will not relieve it at the expense of the soul. It is possible to pray earnestly for the healing of infirmities, or for deliverance out of painful circumstances, which God will not grant. Our dependence on God is thereby increased. We ought not only to expect infirmities, but to take pleasure in them, that the power of Christ may be manifested in us.

This thorn in the flesh given to Paul in order that he should not exalt himself was something that rendered him contemptible in his preaching (Gal. 4:13, 14). It was a counterpoise to the rapture with which he had been honored. We may not necessarily have the identical thorn that Paul had; God will always send us the needed one. It is Satan that God employs against the flesh, and Satan acts on the flesh in four different ways:

1. Before conversion the flesh is under the dominion of Satan, the conscience being hardened. This was the case with Judas, who loved money and was a thief. When he had taken the sop, Satan entered into him to instigate him to unbridled iniquity, and to deliver him afterwards to despair in beholding the result of his crime.

2. Before conversion the flesh is enticed to act by the seductions of Satan.

3. After conversion the flesh remains always there, and can fall under the direct action of Satan, if the Spirit, the seal of redemption, has not yet been given, or else if He has not yet accomplished the work of deliverance in us. One finds oneself then, like Peter, opposing Christ at almost every turn. Before the transfiguration, when Jesus spoke of his approaching sufferings, and Peter out of affection, but in the flesh, wished to dissuade Him, the Lord replies, “Get thee behind Me, Satan” (Matt. 16:23).

4. Satan desires to have us that he may sift us as wheat by means of the flesh. Jesus announces it to His disciples, and prays especially for Peter, in whom the flesh was strong.

Peter put himself forward on every occasion, and showed each time that the flesh is the exact opposite of Christ. Jesus said to the disciples,

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

This is not yet entering into sin. The effect of the Spirit was to incite Christ to prayer, so that when the temptation came it had no power over Him; but the three disciples, instead of watching and praying, sleep, overcome with sorrow, and when the temptation comes they are a prey to it. In the moment when all
that could break the Lord’s heart was combined against Him, and when Judas betrayed Him by a kiss, Jesus remains calm, submits, yields Himself up, undergoes humiliation to the full, and Peter draws his sword. The flesh leads into temptation, but sustains no one in it; it leads Peter to the high priest. There Jesus bears a glorious testimony; Peter, incited by Satan, denies Him. In everything the flesh is opposed to Christ, and yet Peter truly loved the Lord. Even after having received the Holy Spirit, we find Peter still acting in the flesh (Gal. 2:11-21).

Every time that a Christian acts according to the flesh, what there is in him of piety sanctions and authorizes in the eyes of others his evil action. When the flesh is at work in a Christian, the effects are, for this very reason, much more fatal than in an unconverted person. Peter, by his example, led all the Jews at Antioch, even the apostle Barnabas, into his dissimulation.

To have been in the third heavens even does not change the flesh in any way. It exalted itself, and could say to Paul, “No one but you has been there.” It is then that the messenger of Satan has permission to buffet him, but becomes the instrument of the goodness of God for preventing Paul from exalting himself. God does not Himself do that, but Satan, who loves to hurt the children of God, is employed by Him as a means of making the flesh disagreeable to us, just where it would desire to exalt itself and be esteemed.

Circumstances painful to the flesh are the most profitable for the soul. It would be useless for a father to inflict a punishment which would not be felt as one by his child. The work and power of God in us, as well as our own weakness, are manifested in these difficulties. When something trying is before us, God’s answer is: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” God would have us in His presence in joy; and all which makes us suffer in the flesh is especially profitable.


**A READING ON 1 CORINTHIANS 2**

Well now, we get the apostle’s use of all this, and it is remarkable how he sets man aside altogether, and then takes this ground, that when he came to this wise people, he knew nothing but the cross, and not only that, but that, looked at as a man, he was in weakness himself, and in fear, and in much trembling. He has only this foolishness of the cross, and his speech and preaching not

18. These are verbatim notes of Readings in Belfast some years ago. Condensations of these have already appeared, but hitherto the full report has never been printed. It is hoped to give others as opportunity offers. -- (Ed.).
with man’s wisdom, that their faith might stand in the power of God (vv. 4, 5). In those first five verses you get Paul coming to sinners; his way to these wiseacres. There was neither excellency of speech nor wisdom to man’s eyes. It is not strictly the cross of Christ, but Jesus Christ, the positive fact of preaching Christ; and then he takes Christ, as men would think, in the lowest and most degraded way -- “Christ, and Him crucified.” The preaching of the cross is not exactly the same thing; but the point is, he was not reasoning philosophy with them, but was preaching Christ; and then if you take up Christ, it is in this way -- as a crucified man. It is difficult for us, used as we are to look upon the cross as redemption, to feel what the effect was on a parcel of philosophers, what it was to go and say, “There was a man gibbeted in Belfast; trust him.” To man it was the grossest folly that could possibly be. And see, it is Jesus Christ, His person here, Him crucified.

He adds that

which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Because He was that, you get His person, and not merely the fact of the cross. And it is a very strong thing to put before men; it is what brought folly on their wisdom, and on the grandeur of this world. The moment man was a sinner it is another thing altogether, and the infinite love of God coming in and speaking to man as man. What comes of all grandeur, and of all wisdom, and of all else? The whole of man in flesh is swept away by it. All that flesh could glory in is there totally put to an end and to death. There is no kind of fleshly glory in the cross whatever. It was God’s wisdom to do this; no dignity, no heroism, but shame, reproach, ignominy, and death. It is all of man brought down to where nothing could be found; no, not a stone to put his foot on to keep it out of the water. None but slaves were put on that cross, and that is what God takes up to bring the world to nothing; first to nothing in judgment, and to nothing too where we know He is in glory. Then it brings forth God, man put out and God in, and the moment I get that side I get the “Lord of glory.”

Divine righteousness, divine wisdom.

We speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.

First he brings the cross to man in every shape and way, and when he has done that he says, “I have judged you in the cross, and am coming to tell you what God is in doing so.”

Q. What is the “perfect” there?

A. When they are brought by the cross into this new condition with God, it really is in resurrection; if you come to examine it, they are grown men in
that condition.

Q. Is it a moral state?

A. What he is looking at here is a person who had the flesh put down with death written on all -- all brought into God’s presence, and all the world put an end to; then a new state of things altogether, the beginning of the new creation, what the Holy Ghost reveals, and the Lord of glory. It is that the person is brought into the state that the cross brings into. You do not begin expounding blessedness and glory to a person who wants his conscience reached; but the contrast here is, the world and the man who has got out of the flesh into God’s place of blessing in the new creation.

Q. Is the word in contrast with ἐν πιστεῖ (babe)?

A. Well, it is the full-grown man. Judaism was flesh in that sense of the word; “As unto babes in Christ” is another thing (3:1). You get three things carnal men, natural, and spiritual men. You may get a person you cannot deal with, though having the Holy Ghost, because his practical state is “carnal” yet not “natural.”

Q. Is a Jew saved always “carnal”?

A. It is not a question of the Jew here at all. In Galatians he says,

The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all (Gal. 4:1).

But here he is talking of Christians in so low a standing that he could not talk with them of certain things.

Q. Could “carnal” people be said to be “perfect”?

A. As to knowledge they were, but in practical state he could not deal with them as such. I believe there are real Christians who are not ἔν θελειοι (perfect). If one did not know the forgiveness of his sins, he has not got into the consciousness of his new standing, and is not ἔν θελειοι.

Q. Here where he says, “Among them that are perfect,” he is speaking of their standing, is he not?

A. Yes, because he is taking up the question of those who had got God’s wisdom instead of man’s. When he came to sinners he preached Christ crucified, and when he had got people in a Christian state he speaks of all the fruits in glory. He is speaking of those who have got into the Christian standing; but when he says, “Ye are carnal,” that is the particular state of certain Christians who ought to be up to the measure of their standing, but are not.

Q. What is “the wisdom of God in a mystery?”

A. All that is unveiled of His counsels in Christ.

Q. Is it an allusion to Christ?
A. Everything that God has done in Christ. If they had seen all the glory of God in Christ, they would not have hanged Him on the cross. They went and crucified the Lord of glory, but, they would not have done it had they known. You get it contrasted in vv. 9 and 10 with the Jewish state of things –

As it is written, 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.

There you get the Jew, the prophet declaring that it had not entered into man’s heart, but that God hath revealed these things unto us; that is, I get in the Old Testament not a νηπίος, but that these things were not revealed, and now they are. He is speaking of the whole Christian condition, and not of the state of the individual; and he takes up the Christian therefore in his full character, and not in his gradual progress, or in his faulty want of development either.

Verses 9 and 10 are striking; they are often quoted as of present application, but the apostle is quoting them to show what is not the Christian state; for to us God hath revealed these things by His Spirit.

Q. Is the last clause of v. 10 the Spirit in us?

A. Yes, you get three distinct steps here: the Spirit of God revealing, whether to Paul or others; then the Spirit of God communicating what was revealed; and then receiving by the Spirit. The Holy Ghost in us searches all things; there is nothing hid. In a man, what man knoweth the things passing in his mind? only the spirit of the man knows. Now we have got the Spirit of God, and He knows the things of God, and therefore we know them. And then Paul goes on to the unfolding of this. It was revelation to Paul, and communication by Paul in the words of the Spirit, and the reception spiritually by spiritual men.

Q. Would you add a fourth, the mind capable of receiving them?

A. That is true, but it is not exactly the fourth thing. It is not I who know what a man thinks, but the mind of Christ we have here.

Q. Would it not be common to all Christians to have the mind of Christ?

A. It should be. Here is what I have somewhere lately called the intelligent and the intelligible. The intelligent is capacity without a thought; but add the intelligible, and you have the thought as well as the mind.

Q. Does νοῦς (mind, v. 16) take in both?

A. Yes, I think it does here.

Q. In v. 15, “Yet he himself is judged of no man,” is that a natural man?

A. It is man as man in contrast with the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is the “comparing” in v. 13?

A. I don’t think “comparing” is right at all; it is communicating “spiritual” by “spiritual.” He gets the Holy Ghost’s words, and communicates the Holy
Ghost’s words. And that is whether it be writing or preaching.

Q. Would it not be even to the present day that our preaching or teaching should communicate what we have to say in the words of the Holy Ghost?

A. If we can. There may be things I am quite sure of which I may put in a way that is not the Holy Ghost’s way.

Q. What authority have you for “comparing” Paul’s preaching?

A. “Comparing” when Paul was preaching was not comparing at all.

We speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

Q. With preachers now, then, there ought to be carefulness that the words used should compare with the words of the Holy Ghost?

A. Well, I speak as from God, or else I ought to hold my tongue.

If any man speak; as oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11).

That does not mean according to Scripture, but as from God. Of course, it will be according to Scripture, but that is not the thing here.

Q. Would not that strike at all the intellectual preaching of the day?

A. It strikes at everything that is of man. And so you have revelation first, then the words were adequate, and then the third thing, that through the Spirit I receive it. It is the ρήμα as well as the λόγος, both. I know they talk about inspiration, and of Shakespeare being inspired, and so on; it is all very well, but did such men get a revelation, a positive new thing, from God? The first thing is revelation; what you call inspiration is not so clear. It is possible I may get a revelation from God, and never say a word about it. Paul got a revelation, and told us nothing of it. Inspiration is an ambiguous word, altogether, and you may deceive by it; but when it comes to a positive revelation, men know they have no place at all in that. Then the Holy Ghost forms the communication too. It is like a fountain; the water is all the same; it comes out as it went in. You may deceive people by inspiration, but no one talks about revelation in Shakespeare. It is a most important chapter. You see we have the Spirit, that we may know the things that are freely given to us, and we have to learn them as revealed, and the revelation is prior to the communication. In the last verse we have the same contrast with the Old Testament.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him?

And in answer to the challenge of the prophet,

But we have the mind of Christ.

Q. You spoke of the intelligent and intelligible, which is this?

A. If I have got Christ’s mind, I have the thoughts that are in it, and all that is included. We have not got the divine mind abstractedly, but we have by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us; and then comes all this revelation of the mystery.
I must bring the cross to a poor sinner, whoever he is. Say you are a clever person; can you answer in the day of judgment? No; the cross is the answer of divine wisdom. Suppose he has made all the telegraphs in the country, when he is dead what becomes of them to him? Well, now, God will give you, not cleverness in your mind, but the Holy Ghost, and the truth of God, and the mind of Christ. John says,

Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things (1 John 2:20).

And there is no part of God’s counsels that is not now brought out into light. As to this the intelligent and the intelligible go together; with us creatures you can’t get the capacity without the thoughts.

Q. Is that before a man knows his sins are forgiven?
A. Well, he could not receive that without it being imparted to him through the Word.

Q. In v. 10. If a man has the Spirit of God, how can the Spirit of God in him search the mind of God? Does not the Spirit know it?
A. Ah! but not working in us. They searched what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify (1 Pet. 1:11).

Having the Spirit they began searching out. It is the Spirit in us who searches.

Q. Is it the renewed intelligence that does that?
A. I don’t know what you mean by the renewed intelligence.
Q. Well, is it the Spirit of God?
A. Yes, of course. People may spend their time or words to little purpose; but it simply is, there is a power of the Holy Ghost to give all the counsels of God. That’s all. You find the Spirit of God is identified with the person He is in elsewhere (Rom. 8). He maketh intercession for the saints according to God. I have got the Word, the mind of the Spirit in my heart, and the mind of the Spirit according to God.

Q. How can I say the Holy Ghost according to God, when He is God?
A. ϕρόνημα is what the desires are on. Their mind is set on them, and therefore you get, “The mind of the flesh is death.” That is what the flesh is after.

Q. Is there any difference between “spiritual” here and Gal. 6:1?
A. Oh, no; only that it is more practical!

The Christian Friend, 1889, pp. 96-104.
A READING ON 1 CORINTHIANS 9

Q. Is it one of the apostle’s qualifications to have seen the Lord?
A. He could not be a witness otherwise.

Q. What is the force of “free”?
A. Not under the yoke to anybody in his service; only the Lord of course.

Q. Why “forbear working”?
A. He was free in that sense; it is what he calls willingly and unwillingly further on. “I did it not for my own will”; but still he was free from man -- it was not Peter that sent him. That was what they charged against him; he had not seen the apostles; did not come from Jerusalem, and so on.

Q. What is “willingly”?
A. Our word does not quite convey the thought; it means of his own will.

Q. Then “to lead about a sister, a wife”?
A. That is against “forbidding to marry”; it is the Gnostics and their error.

Q. Is Barnabas working in fellowship with Paul here? is it not after he left him at Antioch?
A. They had gone together in fellowship, and they had separated, and Barnabas had gone on to Cyprus. The nineteenth verse gives you what “free” is, “though I be free from all, yet have I made myself servant unto all.”

Q. Where do you gather that there were false teachers who had gone out, and not taken anything?
A. In 2 Cor. 11:12 he says, no one shall stop him his boasting, and he will do as he had done, that he might cut off occasion from others that “wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.” In 1 Cor. 9:20, 21, he sought to win Jews, not to Judaize. Judaizing was very common. In itself Judaism was God’s dealing with human nature to see if good could be got out of flesh. God dealt with Adam, and then with the Jew (promises came in between); but Judaism was God taking up man on his responsibility, and giving him a rule or law, and with it all appliances to help -- a priesthood and temple -- every kind of help to man as man, to see if any good could be got from him. It was the orderly assaying and proving whether man could be on terms with God. He could not please God, but yet it is the constant tendency of human nature to go back and try again; for it does not bow and own there is no good in it, and so it is always talking about keeping the law and so on. Really man’s responsibility is not in question at all. There is such a thing; but Christ came
to seek and to save that which was *lost.*

I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18).

Now that is what has been brought into the light and condemned, and I have therefore now a right to say I am dead.

I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God (Gal. 2:10).

I am dead and finished as a child of Adam. Because this is not apprehended there are always some remains of Judaism.

When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death (Rom. 7:5).

And the result is we discover we are lost. Take the whole system of setting up law in any form, and the moving of men’s hearts by it, it all owns man still alive in the flesh. You get it gross in a self-righteous person, and in a mixed shape in those who try to put law and grace together; but in each and all it is just human nature thinking it can be something. There is something terrible in putting a man under law after grace has come in; it is setting him under responsibility after flesh has been proved unable to meet it.

Q. How did Paul put himself under law?

A. Ah, there is a line left out, which is, “Not being myself under law,” and which comes v. 20, after the second word “law.” It is recognized as in the text by all who have examined it. He put subjection to Christ in the place of being ὑπὸ νομὸν (under law); he is ἐννοομος Ἰησοῦς. All that he means by, “To them that are under the law, as under law” (1 Cor. 9:20), is, he would not eat pork if sitting with a Jew.

Q. Is that how Timothy was circumcised?

A. It is the same in principle. He had no right to be circumcised; it was an arbitrary act, for his father was a Greek; that is, unless he wished himself to be a Jew. Paul yielded to the Jewish Christians in that case, and did it to please them; but you notice the moment he got into a scrape about it not one of those he sought to please showed his face to help him. In dealing with Jews, he adapted himself to them; but the moment the Jews made the law necessary he withstood them. He would not yield about Titus, because there they were making it necessary. But in Paul’s own case here there was no necessity; it was his own adapting himself to them. Just what we all ought to do. His action at Jerusalem was a further case. The Spirit had told him not to go up, and he could not do anything right there, though nothing wrong either. It was merely to please himself, and under other people’s advice, doing this and that after he had left all such things entirely.

Q. Does not v. 14 look like compulsion on those who preach?
A. No; if the preacher gives it up for the Lord’s sake, of course he may.

Q. How could he “live of the gospel”?

A. By being maintained and fed; getting food, raiment, and what he wanted. He may, if he have energy, work like Paul all night, and so support his house, and to prevent selfish people, like at Corinth, from saying, “He is doing it for his pay.” Not many have energy enough to do the two things, and do them well. If you have a man preaching, supply him while he preaches. “He that plougheth should plough in hope” of getting the fruit of his ploughing.

Q. What do you think is the meaning of the passage 2 Tim. 2:6: “The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits “?

A. He tells Timothy he must work, or else he will not get his pay. I do not mean pay in a bad sense.

Q. Some have thought souls were the fruits?

A. I have no objection. There is a question of translation, whether it is “first laboring,” or “first partaking.” It is a mere comparison like the other.

If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully (2 Tim. 2:5).

Only he must first labor to be a partaker. The verses before show that he is to endure hardness as a good soldier, and he is not to entangle himself with the affairs of this life. You get something of the same kind in 1 Cor. 9:24: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?”

Q. Better for him to die, he says, than that any man should make his glorying void?

A. Well, that is about the same thing. Even what Christ has sent me, I do not take it for His sake. I glory in this, that I have given up everything I had a title to for the gospel’s sake. It is a very strong expression. Better for me to die, than for me to do anything that would hinder the gospel. He was ashamed of the Corinthians.

Q. Is there any change in translating (v. 5) “sister” as “wife”?

A. It is, “Why should I not have a sister as a wife?” It would not do for him to have an unconverted person. He was at liberty to marry, though an apostle. Cephas {Peter} had a wife, we know; for Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever. That is one of the things that puzzle Roman Catholics. In A.D. 324 it began that they were not allowed to have wives -- that is, the priests -- so that it came in early.

Q. When would you say the primitive Church ceased?

A. There is no limit for the early primitive Church but the death of the apostles. “I know that after my decease,” Peter says, pointing to a change. But
what we get in principle for ourselves is,

That which is from the beginning {1 John 1:1}.

If it is not from the beginning, it has no claim of authority over me at all.

If ye hold fast that which is from the beginning, ye shall abide in the
Father and in the Son.

They had wanted at the council at Nice to establish the celibacy of the clergy, but one old bishop got up and told them they would only be putting a snare to their feet. That was about nine years before. Some tried at the first so-called general council to lay it down as a rule, but they were hindered, though the spirit of asceticism had come in. A century afterwards you find the strongest denouncement of these notions. Chrysostom has two treatises against them.

Q. How far is Alford’s translation to be depended upon?

A. Not at all. It may be useful to a person who can judge for himself. He was a rash man, who got a little soberer afterwards and very useful, with an active mind in raising questions, but I never trusted his judgment. His was not a sober judgment, and not therefore one to be trusted. What I dread in these new translations is, that there is a kind of conservatism of an old doctrine governing them; as, for instance, Alford retaining “sin is the transgression of the law.” You find him keeping to the old thing, because it is there. They none of them know Scripture, or have got truth from Scripture, but they bring their thoughts to Scripture.

Q. Are there any modern scholars who change that text?

A. Oh, yes! Besides, it is clear enough in other passages, as Rom. 2:12, 

As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.

That is in contrast with those that have sinned under law. It is clear contrast there, and that in the English translation itself. Now they had a doctrine which was that the transgression of the law was sin. And so in John they put it, “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4); but where their doctrine was not in question they translated it as lawless. In John it is positively contrary to Scripture; for when it says, “As many as have sinned without law,” how can that be if sin is the transgression of the law? And again, How then could sin, by the commandment, become exceeding sinful? And again,

For until the law sin was in the world (Rom. 5:13).

How could that be if sin was but the transgression of the law?

Q. What is “sin is not imputed when . . . there is no law”?

A. It is not the word elsewhere rendered “impute,” but it means the particular sin is not put to account. You are a sinner and lawless when you have no law; but I cannot then say to you such and such a thing is forbidden. As, if my child runs into the street instead of doing its lessons, I cannot say in a particular
sense, “You have been disobedient”; but if I have told him not to go out into the street, then it is not a general question of his idleness, but I say, “I am going to punish you for that particular thing.” In that passage, Rom. 5:13, what the apostle is reasoning on is, that he has death as a proof that sin was there before there was a law. You cannot confine grace to the Jews, for then you make it narrower than sin, for death and sin were there, and all had sinned; and if you go on and shut up grace to those under law, and don’t let in the Gentiles, you are making sin a more powerful thing than the grace of God. Death was reigning there before ever Moses’s law came in; and that is the meaning of the expression,

Them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression (Rom. 5:14),
a quotation from Hos. 6:7, “But they like men” -- Adam -- “have transgressed the covenant.” These Gentiles never did that. The Jews did; they transgressed it; and Adam too transgressed the commandment he had. Yet these Gentiles were under sin and death, though they had no law at all. You must now take up Christ as answering to Adam in Headship, though first he adds more, that the law entered that the offence might abound; “but where sin” -- not offence -- “abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

Q. What is the difference between “impute” in ch. 4 and ch. 5?
A. In ch. 4 it is reckoning a man to be something; in ch. 5 it is putting so much to his account. It occurs again in Philemon, “Put that on mine account.” In reading the verse in 1 John 3:14, “Sin is lawlessness,” it would not have the same effect if you reverse the words while they stand as in our version; but as in the Greek with the two articles it is a reciprocal proposition. A blow is sin; but you could not say sin is a blow. But lawlessness is sin, and sin is lawlessness, and he who does sin also does lawlessness. It is κακία -- “for” -- that is used to connect the sentence, not ὅτι or γὰρ, and I think that brings it back an abstract proposition. In Rom. 5 Adam had a law and Moses had a law, and sin was in between and death too. I think you see at once that law is in contemplation. Not so lawlessness. It is παραβάσεις νοµοῦ. Ἀνοµία is an abstract word.

Q. What is sin?
A. Sin I believe to be man having a will of his own. It so far takes in law that the moment you have got a creature of God there is some rule or will of God that that creature ought to obey; but if he does not he is lawless. Ἀνοµία is to err, to miss anything; as not to hit when shooting at a mark, to reel off when you ought to keep on -- to leave a straight right path is the etymological meaning of ἄνοµία. But it is a very different thing to bring in the thought of law. If I say “them that have sinned without law,” it makes me think of a law, though they have had none. You cannot, in the abstract sense, think of a
creature that has to say to God, without thinking of God’s authority expressed somehow, and that would be a law to him; and that was true in the garden of Eden. But when a fruit was particularly forbidden, it was a legal covenant. “If you eat that, you shall die” -- a positive rule. Well, man eats it, and gets a conscience, and so on. Afterwards Moses’s law was a perfect rule for man in that state -- for a child of Adam that had got away from God. There are no means in it of bringing him back to God, and therefore it says,

The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom, 8:7).

It has got a will of its own. That state you get brought out in the chapter we were reading, where you get Paul “ἐννοοὺς Χριστὸς”; i.e., under law to Christ, and yet not being ὑπὸ νόμον; i.e. under law. “Ἐννοοὺς Χριστὸς is the abstract idea of being subject to the rule of Christ, and so on. Yet he states at the same time that he is not under law; he will not hear of that in any way. But he adds, not without law to God, nor lawless therefore as regards God; and yet he is not -- ὑπὸ νόμον -- under law, while he is -- ἐννοοῦσ Χριστὸς -- rightly subject to Christ. The mischief of maintaining law is, that it sets up flesh, treats man as alive. Now the doctrine of Christianity is, that man is not alive,

The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth (Rom. 7:1).

Well, if I am alive, I am a responsible man in the flesh, and lost and condemned. But now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held, and that is where there is no allowance of sin, and he brings in a nature to which the power of Christ is added. He does not set about to leave the man alive, and then bring the law to a man that will not bow to it; He did that once of old. But now in Christ I get a new life with power in it, and in that respect the Christian scheme is as plain as possible. It is not the folly of bringing a law to a nature that cannot be subject to it; but the bringing in a new nature that delights to do the will of God.

Q. What is Rom. 8:10 -- “the body is dead because of sin”?

A. If my body is alive, in the scriptural sense of evil, it is flesh; of course, this body is a mere instrument. The Jesuits said a body ought to be a mere carcase and obey.

Q. What is “on account of sin”?

A. It is the practice. The only source of life to the Christian that he owns is the Spirit. I hold my body dead, because if it is alive it will be a fountain of sin.

Q. And people sometimes ask, What is flesh?

A. Sin in the flesh is clear in Scripture. You never get flesh alone, unless
merely as the body. “The life I live in the flesh.”

Q. What is the difference between the “body of sin” (Rom. 6:6) and the “body of his flesh”? (Col. 1:22).

A. The body of sin is taking it as a whole; it is merely, as I might say, the “body of leaven,” the whole of it. In Colossians it is “body of the flesh” (1:22), and in Romans it is “body of sin” (6:6). It is the idea of the whole thing going as one lump. I do not doubt there is an allusion to the body, but the thought is the whole thing. This body is looked at as the seat of sin, I have no doubt.

Q. What is “condemned sin in the flesh”? (Rom. 8:3).

A. You have the two parts of the thing we get from being dead with Christ -- dead and “alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). Then follows,

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

In the Spirit of life I get power. Then comes the other side,

God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). The law could not do that. It might curse, but it could get nothing good out of me. Where I was, Christ came there to die, and there and then God condemned sin in the flesh. Christ was made sin for me, and that which was tormenting my mind God has condemned altogether, and there is an end of it for faith.

Q. Is that like “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”? (Heb. 9:26).

A. Yes; only it goes further. First, as to sins, the Lord bore them and put them away. Then I find there is a tree of evil in me, and what of that? It is all condemned upon the cross where Christ died, and I am consequently to reckon myself dead. I have done with it -- sin in the flesh 19 -- that is, faith has. I know it is more difficult for us to get hold of that than to get hold of the forgiveness of sins, because it contradicts our experience. If a man comes and tells me my debts are all paid, I believe that; but if he says, “You are dead to sin,” “How do you mean that,” I say, “for I was in a passion this morning?” and in that way experience contradicts it. But it did die in Christ’s death. It is all dead and gone, because I am in Christ, and Christ is my life; and when the flesh comes and shows its face to me, I say, “You have had your day, and have been ended.” I have a right to say that, knowing that Christ has died and

19. {The reader should understand that sins refers to acts committed, and that these acts flow from something within us that was acquired in the fall. We often call it the old nature. Rom. 8:3 calls it “sin in the flesh.”}
God condemned sin in the flesh there. I have a perfect title to do so, and, also, I have Christ as my power.

Well, now we come to one of those verses some are afraid of looking in the face --

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway {1 Cor. 9:27}.

“Castaway” is the trouble. People have tried to make out that a castaway is not a castaway. I see no difficulty in it at all. He supposes a case, that one is preaching to others and yet perishes himself.

Q. The difficulty with people is that Paul is speaking in the first person.

A. Paul was perfectly well assured as to himself, but he says if he had been merely preaching he would have been falsely assured; but if not merely beating the air, he was rightly assured.

Q. What was it he wanted to “obtain”?

A. It is the general idea of the incorruptible crown of glory. He has got salvation in his mind -- “That I might by all means save some,” and so on. He is not thinking only of the reward of service, but he takes it all in in the most general way. Scripture is plain enough --

Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor (1 Cor. 3:8).

There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting (Luke 18:29, 30).

There is what characterizes the faith of the Christian and makes eternal life the reward. There is the keeping of the body down, that is the contrary to preaching. I am not merely a preacher, but a liver, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

You must run lawfully as a Christian, not merely preach, or you may have all the sacraments, as you call them, and yet fall in the wilderness. There must be reality, whatever else -- that.

Q. What is he “partaker” of in v. 23?

A. It is in the joy of seeing souls saved and in being saved himself.

Q. Many weaken the force of the word “castaway.”

A. Yes, but it is done right in the teeth of the passage. It has no reference to the quality of the preaching, for he says,

So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and
bring it into subjection.

“I myself” is not my service, not my preaching.

Q. How far does “castaway” go?

A. All the way, right away.

Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:9).

What Paul means is, he is not only a believer, but is living like a believer, or else “I” might be cast away as well as other people. I have not the most distant doubt that God will keep His people; they shall never perish.

Q. The difficulty people have is that Paul might perish?

A. Well, suppose I say, “If such a person stayed in such a room, he will never have consumption at all”; so if Paul himself had been preaching only, not living, he would have been a castaway; but he was not, and he was stating how he was living that he might not be a castaway.

Q. Is the thought that of continuous effort?

A. The point is that you must strive lawfully and according to the rules. Now the rule of Christ is, you must live as well as talk, or else be afraid of the consequences:

If ye live after the flesh ye shall die (Rom. 8:13).

Q. In Rev. 22:14 it says, Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life”?

A. Yes, I have no doubt that should be, “Blessed are they that wash their robes,” and so on. We ought to be clear on this. I believe the book of life is final, and all the devils cannot blot a name out of it.

Q. Then what is the “blotting out “?

A. It is like a registry of voters; if it is proved that a certain name has no right there, it is blotted out.

Q. Is that so of the five foolish virgins?

A. Every professor’s name is in the book of life; but if God wrote it, it will never be blotted out.

Q. Who has written his name in the book of life, if he is a mere professor?

A. He has written it himself.

Q. Is not the name written there the privilege conferred on a man, rather than the profession he makes?

A. I get his name written in the book of life, and if he has no right to be there -- unless God has written his name there -- it will be blotted out.
Q. Is the “book of life” in Rev. 20:12 the same as Rev. 3:5?
A. Though it is a question of works in Rev. 3; no overcomer {is} there who was not written in the book of life.

Q. Does not Rev. 22:19 show that God does take away from the book of life?
A. It is tree of life, not book of life, in that passage. He takes away no name that He has written.

Q. In Rev. 13:8 it should be “written from the foundation of the world,” should it not, not the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”?
A. I have no doubt it should, and such a name will not be blotted out. I suppose the “book of life” in ch. 20 is after the names are blotted out; for v. 15 is,

And if any man was not found written in the book of life he was cast into the lake of fire.

Although they are there judged for their works, their names were not there. Blotting out is, a man has got there, and had no right to be there.

Q. But is every baptized infant written there?
A. You will not get Scripture to put itself into your shape.

Q. Have we all got our names written in the book of life -- in the registry in heaven?
A. I did not say anything about registry in heaven. God was not thinking of infants in particular. If they are written in heaven they will not be blotted out, but there they will be.

Q. What grounds are there for supposing professors’ names are in the book of life?
A. Because it talks about blotting out. Moses has the same thought; he says, “Blot me out” (Ex. 32:32). In Rev. 20 not one of those who were there had his name in the book of life. “Life” and “living” in Scripture, when God uses it, is always the thought of, not merely “O that Ishmael might [not die, but] live before Thee” (Gen. 17:18). It is divine favor also. This is one of those cases in which I do not see that those who make difficulties have gained anything in the least. I do not think that the idea of blotting out is all; there is the reality, though it would stop a mere caviler to say, None are blotted out. God puts absolute principles which lead to certain consequences; and if the cap fits, let a man wear it. People try to torture passages to make them consistent with doctrines, instead of taking the doctrine from the passages. Take

If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die (Rom. 8:13).

I am not going to weaken that. Again,

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and
honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil (Rom. 2:7-9).

“Then,” says one, “a man is saved by his works; eternal life is dependent on patient continuance,” &c. It is practical Christianity brought in at once.

Q. Would “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12) be temporal?

A. No, not a bit. I resist altogether the attempts to enfeeble that pressure on the conscience which I see in Scripture. “Work out your own salvation” is in contrast with Paul’s working, as he might say, “I was laboring for your salvation when I was with you, and now you must do it for yourselves, because I am here in prison; but you have not lost God by losing me. God is working in you both to will and to do.” That is what I mean, otherwise you torture the Scripture.

Q. What is “salvation” here?

A. Always in Philippians salvation is looked at as with glory at the end. It was not the mere salvation of Paul’s body in Phil. 1:19. We always have that truth in that epistle founded on redemption; the cross has laid hold of me for the glory, but I have not yet laid hold of it, and what I ought to apprehend is that for which I have been apprehended. And God’s way was when He laid hold of Paul to put him through the wilderness, and make him work out his salvation to the end. When I say God is keeping His people, I ask too, Why has He got to keep them? Because they want keeping, or they would fall. You have the two things in John 10: “They shall never perish” inwardly, nor be “plucked out of my hand.” But this is not to weaken the plain positive passages which are given as warning, and meant to be as warning. You get the “ifs” in Hebrews and in Col. 1: “If ye continue,” and so on. Now suppose I believe that God is keeping His saints, and still I say to you, “If you continue to the end you will be saved.” I get a Methodist who thinks and will say the same, but he thinks such an one might be lost after all, while I am perfectly certain that he will never perish, that is if he really has life at all.

Q. Which would be calculated to give a young Christian the greatest amount of comfort, to read him this in Colossians or part of John 10?

A. I must give him meat in due season. This might help him on or might puff him up. That is a question of spiritual wisdom in dealing with souls. All that I feel anxious about is the maintenance of the positive dealing of Scripture with conscience. Take that passage in Romans we referred to,

Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance, etc. (Rom. 2:6, 7).

Well, a man says, “There may be good people; and if they work good they
will get glory and honor and peace.” But I say, to him, “You are all wrong entirely -- there is none good but God.” There is plenty of Scripture to meet such a case; but I do not go to weaken this sentence in Romans in order to do it. It is the necessity of God’s nature that there must be a certain life and character in a man for him to be with God. I get a scripture that God has given that nature, and that He will keep it to the end; but the latter does not enfeeble the fact that the nature is such as it is. You must have that life, and walk in that life, or you will not be in heaven. So I get broad dealing with conscience; and that is what I do not want to weaken. I get it plain enough, unmitigated and unenfeebled. Consciences want it, they are slippery enough. If I go and use it to weaken a person’s faith in God’s fidelity, I use it wrongly; but I want to give it all its force as it stands, but giving meat in due season. Suppose I found a person slipping into sin, and I say to him, “Well, never mind, God is faithful”; though that is abstractly true, that is not what I should use to him then, but just the opposite. Yet, if God did not keep me, I know I should be off somewhere soon.

Q. A man may have life and be for many years a backslider?

A. I suppose so; but these Scriptures do not justify that.

Q. When Paul says, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18), would that have to do with it?

A. Now I do not believe such persons have got that at all; that is, experimental and conscious knowledge.

Q. Would not v. 12 of next chapter apply, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”? Would that be eternal life lost?

A. Well, both -- standing and falling are put in opposition. The next verse shows God is faithful.


**DECLINE AND ITS ANTIDOTE**

When we first receive the knowledge of life in Christ we are absorbed, we readily admit all else to be “dung and dross” (Phil. 3). But when decline comes in, we get old motives into action again. Little by little, we are not absorbed, and then a hundred things begin to be motives -- things of which I took no notice, which did not act before. People say, “What harm is there in it?” When I begin to enquire, “What harm is there in this, or in that?” there is the tendency to decline. There may be no harm in the thing, but the thought about it shows that I am not absorbed with that which is heavenly. “Thou hast left thy first love.” It is not in great sins, but here, that decline in the saints is
manifested. When the sense of grace is diminished, we decline in practice. Our motives must be in God. Sometimes effort is made to press conduct, works, and practice, because (it is said) full grace was preached before; and now that there is decline in practice, you must preach practice. That which is the rather to be pressed is grace -- the first grace. It is grace, not legalism, that will restore the soul. Where the sense of grace is diminished the conscience may be at the same time uncommonly active, and then it condemns the pressing of grace, and legalism is the result. When conscience has been put in action through the claims of grace, that is not legalism, and there will be holy practice in detail.

We may fall into either of two faults -- that of (because fruits have not been produced) preaching fruits; or that of getting at ease, when certain things come to have influence over us again, through thinking that what we approved of before was legalism. We shall not get back by dwelling on detail. Christ is the great motive for everything, and we must get up into the knowledge of resurrection in Christ to remedy detail. Here there is wonderful truth and wonderful liberty.

Another very important point is, the tone and spirit of our walk. Confidence in God, and gentleness of spirit, is that which becomes the saint. For this we must be at home with God. The effect of thus walking in Christ, setting the Lord ever before us, is always to make us walk with reverence, lowliness, adoration, quietness, ease, and happiness. If I go where I am unaccustomed to be -- if I get, for instance, into a great house, I may have much kindness shown me there; but when I get out again, I feel at ease, I am glad to be out. Had I been brought up in that house, I should feel otherwise. The soul is not only happy in God for itself, but it will bring the tone of that house out with it. Because of its joy in God, anxieties disappear, and it will move through the ten thousand things that would trouble and prove anxieties to another, without being a bit troubled. No matter what it may be, we bring quietness of spirit into all circumstances whilst abiding in God.

If a man be risen with Christ, if he be dwelling there, it will show itself thus: we shall not be afraid of the changes around. We shall live, not in stupid apathy and listlessness, but in the exercise of lively affections and energies towards the Lord. One great evidence of my dwelling in Christ is quietness. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on. Another sign is confidence in obeying.

This connects itself with fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ -- fellowship not only in joy, but in the thoughts of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, is our power of entering with the affections into the things of God.

“The Father loveth the Son.” What a place this puts me in, to be thus
cognizant of the Father’s feelings towards His beloved Son.

In our proper place we get our mind filled and associated with things that leave this world as a little thing—an atom in the vastness of the glory which was before the world was.

A READING ON 1 CORINTHIANS 10

Q. Would not 1 Cor. 12:10 apply? “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Would that be eternal life lost?

A. Well, both standing and falling are put in opposition. The next verse shows “God is faithful.” This chapter is a continuation of the same subject. Israel

were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

They were, as you may say, in the Christian profession and standing in this world.

Q. Why does he say, “Our fathers”?

A. Fathers! It was so; fathers of us -- Jews.

Q. Would ch. 10 show that a person might persist in the outward observances of Christianity and yet be lost?

A. Of course; that is just what he is proving. But there may be such a thing as God permitting the shield of faith to be down as a chastisement perhaps, but that would be the only case I can recognize of loss of assurance where it has been really known; that is, I mean where a man is given up to it and to the fiery darts as a kind of chastisement.

Q. What is “He which establisheth us with you”? (2 Cor. 1:21).

A. It is general; it is the whole thing.

Q. What is Peter’s -- “Forgotten that he was purged from his old sins”? (2 Pet. 1:9).

A. I have got clean and gone back to the mire.

Q. I have known a person talking of his assurance when away from fellowship?

A. I remember one who was away fourteen years, and a high Calvinist spoke to him as a child of God, and that was the means of bringing him in again. He had got puffed up; was a kind of prophet, Irvingite, and so on, and the devil had blown him over. Very solemn indeed! But I do not want a soul to lose the assurance; it may be the power for bringing him back. I do not say of a child who is naughty that he is not a child, neither do I wish him to think he is not.

Q. You spoke of God giving a man up to the fiery darts?
A. Well, God may let Peter fall, though Peter ought not to fall. If you find a person in despair, you may feel it is the divine nature there.

Q. Would it be meat in due season to say to such a one, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die”? (Rom. 8:13).

A. Well, you must judge. I might say it and awaken conscience by it.

Q. But you could not settle beforehand how you would deal with any case?

A. No, of course not. God reconciles absolutely His holiness, and His faithfulness, and all else. We may be taking them apart, but He never does.

Q. Why does the apostle change from “ye” to “us” in vv. 7, 8, 9, 10?

A. Only that he had them specially in mind, I suppose. He was thinking of the heathen, and when he thinks of saints he takes them all in together. You get here certain great truths typically presented -- the keeping of Israel as a whole on to the end, as well as the fall of these individuals. If you go to Num. 15, you get the security of God’s purpose most beautifully set out. Num. 14, He says their carcases shall fall in the wilderness; He pronounces judgment on the whole nation, save two persons. The entire people refuse to go up and take possession of the land; and the Lord says, “Doubtless ye shall not come into the land” (Num. 14:30) -- save Caleb and Joshua. Then Num. 15: “The Lord spoke unto Moses; saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land” do so-and-so, and goes on with His own intentions just as quietly as if nothing of ch. 14 had happened.

Q. What is the meaning of being “baptized unto Moses”?

A. It is what we call being associated with him in these ordinances. “Baptized with the baptism of John” was objectively the thing to which they were brought, so it was baptized unto instead of into.

Q. Was not Mount Hor in the land?

A. It was in the west side of what they call Akaba, and was outside the land as much as all the rest of the wilderness. Ἐἰς refers to the object you are going to, unless hindered. I might say I am going to (εἰς) Rome, but robbers might come in and stop me. But εἰς has that force. Πρός is “towards” with the accusative; with the dative it is rather “there”; but with the accusative it is distinctly objective. “This sickness is not unto [πρός] death, but for the glory of God”; i.e., it was with that object in view. In Eph. 4 ministers were given εἰς the edifying of the body, and πρός the perfecting of the saints. The prominent thought is the perfecting of the saints; the more immediate point is εἰς, the object in view. That is an eternal thing, but the work of the ministry was a present thing, and what they were at then. The perfecting is a definite result in view. In the middle of this chapter we go from the outward thing to the inward thing. We have had not merely those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus, but those who were baptized to Moses, and did eat the same
spiritual meat, and so on. These really partook of the privileges, and yet were lost. You may have really Christ, and yet God be not well pleased with you.

Q. Is that because he is living after the flesh?

A. A person who is living after the flesh shall die. He therefore cannot have the real thing. This passage is not a warning against having a thing and in any way perishing, but against having the signs of the thing and then perishing.

Q. But it was written to the Corinthians?

A. It is addressed to saints, with all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus, however bad they might be at Corinth. It would be a very dangerous thing to say that people were outside warnings and dangers, because they themselves are so bad. We have now a kind of Sardis; and a terrible thing it is to have a name to live, and yet be responsible.

I gave her space to repent . . . and she repented not (Rev. 2:21).

The whole professing Church will be cut off. They have left their first love, and go on worse and worse, but still the responsibility is there. To the Thessalonians Paul had written,

Ye . . . are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief (1 Thess. 5:4).

It will overtake the world so. And then the Lord writes to Sardis, “Lest I come as a thief” (Rev. 3:3); that is, treat you as the world.

Q. Is there any difference between the opening of Corinthians and the close of Timothy?

A. You must take each passage in its own place and force. There will be a testing-time, and then some will be cut off: In the beginning of all, “the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). But when you get as far as Jude you get apostasy coming in, creeping in unawares.

Q. I suppose the way in which the Corinthians might be idolaters would be by eating in idols’ temples?

A. Yes. We now get from the outer to the inner circle.

Q. Why do you get the cup first here, and not the bread {1 Cor. 10:16}?

A. He was going to make use of the bread in connection with the unity of the body, and so puts the other first.

Q. Does he refer to spiritual fornication? (1 Cor. 10:8).

A. I don’t think he does particularly. Here, I take it, it is just the particular danger they were in, all their relatives around them going on in that kind of thing, and themselves therefore in danger of slipping into it. Fornication was not a type; these were the things that happened then in Israel. Not the figures
of things for us, but the judgments that came from them, are our warnings. As to their idolatry, I doubt if a single sacrifice, unless an official one, was offered to God all through the wilderness. In Acts 7:42, 43, Stephen says,

Have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them.

The official ones probably were maintained, or might be; and at large what they did offer might he professedly to the Lord; for when they made the golden calf Aaron made proclamation -- “Tomorrow is a feast to Jehovah.” God had ordered them to bring the blood of every beast they slew to the tabernacle, or rather the beast itself.

Q. What is the “ends of the world”? (1 Cor. 10:11).

A. The completion of the ages. To me the world now is not under any dispensation, but the whole course of God’s dealings with it are over until He comes to judgment. I get man under responsibility from Adam to Christ, and then our Lord says, “Now is the judgment of this world” (John 12:31). Historically I see this: Up to the flood, no dealings of God, but a testimony in Enoch. You get a man turned out of paradise, and presently God comes in by a solemn act and puts that world all aside. Then after the flood you get various ways of God with the world. He begins with putting it under Noah; gave promises to Abraham. Then law raised the question of righteousness, which promise did not. Law was brought in to test flesh, and see whether righteousness could be got from man for God. Then God sent prophets until there was no remedy; and then He says, There is one thing yet I may still do -- I will send My Son. And when they saw the Son they said, “This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours” (Mark 12:7). And then, so far as responsibility went, God was turned out of the world. Then comes the cross and atonement for sin, and a foundation for a new state of things altogether; and that was the completion of the ages. God is not now dealing with man to try if he is lost or not, and so in John’s gospel man is gone from the first chapter. The first three gospels present Christ to man, and then He is rejected; but in John 1,

He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to then gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God {John 1:11-13}.

There I get God’s power coming into the world, and the Jews all done with, only some receive Him who have been born of God; and so John’s gospel is what you call thoroughly Calvinistic.

Q. Is it correct to say to an unconverted man, “Come to Jesus”?

A. Oh, no! not incorrect at all. Go further.
God did beseech you by us . . . be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20).

God is obliged to have ambassadors for Christ now that Christ is gone. Beseeching is more than saying “Come,” so to speak.

Q. When Christ said, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden” (Matt. 1:23), was He still supposing man responsible?

A. Not exactly. It is stated in this chapter where He has said already,

We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

And then He began to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, declaring woe unto them; and then comes,

I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

And then comes, “Come unto Me,” &c. He speaks of the judgment as already come upon them; then there is nothing for it; for

no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son {Matt. 11:27}.

He bows to His Father completely in rejection, and it is consequent upon that rejection that, like Noah’s dove, He finds there is no single place for Him to put His foot upon; and so now, if you want to get to heaven, come to me outside the world.

Q. Is it correct to say, “Accept Christ”?

A. Simple souls may say it all rightly, but all are not simple; it is much as the Catholics say, “If you have got the right faith.” The gospel tests, and people will not receive the gospel any more than they would receive the law.

Q. “No man can know the Son save the Father.” In what sense does 1 John 2:13 say, “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning”?

A. Because they know Christ has come into this world. They know a great deal about Him, but no man can fathom the Son but the Father.

Q. Is “Son” the mystery of His incarnation?

A. “Son” is that being in the form of God. Christ made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and so on; but if you ask, How can God be a servant? there is the difficulty, if you get into the reasonings of men.

Well, you get identification with the table here; they are κοινωνοὶ -- partakers of the altar {1 Cor. 10:17}; in eating of it you identify yourself with the body of Christ, “for we are all partakers of that one bread.” ___ brought a difficulty to me. Some one wrote to ask him what the proof was that it was
the body of Christ. Then I found from another that it was understood only to speak of the unity of those who were actually partaking. But what the apostle is saying is, “If you go and eat of these idolatrous altars, you identify yourself with them.” As Israel after the flesh, if they ate of the altar, they identified themselves with it. So if you are partakers of this table of the Lord, you are κοινώνοι with it. It is not itself identity with the body, but that which is the sign of it. You cannot partake of Christ and of devils at the same time.

Q. Is that “cannot,” in 1 Cor. 10:21, “You shall not”?

A. You cannot morally. The peace-offering gives the understanding of it. Some was burned on the altar; but of the flesh the priest ate the part offered to God, and they themselves, the offerers, ate the rest. The principle was, the eaters were identified with the altar. If it were a thanksgiving, it must be eaten the same day; but two days were allowed in the case of a vow, because there was a stronger energy in it, and none might be eaten on the third day at all. And so, if they were at table at a feast, he says, Eat what is set before you, unless it is given you as having been offered at an idol’s temple, and then -- no. Of course, you could do the act of eating of idols’ sacrifices, but you cannot to God and to the devil together. Then comes the question whether it is only those who are eating who are identified; and I get the local Church spoken of as the body of Christ. I must take in all Christians when I go out into the mystic body. The μεσοχος is merely the external act of partaking; but if it is Christ, it is the whole body. I cannot call an assembly the body of Christ, except so far as it may represent the whole body. At the altar it is identification; I am κοινωνος with it. You do not get the Lord’s table and “κοινωνος.” There is a distinction; the Lord is somebody over me. I do not think Christ is ever called the Lord of the assembly; He is Lord of the individual, but not of the assembly.

Q. Is “Head of the Church” used to imply union?

A. Yes. “Head of the body” is not the same thought as the Head of every man; that includes wicked men as well as good. The head of my body is head, and therein is union; but when I speak of Head of every man, it is lordship over.

Q. In Eph. 5:29 the Lord and the Church occur together.

A. Yes; though it should be Christ and the Church in that verse.

Q. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). Is it right to speak so of us?

A. Oh, yes; because He is a glorious Person, and I am one with Him who is such by the Holy Ghost. But that is very different from the thought of Lord of the assembly as such. That thought destroyed the unity of the body, and that was the use that was made of it. He is Lord in the assembly. I suppose every Christian would own the title of authority in the Lord. Christ is generally the official name; it is not an absolute rule. In most cases we have lost the “The
Christ” in the English. There is a Greek rule, that if you get the article and the thing that governs the genitive, you get the article with the name, and there is a question then whether you say, “The Christ” or “Christ.” “The Christ” may contemplate the Church too, as in “So also is the Christ” {1 Cor. 12:12}.

Q. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ” (1 John 5:1). Is that simply believing that He is the Messiah?

A. Certainly. He takes the lowest character first, and says, “He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”; that is, has faith in His person.

I do not think we have more than got to the “one loaf” yet. The thought that was put out as a difficulty is, that the unity is merely the unity of those who are actually partaking. The bearing of it all {i.e., the bearing of that false notion} is to make independent churches. The apostle here is looking at them in connection with the fact of their partaking at the table; but he adds, It is the communion of the body of Christ, and then I get the whole body; while those who may be present stand as such for the time.

Q. Has the word “body” (v. 16) a reference to the whole body?

A. In 1 Cor. 12 you have two statements --

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” -- literally, “the Christ.” Then, in v. 27:

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular, taking in the whole thing and the character that belongs to them.

Q. Are verses 16 and 17 here the same thing?

A. Well, the one brings in the other; for if I talk of Christ’s body, there is His literal body and His mystical body. His literal body is broken, and His mystical body is a united one.

Q. Is the “one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17) Christ?

A. It represents Christ; it is the loaf on the table. We all partake of it, and are therefore one body. “For we are all partakers of that one bread.”

Q. Will you say in what aspect the loaf is spoken of here?

A. Before it is broken, in a certain sense, it represents the body of Christ

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20. {JND’s translation reads: “Now ye are Christ’s body, and members in particular” (1 Cor. 12:27). The assembly at Corinth was nor “a” body of Christ, as if there were many bodies (cp. Eph. 4:4). They had body character. But we do not so speak in English as to say “Ye are body of Christ,” but that is the thought. The saints there had body character and were members of the body in particular.}
before it was broken; but it does not form a sacrament in that state, because we have not the figure. It is true I eat Christ as the “living bread which came down from heaven” (John 6:51); but I go back to do that after I have eaten of Him as broken.

Q. “The communion of the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 10:16), is that in contrast with the blood of Christ?

A. Yes. You see I cannot think of the body of Christ without bringing in the mystic body, and v. 16 identifies me with the thought of the body it belongs to. The communion of the blood is always identification with the blood of Christ as shed for us; I do not know another word so good for it as that. Israel had their character from that with which they were connected; so with us, with Christ, with His body, and His blood. It is not the spiritual feeling of my soul, but it is in the sense that my hand is partaker of the life of my body.

Q: Does joint participation express it?

A. Not quite, because that is rather the act of partaking, or might only go so far. I may partake and not be in common (or communion) with, but it is in the latter way we are identified with Christ as His body.

Q. What does the expression “devils” {1 Cor. 10:20} refer to?

A. Idols, temples as such, because it was to devils they offered, and not to God. Well, the difficulty we started with is all cleared to me by 1 Cor. 12:27 -- the Corinthian Church was not the body of Christ. It is a sheer attempt to make one meeting independent of another. That is not the apostle’s mind through this chapter at all. That is, what was attempted by connecting the Lordship of Christ with the assembly as such. Some said Christ was Lord, and they obeyed the Lord, and acted under obedience to the Lord in any one place, and nobody else had anything to say to them. At first I could not think what they were all at, insisting on Lordship in this way, though a man surely is not a Christian if he does not own the Lordship of Christ. Calling on the name of the Lord is a sort of definition of a Christian. What we have been considering is a kind of less vigorous attempt at the same purpose. They asked what proof we had that the Lord’s Supper was an expression of the unity of the body. It was that that made the separation in Dublin. Now, what brought me out of the Establishment was the unity of the body, or else I could have gone into some independent church, or set up one for myself perhaps. I do not think many would deny in words that there is one body, but the practice does deny it.

Q. I suppose people do not see the doctrine?

A. You cannot tell when people do not act on that which they have. In v. 20 you get distinctly what the meaning of the cup of devils is.

Q. And loose tables?

A. I could not go to such as the Lord’s. People do, and call it the Lord’s.
Of course I do not, or I should be there. Many go with a good conscience, I do not doubt; but they do not meet on the principle of the unity of the body.

Q. Suppose all the Christians in any place came together?

A. Well, they would not be a Church and members. There are no members of the Church; the idea and terms are unknown to Scripture altogether. Members of Christ’s body, and therefore members one of another, and that only. There is not the most distant approach to the common idea.

Q. But one must be a member of Christ’s body if he eat of the one bread?

A. He must be a member before he comes to the table, and then as such he partakes.

Q. “All things are lawful,” &c., is connected with what is sold in the shambles, I suppose?

A. Yes; I do not mind what I eat. He alludes to the custom of selling carcases for food in the common way, after the animal had been offered in the idol’s temple. Then suppose we are sitting at a table with a person just come out from idolatry, and he says, “That flesh was offered to an idol,” his conscience is not free, and for his sake I do not eat it, to me it is all common meat.

Q. How does that verse come in: “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He? {1 Cor. 10:23}.

A. Why, if they tried to eat of the Lord’s table, and also of the table of devils, that would be saying, “I can eat with a devil, and I can eat with you”; that would be provoking the Lord to jealousy.

Q. Do you see any connection between it and the offering for jealousy?

A. No, I do not; it was no question between Jehovah and another god there, but when a husband was jealous to find out the truth.

Q. In v. 23 both the “for me’s” are left out; and, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof,” in v. 28?

A. Yes; it is of little consequence. Perhaps the connection runs clearer; you get it in v. 26.

NOTES OF A READING
ON 1 CORINTHIANS 13

What I think is, that there is many a gift that is not developed from want of devotedness, and ch. 13 brings us to that. He supposes all manner of gifts with no grace (vv. 1-3). That is of moment in the exposition of Heb. 6.

Q. Could there be this faith without reality?
A. Yes; he is talking of faith to remove mountains, not of faith of the Lord Jesus Christ’s person. We find power and grace constantly distinguished. We have got the power and not the grace in the Old Testament, in such an one as Balaam for instance, but I have no such instance in the New Testament: there you get Judas rather.

Q. How do you define “love” here?
A. Well, you have a long description of it in the chapter. “God is love.” It is sovereign goodness coming out of itself.

Q. Is it beyond what we get in Rom. 5:5 -- “The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost”?
A. Yes, it is the same love, but here you get it in its different characters,

Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. It is not a definition, but the way it works. But what I get here is divine love in the world, which is such a different thing from law. I get what is above all the evil that is round it, and therefore that can feel for all the evil affected by it, but never touched in itself by it. That is what I see in its working. I see Christ going through this world, and it is a sovereign thing. There are two kinds of love, both divine, a downward love which is sovereign in its nature -- God really -- which is in our hearts in a certain sense through the Holy Ghost, and then I find another which goes upward, and there it is a holy affection to which I am subject. You get an analogy to it in husband and wife; but where divine love is working in my heart towards others it goes downwards, but when I get the state of my soul I must look up and I am subject.

Q. What is “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us”? (Eph. 5:2).
A. That is divine love, and it is the giving up of myself altogether; and then I get to God, and that is the object. And therefore it is said, we are light; but it is never said, we are love, because love is sovereign, and we cannot say we are that. Here I get it in this character of the Spirit of Christ working in us. I must get a power that is above all the evil that is round me and yet walk in graciousness through it all, and that is the reason the love of the Lord would
not do for this world. *If* I love my neighbor as myself, it is not enough for a world of evil, there I must have a love that can go on and be superior to all the evil, and that is what Christ was. It can feel all the evil too, having no self in it; it has no self roused by all the evil that is around, and therefore it can think of the people that are there. I suffer long, and that is downward, “does not seek her own” -- downward -- it is not that I am delighting in God and in what is blessed here, but it is looking around me in the midst of evil and selfishness.

Q. What is “rejoicing with the truth”?  
A. It is in the truth no doubt, the truth is there, and I rejoice with it, and take delight in it. Suppose the truth is being preached, my heart goes with it and is delighted.

Q. What is “I am nothing”? (v. 2). Is it the work?  
A. No; it is, I am nothing.

Q. What is “believeth all things”?  
A. It is not suspicious, believes readily, “Hopeth all things.” It does not mean bad, it does not think of evil. Evil tends to depress the soul, but God is above all that. I find constantly the danger of thinking the evil is greater than the good, but if I bring in God, God is greater than all. Christ was here in the world with no thought of suspicion, and that is the spirit in which we are to walk through the world. If you are always suspecting people, who will trust you? I feel the great difficulty in seeing the evil, and it is apt to get the upper hand of one’s mind, though it is no good deluding oneself that it is not there, because it is there. But love will go on in heaven when there is no evil to think about; prophecies will fail, tongues cease, and knowledge vanish away.

Q. What is “When that which is perfect is come” {1 Cor. 13:10}?  
A. The time of glory when everything is perfect, and then partial things will have ceased.

Q. How does “knowledge vanish away”?  
A. Knowledge now is merely, we know in part; all that kind of learning things will pass away. Learning is a proof of ignorance, and that will not be. Even in divine things we learn, and all that is testimony to ignorance. I have a great idea of the littleness of man in that way. It is these partial instruments of communicating will be done with when I get to know as I am known.

Q. What is that “know as I am known”?  
A. I believe it is God’s way of knowing, it is not knowing in part, it is not so much the measure as the manner of God’s knowing. God can create ideas; I know so far as things are knowable to be known.

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21. {No doubt, the reference is to the gift of knowledge, as in 1 Cor. 12.}
Q. What of faith, hope, and charity?

A. They are not merely put accidentally here. They are the three things that are characteristic of the Christian state now: “Putting on the breast-plate of faith and charity” (same word); “and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). Some ten times in the New Testament you get faith, hope, and love together; they are positive elements, faith and hope referring to the present state I am in, and charity to the present and eternal state. Faith gets hold of an object and hope desires it. The word charity is an ecclesiastical word. Love is really God. “He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God” (1 John 4:16); and that never fails. When I have got a thing, it has done with faith and hope; they have passed into positive fruition, as they say.

In the next chapter he is referring to these tongues which shall cease. The Corinthians were vain of them, and he says they were not to use them at all.

Q. Will there be faith, and hope, and love in heaven?

A. No, there will be love there. We shall not have faith because there will be sight, and shall not have hope because we shall have possession.

Q. Why does it say then “now abideth”?

A. Because it is a present thing, these three, but charity never faileth.

Q. What is the meaning of “darkly”?

A. That we do not see clearly. It is just as I see through a window, instead of seeing the object at once. It is an extraordinary expression. We do not see clearly, but in what you call a mystery; it is not like open, plain things. It is an enigma, though I do not like that word, because it does not fit divine things.

THE LOVE OF GOD

1 John 4:10

The first thing -- legal commandment – disappears, although it is quite true that we ought to love God, as the commandment demands. “Not that we loved God.” Love is the fruit, but never the ground, of my fellowship with God, because I learn that God loved me in my sins (Rom. 5:8); and I learn too that, however excellent, love is a thing not required of a sinner. If it is required, I am lost! But what I now seek to show is, that the sinner is loved when he does not love God. It is the sinner’s needs that draw out God’s love.

You say, perhaps, “I do not find I love.” You mistake the whole matter.

Herein is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us.

Do you say, “I admit it; but I do not see that I have any share in it, for I do not feel its effects”? The answer is, “He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and that is the proof of His love.” It is the eternal enjoyment of it to know eternal life in the Son; but down here we often question it, because we do not see this love in us. Here then is the proof of it,

He is the propitiation for our sins.

Ah! now I see, when I believe that. In Him, in His death, is the ground of my rest. Therein I learn what love is towards such a sinner as I am. I turn to look at it, not in myself, but in Him, and I rest in God. What my soul rests in is what He is, and what He has done. He has sent His Son as a propitiation. God has loved me not only when I wanted {needed} it, but according to His sense of my want {need}. He has not mistaken my case; for Christ on the cross has made propitiation for my sins, and I have found God. My soul rests there. The cloud is taken away for ever, for God has given His beloved Son.

If, however, you say, “There are such and such sins which I have committed,” I answer that it was for these very sins that Christ died. You ought to hate them. God has both the sinner and his sins before Him; but He does not put the man away, but his sins. He cannot bear sin, and therefore His love has wrought a work to bring the sinner without his sins into His presence.

First, then, there is Christ meeting the need of all who come unto God, and then we learn why it is—“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” It is important we should know not only our need of Christ in approaching God, but also that God in His love gave His Son that we might approach Him. John says,

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us {1 John 4:16}. 
Faith is always certain, and so I set to my seal that God is true. Thus, believing and looking to God, my soul is certain.

More,

He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God {1 John 4:16}.

My soul rests in His love, dwells in it, and now I have communion -- seeing the work He has done to cleanse my sin, as I learn it in Christ -- and I am perfectly happy. Why should such an one murmur or be unhappy? No; for we also have known and believed the love God hath to us. God does not expect fruit from man, but His grace produces the fruit He seeks. Man had no life from which God could expect anything, and so He gives a new nature in Christ that He may produce fruit.

But do I find many sins in myself? Again, we must remind ourselves that Christ is the propitiation for our sins. Believing this, I have rest, and I enter into communion with God in His love. Why, then, do you have fear and torment when you discover sin in yourself? Is it that you cannot trust God’s love? that you have not believed the love He has towards you? Have you not had the Father on your neck in your rags? When you know the love God has had to you, you know God Himself. The apostle thus says,

Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment {1 John 4:17}.

God’s love was manifested to us in sending His Son, that we might have life, and that propitiation for our sins might be made, and now it is perfected that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. I am in Him who will be judging, and He is my righteousness. Why should I not be bold? Nay,

As He is, so are we in this world {1 John 4:17}.

The effect of grace is the cause of our feeling sin, as well as of knowing that it is blotted out, and that we live through Him.

The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them . . . that the world may know that Thou . . . hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me.

There is no fear in love.

It is a matter of communion;

Perfect love casteth out fear {1 John 4:18}.

We are called to learn God’s love by the communication of what Christ is for us, and then we are in Him before God as Christ is. If this be true, I find rest to the heart; for the heart rests in God, knows God is perfect, knows He has met all its need, and that all its sin is put away, and hence that He is perfect love.

“We love Him, because He first loved us”; and we pass through this sorrowful wilderness leaning on Him who is bringing us through it. Let me then ask, Do your souls rest in the love of God?
Papers from *The Christian Friend*

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

Psalms 63 and 84

I read these two Psalms with the hope of bringing before you the difference there is in the character of the blessing and enjoyment of God expressed in them. Both are most blessed, and in one way complete, each in itself; but there is a marked distinction between them, the former expressing perfect enjoyment in God Himself, and in Him alone; the latter, the enjoyment of Him in the midst of blessings with which He in His mercy surrounds us, and in the fellowship with them.

As saints we must realize God in both these ways, though in His mercy His general way of dealing with us is rather that of Psa. 84, that is, granting us the assistance, the help, and the comfort of outward blessings, and communion with fellow-Christians.

Psa. 23 is just proof of this. That opens with what we may call the natural condition of a saint, the quiet, peaceful enjoyment of the green pastures and still waters of the Great Shepherd of our souls. But that does not continue always, and it is not the only experience we get; sorrow and trial and failure come in, and then we learn that He restores the soul, and by His strength made perfect in weakness, and the table spread before our enemies, we gain the knowledge of God which says,

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

And our hearts need this sort of discipline, that we may not merely, as in the first moments of our salvation, rejoice in the love that has redeemed us, but that we may know with what a God we have to do, and learn apart from all extraneous helps what our portion is in Himself.

I examine a little more closely the Psalms before us. We may notice the opening of the 63rd; it begins with the address -- “O God,” not “O Lord of hosts,” as in the 84th. It is not His title in covenant with Israel, but the individual apprehension of what He is in Himself. “O God, thou art my God.” “My soul longeth for Thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.” This is the land where God is learned as our God, and where there are no springs of refreshment by the way, no outward comforts, perhaps even no sources of spiritual help and strength, no “courts of the Lord,” no “tabernacles.” True, we may have seen and rejoiced in God’s power and glory in these at other times; so we should, for they are divinely appointed means of grace and help for us; but the psalmist in v. 2 longs to see these -- “as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary”; to see them thus “in a dry and thirsty land” is by
no means so easy. They are not so evident there, and the heart sometimes finds it hard to say -- "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life" -- is better than what ministers to life, than all the blessings and enjoyment in which life consists, and which are, whether spiritual or temporal, the offspring of the very same lovingkindness of God. But . . . we must realize the lovingkindness itself to be better than all the blessings it gives, and find it our joy when they are all withdrawn . . . If we have once really tasted, we never enjoy it so much as when we have nothing else to enjoy. The Lord Jesus was, of course, the perfect illustration of this trusting in God, and finding joy in Him too, in a dry and thirsty land. We know in what sanctuary He had seen God’s power and glory, and His life proves He saw them equally in this “land,” which was to Him how far more dry and thirsty than to us! He could say, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of,” and pray that His joy might be fulfilled in His disciples. “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,” this too in the same circumstances of barrenness and dearth.

What a contrast between the actual position and the joy which the faithful saint derives from the presence of God! The 6th verse is just another expression of the loneliness and absence of all external sources of help and support. The light of day even, and the presence of others all gone, still the experience of what God has been gives confidence and joy and peace in the shadow of His wings; and the dry and thirsty land, the place of death to the natural man, becomes a place of blessing, and of proving the Lord’s right hand upholding us.

The 84th Psalm is quite another thing as to circumstances, though of course all the joy and blessing in it spring from the same source. It is the full confidence in and desire after a God that has been known and loved, expressed in Jewish language, as the “tabernacles,” “courts,” and “Zion” show, and having an application to Israel of course, though I take it now in the spiritual bearing. The “tabernacle” is to us the heavenly places where we enjoy God’s presence, and which are the home of our heart, just as the nest is the home of the swallow, and the place where she finds rest and joy. It is perhaps especially assembled together, and privileged for a while to shut out all save our heavenly home, that this psalm regards us in this sense. “They that dwell in Thy house shall be still praising thee.” Praise is here the one legitimate object of our souls and employment of our lives. In secret with God conflict and petition and the like have all their places; in His house our one occupation is to be still praising Him who is our strength there, and the object of all our desires. These desires will never he satisfied till we are for ever in His house, till we get to our God in glory, and therefore till then the way thither must be the thing that fills our hearts. “Blessed is the man . . . in whose heart are the ways.” These ways may be rough, they lead through the valley of Baca -- the place of tears; but what matters this if they lead home? If my heart is set on
the end of my journey, the roughness of the way little matters — it brings me where I want to be, and a smoother, pleasanter path in another direction will not even have an attraction for me, it does not lead home; it gives great decision and firmness to the Christian character to keep this simply before the mind; and, after all, the valley of Baca is turned into a well to us, and we often find a deep source of spiritual blessing in the very things that cause the trials. They are not pleasant, of course; but they are the means of breaking down these miserable fleshly hearts, and making us fit to receive the blessing our God designs to bestow; and then “the rain also filleth the pools,” streams of heavenly blessing come pouring in upon us, and making our path a continuance of refreshment and help. Thus a rough road and His strength and help along it is our portion, and then we are led from strength to strength, the strength ever tried by the needs of the way, but ever renewed by the grace of our God, till we appear before Him in Zion. *The only thing for a Christian in this world is the path towards glory*, that leads out of the world. In that path we can never fall; the cause of tears becomes to us means of grace and of the powerful refreshings of the Spirit, and the living waters from above divinely reanimate our courage, and all this because the Anointed is there. God looks on His face, and so all is secure to us. Nothing shall separate us from His love; neither height nor depth nor any other creature (prone as our hearts are to let any creature do it now) shall ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Well, beloved friends, we must all learn God in these ways — learn Him in the midst of His blessings, and in a measure by them, perhaps first, and some time or other have our hearts settled by being cast over on Himself and nothing else, being brought into a position where nothing helps God to make us happy, if I may use such an expression, and where we must find in Him alone all — our joy, our strength, our peace, our hope — find Him such too in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.

Still, blessed be His name, He has given grace, and will give glory, and will withhold no good thing from us. Well may we say, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.”

*The Christian Friend*, 1892, pp. 74-78.
FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER
AND WITH THE SON 22

Notes of an Address on 1 John 1

The subject of this epistle is the communication of divine life. In the gospels we have the exhibition of it in the person and character of Jesus Christ: but in the epistles we have the communication of it, as also tests of divine life. These tests are given to assure us of the possession of life, as hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

Divine life in fellowship with God exhibits sin in us, and the question arises as to how we can have fellowship with God. But of this the first four verses do not treat; they exhibit the beauty of eternal life outside of us -- first as manifested in the Man Christ Jesus, and afterward as communicated through Him from God.

From the 5th verse to the end treats of fellowship with God.

Now fellowship, or communion, with God is necessary to our being happy in His presence. If we seek to walk with Christ without having fellowship with Him, we shall be miserable. We must have common feelings with Him and common objects, or we cannot be happy with Him! Impossible; less than this is worse than nothing.

How can such as we have fellowship with the Father and with the Son? By the communication of an entirely new life. Something we never had before, or could have had save by direct communication from God. Adam had it not, not any more in Eden than out of Eden. In Eden Adam was a happy, innocent, obedient creature, but he had not Christ -- he did not want {need} Him. He had Him as Creator, of course. Adam was good, no doubt; but the first Adam is not the second Adam, and never will be. The last Adam is the Son of God; He became man, and as man manifested the divine life here on earth in a way that it never could have been manifested but for sin. It could not have been displayed in heaven in this way. The light shone in darkness. Not only was not the first Adam the second Adam, but he saw no beauty in Him. The second {last} Adam had to say, “for My love I had hatred.” Man saw nothing to admire. There was not a feeling to respond to the revelation of God’s grace. Blessed be God, the patience of grace was greater than sin, and it is sweet to see the unfoldings of this grace.

Divine life was adapted to our needs by being in the Man Christ Jesus. He

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22. As far as ascertained, these particular notes have never been before published.
went through all that we have to go through, was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

There was no sin, of course. But in Him, the heart to which life has been communicated can see the perfection of divine life. It could not have been thus seen in heaven, although it was there with the Father long before. No angel wanted such grace; no angel demanded such patience; it was for man as a sinner that divine life was manifested. Thus we see love adapting itself to us in the person of the Man Christ Jesus. Perfection has come to meet us (I speak of those who know Christ, though all may come to Him as sinners).

The apostle says, “we have seen Him and heard Him.” They heard Him every day, and what was it they saw? Eternal life. You may ask many a Christian what is eternal life, and he cannot tell you, though he has it within him. Christ is eternal life. John says, “the life was manifested, and we saw and heard”; they saw and heard Christ, and He was eternal life.

First manifested, then communicated; as is said farther on,

this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

And, then,

he that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Our responsibility is to believe the record: Adam’s was obedience. A man may be very respectable and well conducted, without having life, because whatever he may have got he has not got life, unless he has got Christ. If you have not got Christ, you have not got life (divine life, of course). If I have not got Christ, I have no life in me. Immense joy there is in the fact that the life I have is in Christ -- not in myself; as Paul says, “not I, but Christ in me.” Divine life was perfectly manifested in Christ: we have the treasure in earthen vessels, therefore it is exhibited feebly in us.

Now, we have to follow Christ’s precepts in obedience, but that is not divine life; the communication of life, by giving us a new nature, makes it natural to us to love what Christ loves, and to do as Christ does. Obedience is necessary. “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.”

Obedience to God is the essence of doing right, but Christ has set Himself apart as the perfect and glorified Man, to attract my heart’s affections to Himself, and my desires must flow according to the new nature which He has imparted. And thus, as in 1 John 2:8, that which is true in Him is true in you who believe.

Then God is holy, and I am not holy. Christ becomes my hope, and His blood cleanses me from all sin. If I receive His word, I receive Christ, and He is eternal life. Henceforth I hate sin, and the Son of God is my life. The
second verse puts me into fellowship. If Christ is my life, that is fellowship. When He is in me all things are changed; He is my object; He is my life; and we have a real fellowship by nature. My walk should not be the result of obedience merely, but of the same feelings as Christ’s. So the Spirit by John says, “Walk in the light,” not according to the Light, which would be obedience, but in the Light, which is fellowship.

In the 4th verse we have, “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” “These things,” as expressed in the opening verses of the epistle, are the manifestation of divine life in the person of Christ, and the communication of divine life through Him to such as believe; and thus the detail, however real, and true, and valuable, of conflict and experience in the believer, is set aside as a source of joy.

Divine life has been manifested, divine life has been communicated, “and these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” It is the fact that God in Christ has become a man, that is my life and joy. And this is fellowship with God, and blessing to saints. Is Jesus the Father’s delight? Is He His Well-beloved? So is He mine; feeble no doubt my affections may be, but in measure they flow in the same direction as the thoughts of the Father. This is communion with the Father. And, then, is the Father the Son’s delight, and His confidence and joy? So is He mine; and this is fellowship with the Son. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

Here sin is left out; there is no question of sin here, because the new life has nothing to do, so to speak, with sin (though we have). The new life is in the last Adam; this life and this joy is the blessedness of heaven. There is no other blessedness but Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Perfect (no doubt as regards our enjoyment of it) the blessedness will not be, till we are in heaven; but there will be no change. Christ is my life and joy now, and heaven has no other life or joy. Now I have done with self, because I have got another self, who is more my real self than I. My connection with the person of Christ is new life in me.

Therefore, I am not in the flesh -- the flesh is in me, and drags me back sometimes -- but I might be a very decent, respectable man, and have no life -- (divine life, of course, I mean). I can go to the vilest sinner in the country and offer him life. Your respectability is not life. Grace upsets that to magnify God, grace puts down man to give new life which is altogether of God. But we are responsible.

Eternal life has been manifested, and now the message to us is, that God is light, and there is no darkness in Him, so that if we say we are in fellowship with Him while we are walking in darkness (the apostle uses great plainness of speech) we lie. You wish for heaven? If you have not fellowship with God, you would be more miserable in heaven than ever you can be on earth. If I talk
of fellowship, I must be able to stand the light of God’s presence. If that light can discover a spot upon me, all is over with me. The fact is (it is a solemn fact), you are all this moment in the light of God’s presence without a veil. The veil is rent. I do not say you all enjoy this. God knoweth, and my earnest desire for you all is, that you may joy in God and be happy in His presence, that He may manifest Himself to you. But whether you know it or like it, there you are:

All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Measures of guilt are useless here. It is not “Have I more spots or fewer? am I better or worse? a great or a little sinner?” not this at all, but, Can I enjoy God in Himself? Am I full of joy at the manifestation and communication of His own gift -- eternal life? If I cannot stand in the light I cannot see God. Under the law God was hidden. He said, “I will dwell in the thick darkness.” From thence He sent out His commandments.

But do you think the law was the manifestation of God? No, but of you. The law showed what you ought to be, it also showed what you are. The law said, “You ought to love God.” You say, “Who is He, that I may love Him?” Well, He is that Being who is up thundering and lightening upon Mount Sinai.” “Oh, I cannot love Him, I am awfully afraid of Him.” “What! cannot love Him? Then you have broken the law, and there remains nothing but the curse for you.” This is all you can get from the law, because the law does not say that God loves man, but that man should love God. The children of Israel said, “Let not God speak to us.” Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake,” but in the infinite grace of God the law was the schoolmaster up to Christ, who was with the Father, and who in the fulness of time was manifested in the world.

It is certain you ought to love God: they do it in heaven. Man cannot love Him, does not love Him, and so is under the curse of the law. Then God cannot allow sin. So He hid Himself. The fiery mount, the thick darkness, the veil, all had the glory of God, till at last He hid it in Christ, that He might manifest His grace and eternal life in Him. Thus the veil was rent, and man stands in the open presence of God. God was hid behind the veil: the veil is rent, and you here now are all in His presence. God reveal it to you, if you know it not; for if you are not fit for His presence, you have nothing to say to Him. I do not say that grace cannot unfold this to you. I say grace can do so. But I speak of light, the light of God’s holy, immediate, unveiled presence, and if you are not spotless in that light, you have nothing to do with Him. I repeat it, you have nothing to do with Him.

Under law, my first impulse on the discovery of sin in me is to flee from God. When Israel heard the noise, and saw the light from Sinai, “they removed, and stood afar off.” When the woman taken in adultery was brought
to Christ, He stooped down and wrote on the ground, having said that anyone who was without sin might cast a stone at her, and when He looked up again they had all run away. That is what law does, it shows me myself and makes me flee from God.

If I talk of having fellowship with God, I must be able to bear and to enjoy His presence. It is not that I am good, but that God has cleansed me. It does not depend on my filthiness, but on His power to cleanse. When I have washed something, I do not keep thinking whether it was much dirty or little dirty, but that now it is clean. And so with saints, “But now ye are clean,” and God delights to look on me, because He has washed me. It does not depend on my great or little sins, but on the good washing, on the value of the blood. So I read, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow”; that is the good washing.

Now do you, beloved friends, believe this? If you do you are walking in the light, you cannot believe it any other way, for, of course, if I am in darkness, let me be a clean man or a dirty man, I cannot tell which I am.

Do you believe that you are washed? It is a personal question in which every man’s conscience is brought into the light of God’s presence. If you can stand there, you stand in the rent veil, and in that you stand spotless. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” You have fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. God has cleansed you, and He is delighted to do it. He loves to do it. Christ has died and done it. Once in that holy presence without spot, I can stand still and look back and admire the ways of grace. My soul, my heart, my conscience, are all engaged, and this produces integrity. If I am under law, I may be trying to get God, but I cannot get to Him. God certainly looks upon these blind strivings, and reveals Christ in grace, but I can never reach Him through law.

The prodigal son had made up a speech for his father, asking him to make him a hired servant, and no doubt as he went along he thought, “Dear me, how shall I be received, and what will my father think of my rags?” The nearer he got to his father the more uneasy he would be, till at last, when his hand might be on the knocker, he would fear to knock. We know his father never let him wait for that, but rushed forth to meet him, and fell upon his neck. Then he forgot his speech that he had made. How, indeed, could he have uttered it? He might well be ashamed to do so with his father’s arms about his neck, just as he was, rags and all. But the father did not like the rags for all that, and what was to be done? “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.” So he bids us put on Christ, the best robe, to cover our filthy rags; and here comes in the 32nd Psalm: “Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.”

Verse 9: “If we confess our sins,” not sin merely, but sins. It is not a very humbling thing to confess that we are sinners, and have an evil nature in the
abstract. We can all do this, and take it very quietly, too. We have an evil nature, but we have an evil conduct also when we do not keep down the evil nature.

There are the two distinct things -- forgiveness of sins committed, and cleansing from sin in the abstract. Suppose, now, I was a wild, extravagant young man, and got into debt. Well, my father comes forward and pays my debt. Is that all about it -- that I am free from debt? Oh, dear, no. I have grieved my kind father, and I want to confess that, and to have his forgiveness. I get both. My father is glad to have me. He has been on my neck. Still, though it is all grace to me, God says faithful and just, because Christ paid for me. God cannot have sin in His presence, and He wants me, so He washes me. That is it. And as Balak said to Balaam, “I wot he whom God blesses is blessed,” so I wot he whom God cleanses is clean. Do I say I have no sin? If I do I am a liar, and I make God a liar (vv. 6-10).

I cannot come into God’s presence at all except through Christ, and coming through Him I come spotless, absolutely clean. Then there is my daily weakness. I am reconciled as a matter of fact, but I am weak. So the details of such a one’s course are now given. He who seeks to walk in the light often fails, but never excuses himself. He cannot say, “I could not help it,” because God has said, “My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness.” He often fails, but that does not alter the ground of his righteousness before God. Christ is my righteousness; I have no other. If you have any other, you are without “hope, and without God in the world”; you are alone. The agony of Christ and His death secured my righteousness. I change, I fail; He is unchangeable, infallible. Can He allow my guilt? No. He is my advocate as well as my propitiation, and I apply to God, and He forgives.

But will He allow me to go on without this? No. And does He use the law to charge my sin on me? Ah! no. Through the affections of my renewed heart, He can work all things in me. As my Advocate, He can make me feel my sin, and I say to myself, “You wretched creature, you have been delighted where Christ has been pained; you have gone and found your pleasure where Christ found His agony.” That is what I can say to myself, and in fellowship with Christ I hate the sin I commit.

Jesus makes me feel my unkindness to Him, not by imputing it to me, but, as in Peter’s case, the Lord turned and looked upon him. Peter boasted, “Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I.” Jesus never charged the sin upon Peter, but it was enough He should look on him to convince him of sin. Had Jesus done with the matter then? No. After He was risen He said to Peter, “Lovest thou Me more than these?” Have you still the same self-confidence? Is there still a root of pride? And Peter was grieved.
Now, perhaps I may show my pride through an impatient temper. Christ will convince me of it. He will not impute it to me, but He will remind me that He died that He might not impute it to me; and more than that, if I do not judge that sin in myself He will, and He will never let me alone about it until it is cut up and broken down to the root.

If I detect my own pride, without indulging it, I may judge it myself, and then be humbled by my pride. It need not break forth if I do watch over it in this way. Christ ever lives to intercede for us, and He watches over our ways, and works in our hearts, souls, and consciences through the new affections, so that while there is all peace with God, there is none with sin. Some think it humbling that they must be cleansed every day. The feet must be washed, we must confess our sins, but sin is for ever put away. If you do not believe that your sins are put away by the sacrifice of Christ, what has God said to you? God has said, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission”; and God has said, “There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

EVIL THOUGHTS UNBIDDEN AND HATED

(Extract from a letter)

I have your letter, and I am sure that the enemy is very busy, as well as the evil heart within. What you need is, thorough deliverance from yourself; that is, the flesh. You speak of evil thoughts, unbidden and hated, springing up in the heart, even when you seek to be occupied with the Lord; this, too, when really thinking of Him. Then you stop to confess them, and the occupation for a moment in confession only provokes another evil thought. And so it is, as you say, an unending all-day work.

My feeling is that you have never yet enjoyed full deliverance from self and flesh. You are what Scripture calls still “in the flesh,” though a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe if your soul were free you would find the simple, yet profound truth of “reckoning yourself dead” (Rom. 6:2) would so act, that the thought of turning aside to confess what would spring up unsought for in your soul would be found to be really and only allowing the flesh a triumph, in leading you to be occupied with it. When there is no will, such thoughts will be left, turned aside from, and treated as “not I.” Of course, when the soul is not free, I could not say you could do so at all; but were freedom enjoyed, you could not be the sufferer from such things. What I would simply say to you is, when evil thoughts are present to your soul, unsought for and hated, do not stop or cease from your measure of occupation with the Lord to confess them. If will enters, they must be confessed; but if not, pass by them as you would avoid an evil person who is not yourself, and who you know is incorrigible, and with whom contact is only misery and defilement. “Avoid such; pass not by them,” but leave them there. To own them at all, is but to give the flesh the place it seeks -- a recognition in some way or another. This, even when it is only to abhor its workings, will be a satisfaction to the flesh.

Oh, that you had grace to leave “the flesh” unrecognized and disowned, and to pass on, conscious that it is always there, and will be in you to the end. How blessed that we can, by grace, disown and refuse to hear its suggestions when it works, knowing, through mercy, that it is no more “I.” Your case is one that has been, and is, common to most of the Lord’s people, if not all. I refer to unsolicited, hated, and wandering thoughts. You should simply go on and take no notice of them whatever, as by doing so, you only give the flesh the place it seeks. Go on as not hearing the suggestions -- be, as it were, deaf to them. Confess to God if you find will at work; but not so as to be occupied with the analysis of the evil; rather look up to Him, the sense of weakness and impotency filling your heart, and in the attitude of dependence of soul, pass on with your eye resting on Him, out of whom strength comes whenever there is conscious weakness.

REMARKS ON THE PRESENT TIMES

This is a time of trial for the beloved brethren who are gathered to the name and for the name of the Lord Jesus, because the pretensions and the energy of man are highly manifest. It is not an easy thing to be content with being simply what we are in reality before God. Times of “revival” reveal the thoughts of many hearts; but to learn in a day of grace to abide in peace, and know that God is God, is completely above the education of the flesh.

The spirit of the age affects many Christians, who labor to restore the “old things” for the service of God, instead of being broken before Him by the decline of their own fall. I do not at all doubt their sincerity, but I fear that they have not judged themselves, that they know not the actual state of the ruin that surrounds them; so that they cannot have an adequate confidence only in the living God, as in the God of all resources, in the midst of this scene where man has failed in everything.

We ought never to be afraid of the whole truth. To confess openly what we are in presence of what God is, such is always the path of peace and of blessing. If it be thus when even two or three only are found before God, there will not be disappointments nor fallen hopes. If the wells dug in the days of Abraham have been filled and stopped up with earth, we have nevertheless to do with a God who can make water issue out of the rock, even when struck, and cause it to flow in the parched desert to refresh His people, thirsty and fatigued.

I do not envy the labor of those who dig canals in the sand for the streams which after all may take another course. The active ways of God, in all times of blessing, consist in reproducing the glories of the work of the Lord Jesus. The darker the long night of apostasy becomes, the more distinctly the light of life shines. The word to the remnant is, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” He is the only gathering-point. Men make among themselves confederations, having many things in view; but the communion of saints cannot be known unless every line converge on this living center. The Holy Spirit does not gather the saints around simple views, true as they may be, on what the Church is, on what it has been, or on what it may be on this earth. He gathers them always around this blessed Person who is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.

Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20).

We are certain that Satan and the flesh will seek to resist this work and this way of the Lord, or to overthrow them.

We have need to be guarded from boasting, as is the case in these days; we need to be kept peaceful in the presence of God: there is so much independence and self-will almost everywhere. “We shall do great things,” is the most
unbecoming cry that can be heard at this time, when the light has made evident how little has been done.

God has made us know His truth as that which delivers us:

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

This liberty is not that of the flesh, because it penetrates our hearts with all the reality of a separation well known to God, who is holy. Thus one gets straight into his position with one’s heart broken and humbled. If anyone talks of separation from evil without being humbled about it, let him beware lest his position be simply that which at all times has formed sects, and has also produced heterodoxy in doctrine.

As to our service, we have seen our precious Lord and Master in profound abasement wash the feet of His disciples, giving Himself as an example -- to whom? To us assuredly. Now I know no service at the present time which is worthy of Him and agreeable to Him if not done in humiliation. This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the Church of God, so dear to Christ, is in this world dishonored, dispersed, ignorant, and afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. The true service of love will seek to give according to the wants of, and will never think to put shame on, the objects of the Master’s love, because of their necessity.

The men taught of God for His service come forth from a place of strength where they have learnt their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Jesus is everything in the presence of God; and Jesus is everything for them in all and through all. Such persons in the hand of the Holy Spirit are real helps for the children of God; they will not contend for a place of distinction or authority among the scattered flock. Communion of man with God with respect to the Church is shown by a frank disposition to be nothing in it, and thus one will be happy in one’s heart in spending and being spent.

In our personal remembrances we have lessons to learn with fear and trembling. May the thoughts of power never occupy our hearts too much. “Power belongeth unto God.” For about twenty years there has been a time of excitement, men seeking power everywhere and crossing seas to find it. Many thought of the Church; but it was rather the Church in power. They have felt and said that the power was lost; how regain it? From that they became occupied anew with earthly things, as if they could work deliverance here below.

Many recollect how at that time Satan could put man forward, and the result has been the same everywhere. Whatever the form that such efforts adopted in those days of confusion and excitement, they were invariably agreed to let all go on perceiving their deception (for all failed in their objects, and the results were only sects). There were mortal marks of hostility against the Lord Jesus; or if His name were left untarnished, they prepared nevertheless the way
for the terrible result of annulling the presence of the Holy Spirit, who alone can glorify Jesus.

The Great Shepherd will not forget the labor done in His name with a happy heart for His dear sheep, poor and necessitous. An unfading crown of glory, and abundant praise in the day of His appearing, will be the portion of those who meanwhile act thus. God will own all that He can own, and none will lose His recompense. I am not surprised at the disappointments which have followed all the efforts men have made in the Church to introduce some formal system of ministry, authority, or government: God cannot allow men to come and arrange the ground on which in these days He is pleased to find and bless His saints. We know very well what is the path of the flesh, which is completely indifferent about the fall of the Church; it is to occupy a place among men where God has not granted it.

There is a great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel related in the Book of Ezra (3). The son and heir of David takes his place with a remnant returning from captivity. He is content to labor in Jerusalem without a throne, without a crown. In building the altar of the Lord and the house of God, he simply served God in his own generation. Heir of the place that Solomon had formerly occupied in the days of prosperity and glory, he speaks neither of his birth nor of his own rights; yet is he faithful in all the path of separation, the grief, and the struggles he is obliged to pass through. May the Lord render us more and more peaceful and confiding in Himself in these days of trial. “When I am weak, then am I strong,” is a lesson Paul had to learn by a very humiliating process. If we speak of our testimony on the earth, it will soon be evident that it is all nothing but weakness, and, like the seed which is lost by the wayside, the testimony will end all the same for our shame. But if the living God has by us on the earth a testimony to His own glory, then the feeling of weakness will only draw us more directly to the place of power. An apostle with a thorn in his flesh learns the sufficiency of the grace of Christ. A little remnant is gathered and assembled, having nothing in which it can boast in the flesh; but it is thus that it is suited to remain faithful to the name of Jesus when that which seemed to be something before men has failed.

Neither anger nor prudence nor pretensions of man can do anything in the state of confusion in which the Church is now. I freely confess that I have no hope in the efforts that some are making to insure themselves an ecclesiastical position. In an earthquake, when the house is undermined from its foundations, it matters little for a man to see how he can make his dwelling agreeable. We shall find it better for us to remain where we are set by the first discovery of the ruin of things in the hands of men, and with our faces in the dust. Such is the place that belongs to us of right, and after all it is the place of blessing. In the Apocalypse John learns the actual state of the Churches falling at the feet of Christ. He was afterwards taken to heaven in order that thence he might later on see the judgments on the earth; but evil in the Church can never be known
save when one is humbled at the feet of Jesus.

I have read of a time when several gathered together in such grief of spirit that for a long time they could not utter a single word; but the floor of the meeting-room was moistened with their tears. Were the Lord to grant us still such meetings it would be wise to frequent these houses of tears.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy (Psa. 126:5).

It is not only for an earthly remnant that that is true, but it is also written for us. I should willingly make a long journey to join persons thus afflicted, but I should not take a single step with a view of receiving, at the hands of the most excellent of men, power to overthrow all to-day, and to reconstitute tomorrow.

All that we can do is to walk with vigilance, but peacefully, thinking of the interests of the Lord Jesus; as to ourselves having nothing to gain and nothing to lose. The path of peace, the place of testimony, is to seek to please God. We need to be very watchful over ourselves, lest, after having been preserved from the corruptions of the age by very precious truth: made known to us in our weakness, we should be caught in the net of presumption, or launch out into insubordination -- a thing that God never can own or tolerate.

Using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace (N.T.).

The word of God is the same today as ever. All that has happened has not changed His purpose, which is to glorify the Lord Jesus. If we are humbled before Him, all that belongs to the glory of Christ will be to us of great moment. And what do we wish more?

Papers From
The Present Testimony

{The following comments, used by permission, are by M. Arhelger regarding the reason for including the items from The Present Testimony.

This magazine was edited by G. V. Wigram who was a lifelong intimate friend of Darby. In Wigram’s magazine most of the articles are written anonymously; only few have initials (save by poetry and in the latter volumes of the "new series" where more initials appear). The initials “J.N.D.” appear only once in vol. 1 (poetry), once in vol. 5, a few times in vol. 13 and two times in new series vol. 2. Nevertheless, a search in the Darby CDs proved that about 130 articles in the “Present Testimony” are also in the Collected Writings of J. N. Darby. There might be other works by Darby in “Present Testimony” though not having his initials. Now there is one remarkable observation: There are 11 articles in “Present Testimony” which are signed simply with “D.” I was not able to identify this “D” save in five cases where it is always J. N. Darby. 23 There is no other brother who is likely to be “D.” 24 Therefore it is assumed that the other six articles of “D” were also written by J. N. Darby though that is not completely certain.}

23. The five cases are:
2) Present Testimony, vol. 1, page 451 – 454 which is in Collected Writings 5:252-255.
4) and 5) Present Testimony, vol. 14, page 224 – 226, which contains two songs written by Darby.

It is interesting that an article of Darby in The Prospect 2, 97-100 is also simply signed with "D.” The same is true of an article in the Christian Witness 1: 313-320 (1834).

24. William Henry Dorman had his own magazine (Girdle of Truth) which was issued since 1856 and which probably contained most of his own articles. (Similarly there are only very few articles of W. Kelly in the Present Testimony because Kelly had his own magazine The Prospect and later the Bible Treasury). Dorman has signed an article with “WHD” (and not with “D.”) in Present Testimony, vol. 4, page 417. J. G. Deck was a hymn-writer and is unlikely to be the author of the “D.” articles. Sir Edward Denny normally signed his articles in Present Testimony. Denny had a peculiar style of writing which does not reflect the “D.” articles.
THE FOLLY OF TRUSTING TO EGYPT FOR HELP

Isaiah 31:1-3

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord (Isa. 31:1-3).

The importance of Israel’s history to the church of God, arises from its peculiar character as a nation, in contrast with the other nations of the world by which it was surrounded, and from which its special glory and privilege was to be separate and distinct.

Israel, as a people, was God’s elect nation, of whom He says,

This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise.

And, again,

You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Hence their obedience or failures come to be most instructive to God’s people now, because they exhibit the effect of God’s principles, either in subjection to them, with all its happy issues; or in departure from them, with all its calamitous results.

This, it will be admitted, is true of their history generally; while, in one special part of it, the Scripture expressly teaches, that “they were types of us.”

All these things happened to them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

This is the point of importance in Israel’s history, that they were a people in connexion with God. Their conduct had its main importance in this respect. It had its bearing on their own national welfare, or the reverse; but it had a much higher importance in relation to God, as it exhibited His character and principles before the nations around. “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.”

The nations of the world were the witnesses of the power and policy of man, and they exhibited the ways and principles of man; but Israel should have been a witness before the nations of that truth.

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee {Deut. 33:29}.

25. {Greek} “tupoi” types.
It is on this ground that Israel and “Egypt” are found, in their national character, so frequently presented in contrast in the Old Testament, just as the church and the world are set in constant opposition in the New. The principles of God had their place in the one, and the principles of man were, working in the other, which necessarily placed them in opposition.

But Israel had another character besides that which was stamped on them by their connexion with God. They were men, and they had, naturally, all the feelings and propensities of men. Hence, whenever their faith failed, and they were left to their own unrestrained action, they invariably displayed nothing but human tendencies, and sought for help in the natural resources of men.

It required the knowledge of God, and the recognition of the special relations he sustained towards them, and an active trust in His power and protection -- in a word, faith in Him as God, and their God -- to enable Israel to walk on God’s principles, and to act in character before the nations. In like manner, now, it requires faith on the part of the church of God, in all God’s blessed relations toward it, and the sense of His presence, in order to walk with Him, and to exhibit a heavenly character before the world. “They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee”! And what wonders of love and grace are wrapped up in the knowledge of that name! “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But saints are men, as well as Israel of old, and in that character have been schooled and trained in the world, as Israel was trained in Egypt, and in either case the effect is seen, for the certain result of acting on the principles of the world, is to lose the principles of God. The world is a definite sphere, where the principles of man, under the influence of Satan, “the god of this world,” are paramount and in action; while the church is the only sphere in which the principles of God are working. “Egypt” had its wisdom, and policy, and power; but Egypt could be only the oppressor or the corrupter of the people of God. Indeed, there is nothing more affecting in Israel’s history, than their constant hankering after Egypt, after all that they had suffered there, and after all that God had done to deliver them from it. It only yields, in infatuation, to that which has been manifested in the history of the church, in its turning from the grace and presence of a divine Comforter and Guide, to the miserable shifts and appliances of “this present evil world.”

The earliest mention of Egypt, except in Gen. 10, in the division of nations, is as the place whence Abram, the child of faith, sought help from the famine which pressed upon him, when a sojourner in “the land of promise.” And, indeed, it was the land of earthly plenty. The comforts of this life were there in abundance; but we learn, in Abram’s sojourn there, what a price must be paid by the believer for its “cattle, and silver, and gold,” and for the favor of its prince! The faith of the patriarch and his altar belonged not to Egypt, but to the land of Canaan, which he had now left behind. Egypt was the land of plenty. It was well watered, and the fruitfulness of its river was proverbial. But it did not drink of the “rain of heaven”; nor did it enjoy the fertilizing dews from above. It is coupled with Lot’s portion in the plain of Jordan; of which it is said, “it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden
of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar.” Still its river bore only “the fatness of the earth”; and in this respect it is contrasted with Israel’s portion, as chosen by the Lord. “The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs: but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.”

Accordingly, in after times, when their moral corruption was hastening on the sorrows of the Babylonish captivity, the Lord, by His prophet Jeremiah, expostulates with them thus: -- “The children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God when He led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do with Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?” Israel (had they known how to value it) had their own “fountain of living waters”; and ought never to have been indebted to the streams of Egypt, or the nations around them.

As to Egypt, Joseph’s history may indeed cast a halo of glory over it; -- as even the world itself will be changed in its character when the humbled One comes to take His power; 26 still its real character is to be found only in the hard and bitter bondage of Israel. For how often is that word repeated in the books of Moses, “Remember ye were bondmen in Egypt!” And their redemption is thus characterised in Deut. 4:20, “The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance as it is this day.”

It required the plagues of Egypt, and the blood of the Passover, to put God’s captive people and their oppressors, into their true relative position towards each other. And accordingly, God’s relation to Israel, in redemption, is thus expressed, “I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of Egypt”; while the confession that was connected with the offering of “the basket of first fruits” was designed to be the constant memorial of this.

Thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish, was my father; and he went down to Egypt to sojourn there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous; and the

26. So, in God’s prophetic purposes, there is another destination for Egypt, when Israel under Messiah becomes the head of the Gentiles, and “they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem.” This is presented in Isa. 19. “And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt; every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it” (v. 17). “In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord, in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord” (v. 19). “And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation” (ver. 20). “In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance” (vv. 24, 25). The whole chapter is one of the deepest interest in connexion with the millennial glory and blessing of the earth.
Egyptians evil entreated, us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked upon our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders; and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land that floweth with milk and honey (Deut. 26).

Still, almost as soon as ever they had reached the wilderness (the place of earthly destitution, and of heavenly supply), Egypt assumes another character in their eyes than the land of their oppression, and the place of God’s judgment.

The children of Israel said unto them [Moses and Aaron] would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full. And they were not ashamed to say, “it was well with us in Egypt!” The reason of all this is obvious and instructive. To walk with God in a wilderness requires faith, and that spirit of dependence which nothing but faith can give. But to be satisfied with the supplies of Egypt is a thing which is perfectly understood by sense. Thus, whenever the necessities of their condition demanded the exercise of faith — and faith was not there, they, “in their hearts, turned back again into Egypt.” And on one occasion, they said,

were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Nor was this all: their religion was corrupted by Egypt. The worship of “the calf” was Egyptian idolatry; though Israel knew that the Lord had said,

I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the GODS of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord.

But, alas! Israel had learned to commit fornication in Egypt; and they practised the lesson in the wilderness, and ever after. For when the Lord presents before them their course, in the days of Ezekiel, in the parable of the two lewd women, He says,

they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth.

The infidelities of Judah and Israel were multiplied in their after history; but it was only a fruit of their not having left their whoredoms brought from Egypt. 27 On their entrance to the land under the leadership of Joshua, this is noticed though in grace, by the Lord. After the people were circumcised anew,

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27. The father of the man that blasphemed the name of the Lord in the camp of Israel was an Egyptian (Lev. 24). Hagar also, Abram’s bondmaid, was an Egyptian.
the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

And nothing but the power of circumcision can keep the heart of the saint separate from the world now; for if the flesh be allowed, the world at once has an open door.

But, in another form, Egypt still was Israel’s snare, after their settlement in the land. Outward weakness was the designed characteristic of Israel’s polity by Jehovah; that the people might know that they got not the land in possession by their own sword; neither did their own arm (at any time) save them; but Thy right hand and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favor toward them.

And the song should have been ever heard in their midst,

Thou art my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies; through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save Him. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In GOD we boast all the day long, and praise Thy name for ever.

It was for this intent that they were forbidden to multiply horses, and that three times a year their coasts were to be left entirely unguarded; while all their males were brought together in solemn assembly, to Jerusalem, before the Lord. But Egypt was celebrated for its horses and chariots; and this is noticed in the Lord’s prohibition to the king,

he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Their redemption from Egypt and all its power should have been final; nor should any thing have tempted them to return. But, in the reign of Solomon, we find that horses were one chief article of commerce with Egypt. In 1 Kings 10:28, 29, it is recorded that Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt: --

And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for an hundred and fifty.

While in the days of Isaiah, the Lord complains, amongst other tokens of departure from himself, that their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.

But in the following chapter of the book of Kings, there is opened a still further effect of Solomon’s affinity with Egypt. This wisest of men was corrupted by it.

King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh. For it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other GODS.
How near is the neighbourhood, and how subtle the connection of “the flesh,” the world, and the devil! And how instructive is the lesson, that as to Israel, the first enemy that invaded their land after the death of Solomon was Shishak king of Egypt!

It came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king’s house: he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of silver and gold which Solomon had made.

What force do these historical notices give to that statute of the kingdom (already partly quoted):

he shall not multiply *wives* to himself that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself *silver* and *gold*!

And how full is the illustration of a part of the passage which is the subject of the present comment, “Yet he also is *wise* and will bring evil, and will not *call back* his words!”

There may be the silver and the gold, and the “tapestry, and carved work, and fine linen of Egypt”—but it is *Egypt* still! There may be its wisdom, and policy, and power; its horses and chariots -- but still the word of the Lord remains in all its force,

Woe to them that go down to *Egypt* for help; and stay on horses and trust in chariots because they are many; and on horsemen because they are very strong; . . . now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses flesh and not spirit.

And as a ground of trust to Israel, Egypt’s character is most accurately given by a heathen man.

Now behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon *Egypt*, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh *king of Egypt* to ALL that trust on him.

And this judgment is entirely confirmed by the Lord, through Ezekiel, who says,

And all the inhabitants of *Egypt* shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a *staff of reed*, to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by the hand, thou didst break and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

Nor should this instructive warning to Israel be allowed to lapse while the saint has this significant note of divine wisdom concerning the world through which he is passing, that it is

the great city which spiritually is called *Sodom and Egypt*, where also our Lord was crucified!

Heaven-bestowed names and titles are more unchanging, and more significant, than our careless hearts are wont to conceive. But finally, as to *Egypt*, when God
speaks of it in all its glory, he speaks of it only as “the tabernacles of Ham!” “He smote all the first-born of Egypt: the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham!” And it may be said, that the example of Moses gives the only proper action of faith towards it. “By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath, of the king.” He esteemed “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

All this recorded testimony to Israel about Egypt gives especial pungency to the denunciation of the prophet;--

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down and they all shall fail together (Isa. 31:13).

The special and instructive contrasts here, are “Men” and “God” and “flesh” and “spirit.” Man with his horses, and chariots, and horsemen presenting an array of strength, resistless in the estimation of the natural mind; but

when the Lord shall stretch out his hand both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

How deep is this infatuation of a people whose privilege and strength is thus presented to the eye of faith, that they should look to Egypt or horses and chariots as their strength!

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places (Deut. 33:26-29).

This was Israel’s folly, to turn from God and his Spirit to trust in Egypt and in an arm of flesh, because they walked as men. But what is this to the church’s folly that is associated with her head in heaven, and is blessed with the ever-abiding presence of the Holy Ghost on earth; and has God for her, and the infinite treasures of his grace as her resource; and Eternal glory before her; when she is found turning to seek the world’s friendship, and practically trusts in the flesh and in carnal wisdom for her guidance and help! The Lord teach our hearts more the force of that word, “If ye then be risen with Christ!” And lead us to beware of following the course of “Demas,” of whom the apostle says, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” “If GOD be for us who can be
against us.” There is nothing more certain than this, that every degree of confidence that is reposed in man by a saint or *in himself*, is so much of his trust withdrawn from “the *living God*.” “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.” But *faith* alone can use those weapons; and when faith fails, there is always the practical turning to the world and its strength and wisdom for help. This only is the right position of our souls,

> to have the sentence of death in ourselves; that we should not trust in Ourselves; but in God that raiseth the dead.

And again let it be said; “if *God* be for us who can be against us!”

> There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength . . . our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

THE FOLD AND THE FLOCK

John 10:1-30

The force and beauty of this chapter are often missed, through failing to notice the circumstances in our Lord’s ministry, which impart to it its special character.

Much has been often advanced in illustration of the office of our Lord as “the Good Shepherd,” and it may be with a measure of truth; but the parable before us which presents him in this character, applies itself to the condition of Israel, before God, as brought to light by the ministry of the blessed Son of God, in grace, amongst that people.

It is of Israel especially that the Lord says, “Ye, my flock, the flock of my pasture are men; and I am your God.” Hence any application of the terms, “entering in by the door into the sheepfold,” or “climbing up some other way,” to a sinner’s coming to Christ, or, which is more common, to any supposed entrance into the church is, to say the least, a misapprehension and a misapplication of a most important and instructive passage.

If, then, Israel be God’s flock, Jerusalem, or, at any rate, that system of ordinances which separated Israel from the surrounding nations, and of which Jerusalem was the center, was the fold. The fold into which Christ is here proving His right and title to enter; and in connexion with which He presents, by way of parable, the effects of His personal ministry as the true, but disallowed, Shepherd of Israel.

“This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.” The glass which so accurately reflected their condition and circumstances was held up to them, but they were too much blinded by their prejudices to discern in it God’s moral judgment of their state, and of their own responsibility.

In seeking then to understand this parable, which it is said the Jews understood not, it should be remembered that there was a twofold effect resulting from our Lord’s ministry; namely, the attaching to Himself, in grace, those who, as taught of God, received His claims; and also the testing of the moral condition of those who rejected His mission; which, indeed, were the great mass of the nation. For if God’s manifestation of Himself in grace does not convert the heart, it nevertheless puts the consciences of men in the light; and thus leaves them under the responsibility of rejecting the light, and hating the light, because their deeds are evil.

This was pre-eminently true of our Lord’s ministry; but in every dispensation it holds good, and, “wisdom is justified of all her children.”
Of John the Baptist’s ministry it is said, “all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”

The light of God, in whatever vessel it shines, is recognized and rejoiced in where the heart and conscience are in exercise before Him; and it puts under responsibility those by whom it is rejected.

A little consideration of this will throw light upon the present chapter.

John the Baptist was intermediate between “the law and the prophets,” and the coming of our Lord; and his mission was to disclose the moral condition of the people, and by the baptism of repentance to prepare them for the speedy advent of their expected Messiah. But, more than this; he was also set to preach a remnant in Israel, or a separation from the mass of the people, of those who received his testimony. Hence a distinct baptism was attached to his ministry, as the formal seal of that separation which was to be administered to all who obeyed his word. This was a circumstance which marked him off from all preceding prophets, who, whatever might be the force of their ministry, had no commission to effect an outward and formal separation of those who received their testimony. A moral separation there must, of course, always have been between those that feared the Lord, and those that rejected His word. But the ministry of John marks an epoch in the dealings of the Lord with the nation. Hence the language of Matt. 3:7-12, “When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance [a baptism which separated by the confession of sins to the hope of coming mercy and salvation]: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost [a baptism which separates to God by the power and presence of God; making those who receive it the vessels of his power and presence], and with fire [a baptism of judgment which Christ when He returns will assuredly bring upon those who have rejected His claims as witnessed by the Holy Ghost]: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Now, it is exactly at this point that in the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord’s ministry is said to commence. He associates Himself with this remnant in Israel, separated by John’s baptism; and He Himself is baptized with John’s
baptism. Not, indeed, as if He needed repentance, as the reason He gives for submitting to it sufficiently shows. “He said, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” It was as fulfilling all righteousness that Jesus was baptized. But in thus owning this ordinance of God in the hand of John, our Lord at the same time associates Himself with this movement of God’s Spirit on the hearts of a remnant in Israel, and fulfilled the gracious words of the sixteenth Psalm; “Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.”

Stooping thus low in love and grace, and in self-emptying obedience, he is in a position to declare God’s name to his brethren. For the Apostle applies the first words of this Psalm to Christ, in connexion with the declaration (Heb. 2:11), that

both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

But being what He was, as Son of God, as well as the humbled Son of man, He is found receiving this remnant, who were the sheep, whom He “calls by name and leads them out”; or “the poor of the flock,” -- “of the flock of slaughter” -- of the eleventh of Zechariah; where Christ is prophetically presented as the Shepherd of God’s appointment to Israel; on which this chapter in part, and His personal ministry as detailed in Matthew, especially, forms a striking comment.

The first thing, then, which the Lord marks is, that He had entered by the door into the sheepfold, thus proving his authority from the owner of the flock, to take charge of the sheep, in opposition to any surreptitious entrance, which of itself convicts of a sinister design. As He says, “He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But He that entereth in by the door the same is the Shepherd of the sheep.”

Christ is here, then, Jehovah’s divinely sanctioned Shepherd of Israel, who were the “people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand”; -- for He had submitted to every requisition of the owner of the flock: -- but at this time, alas! proved to be “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” For the mass of the nation, and especially the rulers of the people, blinded by a false estimate of their condition before God, and entrenched in religious ordinances, knew not
the person of Him who came in grace to meet their need; nor heeded the divinely-sanctioned claims of Him who, “when He saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.” “Their own shepherds pity them not!” Hence, having stated, as another mark of His proved title to be the Shepherd of the sheep that, “to Him the porter openeth,” and the “sheep hear His voice,” He adds, “He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth his own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice.” And here we may be reminded of the beautiful keeping of the figure; and be referred to the customs of oriental countries as verifying this description of the Shepherd’s preceding His flock, when leading them from the fold to their pasture, or when conducting them from pasture to pasture. But it is not the correspondence of a description with physical facts or with a known usage that is here in question. It is the application of this peculiar action of the shepherd, by way of parable, to show, as in a glass, what was then taking place under the action of our Lord’s ministry, as necessarily modified by the moral condition of Israel, which was being tested and proved by His presence amongst them.

In a word, it expresses the moral effect of our Lord’s ministry, when received in grace, as in the example of the poor blind man in the preceding chapter, and also the effect of the disallowance of His claims on the part of the leaders and the mass of the nation.

In the one case, it was the Lord “calling his own sheep by name, and leading them out” -- for the result of their attachment, in grace, to him was their being virtually, if not actually, excommunicated like “the blind man” referred to, and thus outside (led outside by the Good Shepherd) of all Israel’s ordinances, and clean apart from every ground of connection with God, but that which was found in the person of Christ. While, on the other hand, it was virtually the Lord’s saying, as in the prophet, “I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land -- but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour’s hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them.” And again, “Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.”

Thus, through the rejection of the claims of our Lord to be the Shepherd of Jehovah’s flock, the fold is deserted by Him who alone could lead into green pastures, or give security to the sheep. But leading outside the fold His own sheep, He in effect says to them, “I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock.” And how blessed to be under the care of such a Shepherd! though it be outside all man’s religion, and apart from the whole array of Israel’s divinely appointed ordinances. For it was in the maintenance of these, in opposition to a living faith, as the grounds of connexion with God,
that the claims of this blessed Shepherd were disallowed.

One might turn with deepest interest to the descriptions of the thirty-fourth of Ezekiel, in illustration of Israel’s happiness, when, in a future day, the Lord will set aside, in power, the claims of every false shepherd that has neglected or preyed upon the flock, and will Himself take charge of His beautiful flock. As He says,

For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Or it might be thought an omission not to refer to the twenty-third Psalm, as an illustration of the present experience of a believer under the exercise of Christ’s shepherd-care. And surely nothing can exceed the beauty and comfort of that Psalm, nor the richness of the portion of the soul which can say,

Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth, me beside the still waters.

The certainty that want will never be the condition of the soul that reposes in such a Shepherd as Jehovah, and is owned of Him, may, in its largest, widest, application, be affirmed; and that quietness and refreshment are the natural blessings to the soul that flow from being under his hand. But this is not all that our souls require; alas! as it is not all in the natural application of the figure. The silly sheep may stray from the rich and quiet pastures, and need the Shepherd’s care to follow it in its wanderings, and restore it again to where the flock abides, under His gentle eye. Hence the touching expressions, “He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.” This is a different exercise of the Shepherd’s care from that of making to lie down in green pastures and leading beside still waters. It is recovery, in gracious love, when these have been departed from; and it affords the most affecting acquaintance with the grace of the heart of the Lord. When thus restored, the soul may add, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”
Nothing so strengthens the confidence of the soul in the Lord as the experience of the exercise of His gentle restoring grace. It so introduces the heart to the interior resources of God’s goodness, and so establishes it in His unfailing mercy, that confidence in all imaginable trials, and an assurance of receiving nothing but good at His hand, are the natural result. The darkest paths of difficulty and of danger -- “The valley of death’s shade” may be tracked in perfect security now, because the soul has been shown the only proper spring of confidence. “THOU art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” And more than this -- the sense of surrounding enemies can now be used not as an occasion of dread, but as only giving character to the efficiency of that goodness which prepares a table before us, in the presence of enemies. “Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.” This is not the result of an increase of outward good, nor the mere effusion of thankfulness at the contemplation of the increase of corn and wine -- this may not exist -- but it is the renewing of holy joy from the experience of what GOD is; and the overrunning-cup is the sense of the heart’s portion in the presence of a God of infinite goodness. The conclusion, therefore, from such an association with God, and such experience of what God is in goodness and love, is, “Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” All this, and much more than this, readily presents itself to the mind, while contemplating this lovely Psalm; but the chapter before us is not so much intended to teach generally the shepherd-care of Christ, as to disclose the present principles of his action resulting from Israel’s rejection of His claims. For it is in Israel, and amongst an earthly people, that His proper shepherd-character will be displayed. As a proof (see Isa. 40:10, 11),

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

And (Psa. 78:70-72),

“He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Hence, when He has given the remnant, whom His personal ministry was now separating to Himself, the necessary authority and guidance to leave the fold, which was His having called them by name (the mark of individual dealing in grace), and having Himself gone out before them, He takes an entirely new place and position.

He now says, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be
saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9). This is no mere reiteration of the previous parable, which it is said the Jews did not understand; but it is the unfolding of the true position in which He now stood to all who were taught of God to acknowledge His claims. He does not present Himself as the door into a fold; but as the door of salvation. “By me if any man enter in he shall be saved!” “And he shall go in and out and find pasture.” It is the acknowledgment of His personal claims, in faith; and the result is, not security in a fold, but salvation and liberty, and sustenance. Neither does He now address Himself as before, to His own sheep within the fold, in order to lead them out; but it is, “If any man enter in he shall be saved,” etc., which took up the outcasts of Israel and opened the door of grace to all.

It is indeed a tacit indication, that another principle of God’s dealing must be known, and another position taken by those who were owned of Him.

It is not now enclosing in a fold of ordinances in separation from those without; but it is salvation through the Shepherd who gives the life for the sheep, and security and pasturage in following Him. It is the presence of the Shepherd, and not the walls of a fold, that we must seek.

It is not, as is generally known, when speaking of the gathering of the Gentiles, as the other sheep who were not of the Jewish fold, the gathering them to a fold: —for the word is changed, and it is, “There shall be one flock and one shepherd.”

“The Good Shepherd,” and the “True Vine,” present the Lord in contrast with all that existed in Israel’s vine of ordinances, and every pretender to the care of the flock as having a right to them before He came. United to Him as the True Vine, they become fruitful branches; and as the Good Shepherd, He not only gives His life for the sheep, but He gives eternal life and eternal security to those whom He thus owns as His flock.

The difference between the door into the fold, by which Christ entered, and Himself as the door of the sheep should be noticed, in order to have the line of instruction clear before the mind. In the one case, it was the appointed way of Christ’s entrance amongst the Jews as the Shepherd of Israel, and living Messiah, in His earthly ministrations to that ancient flock of God; and in the other, it was the place which He took in grace as the rejected One of the nation -- the door of salvation to all who entered by Him. Not the door into any fold of exclusive ordinances, as in Israel, which He was now leaving Himself, and thus leading out His own sheep; but the door of entrance to salvation, to liberty and sustenance; and where security would be found alone in being near and following the Good Shepherd.

Nothing can be more touching or instructive than the contrast presented between the conduct and feelings of the “hireling,” and Himself as “the Good
Shepherd." With Christ there is no fleeing like the hireling when danger appears, but in love and self-devotion to His sheep meeting all the danger, saying to the enemy, “If ye seek me, let these go their way.”

“The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep” -- Israel as His sheep -- those lost sheep of the house of Israel—and for the “other sheep” also which are not of Israel’s fold—which are gathered and brought by His death from amongst the Gentiles, that thus there should be “one flock, one shepherd” (Greek mia poimne eis poimen). But this is spoken of as consequent upon His death -- for, indeed, whether of Jew or Gentile there could be no association with God or enjoyment of salvation apart from his death.

The reciprocation of the knowledge subsisting between the Good Shepherd and His sheep is also marked. He knows His sheep and they know Him; even as the Father knew Him, and He knew the Father. It is not a mere abstract statement of a reciprocation of knowledge, but an illustration of the character of that knowledge. He, the blessed Son, who had given His life and was in heaven, ere this gathering of His other sheep took place, or even the remnant of Israel was gathered by virtue of His death, knew His own, even as the Father knew Him, when He was upon earth. Nothing can be more precious to the soul than such a principle as this! And how simply, yet how wonderfully, is the link of connection between Christ and His sheep presented, and their eternal security declared! “My sheep hear my voice — and I know them -- and they follow me -- and I give unto them eternal life!” But this is not all. He adds, “They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all; none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” What a link of connexion is this! The poor sheep, precious to Christ as the Father’s gift to Him! What a ground also of security! The sheep not only have eternal life from Christ, but they are in His hand! Nay more, the thought of their security must be knit up with the eternal power of God -- for the sheep are in the Father’s hand! And then the contrasted points brought together of the lowly Shepherd stooping to enter by the door into the fold -- and the statement, “I and my Father are one!” Nothing can be more touching, nothing more precious or wonderful! The grace is infinite, the love knows no bounds, and the power by which all is secured is the Almighty power of the Eternal God! The depth of instruction in the chapter is but just touched upon in this brief paper, but it may guide the meditations of some to the chapter itself, there to find the infinitude of divine love thus brought home to us as the portion of the sheep of Christ.

REMARKS ON FAILURE

{Galatians}

The leading subject of the Epistle to the Galatians, as is manifest, is the correction by God’s Spirit, of the first form of error by which the doctrine of Christ began to be corrupted; and, it may be observed, there is a severity of expression in its terms of reprobation, both of the propagators of the error, and of the error itself, that has no parallel in any other of the Apostolic Epistles. This fact, bearing in mind that error in doctrine rather than evil in practice is the subject of the Spirit’s censure -- is very strikingly in contrast with our ordinary thoughts; and most especially opposed to the latitudinarian sentiments of the present day.

The principle of this is plain. Nature can take its measure of human conduct; but Faith only can estimate the importance of the truth of God. And perhaps there is nothing that more strikingly displays the low spiritual condition of the church, and its utter incompetency to judge of things according to the mind of God, than that laxity of feeling which prevails with regard to doctrine, in comparison with the moral walk.

It could never be imagined that God had placed the two in opposition -- for, indeed, the doctrine of the gospel is “the doctrine according to godliness”; -- but the tendency of the natural mind, as to their relative importance, is always to reverse the judgment of the word of God. The spiritual mind, however, which makes God and not self its center, will at once discern that the sinking of the foundation is incomparably more fraught with danger than a fracture in the edifice; and the corruption of the truth, which creates and sanctifies the church, is infinitely more fatal than a lapse in the walk, which is but the external witness of the power of the truth within. The church may be recovered while the truth of Christ remains; but if Christ be gone, nothing but hopeless corruption must ensue.

This is plainly the ground on which that unparalleled severity of rebuke, which pervades this Epistle rests. For example; he says,

\[ \text{I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED {Gal. 1:6-9}.} \]

Here, in the outset, the Apostle, by the Spirit, enters his solemn protest, not against others only, but against himself, if he should ever swerve from the
purity of that gospel he had preached. If man or angel, or himself, should ever become a perverter of the grace which he was empowered of Christ especially to proclaim, he invokes upon either a solemn curse; and thus raises a barrier against the possibility of his own, or others, turning back from the full position of grace and acceptance before God, into which the wondrous work of Christ introduces a sinner!

No authority must for a moment be allowed to cast a shadow over the full grace of the gospel; or question the divine truth of that declaration,

If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, (or a new creation), old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ {2 Cor. 5:17}.

A man may be warned how he builds upon this foundation;—and the word of the Spirit is express,

Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity -- but, other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ {2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:11}.

Let God be true, but every man a liar.

This is “the shield of faith”; and is the merited rebuke of the least perversion of the “true grace of God, wherein we stand.”

Unquestionably the church is the place of holiness -- “the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” {1 Cor. 3:17} -- but it is so, practically, only as it answers to the description, “the pillar and ground of THE TRUTH” -- the wondrous vessel of that which the Apostle thus denominates. For he directly adds, “without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to {in} glory” {1 Tim. 3:16}.

This is “the truth” of which the church of the living God is to be the pillar and ground. It is both formative of its character and is the basis of its walk: -- “He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”

Laxity of walk, or worldly principles and habits, may be corrected by bringing in the light to manifest the darkness -- for we are to “walk in the light as he is in the light” -- but when the truth is corrupted, the light becomes darkness, and the very instrument by which God is pleased to work is destroyed.

But our moral sense is outraged by flagrant conduct. Self is touched, in our associations, at least, when it is a question of walk. But it is only the spiritual sense that rightly estimates the danger of an inroad on the truth; and it requires the sensitiveness of the spirit to turn us from seeking our own, and “not the things that are Jesus Christ’s.”
Still, nothing is more important, than to heed the moral association of things in the mind of God. For example, in Phil. 3:19, those “who mind earthly things” are in the position of the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame!

This is God’s moral connection of things; and the true contrast of this, is to have “our conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

So again, in a matter of more ordinary note, in 1 Tim. 6:9.

They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish, and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

This is God’s moral association, and what in his mind is knit up with the commonest of all desires — the desire to be rich! And his path of escape is this, “Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”

Also in Rom. 16:17,18.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

There is no middle course between serving the Lord Jesus Christ and one’s own belly! And once more, in 1 Cor. 1:32; “If the dead rise not -- let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die”; just as in the corresponding truth our Lord associates the expression, “My Lord delayeth his coming” with the servant’s beginning to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.

Now it is this Divine moral association of things, that accounts for the severity of expression, noticed, as pervading this epistle, whose object is to correct the very mildest -- in our thought -- and most universal form of error by which the grace of the gospel is perverted. For what is so common in the forms of Christianity around us, as the grafting of the law and Judaism on the gospel. But, it is this, which in this epistle calls forth the stern rebuke,

Behold, I Paul, say unto you that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing . . . Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.
Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. *I am afraid of you,* lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. . . . I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

O foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Ye did run well: who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. *I would they were even cut off, which trouble you!*

Now though there was manifest corruption and worldliness in the church of Corinth, and they were “carnal and walked as men,” yet is their evil not rebuked in any degree with the sternness that pervades this epistle. It is true he says, “your gloriying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”: -- a universal principle, applied in Galatians to doctrine, as here to practice. And again in 2 Cor. 12:20, 21.

I fear lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall not be found unto you such as ye would: lest there be debatings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest when I come again my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed.

In visiting those who had so sinned, he says, “*I will not spare.*” But he does not once say, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain” -- “I stand in doubt of you” -- “Ye are fallen from grace” -- “I would they were even cut off who trouble you” -- “Christ shall profit you nothing” -- “Christ is become of no effect unto you.”

Alas! it is forgotten, that, if the church is to be the epistle of Christ, it is Christ known and valued, and all things else esteemed as dung and dross, in comparison, that can alone make her that epistle. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” And in vain is the cleanliness of the vessel and its external polish regarded, if the treasure which is alone of value be extracted!

Christ crucified and risen, and we risen in him, is the church’s morality.

Let us hold fast grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.
Whenever grace is questioned, and a legal standing sought, there is introduced the wholesale principle of the corruption of the church’s morals — “walking in the light, as he is in the light”; and “walking as he walked.” For in the first place, conscience will stop at the lowest point at which it can be satisfied; and in the next place, the law deals with the flesh of man, in which grace teaches us “there dwells no good thing.” But grace leads to holiness, through a new nature, which is born of God, and the subduing of the flesh. Never therefore is holiness, in its true character, so much in danger as when it is sought to be established apart from grace — which in its grossest form, is the Puseyism of the present day. And often the assumption of an ascetic sanctity, where the gospel prevails, sinks into moral debasement, that shocks even the natural conscience.

In the opening of the epistle — “Paul, an Apostle not of man neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead” — we get a principle that characterises indeed, but extends much farther than the apostleship of Paul, and teaches us that nothing which is “of man” as its source, or “by man” as its authority, can be acknowledged in the Church of God. It must be, “by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.” Hence he says,

I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Neither man’s ordinances, nor man’s authority, nor man’s obedience, can reach up to Him whom God hath set at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 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 hath put all things under his feet, and gave HIM to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The grace of the gospel is a thing altogether beyond man’s power, and independent of man’s authority; and is thus wonderfully expressed by the Apostle,

“I, through the law, am dead to the law” — I have been killed by it outright — “that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the SON OF GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me!

And this is the Christ, and this is the grace, that is to be guarded against all that is “of man” and “by man”! For, whatever is “of man” or “by man,” necessarily subverts this grace, which flows alone from its divine fountain — “Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.” Can any thing for a moment that is “of man” be borne with, by the heart that has
learned this truth, “the Son of God hath loved me and given himself for me?” or that which is so akin to it in Heb. 1,

Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.

It is on this ground, that the Apostle says, in 2 Cor. 5:16,

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

And, as already quoted, it follows,

Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature {it is new creation}: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God.

Now, in Colossians the warning is,

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him.

What madness to attempt a supplement from man and his philosophy to the fulness of Him “in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!” But here it is by the introduction of the law and circumcision.

Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law.

And

Behold I, Paul, say unto you, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Whatever man, in his wretched blindness may attempt, the two things -- grace and law -- cannot before God stand together. In grace “all things are of God” but the law, addresses it self to man: it requires something of man, which he, in his ignorance of his own condition, attempts to meet: although “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” “And as many as are OF the works of the law are under a curse.” If law is his principle, then he is only under a curse. “For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

The adding of “circumcision,” which was the point at which this severely reprobated error touched the Galatians, was not in the least intended as an ostensible setting aside of the gospel, by the substitution of the law. But though they were deceived, the principle can receive no quarter. It may be only the addition of circumcision; but there is a principle involved in it which subverts the whole standing of grace -- “If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you
nothing.” “Ye are fallen from grace!”

And yet this is the most natural condition into which the heart sinks that does not see -- or has perhaps lost the perception of -- the brightness of grace: and this on the most simple ground. For Judaism was God’s own institution -- his earthly institution -- for maintaining intercourse with himself, on a lower ground than that of the vail being taken away. Judaism was the religion of a people at a distance from God; who, however near their priest might come, which their necessity required, had a vail between themselves and God. And whenever the heart practically loses its sense of that nearness to God to which His grace has introduced us through the eternally precious work of Christ, we naturally lapse into Judaism. Not that there may be a formal adoption of it as a system, but there is a natural adaptation in it to the heart that feels it right to be occupied about the things of God, but is not in the brightness of intercourse with God himself.

Hence the Apostle says,

When we were children we were in bondage under the elements of the world, but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.

This was their place: this their altered position, through accomplished redemption, to be in communication and intercourse with God, as children with a father. And he therefore asks,

Now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

It was the sweeping away of the whole position into which the redemption of the Son of God had brought them, to assume again the place of distance that belonged to those who were kept under the law shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain {Gal. 4:10}.

This was Judaism, no doubt; but then Judaism, it is but little imagined, was itself composed of “the rudiments (or elements) of the world.” “The first covenant had ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary”; and the whole of the Jewish institution was arranged after the rudiments of the world. God had a righteous claim upon the people in the midst of this, but their religious institutions were arranged to meet their natural feelings as men. There was the beauty of the tabernacle and the costliness of the temple: -- the gold and silver and precious stones; the silver trumpets on their feast days, and the magnificent garments of their priests, all which are now maintained by
royalty and are to be found in palaces and courts, while their festive periods of commemoration are still found in the anniversaries of the world.

And it is this which gives it such a hold on our nature, and accounts for the universality of its prevalence, in conjunction with the profession of Christianity. It puts God at a distance, while it occupies the mind with religion, and sanctions the principles and elements of the world.

The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

God’s presence could not then be reached. The vail was untaken away; and all that could be said of this array of services was, that they were carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation. And hence the severity of that word,

After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements to which ye desire again to be in bondage?

If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?

The cross leaves no place for the elements of the world! “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” Death and resurrection, in Christ, alike leave Judaism and Gentilism amongst the “rudiments of the world”; while they introduce into the blessed knowledge and presence of God, and leave nothing to be rejoiced in, or to be desired, but “the hope of the glory of God.”

Many other things in this epistle are worthy of note, but my object is not to give an exposition. In vv. 15, 16, of ch. 1,

When it pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, we get the whole principle of the Apostle’s course and ministry. And this it was that also led him to say, “of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person.” His only object and concern, was, “that the truth of the gospel might continue with them.” And if the course of Peter even is opposed to this, he meets an uncourtly and open rebuke; and his, and Barnabas’s dissimulation is as plainly censured, as when he says to his own converts, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth!”

It is this which fired him at the attempt to remove them “from the grace of Christ, into another gospel,” and makes him say, “I would they were even cut off who trouble you”; and at the close of the epistle to expose the hollowness of the wretched teaching of those principles, the destructiveness of which he had through the epistle so solemnly denounced --
as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they, themselves, who are circumcised, keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. --

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature

-- a new creation! If the cross brings inside the vail, -- which it does, it at the same time, puts outside the world. God’s “new creation” can combine with none of the elements of the old. The blood of the sin-offering, which brought the High-Priest within the vail, left the victim to be burnt outside the camp. “Jesus, that he might sanctify the people, suffered without the gate.” The very thing which brings nigh to God, is that which entirely separates from the world!

Would that against all these attempts of the enemy to subvert the grace of the gospel, we had the faith to say, “From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks (Greek stigmata) of the Lord Jesus!” But alas! where is now the sensibility of heart to Christ, which causes the blush to mantle on the cheek, and the soul to be filled with indignation, at any attempted admixture of law and grace, which is but the subversion of the gospel. Where is to be found the exhibition of that word -- “the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up?”

Alas! in a day when faith is low, large scope is left for the reasonings of the natural mind; and often the surest resting-places of the soul are treated as points of debate. What is divinely taught is firmly held; but even the truth of God, gathered by human deduction, never rises to the point of faith. The ground of so many questionings amongst God’s children, is, that there is so little faith. Faith settles the soul in the truth, and keeps it in the presence of God. And the reason why known truth is so feebly held, is, that there is so little faith, and consequently so little of God. The certainty of faith seems like dogmatism to the man of reason; and appears like the claim to a special revelation to the Christian whose habit is to gather his conclusions by a rational process, instead of by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. We allow a license to the “lusts of the mind,” which we should not dare to do in the “lusts of the flesh”: But it is not the actions only, but every thought that should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

CONCERNING THE NEAR APPEARING OR PRESENCE OF FALSE PROPHETS

1 John 4:1-6

This little treatise is addressed to those who not only know Jesus to be a Savior, but who know Him as their Lord, to whom their allegiance and obedience is due. Happy those who look wholly to His good pleasure as their Lord. They ought also to know that this is a time when allegiance to Him will be put to the test. It will be quite a different proof than heretofore, because Satan will deceive with far more deceivableness than heretofore. The deception will begin with unbelief in the Lordship of Jesus, and by insubjection to it; and in speaking therefore of the world and not of heavenly things, but perhaps often commending what is earthily religious, and thus enhancing the deceit. One can hardly believe that it is not already the case, and they are not in themselves so apparent, as not to require that the spirit by which they speak should not be tried by you, that you be not misled. We are desired to try the spirits, to bring them to proof by the works of the prophets who speak by these spirits. 1st. They must be proved by their works, and their works are not holding Jesus to be come in the flesh, and therefore immediate Lord over all men; and, 2ndly, speaking of the world. These are two very simple things, so there is no need that simple men should be deceived; it is the want of knowing Jesus as Lord that may lead even the elect into danger. Obedience to Jesus as Lord will disown what He disowns -- will make a good confession of the hope He has left, and will worship according to the power of that Spirit, that is of Him and the Father. We must not suppose, that having the spirit of antichrist is to make those, who by this spirit, speak of the world and its hopes, like men possessed so as to act violently and madly; they would in this case be quickly suspected or disregarded; but these require to be tested in the knowledge of God and of Christ, because they soberly lead from God and His obedience. Persons would gain no credit, and that their master knows, if they were to proclaim principles that would shock mankind. In order to persuade men, they must propose some advantage, something that does honor to mankind and not dishonor, and no one is taught in the honor and reward of obedience to Christ. A condition that would need forgiveness of God they would repudiate. They will say that man in his own honor and dignity, and educated therein, has a true nobility; that death is no judgment of God; and if they acknowledge a continuance of existence after death (not a restoration of the dead to life by the power of God), it is to their own honor, and the

28. [It does not seem to the editor that this paper is actually by J. N. Darby.]
extension of the self-importance with which they have dignified themselves. With a future life, however, they trouble themselves but little. The mark given in addition to the denial of Christ come in the flesh is, that they speak of the world, and the world heareth them. What is now more common than these two marks? God warns us now against these. Against the world He has already warned us. The world perisheth, and the works thereof; and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are of the world, and not of the Father. The world will be judged and the works thereof, but of this those that scoff are willingly ignorant. They have known it, or at least have heard the testimony and rejected it. No one can get rid of the judgments that God has appointed by His word. Disbelief does not alter the truth of any thing. What is, is; and what shall be, shall be. Man does not make any thing untrue by his disbelief. So nothing that is false can be made true because I am deceived by it, even if it were to my ruin; nor do my convictions make any thing true, nor bind God in His judgments, or else my judgment would bind God. Men deceived by themselves are easily deceived by others who prophesy according to the blindness of the people; and who is so foolish as to think, that a man thinking he sees, or that he has a true mental apprehension of a thing will make it certain? God is never moved from His throne, and He will be justified in the day when all things will be judged; and if my affections are with God, I say, “Let God be true, though all be liars.” Now God has revealed the resurrection of all men, and they will stand just as they now are to be tried in their present capacity of conscience, by His presence and not by their own thoughts; and their judgment will be final and righteously so, for God has not failed to make known His goodness by His word. A true prophet believes that Jesus Christ has appeared in the flesh, and will come to blessing or judgment. Such a one therefore speaks of things to come; he speaks of the peace made by blood, and that God has loved, receives men for the sake of His Son whom He has given.

Now false prophets are in this Scripture prophesied of; they prophesy false things, and the reverse of God’s judgment of the world. They will speak of the capacities of it and its greatness; of the perfectibility of man, and of the world’s institutions becoming his noble condition, and the world heareth them. How quickly are the ears of man caught by the false evangelist, or these inspired pretenders! How Christ’s coming to judgment, and as Lord over the world would be scorned, though the price was paid for his deliverance from Satan in body and soul, as well as that for other men!

It is quite true, that at present some men have not gone as far as others in the denial of the Lordship of Jesus, but their words and position are in a strange contradiction one to the other. Religion is not yet always rejected by those who listen to the false prophets, but few would listen, did any do more than accidentally speak of it. Man was so formed of God, that some
acknowledgment of Him is natural, and necessary to him as a right condition of his existence. Wholly to reject is to denaturalize himself; but they do not acknowledge a Lordship in Jesus, and the world heareth them. Politics, as we daily know them, are an unbelief of the Lord as Lord. Man as man, sufficient to himself, is the ground of their doctrine; and as the Egyptian said of his river, “The river is mine own, I have made it for myself.” It is a simple character to try them by, and it seems a sweeping judgment; but God judgeth all things in truth, and giveth a simple rule to judge by, and all that is not in Christ will be found not of Him. A false prophet is one not confessing Jesus, and their word is about the world independently of God, and the world gives them heed; these are they that speak by the spirit of antichrist. The apostle says many false prophets are gone out into the world. If any man knows the true extent of the call that God has made by the apostle, and by those who follow the truth he delivers, he listens not to such at all.

Now the spirits and prophets that speak by them are prophesied of; and because they do the reverse of what true prophets do, they are false prophets, and they are spoken of as to appear in these latter times, when all things are hastening to the time of God’s interference in the world by His judgments against the rebellious; and the spirit is called the spirit of antichrist, because it is set against the Lordship of Jesus over the world, and will fully exist in antichrist when he is manifested. Those that are of God overcome the seduction and turn away, because they have a spirit in them that is greater than the spirit that is in the false prophets. But let us not conceal from ourselves how plain the distinction is made by the Word of God between one spirit and the other. Nor let us think less of the grace of God to man in Christ, or to ourselves who believe, for Christ is made of God to us, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption”; we are possessors of Christ, and own the Lord of whose glory we are partakers, but separate by a clear undeniable separateness from all the false prophets speak of. “Come out and be ye separate, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty.” Doing good to all men, and loving one another for God and for our hope’s sake, and our works will be owned of Him when He shall come, and they shall be judged for all “the hard speeches they have spoken against Him.”

It is unbelief in us to have any thing to say to any of these matters. We return as the dog to his vomit when we do so. We must not be deceived by words of honor and of noble sentiments. When men do well to themselves, men will speak well of them, as is said in the forty-ninth Psalm. Your rule is, “Whom the Lord commendeth”; but for us they are condemned, though we confess ourselves always sinners saved by grace. The Lord cometh to judgment.
But if the spirit of antiChrist is at work, the same will produce a FALSE PROPHET far above the rest. How wise is the arch enemy! Will he let the world see this all at once? None were ever wicked at once. No man ever gained his fellow-men by proposing a thing as evil, but as good; but you have here, in the description of the false prophets and their works, the sure marks of the beginning; and they lead surely to the end. Those we speak of speak of the world, and the world heareth them. Men, again, now perhaps dispute about religion, and about this or that being the right one. God says, “True religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is to keep yourself unsotted from the world”; and His commandments are to believe on the Son of God, and to love one another in this faith. Now, beloved, everything is slipping from its place. Everything that is not founded on Christ and His word, and to the exclusion of everything else, will soon be in the enemy’s camp. Take with you a single eye, and your whole body shall be full of light; otherwise you will slip away into the dominion of evil, and at last of Satan. Do not be deceived by the name of religion. The weak, the crucified One, is the power of God unto salvation. It is a matter of faith and of holding fast. Disbelieve the false prophets. Believe God, and the devil will flee from thee, and thyself be left to the rejoicing of hope, and to you belong rest (with those that have from the first declared the salvation of God) when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, and you, perfected by trial, because you hold fast; they who have troubled you, righteously receiving tribulation, and punished with everlasting destruction from that presence which is become your’s in joy for evermore. Let us now be fain to pluck out of destruction those in whom we discover that God yet keeps a conscience to the Lord alive in their breasts.

This then is the present state of things, or one we shall see presently accomplished; but there will be a GREAT FALSE PROPHET. The power he will receive of Satan will be very great: his business will be to commend him to whom Satan will give his power and throne and great authority, by the permission of God; and the great false prophet will commend him to mankind by signs and wonders, and miracles, and fire from heaven, to cause men to obey him whom Satan has set up, as the glory and boast of man.

It is one fashion of the unbelief of the present day to deny the existence of Satan, the adversary. There can be no greater cause of any falling into his toils, because when miracles and wonders are now done they will be ascribed to God, and thus they will give credit to Satan and be deceived. But Scripture (and a sad woeful sign of the power of Satan is it when the Scripture is kept from the hands of the people) is express on the subject, that as miracles were performed at the beginning of Christianity, that the miracles at the close of the dispensation will be from the Evil One, and not from God. Such then will have no eyes to discover the deceit, but wonder and worship. This false prophet will
without doubt find his representatives, who by the same deceit will commend the same lie to those that are subject to them and not to God; and indeed, all those whose names are not written in the book of life through faith of the Son of God. And it is a sure word, that Christianity falls not into forgetfulness or into the ignorance of heathenism again, but is apostate from God in the fulness of human intelligence and in hatred of Christ.

The false prophet will receive his doom with the great king and power who is yet to be manifested, as we learn from the Apocalypse, ch. 19:20, and other places of Scripture in the New and Old Testament. If you will compare this with ch. 13:10, the description of his working miracles to deceive is the same as in ch. 19:20. The false prophet in ch. 13:10, has the character of a worldly power; this he apparently loses, before he is finally destroyed. It is not said that the prophets mentioned in the text at the head of this tract do any miracles -- their task is more ordinary: their character is, that they do not confess the coming of Christ as man, and they say, “Who is Lord over us?” -- and they speak of the world, and may be, its religion too. But the time comes; the world, through hearing of them, is ripe in the deceitfulness of unrighteousness to fall into the last snare of the enemy; and the great false prophet, and those who are connected with him, will bring men into the last measure of deception and rebellion against the Lord. The time is not afar off. The signs of the last times abound on every side. It is written, that in the last times false prophets shall come on the earth, and speak by the spirit of antiChrist. And this is written to warn and quicken you who confess the Lord, that you be not also deceived.

29. Nowhere else, indeed, is the *exact* expression; for in John 1:29, 36, it is {in Greek} "ο ἀμνὸς" but in the Revelation throughout, it is {in Greek} "τὸ ἄρμιον" Acts 8:32, and 1 Pet. 1:19, are comparisons, expressive of a blessed moral truth, but not applied by way of *title*. 

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THE WORTHINESS OF THE LAMB

{Rev. 5}

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living-ones and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing (Rev. 5:11, 12).

RICH and blessed as are the associations in the mind of every saint of God connected with Christ’s title of “the Lamb,” it may be questioned whether that which stamps it, in the mind of Heaven, with its peculiar significance, has, so fully as it ought, its place and bearing in the soul. The emphatic exclamation of the Baptist, “Behold the Lamb of God!” indicates the grace and beauty and lowly virtues of Him who bears this name, and marks His title to the adoring worship of our hearts. But this title, as borne by the same blessed One, on high, unfolded in the book of Revelation, brings us associated with other glories and other scenes than those that, it is likely, met the holy musings of John, when he gazed on the blessed Jesus walking by the banks of Jordan, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God.”

This title, familiar as it is to our hearts, is almost exclusively connected with the book of Revelation; and is unquestionably designed to indicate the special character in which the bearer of it is there presented. The observance of this may present no unuseful key to the understanding of that wondrous book, which may be “called the book of the rights of the Lamb” for, certainly, it may be affirmed that the whole of the details and principles of the prophetic part of it are knit up with this title; while, on its first occurrence in the book, we see heaven, earth, and all redeemed creation roused by it in joy to accord to Him who bears it, this seven-fold ascription of praise: “saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” He alone is declared worthy to receive the whole tribute of the universe and to become the center of its universal praise.

There is, doubtless, a marked difference in the presentation of “the Lamb slain” in this book, and in His presentation by the same title in John 1:29, 36, the only other place in scripture in which *as a title* it occurs.
In the expressions of John, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!” we see the person of the Lord Jesus, as God’s Lamb, presented to the eye of faith, as the substantiation of all that had been prefigured in the way of atonement. He is here pointed out as the full and perfect provision of God for man’s need as a sinner, and the only basis on which the mercy of a holy God can restore the guilt-stricken and polluted to his presence. This, there can be no doubt, was the immediate bearing of John’s pointing to Jesus, as “the Lamb of God.” But in the breadth of the terms, “that taketh away the sin of the world” it seems as if the Spirit would lead us on beyond the speciality of individual redemption, to the ultimate purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God -- in the destruction of the works of the devil -- to that point in the counsels of God, in which the blessed stream of redemption reaches its limit; and creation, brought back from subjection “to vanity,” is again made capable of receiving and reflecting back the rays of its Creator’s goodness and glory, rejoicing in “the glorious liberty of the sons of God.”

The Lamb slain in sacrifice, from Abel downward, had declared on the part of the righteous holiness of God, that “without shedding of blood is no remission”; and on the part of the love of God, the spotlessness of the victim and its being as a burnt offering “a sweet savour unto the Lord,” declared as fully His delight in the perfection of Jesus -- that “Lamb without blemish and without spot” -- and of His satisfaction in His wondrous, perfected, atoning work. “Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.” “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” But in the Revelation, the “Lamb slain” is not presented so much as God’s provision of love to meet a sinner’s need, or as the perfect Doer of His Father’s will, as He is shown, by His rejection and suffering on earth, to have gained a title in heaven to universal homage, and to be the holder of universal power. In the revelations of God to His church, things in reference to Jesus have passed beyond the limit of grace and atonement now; and we are called to contemplate what are the righteous claims of this suffering and rejected victim, as recognized on high. It is true that the heart of a saint knows Him still as “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The cross abides still in all its wondrous mystery of love, as the attractive point of mercy to meet a sinner’s heart. “Pentecost,” as the pledge and seal of the resurrection and ascension-glory of the church’s Head, tells, by the presence of the abiding “Comforter,” of present union, and of coming glory as the portion of the church. But beyond what the gospels reveal of incarnation and suffering; and the epistles unfold of grace untold, flowing down as the church’s present portion, from her head in glory, and presenting the brightness of her hope in being “for ever with the Lord,” -- we have, in this book, the lifting up of a curtain, and showing things beyond the Spirit’s direct testimony in the church. First, Jesus is shown in the position of
rebuke and chastening, through the hour of the church’s decadence, as His witness in the world, until rejection comes of that which was wholly unworthy of His care. And then, in the prophetic part, it is not so much the Spirit down here testifying of Christ, as seen on high, in close connexion with “the Lamb,” who is in the midst of the throne; and as the spirit of prophecy telling indeed of the progress of things here on earth; but that not so much in regard to the events themselves, as in connexion with heavenly counsels, which result in the vindication of the claims of “the Lamb.” The progress of evil is noticed; but it is noticed only as giving occasion to the introduction of the hand of power by which “the mystery of God” is finished. The opening of the seals, and the sounding of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials -- whatever may be their effects on earth -- have for their one central object, either the declaration or the enforcing by the hand of Divine Power, of the claims of the Lamb. It is, in a word, the blessed accomplishment, in power, of that word in Philippians,

He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Though there is this difference in the aspect in which this result of the Lord’s humiliation and death are presented -- here it is the reward of Christ’s perfect obedience to the Father’s will. In the revelation it is the vindication, on the part of God, of the claims of Him, who, as to man, had been but a suffering victim --

led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so He opened not His mouth.

Therefore, necessarily, judgment, in this vindication, falls on the world that had inflicted His injuries, and still resists His claims. The most cursory study of the book of Revelation must teach us that its object is not so much to unfold the character and fruits of redemption in relation to those who are its happy subjects, as to present the rights and claims of Him by whom redemption was, in “the travail of His soul,” accomplished -- His right, through redemption, to “inherit all things.” And therefore it is, throughout, that Christ, as “the Lamb,” in the midst of the throne, and the actings of the throne itself, are in connexion with the earth and creation, rather than directly with the church. The fifth chapter, in which this worthiness of the Lamb is proclaimed, appears to give the entire outline of the prophetic part of the book. Nothing, as it seems, in accomplishment, can go beyond this. Heaven, earth, and all redeemed creation, in this anticipative song, recognize the full claims of Christ’s mediatorial glory, as the “Lamb that was slain”; and, in accomplishment, we are brought by it down to the point, “when He shall have
put down all rule, and all authority and power; “and when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father.”

Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever {Rev. 5}.

In the challenge which brings the Lamb upon the scene, however symbolic the action, there seems to be but little difficulty in ascertaining the simple truth conveyed. The question -- “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” is designed to present, in strong relief, and in contrast with the hopelessness that springs from all besides, the worthiness and the power of Christ to enter into, and declare the whole mystery of God concerning the course of evil in this world, and its final redemption from its power. And more than this, to show, on whose behalf it is, and on account of whose worthiness it is, that Creation shall be delivered from the thrall of Satan, and the tribute of its praise be restored to Him whose right it is.

No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

The redemption of God’s inheritance from the power of Satan, is no work for man. Neither is it in the creature’s power to declare through what appliances of power and wisdom the whole craft and power of Satan should be set aside. But there is one and one only found, to accept this challenge; and thus is relieved the oppressive sorrow that hung upon the prophet’s heart.

I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon; and one of the Elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the Elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

Here the mystery is solved. In redemption Christ has obtained a title to be the whole creation’s Lord, as well as the church’s blessed Head. As the suffering, meek, and unresisting Victim, Heaven accords to Him the title to universal power and praise. Already -- though hidden in the throne -- He is manifested to the eye of faith, as being possessed of the perfection of power -- “having seven horns” -- and also of the controlling, all-pervading energy of God’s universal Spirit --

having seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth {Rev. 5:6}.

Here, therefore, there is One equal to solve this problem; unsolvable by all
besides; and to accept a challenge that must be declined by all besides. For who can undertake to save the rights of the eternal God, and to bring back a sin-stained universe to His favor? And who can expel the power of evil by which the scattering and dissolving from God of His creation had been achieved? Before this can be, sin must be atoned, and death undone, and Satan bound. But all this power and worthiness is found in Him who was David’s Son and David’s Lord.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof {Rev. 5:5}.

In death, this title of Redeemer has been sealed as the Lamb’s; and in redemption-power will all God’s glory, in connexion with the creature, eventually stand. The tribute of the universe must be paid alone to Him, who to the death asserted the glory of God in a world of evil; and who, in the administration of the affluence of His power and glory, will turn every stream of creature-good back to the Creator’s praise.

Happy is it for the saint, thus instructed in the mind of heaven, to rest in the love and grace of Him who is in the midst of the throne; and happier still, in seeking now to uphold the honor of His name, to count on His power alone, who has the “seven horns and the seven eyes.” For how surely is His power and grace directed to sustain the heart that counts on His goodness in seeking in a world of evil to do His will. Soon that power, which now secretly sustains, controls, and overrules, amidst the confusion of Satan’s power, will be openly displayed. And how is the heart’s joy augmented by the thought, that then the worthiness of the Lamb will not be a secret carried feebly in the bosom of the saint, and contradicted and gainsaid on every hand besides; but evil being removed by the hand of Power, every eye shall gaze upon His beauty, and every heart shall own His claims, and every voice re-echo His worthy praise! And O how soon will this bright scene of glory burst upon our dim anticipations!

We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.

But there is another side of the picture. Heaven’s counsels about the Lamb, alas! are fraught alone with sorrow for great Babylon in her luxurious glory, and for the thoughtless dwellers on the earth! When power Divine shall be put forth to vindicate the claims of earth’s rejected Victim, what but dismay and displacement can be the result to those who despise His name, and will at last be found in martial array to resist His claims.

These shall make war with the LAMB, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords!

But before this hour arrives what a picture of the world’s dismay does the
Lamb’s opening of the sixth seal present!

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the LAMB: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? {Rev. 6:12-17}.

It would be too wide a field, to comment in succession on each instance in this book in which, in different aspects and varied connexions, we are brought into contact with the Lamb. In tracing through, from the fifth chapter to the end, “the Lamb” is ever in the ascendency.

The song of Heaven is, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (vv. 6-13). It is from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, that the men of this world seek to hide themselves in fear (Rev. 6:15, 16). The palm-bearing multitude, before the throne, have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9-14). It is the Lamb that feeds them and leads them (as a shepherd) “to living fountains of waters” (Rev. 7:17). It is the blood of the Lamb that answers all the accusations of Satan, as the accuser of the brethren day and night, on high (Rev. 12:10, 11). It is in the book of life of the Lamb slain, that the names of the faithful are found written amidst the corruptions of the beast (Rev. 13:8). It is the Lamb, also, on Mount Zion with the sealed-ones, whose honor and privilege it is, to “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” (Rev. 14:1-4). Again, whoever worships the beast or his image, and receives his mark in his forehead or in his hand, will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (Rev. 14:9, 10). It is the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, that is sung with the “harps of God,” by those who, in victory over the beast, stand on “the sea of glass” (Rev. 15:2-4). It is against the Lamb, that the beast and the ten kings make war; and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Rev. 17:12-14). It is the marriage of the Lamb, that strikes the note of joy in heaven; and to be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, is the mark of honor and blessing then (Rev. 19:7-9). And, after the seals are loosed, and the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out, when Satan is bound and the clangor of earth’s judgment is hushed, it is “the bride the Lamb’s wife,” that is the wondrously glorious spectacle on which the Apostle is called to gaze (Rev. 21:9). They are the twelve apostles of the Lamb, whose names are in the twelve foundations of the
“holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God” (Rev. 21:14). Of this city the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple, and “the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:22, 23). There is to be no inhabitant in this glorious city “whose name is not written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). And, onwards, “the river of the water of life” flows out of “the throne of God and the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1). And finally, there is to be no more curse, because the throne of God and of the Lamb are to be there (Rev. 22:3, 4, 5).

These are but brief and desultory notices of the wondrous character and claims of Him who in heaven is seen as “the Lamb.” A suffering victim here on earth, now hid for a season in heaven, but about to be brought forth in full investiture of heaven’s glory; and in vindication of His claims, no place to be allowed for any that refuse to bow in homage to His name, “I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living-ones, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” The scattering and confusion, and sorrow, and death, that sin has brought into the universe of God, admit of no remedy but in redemption. And accordingly the Lamb’s title to the glory and praise of restored creation is founded in this. “They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood.”

This estimate of Heaven of the Lamb’s worthiness and the preparations on high to enforce His claims, cast a dreadful shadow over the ease, and glory, and power, and security of the world! “Redemption” -- alas! the world knows not the meaning of the word! And as to “the Lamb” its whole peace hangs only on the abeyance of His claims!

While the main subject of this book is the presentation and enforcement of the claims of Christ to universal homage, and to universal power, as the suffering Lamb, there is that which gleams forth, as it were incidentally in the vindication of His glory. Far away from the scene of conflict, and before the Lamb comes forth sitting on “the white horse,” as “King of kings, and Lord of lords, in righteousness to judge and to make war,” there is seen in the peaceful courts of heaven, “the marriage of the Lamb” and, it is added “his wife hath made herself ready!” For His glory cannot be asserted, and another not be with Him in the scene. That “we may be glorified together” is the strange word of scripture! The joy must begin on high, before the glory is displayed below. From heaven the Lamb comes forth to redeem the inheritance, and to take possession of His glory; and “when Christ who is our
life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory."

And how does this teach the heart of one who knows the espousal of the church to Christ, how little it has to do with all the busy aims of men; and how little reason it has to covet the world’s wisdom, power, or glory, which are but the usurped rights of Christ; while another Lord and Prince is owned. It is not the earth in the power of redemption yet, and yielding its willing homage to the Lamb; but it is the world which made the Lamb a suffering Victim, and still retains its opposition to His claims.


**FRAGMENT**

How sweet it is to look to the end of our weary way—and what an end—"*the home of the Lord*"! and that "*for ever*"! Surely "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Can any thing be sweeter, goodness and mercy *now*, the house of the Lord *hereafter*?

“THE WORD BECAME FLESH”

John 1:1-34

What characterize the Gospel of John, is the bringing forward, at the beginning, of the personal glory of the Lord Jesus; and then, at the end, the gift of the Spirit, the Comforter, whom He promised to send when gone.

In this part there are three distinct subjects. In the first place we have the divine nature of the Lord -- what He is in Himself. Secondly, what He is in incarnation -- the Word made flesh, as come into this world: and then, in the third place, you have the work that He does in this world. The first part is a little abstract. “In the beginning was the Word.” What gives its value to all is, that He was God. It is the divine nature of the Lord, though still looking at Christ as the One who is revealed to us. This chapter begins before Genesis, for the third verse is the beginning of Genesis. When everything else began, He was there already: He never had a beginning: He made everything: all that had beginning of existence He was there to create. Nothing more distinctly marks the eternity of the Word than that He was there before everything. Then you get His personality, “The Word was with God”; and thirdly, not only was with God, but “was God”; and lest we should have any confusion about it (v. 2), He always was God. The eternity of His existence, the distinctness of His nature, and divinity of His Person -- all just in that one word. When we are brought into the same glory as He is, His Person is always maintained safely -- personally distinct. When Moses and Elias were in the same glory as Christ, the Father’s voice comes out, and says, “This is my beloved Son.” If you take Stephen, heaven is opened to him just the same -- he is a son of God too; but Christ was not looking up into heaven at some object that was to make Him like it. Stephen was looking up to become like something -- Christ was an object to heaven. Having stated His divine Person, we get Him in His connection with us (v. 4). “The life was the light of men.” He was not the light of angels, but specifically and definitely the light of men. The delight of Christ being with the sons of men, He becomes a man. It was the Son Himself
come down here -- the power of divine life walking through this world, and specially for man, as He became a man. This One in whom life was, was the light of men in a special way. Here He is speaking of what He is.

The thoughts and counsels of God were just this, to have us conformed to the image of His Son, before ever the world was. Of course it is not so yet, but "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We shall be perfectly like Him in glory.

And he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.

The thought of God is this blessed thought, that Christ having taken us up, He is never satisfied until He sees the fruit of the travail of His soul, in having us in the glory perfectly like and with Himself. We have got into the relationship, though we have not all the fruits of it -- we are sons, though we have not yet a bit of the inheritance.

The light was perfectly adapted to man, but as regards this unbelieving world,

The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. Now you cannot have light shining in darkness, for it is light and no darkness; but then it was God in the world, and they would not own Him. That is where I get what man is. They who found out this,

to them gave he authority to become the sons of God; no one could be that before. It is not that we have power, but the moment the Son comes into this world, this blessed relationship of son is brought out and revealed. He says this is what He has given us. We are brought into the same place as Christ. He has, in His own Person on the earth, shown the place of a Son -- a Man, too, who would not go out of the place of a servant -- there He showed the perfect pattern of our place upon earth, and He has given us the title to take this place as sons. The blessed Lord is in Himself the expression and pattern of this place. We are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus; we have the consciousness of it, and are really born too. "The darkness comprehended it not" -- but as many as received Him, to them He gave the title to take their place as sons. Just think what a place that is, when the world is passing away; that He who was from the beginning, comes in to show us light and life. Here is a Man who is in this place as Son (not like the law, which says you ought to do this and that), and who can bring us into the same place.

When the poor leper said, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean," He put forth His hand and touched him. He says: "I will not put you out of the camp; I will come to where all the defilement is." He touched him as man, His divine authority sends away the leprosy.

Then it goes on,
And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

In this latter clause we get not merely what He was in His nature, but the fact that the Word was made flesh. It is put in contrast with

The law was given by Moses;

grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,

not only were there. We get this wonderful truth, that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He was here as really a man as any of us, only sinless.

The law did not tell man what God was, or what man was; but it came and told man what he ought to be. That was all the law did. It was a perfect rule of life as it came. What was the God they were to love with all their heart? You might take Him as the Israelites did, the One who brought them out of the land of Egypt; but there was no other revelation of God except terror. If you are going to have righteousness, law detects your sin and says, you have done it -- opens your eyes. When I come to what I get here, it is altogether opposite. It is God come as a man into the world of sinners. He comes veiled in humiliation. He so comes into the world of sinners in grace, that instead of saying, “You must behave yourself rightly,” He comes Himself, not to judge, but to save. If I take the law, God never came out, and man could not get in. Now, what I get in the Person of Christ is that God did come out, and man is gone in. When I know Christ I know man has gone into the holiest of all in virtue of Christ’s work. Grace comes abounding over all the sin, and truth comes too; not telling us what we ought to be, but what we are; and man does not like that. When I come and tell a man that truth came by Jesus Christ, he does not like it, for truth says, man is lost already. There was a Man down here after God’s own heart -- perfect holiness and perfect love, and when He came, every one was the opposite. No men are like Him. You never saw selfishness or self-seeking in Christ. I see perfect grace come out to poor sinners because they could not go in; and, on the other hand, perfect truth told about them and about Him too. It was no sending out a message to them, but He came to them. Here He was, walking up and down in this ruined world, seeking the confidence of man.

I believe the first thing that ruined Eve was that she lost confidence in God and trusted the devil. Then she goes her own way, and the lusts come in -- self-will and sin. Christ comes into the world that we might be like Him, and more than that, God comes in and walks through this world in perfect holiness, that men might have confidence in Him.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself -- not judging it. For example: the woman that was a sinner, in Luke 7, and the woman of Samaria. If they were wretched and miserable, afraid to trust any
one, here is a heart that they could trust, when they could trust no other, and that was the heart of God. He says to poor wretched creatures, “You may trust Me.”

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him \{John 1:18\}. People say, “\textit{was in the bosom of the Father}”; but the fact is, He never left it in His divine nature. “\textit{Is in the bosom of the Father}”; -- that is, that He who is the center and sole object of the Father’s delight, comes, that we may understand what a Father’s delight in a Son is, I say, Where can I learn what God is -- what His thoughts and feelings are? \textit{There} in the One who is the perfect concentration of all God’s thoughts. The Son tells what the Father is to Him. It is the only way of knowing it. Therefore, He says, in John17,

That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me \{John 17\}.

Then,

I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

He brings us into it: not as the world gives, for it gives away only what it can spare. The way that Christ gives is bringing us into what He enjoys Himself.

Peace I leave with you. \textit{My} peace I give unto you.

That they might have \textit{my} joy fulfilled in themselves.

The glory which thou gavest \textit{me} I have given them.

I have given unto them the words that thou gavest \textit{me};

and then,

That the love wherewith thou hast loved \textit{me} may be in them.

He makes us sons, and is Himself the expression and model of what a son is. He declares what the Father is to Him, and brings us into the enjoyment of it. He has revealed God in grace to \textit{siners}, and the Father in love to \textit{sons}. He tells His Father’s name, as He is enjoying it then. He says He is not going to leave us to ourselves; He leads us now in our weakness by His Spirit. How can I know what God is? If you are a poor sinner, the way you can know what He is, is by looking at Christ, seeing how He received poor sinners. Then, on the other hand, having the title of sons, what is He to a son? I say, you look at Christ, the only begotten Son. He will make you know what a father is to a son who is thus loved.

The true character of repentance is not like Judas going and hanging himself. Love having come in, with the abhorrence of sin, there is perfect confidence in Christ, like the poor woman putting her tears upon Him. The conscience must be reached, to know God. If grace comes, truth comes as well, and the conscience is reached. Not one without the other; but there must
be confidence. People say, “If I perish I will perish at the foot of the cross!” Is that what you call confidence? There must be the light of God coming into the conscience, and then confidence is produced. There is never full confidence though, till we come to the “best robe,” and then there is no more about us.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world {John 1:29}.

There are the two parts of Christ’s work (the full result will never be, till the new heavens and new earth); “Behold the Lamb of God,” the Person and work. God provides Himself with a Lamb, God’s Lamb, for us no doubt. He who knows what righteousness is, and consequently what sin is, He provides a Lamb and a Victim for Himself. “The Lamb of God” -- He came to be made sin, the One without spot before God. It is not merely that my sins are put away, but I get One, who having been made sin, has perfectly glorified God about it all.

Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him . . . shall straightway glorify him.

He does not wait for the glory of the kingdom. Sin has been dealt with once and for ever. It is the end of the world as regards man’s history.

Now is the judgment of this world,

God’s work was done in it. The very wickedness that rejected Christ was the very thing that brought about man’s salvation: it was the means for saving even the people who did it! The only part we had in the work that saves us was our sins. Man’s history was over; then God’s Lamb comes in -- was made sin: and the whole righteousness of God, and His hatred of sin, comes out against One perfectly able to bear it, and all God’s love to the poor sinner. There I get the work of the blessed Lamb of God.

I had a world of innocence; I have a world of sin, but a sacrifice; then I get a world of righteousness, that never can change. My rest is upon the work on the cross. “Behold the Lamb of God” runs on to the new heavens and earth. It is perpetual, and never can change. The work of His Lamb is always there; in fact there is no time with Him. “He will convince the world of sin,” not wicked people in it. The Spirit of God comes down and says from God, “Where is my Son? “And the answer is, “He spat in his face and crucified him.” There I have the work of Christ. The second thing is that He baptizes with the Holy Ghost; and there I have the present consciousness and effect of what He has done, though as yet I have not all the fruits of it. It is a ministry of righteousness, because Christ is my righteousness in the presence of God: and a ministry of grace, because the Comforter is come down. He is the earnest of the inheritance, not the earnest of love, for the love of God is shed abroad in my heart.
Duties always flow from a relationship we are already in. Are you a child of God? Then conduct yourself as a child of God. We have the distinct source of this -- we have the Object -- we have the bread of God come down from heaven. The law never gave an object: the gospel does; it is Christ, and as I look at Him, I am changed into the same image.

And now is that where our hearts are? Has your eye been so occupied with that blessed One, that He is your Object? And then I add, is your conscience all clear? He appears in the presence of God for those who believe, but He has not got your sins up there. Have you the consciousness of that, setting to your seal that God is true? If it be so, are your hearts able to say with Paul -- not “I have attained,” but “This one thing I do?” Is that what fills your heart? We shall be sure to find out our weakness; but “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Is Christ the One that feeds your heart and that leads your heart?

God has come down that we might know the whole story for ourselves in Christ. Love coming to us, and righteousness going to God. What we have to seek in everything is to glorify God -- a thousand circumstances in life, but only one Object. The question is, whether we are living Christ in the ordinary circumstances of life -- in the calling in which we are (though if we cannot abide in the calling with God, we must leave it). Is it the one object of our lives to show forth Christ, to manifest Him in our mortal bodies, to realize more of Him by the power of the Spirit of God -- is that where we are? And with thankfulness of heart that He became that Lamb of God, and has given us the Spirit to dwell in us.

The Lord give us to know the grace that has sought us, the love that has bought us, and the glory that awaits us!


**“RAISED AND SEATED TOGETHER”**

**Ephesians 2**

(Notes of a Lecture)

There are two subjects in this chapter, one of which I have specially in view. The first is that God has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Still He has a habitation down here through the Spirit, which is the second thing. There is a house built in which God through the Holy Ghost dwells down here. It is the first part I have on my mind.

There are two great points in God’s ways and dealings with man; one is the responsibility of the first Adam, and the second is His purpose in the last
Adam. God purposes certain things about us. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, and, again, predestinated unto the adoption of children.

God had in view certain things, which He was going to accomplish in the second Adam. It was all before the foundation of the world, and the cross is the meeting-place of these two things. The cross proved that we were ruined and lost, and it also laid the foundation for putting us into the same glory as the Son of God. The epistle to the Romans takes up the first of these points, except two or three verses at the end of ch. 8, while that to the Ephesians is entirely taken up with the second. It looks at sinners first; but it looks at them in an entirely different way to Romans. It is a different thing to look at me as a sinner and responsible for my sins, with Christ Himself answering for them, to God putting me into the same glory as His Son. This last is treated of in Ephesians. We get also a different dealing with the condition of man. In Romans we are looked at as alive in sins, and there is a long account of the wickedness of Jews and Gentiles, and the whole world is proved to be guilty before God, and then it deals with our condition and state. The second part of Romans takes up the tree as being bad, not only the fruit it produces. The cross has met all that. Not only has He died for my sins, but I died with Christ, for faith. Death is the only end of the flesh or the evil nature. Romans takes up man as a sinner; first, as to his conduct, and secondly as to his state; for one, justification, and for the other, deliverance, and that is by death.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh {Rom. 8:3}.

It has been condemned in the cross of the Lord Jesus, and reckoning myself dead is a positive gain. Colossians treats of both. I reckon myself dead now, because Christ has died. It is the same figure as the Jordan, and the Red Sea, too, in a certain aspect.

When I come to Ephesians I am looked at as dead in sins {Eph. 2:1}, not alive in them. There is nothing to do with responsibility or justification -- it is a new creation {Eph. 2:10}. Before the death of Christ it was God not merely saying that man was a sinner, but there were dealings of God with man -- the flood, the law, the prophets, and lastly His Son; and the end of it was, not that God turned man out of Paradise, but that man turned the Son of God out of this world. Man is lost; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. That is what Christianity came in with. The world is thinking of meeting the day of judgment, but I do not think of that, for I am a poor lost sinner, and I get salvation. When people want to make something of man, it is important to get hold of this -- what the testimony of the word of God is. We often find foundations insecurely laid in a man’s soul, and that
comes from the want of a thorough conviction of sin. They have no sense of
the impossibility of God and sin coming together.

Well, God had gone all through this process, and at last said, “I have one
Son, I will send Him.” But when He came they said, “This is the heir: come,
let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.” It was in the end of the
world that He appeared -- in the consummation of the ages {Heb. 9:26}. We
are not come to the end of the world yet, but God has tested and tried man
thoroughly and completely, and as the Lord Jesus says,

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be
cast out {John 12:31}.

It is not yet executed, but God has tested man thoroughly. The thing in which
the enmity of man’s heart was manifested against God was the very thing in
which God wrought the redemption which saves a man. The cross was the
meeting-point of the sin of man with the perfect love of God.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that
whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
The world said, “We will not have God at any terms,” and they cast Him out
and slew Him. That is what we all are. Man has to find out what he has done
and what he is.

When that blessed and glorious work was done upon the cross, then God
could bring out all His purposes and thoughts, not merely the church, but if
you look at 2 Tim. 1:9, it is perfectly stated there.

Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to
our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given
us in Christ Jesus, before the world began {2 Tim. 1:9}.

God brought in the first Adam and tested him, and when all that was gone
through, and Christ was rejected and died, God was glorified in that, and the
foundation was laid for bringing man into glory; and then it comes out that
the purpose was before the foundation of the world -- so also in Titus. The
soul goes through it individually, but we have the whole historical truth of it
at the death of Christ. What I learn now is, that it is not whether I can meet
the day of judgment, but that I am lost already. I prefer any vanity of dress
or money to Christ. The world we live in has rejected God come in grace.

Then I come to the second point, what the purpose of God about us is --
that we should be in the same glory as His Son. I was “alive” in sins if I look
at my side of it, but “dead” in my sins if I look towards God. In this epistle,
where it is “dead in sins” (I speak now of the operation that brings us into a
new condition), Christ is looked at as dead.

What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,
according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in
Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places {Eph. 1:19-20}.

Here Christ is looked at as a man, in order to bring us with Him according to the mighty power which God wrought in Christ.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins”; the blessed truth of that is, that where we were lying in sin and disobedience, Christ came in love and obedience, so He gives Himself up to death where I was lying, having put away my sins. Well, then, God takes this One who had gone down into this place for us, and raises Him from the dead and sets Him in the glory of God. We do not see ourselves yet gathered to Him in the glory,

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor.

And now that very same power has wrought in bringing us into His place, by faith. Christ was actually dead, and I was dead in my sins, and God comes and raises us both up together. How came He to be down there in death? Ah! He came there about my sins. In virtue of what Christ has done, God takes a man that was dead in his sins, and puts him in Christ -- in the very same place where Christ is, and by the same power that raised up Christ from the dead.

We “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” -- that is the condition we were all in, Jews and Gentiles. We naturally belonged to it Then he goes on, “But God, who is rich in mercy,” &c. I see this poor, wretched child of wrath, and I find God above all this, and rich in mercy. I am taken from myself and cast upon God’s doings, and that is where we get real peace. The prodigal son thought he would say to his father, “Make me as one of thy hired servants”; but he had not met his father then, for if he had, he would have known how his father would have treated him. It was all showing what the father was for the son: he must have the best robe, and the shoes, and the ring. The whole condition of the son was the effect of what the father was for him.

When I was by nature a child of wrath, He “hath quickened us together with Christ.” Christ having done what made it righteous for God to do it, God comes and takes us up there,

And hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:6}.

He put Christ as a man at the right hand of God, and by the same power He puts me into Christ. My place now is the effect of the sovereign goodness and mercy of God, who took me when I was dead in trespasses and sins, and put me right into Christ where He is -- wonderful place surely! Then the angels say, “Well, that is grace.” “That in the ages to come he might show the
exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." Whether it is the thief upon the cross, Mary Magdalene, or one of us, we are put in the same place as He is. We are not in the heavenly places with Christ yet, but we are in Christ. The power that raised Christ, from death, into the glory of God, has put me in Christ in the same place.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast {Eph. 2:8}.

You get the works afterwards.

We are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works {Eph. 2:10}.

Created in Christ Jesus, not in Adam now, I am created over again. The same power that wrought to put Christ into glory, has now wrought to put me into Christ. The Holy Ghost dwelling in me, gives me the knowledge that I am in Christ. God dwelling with us never was true of man, except in virtue of redemption -- it never was true of Adam or Abraham, but the instant that Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, then He dwelt among them -- there by the cloud over the tabernacle. Now in virtue of redemption God can come and dwell. The Christian is sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and individually he is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Being livingly united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, gives me the knowledge that I am in heavenly places in Christ, and therefore our citizenship is in heaven. Christ as Son of man has perfectly glorified God; and what is the just reward of glorifying God? That He is set at the right hand of God. We “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God”; what could make poor worms such as we are, think of that? It is because of what Christ has done. Just as we were like the first Adam, so shall we be like Christ in glory. He became a man on purpose to bring us, through His death, into the same glory with Himself.

Do you believe that, beloved friends, as regards yourselves? Do you believe that God is going to show to angels, in the ages to come, the riches of His grace in the place He has given you? It is important for us to see that, as regards title to the place and having the Holy Ghost who gives us the knowledge of being in Christ, it is a present thing. The glory is not a present thing, but we are to know that we are in Christ, and that as He is, so are we in this world, That is our place with God, so that we have boldness for the day of judgment, delight in the day of Christ. I could not dream of works of mine to get there -- of my works giving me a place in the glory of God! Man is in the glory of God in virtue of what He has done who has entered as my forerunner. We are called there in justice to the worth of Christ’s work.

Now see where the works are; they come in as the fruits of this. God has works which fit this place.
Good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them {Eph. 2:10}.

The works are ordained as much as the place. What does the apostle say when he exhorts them? “Be ye therefore followers of God as clear children.” You are made partakers of the divine nature, and now go and walk in the way suited to that. Do not let me see anything but Christ in you. Christ appears in the presence of God for us, so that there is perfect acceptance for us according to the value of His work, and now you appear before the world for Christ. I am the epistle of Christ known and read of all men -- entire association with Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not that we have to get a place, but, as put into that place, my business is to show forth Christ in everything.

Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God {1 Cor. 10:31}.

If we have no oil in our vessels it will not do to meet Him. There is nothing more important than the thought of the expectation of the Lord’s coming; it is the character of the Christian. Are you really waiting for Christ, as men that wait for their lord? It is the condition I am to be found in. How far can we really say, I know my place in Christ, who is a Man in the glory of God, and therefore I am waiting for Him to come and take me actually there?

Supposing I am in heavenly places in Christ, then our conversation is in heaven, earthly objects are gone. It is where we are set as God’s workmanship. He has set us there in His sovereign grace, and what I most earnestly desire is, that our hearts should have the consciousness of it, and, in having this purpose of God set before us, that we should be living in a Christian state or place. The place that God has given us is a place in Christ Himself. And now the life of Jesus is to be manifested in our bodies.

It is important that we should get hold of what is Christianity, in these perilous times. “As the truth is in Jesus,” is, that I have done with Adam, and am in Christ. I have put off the old man and put on the new. Man tries to improve the old, it cannot be done. You cannot set about and make the old man do for God, because God has supplanted him. He has judged the old man at the cross, and He has brought in Christ.

RISEN WITH CHRIST

Colossians 2

(Notes of a Lecture)

The whole of the exhortations here are founded upon this, that the believer is put into an entirely new place. Indeed everywhere, though there are different aspects of it (in Ephesians -- seated in heavenly places; in Romans -- walking down here; in this epistle -- not going further than resurrection) we are in an entirely new place. Christ in every case is our life. Romans always looks at the Christian as down here. In Colossians we are called upon to walk as being in Christ. In Ephesians, we are called upon to be “imitators of God as dear children”; that is, as coming out from heaven in our walk here. In Corinthians, it is, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation,” that is, a totally new thing. At any rate it is always a new thing, founded on the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If I look at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, I say, it is not only that, but I am risen with Him; that is what we find in Colossians, but the cross, as the foundation, has closed all that man was in the flesh. God has not executed judgment yet, but He has convinced the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment -- it is treated by God as a lost world. The death of Christ was that point where God Himself had come into the world in goodness:

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and He was rejected. It was not simply that God had to turn man out of Paradise down here, because he was a sinner; but when God came in grace into this world, man turned Him out. In Hebrews it is, “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared,” and it was the end of the world morally speaking. But God is now dealing in grace with this poor world, the fulness of grace meeting the perfect sinfulness of man. Just where man’s sin was complete, the work of grace was complete. Where the highest sin was, the highest love was. It was the full blessedness of that work which brought salvation. It was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ which gave a character to the cross, for there everything came out completely: what man was, what the devil was, and what God was. You have the complete sinfulness of man in rejecting God come in goodness; then you get Satan thoroughly against Christ, and on the other hand Christ giving Himself up in love. When we come to dwell upon the cross, we find everything there; the perfect sin of man, and the perfect obedience of man in Christ, and the perfect love of God, and His righteousness even against, sin, when Christ was made sin. The glory of God was effected there, and everything depends on that; while it throws one world out, it begins a new creation, a new state, which Adam innocent was no more in than Adam guilty. Man altogether was brought
out and judged (not that judgment is executed against sinners), but then on the other hand, that work is accomplished by which man gets a place in the glory of God -- that is the basis of all. Satan is never called the prince of this world till the cross, for until then it was not shown that he had that power in turning the whole world against Christ; the carnal mind is enmity against God.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee {John 17}.

He appeals to the righteousness of the Father in speaking of the world.

We have to learn what it is to be associated with a rejected Christ in glory, when they have not got Him on earth. Of course I do not see the things in glory, and we must walk by faith, with our eyes fixed on Christ, going through this world by the power which we see outside, with the consciousness of the relationship that is made for us by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not now a question of whether I can meet God in the judgment. I know I cannot, I give up all thoughts of it; and I then come as a poor sinner to the cross of Christ, to find that I met God in Christ. Instead of going on, as a responsible sinner, to see how it will end, I see that it is all ended, but that God has stepped in, in grace, and saved me by sending His Son. He sent Him because I was a sinner, and now He is become my life; and my part with God is in virtue of what He has done. People will be judged according to their works; Christ had the fruit of what I did, and I have the fruit of what He has done. Then we get another truth, that receiving Christ as our life,

ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God {Col. 3:3},

that is, we are completely associated with Christ where He is. He is our life, and it is hid with Christ in God because He is our life, and God thus identifies us with Christ. We all know His connection with this earth was closed when He died and went to heaven; they will see Him no more, except when He comes in judgment. Now the risen One has become my life, and I say Oh then, I am risen, for He has become my life. He has associated believers completely with Himself, not only put away their sins as guilty persons. The Christian starts with “My Father and your Father, my God and your God,” only in a poor earthen vessel of course. Being a son, I have now Christ, the second {last} Adam, to be my life, instead of the first Adam.

Now you will find how completely the apostle unfolds this practically. It is not our estimate of the blood of Christ that gives settled peace; the thing is that God estimates it rightly. The question is whether the offended person has accepted it. Oh yes! that is settled, for Christ is at the right hand of God. He gave it in love, and God has accepted it in righteousness. I am crucified with Christ. Then you are dead? Yes, thank God, I am. If you are dead, what is your life? Oh, I have a totally new life, and that is Christ; I am born again.

The apostle takes up this point,

In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.
People make religion out of these ordinances; it is not owning that we have died with Christ. We belong to heaven, though we have not got there yet. Now I say, I look at the second Adam, my life is hid because He is hid, and when He appears I shall appear -- you cannot separate the two things. Having Christ as my life, I have power against evil. He does not talk of dying to sin, but that we are dead to sin. Christ having died, I have the title and duty to reckon myself dead; when I have Him, I have power. I had no power,

In due time, when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly, but now I have Christ as power. I could not succeed in being anything I ought to be, but He has come and redeemed me out of that state. I find out my weakness, but I find I have Christ as strength. In the new life in Christ, there is power,

My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; it required righteousness from me, but never produced anything in me. It was a perfect rule for man as a child of Adam, but as he was a fallen child of Adam, it condemned him because he was a sinner. Did the law give life? Oh no! for then we should have had righteousness by it. Did it give me strength, righteousness, or love? It tells me to love God with all my heart. Why? Because you will be cursed if you do not. Christ comes and does the very opposite: instead of imputing the sins, He takes them, and becomes my life, my strength, and a blessed object for my soul to live by, “that I may win Christ.” The law could do none of this. By faith (Christ being my life) I can say to my flesh, You have not one word to say to me, you were condemned on the cross. Where is the condemnation? In His death. Oh, then it is gone. The flesh will be there trying to act, and the apostle goes through these gross sins in Col. 3:5; but you have not to die, you are dead, “mortify therefore,” and now that you have power and life, do not let the flesh act. I live in Christ, and therefore I must not walk in these things which are contrary to Him.

Now in Col. 3:8 and 9, you find another thing, where there is no lust. There are three characters of sin here. One is lusts (v. 5), another is violence (v. 8), and the other falsehood or lying (v. 9). Corruption we have looked at: it is “mortify therefore”; but now it is not a lust, but “anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy.” My flesh is unsubdued and unbroken, “but now ye also put off all these”; not only lusts, but an unsubdued will, which will not do for a Christian. And the third thing is,

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds {Col. 3:9};
I have done with Adam. The exhortation is founded upon this: seeing I have put off Adam, I have the title and right to say,

If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin {Rom. 8:10},
what the scripture calls flesh. By faith I hold it as a thing that is not to stir.

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:10) -- the power of death, the sentence of death in myself, that I should not trust in myself, but in God which raiseth the dead. I am carrying about the dying of the Lord Jesus, and I am not going to let the flesh stir.

Mark the blessed consequence of this; now I have a new man, I have put off the old man. If I am a Christian, God looks at me (and faith takes this as a truth), not as a child of Adam at all in this world. What are you then? A child of God. The law was a perfect measure for the first man; and now, what measure do we get for “the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him”? {Col. 3:10}.

I know God. As in Ephesians, “which of God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” It is a new nature which is like God, in fact it is Christ as my life. It is the same kind of life as He had (we speak now of that which is communicated). What is the measure of this “knowledge”? Why, what is in God -- true spiritual knowledge -- I am called to walk according to that; we are to be followers of God as dear children. I get the knowledge of what God’s nature and character are in Christ, in a Man; well, then that is the way I am to walk. Did not He love His enemies? You go and love your enemies. Was not He holy? You go and think holiness. Was not He kind to the unthankful and evil? You go and do likewise. There is of course growth in likeness to Christ. The Spirit of God takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to me; very well, that is the way you must walk. It is not merely that I avoid gross sins, but I have to put on the new man. This apprehension of how God has revealed Himself in Christ is a perfectly new thing. I have the mind and spirit of Christ, the new man, and Christ as my life, and the perfect pattern of it, according to which I am to walk. What I get in Christ is alone and unique, perfect goodness in the midst of evil -- go and walk like Him.

In Col. 3:11, “Christ is all and in all.” “Christ is all,” the whole and sole object, and He is “in all” as the power of life and strength. “Christ liveth in me,” that is “in all,” and “the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,” that is “Christ is all.” He is all to me, and if He is all, there is nothing else. We have various duties, but the question is, is our motive in them all, serving Christ? If you get distracted from that, you get away from Him. I get sonship in John. In Ephesians it is, “Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children”; it is as dear children we are to follow. God puts us into this relationship, and then tells us to behave according to it. A child could not make himself my child, even if he were to behave like an angel.

Col. 3:12:

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.
I am bound, in walking as a Christian, to carry along with me the consciousness of this; I am sanctified as “the elect of God, holy and beloved,” God delights in me, I am His beloved one, He has sanctified me. In what measure and degree? What do I mean by holiness and righteousness? I mean what Christ was to God. What is righteousness? Why, what Christ was; well, then, what is redemption? Why, you get that fully at the end in glory. God puts us into this place first, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God”; now you go and behave like that. What a blessed thing it is to see where He does put us, the present consciousness of relationship. “He died, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves”; Christ gave Himself up for a parcel of sinners. It is the standard that is given to us, not to “live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”: but He does not call on us to walk according to this, until He has put us in the conscious relationship. Verse 12 is just what was in Christ. Do you get wronged and injured? You go and take it patiently. He forgave the people: you go and forgive them. You are the epistle of Christ. The world is reading Christ in us, just as they read the ten commandments off the tables of stone; and scripture does not say, you ought to be the epistle of Christ, but, you are. Duties flow from that place. It is not merely a “kindness” among men, but it is “charity,” which is God’s love. Charity tests everything, whether it is up to the mark or not. We are so apt to degenerate, poor creatures that we are, that God Himself has to be brought in (v.13), to keep up the measure of the love in its true, real character: divine love, which must be holiness.

Col. 3:15:

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

What sort of peace do you think Christ had? Besides peace of conscience, there was the peace of an undistracted heart. Your heart is often distracted, and of course you have not Christ’s peace. If He has brought us into the relationship of sons, we must walk in the peace in which Christ walked. What I feel so important for us is this, that it is not only forgiveness, but the mind and purpose of God is, to bring us really, livingly, and consciously into the place where Christ is. By the Holy Ghost I know I am in Christ; then I know that Christ is in me. I am perfectly accepted as Christ is; then my part comes, which is, Christ to be shown out, “That the life of Jesus should be manifested in our mortal flesh.” He has left His own peace with us; and now, beloved friends, are we walking in the peace that Christ had in this world? It is perfectly true that we are to judge ourselves; we find we can do nothing without Him, and if we have been careless, we shall discover that we have not power and strength; but still what He has done, is, to set us consciously in His own place.

Col. 3:16:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

Here I have the positive enjoyment of all the divine things which are revealed. Do not think that we cannot know and enjoy all the things that belong to us as God’s heirs. Live like Christ, and you will certainly find something of the
Master’s reproach. If the spirit of the world is active in me, of course I do not see clearly; but the Spirit of God is given to us, that we may know these things. I have the word of Christ dwelling in my heart, and the Holy Ghost takes the things of Christ and shows them to me. When I know that every saint will be perfectly like Christ in glory, I say, What a blessed thing that will be. Whilst we have universal joy, there is a special link a person has with Christ’s joy, which no one knows but himself.

Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (v. 16). Spiritual songs to enjoy the Lord in. I have the word which brings all these precious things —the love of the Father—into my soul, and my song goes up in praise to the Lord.

Col. 3:17 is a very simple direction, but how it sweeps things away:

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. If you are going to buy a house -- are you doing that in the name of the Lord Jesus? It is the motive that governs us. My life is not made up of heroisms, but of a hundred different little things; do them all in the name of Christ: it is everyday life. Supposing I am living three-quarters of my day without Christ, I then have to make an effort to get back. At the bottom of my heart, Christ, and at the top, blameless conduct, perhaps no one can reproach me, but a man in between the two. When I look back over to-day, has it been for Christ? Never do anything except for Christ; you will find it will keep the heart fresh.

Now let me ask you, Are you willing every day to take the place of being an epistle of Christ in this world? If you are, then of course you ought to do everything in His name. There is no growth in acceptance, for it is “in the Beloved,” but there is growth in the Christian as to his path. I know Christ better, and I imitate Him better. If I am in earnest, I am very glad to be kept close to Him. When Christ is in the heart, the whole thing is easy, but it is not easy when the world is in the heart. If you get a pretty bit of dress, that is more than Christ. It is the question of what is near the eye of the mind. If I am walking with the peace of Christ in my heart, I get the word of Christ to dwell in me richly in all wisdom. Who gets the knowledge of the highest privileges of the Christian in John 20?

Was it the apostles? No, it was Mary Magdalene, for her heart was clinging to Christ: the disciples could do without Him; she could not, and He reveals Himself to her, and tells her to go to the disciples and say,

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.

In the measure in which we keep close to Christ, the word of Christ dwells in us richly. The affections of the heart are up there, and the Holy Ghost takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, and my responsibility is in everything to show forth Christ.
The Lord give us to see, very distinctly and clearly, that we are put into an entirely new place. If the Spirit of God is dwelling in me, my place is not as a child of Adam at all: I am in Christ, and Christ is in me, and my responsibility is to walk not as man ought to walk, but as a child of God ought to walk. When we see the perfectness of grace in Christ, we shall soon see how far short we are. Are your hearts set upon Christ, so that your one, earnest desire is to glorify Him? If the life of Christ is manifested in everything I do, the world will soon find it out. God has left us the consciousness to walk in His favor as Christ Himself. Then the motive of anxious love to Him is to seek to glorify Him in everything we do: dead with Christ, risen with Christ, entirely associated with Himself, and a witness for Him here.

_Helps in Things Concerning Himself_, 1894, vol. 4, pp. 3-16.
“LOVE IS OF GOD, AND “GOD IS LOVE”
(1 John 4:7-21)
Notes of an Address

The great subject of this epistle is not the grace manifested towards us as sinners, dealing with us as such, and justifying us; but another side of Christianity, and that is, the life of Christ,

That eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us {1 John 1:2},

that is, in us; and then “which thing is true in him and in you”; we live by this life of Christ. Then the apostle unfolds this life of Christ in two great principles -- righteousness, practical righteousness, doing God’s will and commandments -- and the other, loving the brethren: just what His own life was; so when we have this life, it bears the same fruit—perfect in Him of course -- still, characteristically, it is that same life of obedience and love to the brethren.

The difference between Paul and John is, that Paul speaks of man being presented to God, justified and accepted in Christ; but John has a great deal more of revealing God to man. In v. 9, he does speak of the work done for us -- not in us -- for he goes to the way in which it has been manifested and done. In the Gospel of John you get, first, eternal life in the Person of the blessed Son of God down here -- God Himself manifested; and then, in the epistle, he goes on to the expression and reproduction of this life in us. Paul is much more upon justification and acceptance -- the two things we want -- eternal life and acceptance with God.

This fourth chapter takes up what God is towards us in love. In speaking of the life, it goes through the whole condition of man, from the time of his utter sinfulness since he was born, to the day of judgment; and then life, and how we are brought into the blessed knowledge of what it is. The fact of having life, does not in itself enable me to say, I am perfectly accepted in the Beloved: even supposing it is really there, it does not do for righteousness before God. The effect of being quickened and having life, is to make us understand that we want righteousness. We look on ourselves, and see that this will not do for God; and if it will not do, how are you going to be accepted of Him?

The first thing is,

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God (1 John 4:7),
one of the traits of this new life, the nature only. An angel cannot understand what is passing in my mind; we must have a divine nature to know God, and if I have, I know God. An animal has the same nature as that of which it is born. There is the spirit of love in us -- we are born of God, and know God, and therefore we know what love is. If I am only partaker of this divine nature, I see faults in myself, and know nothing of righteousness. When a person is quickened, he sees the difference between things, and consequently is uneasy and restless, and finds a root of evil in himself -- flesh working in him -- even when he has known forgiveness; for he has to learn what he is, as well as what he has done. Well, then, the apostle turns to what is not his common subject. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us” (v. 9). Not a bit of what is in us, but he turns round to show what God has manifested Himself to be towards us: so he begins at man’s utterly lost condition, and goes on to the day of judgment.

God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. All my Adam-life gone and judged, and another life come in, that I might live by it. God sends Him into the world that we might live through Him, and I am looked at consequently, as dead in sins. If a man is dead, there is not a movement in him towards another; and what is more, if you try to awaken it, you cannot: there is nothing spontaneous, and nothing to be awakened -- and that is a sinner’s natural state. Nothing in them towards God; in fact, God has tried everything -- promise, law, the prophets, His Son, and the Holy Ghost -- and it is all no use. And now He sends His only begotten Son, and I get another kind of life, “that we might live through him,” because we were dead.

1 John 4:10 is entirely another thing,

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Now I have my guilt met, for we were guilty in our sins; He sends His Son to make propitiation for them. I was dead, and guilty, lying in my sins, and God has thought upon me, and has been willing to spend the best and most blessed thing in heaven His own Son, that I might get life in this new way -- life, when I was dead, and propitiation for my sins, that they may be all cleared away. I find Him beginning where I was, expecting nothing from me. The only time you find the Lord pronouncing a curse upon anything, was when He came to look for fruit upon the fig-tree, and there was nothing but leaves, and He said it should never bear fruit -- man is judged in his condition. Man, the thing cultivated of God, brought forth wild fruit. “Let it alone this year also.” God, in Christ’s ministry, so to speak, digging about it, and dunging it, but at the close of His ministry, it withered away. That
was man’s condition; and, having judged the Adam-life, He sends Christ, that I might live through Him.

As regards my state, He has met my whole case in Christ; God has manifested His love. But my soul wants to know this love. Well, if I look at myself, I cannot. I may say, I do think there is something in me, for I love His saints and His word; but it is sinful nature that makes me discomfited and in uncertainty, and there can be no settled peace. But here is God’s love manifested towards me as guilty and dead; and the blessed Son of God came, that we might live through Him: there is nothing but evil in your heart, so He comes and brings life. Yes, I say, but I am defiled and guilty all this time. Oh, He says, I am come to be the propitiation for these sins. The blessed manifestation of God’s love is, that I find what is in God’s heart about me; that He has done what was needed for my state, and revealed it too. It is what is in God’s heart that is my comfort, not hunting anything out in my own. I know that God has acted on His own love, and revealed this love to me, where I was in all my sins. There I get this manifestation of God’s love; He knew everything that was in me, and He sent His Son to put it away -- He has acted from His own heart, unasked and unsought, and sent His Son. I insist on this word “manifested,” because I have it demonstrated. How do I know what is in God’s heart? Because He has given His Son -- the very best thing He could give. There we have the first thing in which His love is shown out, both for life and propitiation: another life, which produces what is good in me, and not what is bad; thus it comes out in love to the brethren.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

1 John 4:12:

No man hath seen God at any time.

How can I know a person I have never seen? What makes this passage more striking is John 1:18. What is the answer to it there? That the only begotten Son has declared Him. If a person wanted to know God really (divine teaching for it of course), there was Christ to reveal Him, manifesting Him in love.

He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.

The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In His place of Son, He would necessarily know God as Father, infinitely and perfectly. He who knows God in the closest affection, He has revealed Him, and He must of course tell you what He was as He knows Him. There you get the way He was presented to the world.

Now mark the difference here.

God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us
-- not the love to the sinner, but the love enjoyed in the saint: it is another step on. When I see the manifestation in the midst of the world, if anybody had eyes to see, there was the Father to be seen -- but here it is "God dwelleth in us," that is the way "we know," and "His love is perfected in us." Well, if I have God dwelling in me, I can see His love; the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts -- what more can I ask? It is a wonderful truth, God dwelling in us.

1 John 4:13:
Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

The Holy Ghost dwells in us, as Paul says to the Corinthians, even when they were going on badly. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," how can you go and use it for sin?

1 John 4:15:
Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Of course He is not speaking of hypocrites; but if there is the real confession of Christ as the Son of God, God dwells in me, and I in Him, by His Spirit. There I get the love, not manifested to the sinner, but the direct, positive enjoyment of it by the saint. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer, which distinguishes and characterises him. The working of this verse is most blessed. Supposing I find a timid soul, why, I say, God is dwelling in you -- do you confess that Jesus is the Son of God? Of course I do, he says, it is my hope and joy. Then you have God dwelling in you. But see how it acts on the conscience, supposing it is a person who has known these things only in the conscience -- I say, You have God dwelling in you, but how far have you thought of Him today? Perhaps not once. Well, is that the way you are treating God? You know the truth that God dwells in you, and yet you are not even taking the trouble to think of Him once the whole day! It rejoices the feeble soul, but on the other hand, it tests the conscience; for how have you been treating this wonderful Guest -- how much have your hearts been upon Him -- watching not to do anything to displease Him -- but to glorify Him? How far short it puts the low idea of Christian life you are dragging through -- not to scandalize the world!

That is the second way I get the love known — it is shed abroad in my heart as a saint. God has taken me up, and cleansed and adopted me, and now He comes to dwell in me: and that is the condition of every Christian, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God." We cannot think too much of what characterises the Christian, that the Holy Ghost dwells in him.

1 John 4:16:
And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us:
and no wonder, if He is dwelling in us. If a person asks me, How do you know that God loves you? The proof is, that He has given His Son for me when I was a sinner. But if he asks me, How do you enjoy it? Oh, by the Holy Ghost which He has given me. It is a practical point with the Christian, because I have never to grieve this Spirit. He is not uncertain about the love -- he knows very well he does not live up to it, though that is no excuse; still we do fail, and often; he knows he is not all he would wish to be -- but he knows God is all He could wish Him to be for him. There I get this blessed effect;

We have known and believed the love that God hath to us -- we know and understand it, divinely, through the Holy Ghost, and there is not a doubt or a cloud. If we wish to know the measure of it (for it is His love, not mine to Him), the soul walks in the consciousness of this blessed, divine favor, and the measure is, that the Father has loved us as He loved Christ.

1 John 4:17 is a further step, which is often a hindrance to people. It goes on to the day of judgment -- to the end.

Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

There I get the Christian condition. It is a great thing to connect experience with the absoluteness of grace. A person living on experiences is always doubting; the mistake is not in having the experience, but in looking at it. You must have the experience, for something must pass in our hearts about divine things; the harm is in looking at it. The effect of the Holy Ghost working in me is to make me look at Christ: He makes me in this experience to look at Christ as my only resource. He does not set me looking into my own heart, but He shows me that Christ is the answer to all the wants my experience gives me. Faith never leads me to look at my state, but it leads me, through the operation of the Holy Ghost, to look at Christ. Wherever there is divine faith in what I believe, there is no doubt at all. For instance, if I ask a person, Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Of course I do, he says, but that is what is making me so miserable, for I never care about Him as I ought -- there is the experience you see. I may reason about it, but where there is faith in exercise, I set to my seal that God is true; and if I set to my seal that God is true, I am absolutely certain. The moment I think that God has said, “This is my beloved Son,” and through grace I believe it, I am divinely certain. A doubt may come into my mind about something else -- how can God have me when I have gone on in such a way -- but I am not doubting that He is the Son of God. The word of God is brought into my soul as true, and I set to my seal that God is true, “God that cannot lie.” The prodigal was perfectly certain that there was goodness in his father’s house, but he doubted whether he could have it. There was no doubt about the house, or about the goodness in the house, but when he thinks of the consequences of his sin, he begins to doubt. When he comes to his father, he does not say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” because he is perfectly certain of his father’s heart, for he is on his neck. If I say, Look what I am, I do not see how
God can receive me -- there comes in the doubt, but, I am certain about this other truth, that “Jesus is the Son of God.”

Many a soul whose trust is in the blood of Christ, if he thinks of the judgment-seat, is not quite sure where he is. You say, the cross just suits you, but can you say you are a poor sinner, and the judgment-seat just suits you? It is another thing, and brings up this -- that when God is exercising judgment, it is a question whether I can stand in that day. If I have my sins upon me, of course I cannot, and there is uncertainty and cloud.

Well, God has thought of it for us: it is not hope in the day of judgment, but “boldness.” It is always wrong to hope about the day of judgment, for this reason, that if God entered into judgment with us, it is certain condemnation.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

It is true that when God works in a soul, you never get a case where there is not some hope: if He brings the light of His truth into the soul, He is light and love, so there is some revelation of love. When the prodigal was perishing, it was the recollection of the love of his father’s house -- though he did not know whether he could have part in it -- that carried him to his father: -- love that was sufficient to draw him to the very place he feared he had no right to. When God deals with the sinner, and makes him feel his sin, it is always the attraction of His love. With Peter in the boat, in Luke 5, he says, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” What did he go to Him for then, if he tells Him to go away? Because his heart was drawn. We all go through that state, for there is the attraction of the love of God, and the effect of the light.

But when I look on to the day of judgment, I cannot rest on that, for it is judgment -- it is righteous dealing with sin, and not love. If I have not righteousness, I cannot stand. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” There always will be some hope in the soul really taught of God; but I am perfectly certain that if God deals with me in my sins, it is all over with me. I know I am a child of wrath, and I am not looking to myself to answer for my sins. You could not judge Adam when innocent; but since Adam departed from God and listened to Satan, he has turned God into a Judge who condemns him. There would be no judgment at all, if we had not departed from God. They thought Satan more kind and good than God, and turned God into a Judge by sinning, and therefore it must be condemnation. If I think in that way of judgment, I become of course, unhappy. But supposing I am “the righteousness of God” in Christ; how can I be afraid of judgment, if righteousness is the thing he is judging by? “There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear.” I can say now, that when I look up to the day of judgment, there is no time that I am so clear; the ground is the cross.

But in what state shall I come before the judgment seat of Christ? Christ will come and fetch me, to have me with Him. The next thing, He will change my vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body. When He shall appear, He
will judge the quick and dead, but I shall be like Him. The moment I have the full effect of Christ’s work, I shall be perfectly like the Judge. What God has done is, first, to show us that the One who is the Savior is the One who is to be the Judge; and besides that, I find I am in Christ -- the righteousness He judges by, I am in Him. That is where we are for judgment. God has thought of me as a sinner, He has given His Son -- given me life in Christ -- put away my sins, and put me in Christ, and given me the Holy Ghost; and now in the day of judgment, I am as Christ is; I am like the Judge, even in my body. True, we shall all have to give account of ourselves, but we are in glory when we do.

Take another aspect of it. Paul has been eighteen hundred years in heaven with Christ -- are you going to take him out of heaven to judge whether he ought to be there? Before God, “as he is, so are we in this world”: well, then of course I have boldness. Is there any good in myself? No, I have no good in me -- I was totally lost, I had no hope, but God has redeemed me out of that place; Christ is my life and righteousness, and the Holy Ghost in me makes me know it, so that I enjoy it; well, as Christ is so am I. So the apostle at once gives the consequence, “There is no fear in love” (v.18). The whole world is convicted of sin, because they have rejected Christ; then I cannot look for righteousness anywhere in the world; but God has set Christ at His own right hand, and that is where I look for it now. This love of God has settled the whole thing, from the time we were dead in sins to the day of judgment.

And now mark how blessedly the effect comes in in 1 John 4:19.

We love him, because he first loved us.

It does not say, we ought to love God -- of course we ought—for the Spirit of God is giving us this sense of love -- God’s love for sinners, and enjoyment of it as saints. What a blessed thing it is that God has loved us in this way! Well, then, I love God. Supposing a child were to say to me, I love my mother quite enough! I should say, You are a wicked child, you do not love her a bit. But supposing that child came to me and said, Oh, if you only knew my mother, all her patient kindness and unwearied ways, and I am so naughty and often grieve her -- well, then, I say that child loves his mother. The sense by the Holy Ghost of all this perfect love from the time we were utter sinners to the day of judgment, tells me that I am to be loving Him. This saying that God dwells in us, gives me a measure and motive for walking, which nothing else ever could give me; as to whether I am behaving myself as if God were dwelling in me; and then I find myself thus surrounded infinitely in everything, by all that God is. I am nothing compared with the space, but I know I never can get out of it, dwelling in God who is love -- He may have to chasten me; but I do not go and chasten all the little children in the street, but my child. I am in that favor which is better than life.

Do you just ask yourself, and see whether you can, in thus putting yourself before the judgment seat of Christ, be perfectly at ease? Are your hearts simply rejoicing and bright in the consciousness of the day of judgment? If there is any
fear, we do not know the love of God fully. I am not afraid of God loving me too much. “If God be for us, who can be against us,” and He is for us in every detail of our life, too.

The Lord give us in exercised and humbled hearts (there cannot be too much exercise) to have the sense and consciousness of divine love; the proof of it being in Christ, and the enjoyment by the Holy Ghost; and then to look up and see that He is coming to take us to be with Him. The Lord give us, as emptied of self, judged self, to find what it is to have Christ in us, and we in Christ: -- to do nothing to grieve the Spirit. If we thought of God dwelling in us, how careful and watchful we should be to do nothing to displease Him.

COUNSELS TO YOUNG CONVERTS

Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Depend on Him. Some are allowed a long season of joy on first believing. But God knows our hearts, and how soon we begin to depend on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object -- not the joy. Sin no longer remains on you, but the flesh is in you to the end: the old stock will put forth its buds, which must be nipped off as they appear. No fruit can come of it. It is the new nature that bears fruit unto God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but think of Christ. As you grow in the knowledge of Christ, a joy comes, deeper than the first joy. I have known Christ more or less between thirty and forty years, and I can truly say I have ten thousand times more joy in Him now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water in the plain deeper, calmer, more fit for general use. Cleave to Christ with purpose of heart. A distracted heart is the bane of Christians. When we have got something that is not Christ we are away from the source of strength. When my soul is filled with Christ, I have no heart or eye for the trash of this world. If Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith, it will not be a question with you,

What harm is there in this and that?

but rather,

Am I doing this for Christ?

Can Christ go along with me in this?

Do not let the world come in and distract your thoughts. I speak especially to you young ones. They who are older have had more experience in it, and know more what it is worth: but it all lies shining before you, endeavouring to attract you. Its smiles are deceitful, still it smiles. It makes promises which it cannot keep; still it makes them, Your hearts are too big for the world: it cannot fill them. They are too little for Christ: He fills heaven, He will fill you to overflowing. You will have indeed to learn what is in your own heart. Abide with God and you will learn it with Him. and with His grace. If you do not, you will have with bitter sorrow to learn it with the devil, through his successful temptation. But God is faithful. If you have been getting away from Him, and other things have come in, and formed a crust, as it were, over your hearts, you will not at once get back the joy. God will have you deal with this crust, and get rid of it. Remember Christ bought you with his own blood, that you should be His, not the world’s. Do not let Satan get between you and God’s grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, count on His love. It is His joy to see you back again. Look at the sin with horror, but never wrong Him by distrusting His love. Talk much with Jesus. Never be content without being able to walk and talk with Christ as with a dear friend. Be not satisfied with anything short of close intercourse of soul with Him.
who has loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood.


IMITATORS OF GOD

Ephesians 4:20 - 5:21

Christian conduct, as does every duty, flows from the place we are brought into; and is spoken of in scripture in different ways. Its motive and energy we find in Phil. 3 -- Christ in glory as the object we are following after, and in pursuing which everything else is counted as loss and dung. And we get the spirit of our conversation in Phil. 2, and the pattern, too, even Christ come down, and even going down, in lowliness. And then, as representing Christ in the world, we are the “epistle of Christ.” It does not say we ought to be such, but we are (2 Cor. 3:3). The epistle may be sadly blotted by us, but still, that is what we are “manifestly declared to be.” Here, in Ephesians, we are viewed as brought into God’s presence, holy and without blame; that is, with a nature and character that suit Him, and are the reflection of what He is. And we are seen sitting in the heavens “in Christ”; not running to get into glory, as in Phil. 3. Moreover, we are in the same relationship to God as Christ is, and hence, Christian conduct is spoken of in this epistle as what suits this place, and flows from it.

Through the grace and power of God I am brought into His presence, not seeking to get into it, and my duties flow from the place I am in. People speak as though men were on probation, and the day of judgment would prove how it will turn out with them, whether they will be saved or lost. This is all wrong. Of course each is tested individually, by the presentation of the gospel; but the gospel comes to man and addresses him as one already lost, and needing salvation. Men have not to wait till the judgment to know how it will turn out. It has already turned out that I am a lost sinner. God turned man out of paradise when he had sinned; and as far as he could man has turned God out of the world when He came into it in grace, in Christ. Of course God can come into it in power, and will do so; but as far as man could, he has turned Him out. Man is now lost in himself, but God has acted in grace, so that he who believes in Jesus is saved; just the opposite; and it does not need the judgment to prove either the one or the other. Judgment is for my work (Rev. 20:12), and on that ground all are already lost. But salvation is of grace, and is God’s work. What hath God wrought! (Num. 23:23). God takes up man as dead in sins, and quickens him: he has a new life, and is “made the righteousness of God,” being brought to God, and set in His presence, in the same relationship as Christ.

Christian duties (and there are such), flow from the new relationship thus formed by grace, and in Christ, and we must first be in the relationship before the duties are there. People make a grievous blunder here: putting the duties as a means of getting into relationship with God. Such a thing would never be
thought of in natural things. Men’s minds are clear enough about their own matters; all is simple to them: but when they come to divine things, and having to do with God, all sorts of blunders are made. How absurd it would be for all you people to get to be my children! You might be never so earnest and diligent; but no amount of earnestness would avail to form the relationship. But if you were my children, all would be simple enough, and the duty, too, to act like children. You cannot fulfill the duties of a child till you are one, or show the love of one either. How unbecoming of a servant to jump up and kiss his master! Quite proper in a child. And if we are children of God, then we are to behave ourselves as such; but our duties as children of God do not commence till we are in that place. Of course there are duties that we have as men, but on that ground we are lost. God makes us His children, and then says, Now imitate your Father.

Be ye followers [imitators] of God, as dear children.

We are brought into God’s presence, and we are to go out into, and through, the world, and show whose children we are: to show His character, and “walk worthy” of Him. “To walk worthy of God” (1 Thess. 2:12). “Worthy of the Lord.” (Col. 1:10). “Worthy of the vocation” (Eph. 4:1). God Himself is our pattern, and we are to imitate Him. He loved us when we were enemies, and He causes His rain to descend “on the evil and on the good,” and we are to act in the same manner toward men. I am to be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, for instance: so here, “tenderhearted, forgiving,” and why? because my Father is. I am to forgive as, in Christ, He has forgiven me. In all things I am to look to Him, as revealed in Christ, as my pattern, and imitate Him.

But all this, of course, flows not only from the fact of a new relationship, but there is a “new man.” The nature we had, as children of Adam, was proved to be utterly bad, and nothing would do but the entire setting of it aside, and a new “creation.” In this Epistle men are seen as “dead in sins”; not alive in sins, as in Romans. And Christ goes down to the lower parts of the earth, putting away our sins on His way there, namely, on the Cross. So that before He lies there, our sins have all been atoned for; and then God comes in, and raises up Christ, and us with Him, our sins being all left behind. It is not simply that we are quickened, but we are quickened “together with Christ” (Eph. 2:5). When it is simply quickening, as in John 5, Christ is the Quickener; but in Ephesians, Christ is seen in death, where He had in grace put Himself for us. We were there through sin and disobedience. He came there in grace and obedience. And now, as quickened together with Him, we are, so to speak, raised by God out of His grave, and taken up into the heavenly places in Him. It is a new creation, the sins of the “old man” being all put away and gone. In Colossians we get the same thought: “Quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:13). It is a new creation, and the trespasses all forgiven.

We have put off the old man, and put on the new. In principle we have done this in Christ’s death; and now we realize it in knowing that we have died with
Him. It is carried into effect in practice in bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus. The new man is after God (Eph. 4:24), that is, it is like God, and is “created in righteousness and true holiness.” Adam was created in innocence; neither righteousness nor holiness. Holiness supposes intelligence as to good and evil, though absolute and perfect separation from evil. Adam had not the knowledge of good and evil, and so is never said in scripture to be holy; nor righteous either, because righteousness is a judgment of, or walking in, ways consistent with the obligations in which we or others stand, and involves also the knowledge of good and evil. Adam was, of course, sinless, for this is one respect in which he was made in the “likeness of God.” But the “new man” “is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:10). The old man is put off in the Christian -- in him who has the truth as it is in Jesus, and the new man, which is after God, is put on. God Himself is the pattern, and it is in Christ that we learn what He is.

We have got a new life, and the Holy Ghost in us, as the power to be followers of God.

In Rom. 7 we have the experience of a man with the new nature (“delighting in the law of God after the inward man”), but without power in the Holy Ghost; and he finds the old is master of the new. It is one who, as to his experience, is under the law, not knowing redemption or liberty in the Holy Ghost, and learning what the flesh is; and it makes him cry, “Oh! wretched man that I am,” and long for deliverance. He does not say, How can I get forgiveness? or, how can I get better? but he wants some one to take him clean out of the place of bondage and helplessness where he finds himself, and says, “Who shall deliver me?” The moment he comes to this he finds it all done, and exclaims, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” There are three things learnt in that chapter.

First, that there is no good in the flesh.

Second, that it was not himself, but sin dwelling in him, that did the evil (Rom. 7:17): he learns to distinguish between the “I” and the “sin that dwelleth in me.”

Third, he yet finds the law of sin in his members too strong for him; for he always does the evil, though he wills the good.

Nothing will do but to be taken out of it; and this is what he realizes in the next chapter.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death;

and

Ye are not in the flesh, but in Spirit (Rom. 8:2).

But here the man is looked at as “in Christ,” not in the flesh, and the Spirit of God dwells in him, producing righteousness, which is different from the sin dwelling in him, preventing him from performing the good he consents unto and
delights in. But, as we have seen, besides the new man, there is, in order to our being imitators of God, the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. We are told (Eph. 4:30),

*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed &c.*

It is not only that there is a new nature, but the Holy Ghost comes into the vessel, as we see in the case of the cleansed leper, in Lev. 14; and leprosy in scripture is a standing type of sin. He was washed in water, sprinkled with blood, and then *anointed* with oil. The water is the word applied in power; Jesus said to the disciples in John 15,

Now ye are *clean* through the *word* that I have spoken unto you.

The word of Christ had been applied to them in power through grace, and by the Holy Ghost, and they were washed. Then we have the blood of Christ applied to the conscience; and next, as here in Ephesians, we are *sealed* with the Holy Ghost, the “holy anointing oil,” the “unction from the Holy One.” And this is the second great principle of Christian practice, as brought before us here. We have the “new man,” the new nature from God, and according to God; and also the Holy Ghost, God Himself, comes and owns the person. He seals him and abides there, and we are not to grieve Him, but to walk as though God were seen by us at our side. Everything should comport with God’s presence in us; and if we are walking with a good conscience, according to our measure of light; we are then free to think of Christ. The Holy Ghost occupies us with Christ, and leads us on in the knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:17). And it is in this there is growth; as to acceptance and relationship there is no growth; all is perfect from the first, but in the fuller knowledge of Christ, and conformity to Him, we are led on by the Holy Ghost. If walking up to the light we have received, we have, in coming into His presence, communion with Him, and we enjoy and grow in the knowledge of Him. If, on the contrary, we are not walking godilily, the Holy Ghost will make us think of ourselves and judge ourselves. So when we are, not only living in the Spirit, but walking in the Spirit, all we are and do will represent Christ. His aim and purpose is that we should be, in all the moral features of His character, the reproduction of Himself. See Phil. 2:15, where every clause may be applied to Christ, though it is given, as the Spirit’s desire, for every Christian. “Blameless and harmless” -- so was Christ. “The sons of God” -- He was the Son of God. “Without rebuke” -- so was He, and so on.

It is a wonderful thing to know myself accepted in Christ before God, that He represents me there; but if He represents me before God, I am to represent Him before the world.

At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and *ye in me*, and *I in you* (John 14:20).

You say, I am in Christ before God, “accepted in the beloved.” Well, thank God, it is so: I do not doubt your acceptance, but if you are *in Christ*, He is *in you*, and let one, let the world see Him and nothing else. The new man then (the old being put off), and the Holy Ghost are subjectively that in which we walk;
where is then the pattern we walk by? God Himself, God in a man, in Christ; and in Him we get a love that gives up Himself, and that for His enemies. This goes infinitely beyond the law, which only requires that a man should “love his neighbor as himself.” If every one did that, it would make of this world a sort of paradise, but that is the measure for man as a creature, mutually recognising each his neighbor’s claim. It does not suit a sinful world. Every one does not love me as much as he loves himself, and if I am to represent God in such a world as this, I must have a kind of love that will get above people hating me, and this we see in Christ. And we are to be “imitators” of God as seen in Him, “as dear children.” Not in order to be such, but as such. The same in Col. 3:12,

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,

not in order to be the elect, &c., but as the elect. The Lord Jesus (in this love we are called to imitate), gave Himself “for us,” but it was “unto God” (Col. 5:2). God was His object, though it was for us He gave Himself. Divine love, as manifested in this world, takes up its object by its need, and looks at it in grace, and above its evil, so it was in Christ. As having become a man, He must have an object, and God was that object. Man must have an object, to keep him free from and above the evil of those he occupies himself with. What a man loves, and makes his object, gives him his true moral character. If he loves money, he is a covetous man. If power, an ambitious man; so with pleasure, or dress, it is the same: we are morally characterised by what engages our thoughts and affections. Suppose, for instance, I love a great rogue, I seek his company for its own sake, I make him my object -- my affection is a low one. If a beautiful character, the affection is a noble one. Christ offered Himself for us, that was divine love, but it was to God: {it} was the rule and perfection of man. Christ is our measure: God has now given His Son that we may be like Him, not kept back the fruit, lest we should become as God, as the serpent insinuated to Eve. “Walk as children of light” (v. 8). Here we see our relation to God as “Light.” He is said to be “Love” and “Light” 30 (John 1). He is not said to be anything else, as to His nature. He has righteousness, holiness, majesty, almighty power, &c., these are His attributes; but love and light He is. Now, we have been told above to be imitators of Him, and walk in love: here we are addressed as children of light, which we must be, if children of God, who is such, and we are to walk as children of light, and Christ is the measure of both to us. Though both these essential names of God are used, we are not said to be love, because God is sovereign in goodness, and that does not suit us, but obedience in the walk of love, as Christ. But light we are said to be, because we are partakers of the divine nature in its purity and consequent manifestation of all impurity around. And while the light, shining out, reproves the “works of darkness,” we are to be bringing forth the “fruit of the light” not “Spirit” (v. 9). Light is perfectly pure, does not mix with the darkness, but makes manifest

30. {Actually, the order in Scripture is Light and Love, which order is not without importance.}
everything that is not of it. Walking as children of light, “proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” We do not learn all at once what is acceptable to Him: it is a thing in which we make progress. Is this our simple purpose? To prove what is acceptable? (Rom. 12:2). In buying or selling, or any common act of life, our question should be, Is this acceptable to the Lord? In purchasing an article of dress, it should not be simply, will this suit me? but is it acceptable to the Lord? Does it suit Him?

In Eph. 5:14, a sleeping man is called to “awake,” not a dead man: he is a believer, but alas! in what a state. A man, when he is asleep, is no better than a dog asleep. They are both insensible to everything around. Dog and man snore together. But when the believer, who has sunk down into worldly associations, is thus aroused (for he is not dead, but among the dead, and grievous to say, apparently one of them), nothing short of Christ Himself is his light.

Arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. The light is there when he awakes, and Christ is the measure of it for him. We must have an object. Sanctification is objective, and not subjective only. A man is holy to something, that is, it is not merely a state in itself, though it be such, in ordering and regulating my ways; but in the occupation of heart and mind with an object, my heart is consecrated to that object, and so sanctified, one outside of me, into whose image I am transformed as I contemplate His glory. Christ should ever be that object, and the secret of real progress is personal attachment to Himself. Mary Magdalene is an example of this; others waited till sunrise to come to the sepulcher, but she came “while it was yet dark.” It was ignorance, of course, to seek the living among the dead, but it was ignorant affection. She tells the disciples, and they come too, and then go back to their homes -- to their breakfast: but will this do for Mary? No; she has found her way back to the sepulcher again. All the world to her was but an empty sepulcher, if Jesus were not there, and her heart, full of Him, was lonely in it; and to her Jesus shows Himself, sending her with that wondrous message to His brethren, which told them of the new relationship in which they now stood -- He was ascending to His Father and theirs, His God and theirs (John 20).

The woman in the Pharisee’s house, in Luke 7, is another example. Her heart was won by Christ -- light had shown her her sins, but love and grace in Christ had attracted her, bringing her into that fine Pharisee’s house, a poor sinner that, where Jesus was not, would have been ashamed to show her face anywhere. Look at Simon! What does he know about Jesus? He is pitch dark: has got God in his house and does not know it. But the “woman of the city” knows, and Jesus answers her faith. She loved much, and she got from the Lord those blessed words of forgiveness, salvation, and peace: “Thy sins are forgiven”; “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace”!

This attachment of heart to Christ is what we so much need. Not mere intelligence in truth, which may puff up, but that knowledge of Christ by the Holy Ghost which makes Him my object. And now in company with this blessed
One we have to walk through the world, finding a way in which we can glorify and represent Him, and enjoy fellowship with Him. But how is it we have got to find a way? Because we are not yet at home. Adam had not to find any way, but simply to abide in the place where God had put him, and enjoy it.

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE

1 John 4:16

This passage is one of much beauty and comfort to the earnest and lowly soul, for it presents to us God, thinking of us from our state of utter sinfulness on to judgment itself, and displays His love from beginning to end.

In general, the epistle presents us divine life, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested here below in the Person of the Lord Jesus, communicated to others, that thing, as it is said, which is true in Him and in us.

The Gospel of John, besides the doctrine of the Comforter, presents to us God manifested in the Son, and life in Himself; the epistle, life communicated to us, and that life known in its fruits of love to the brethren, and obedience or practical righteousness.

In the passage before us, love is especially the subject, and first love as partaking of the nature of Him who is love. He that loveth is born of God and knows God; partakes of the nature and knows Him who is it, as partaker of it.

Possession of a nature (and without possessing it is impossible), makes us know what that nature is, what the Being is who has that nature. A mere animal does not know what a man is, his way of thinking, feeling; a man knows what a man is. What an angel is, save as the part of connection with God necessarily reveals some elements of his nature, he does not know. He that loves, knows God, for he is born of Him, being partaker of the divine nature: a blessed truth, the spring (righteousness being introduced), of eternal joy and infinite delight.

But when we come to the practice down here, we find difficulty in it. I love the brethren: what coldness after all, often self has come in, and I fail in love. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Can I really say I am born of God and know God when I find so much in a treacherous heart that belies after all what I desire? I hope, I fear -- there is no liberty of spirit. And it is so far well; but, therefore, the blessed Spirit gives us the knowledge of love from another side, and where it is perfect: in God Himself, His ways and dealings. In this the love of God is manifested towards us, in our case. But let me briefly analyse the passage, that we may seize its completeness and bearing. First, in vv. 9, 10, God’s love to the sinner; v. 12, the enjoyment of His love in the saint; and 17, perfected in the boldness it gives us for the day of judgment.

First, His love to us as sinners. The eternal object of God’s delight, His only begotten Son, was sent in blessing to us, and with this two-fold object -- first the positive blessing, what is given, that we might live through Him. We were dead in sin, God gives us a new life -- a divine life. We no longer live through Adam, but through the Son of God. He that hath the Son hath life. Our
existence towards God is divine life in Christ. God has thought of our ruin in love, and given us eternal life in His Son.

But we were guilty also, as responsible beings before Him. Here His love has met us. He has given His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not law, nor duty, though it was there, but because it was there, ruin, failure, and condemnation. But love is not in that we love God (which is what we have to look for in our hearts if we seek the proof of life there, but then really under law); that law required, and rightly -- but in that God loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. It is not requiring what we ought to be from us, just as this is, but putting away, making a holy propitiation for our sins. We are dead in sins, and He gives us life. We were guilty, and He has given Him to make propitiation for our sins. He has met our whole case, in both its aspects as sinners. Now the love of God is known, the heart free, the conscience purged, he can exhort us to love one another.

Now we have to do with a saint, and he has more privileges than being forgiven and having life. No man has seen God. How know Him, even if we have a life and nature which capacitates us thereto? know Him as an object fully before our souls, and so known. Before the world this was in Christ personally present revealing Him (see John 1:18), and He was rejected. But how in us? If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Here is the saint’s privilege. He enjoys the love of God, poured out in his own soul. God dwells in him by His Spirit, and makes His presence known in infinite and enjoyed love, but as dwelling in the believer. It is not still that we love Him, but that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. It is in our hearts, but what is there is the love of God, known and enjoyed by His presence. If God thus dwells in us -- which we know, because He has given us of His Spirit, and sheds that love by His very presence abroad in our hearts -- we may well say perfected in love, for what is more perfect than God in love, and what more perfect exercise and display of it in communication to us than His dwelling in us Himself, who is it perfectly, and sheds it abroad in our hearts by His presence; but even this looks out when the proof of it is to be given. We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. You cannot separate the enjoyment of God’s love in us by His presence, from that in which it has been perfectly displayed in His own work to His own glory. And this portion of the Christian is not a special or extraordinary proof of progress. It is the Christian state. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. For God, if He dwell in us, is infinite, and we dwell in Him, feel surrounded, and are, by His goodness, love, power, so that our abode and rest is in Him, and in the fulness of His love. All this may be realized in different degrees, but it belongs to every one that confesseth JESUS, the lowly Man, to be the Son of God. Of course, He does not speak of hypocrites.
But again the apostle carefully brings us back to look at the love as in God, as displayed towards us. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Whatever the enjoyment of the love and the realisation of it, it is always the love in Him, sovereign love, which He hath had to us. We know God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Here, though the love is ever the same, what God is and what He displays to us, yet the order of thought is somewhat different. I am dwelling in love, the enjoyment and consciousness of this love, and its power to exercise towards others. I dwell then in God, for God is love; dwelling in this he dwells in God, and this is what God is. His soul rests, reposes, and confides in Him, surrounded by His goodness, and so as that love is active in his soul, shed abroad and exercised there, God is in him, God being love, and deigning to dwell in us. First it was the fact, God dwells in the saint, and as infinite, the saint in him. Now as to his enjoyment and privilege he dwells in God; and then as to the activity of love, God dwells in him. The first fact is this state, and the double blessedness of God Himself, and the activity of His love. All this is simple. Rich and eternal and pure life now enjoyed in joying in God Himself, and exercised as it was in Jesus, in love to His, and every sinner around.

We now come to the third step in this blessed chain of love. Herein is love perfected with us that we might have boldness for the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. Love has looked on from the time of our sin, looked in and dwelt in us by the way, and now tells the tale of its perfectness for that day, when God’s judgment calls all in question but the fruit of His love. But how should this meet the day of judgment? Here love is perfected with us, we are as Christ is who is the judge; what fear, then? Oh, how has love thought of us, from the state of sins and death right on to judgment, and given us to stand now, “in this world,” as Christ Himself is before God. Who shall find fault in that! Shall Christ whom we are like, or God whose delight is in Him? We have boldness for the day of judgment. No place in which the Christian is so bold, when he knows his place in Christ. When we stand before His judgment-seat we shall be perfectly like Himself; and as He is, so are we in this world. Many a sincere person, I mean, sincere Christian, does not see this his place in Christ. He may say, I am a poor sinner, and the cross just suits me. Blessedly true. But change the phrase: I am a poor sinner, and the judgment-seat just suits me! That will not do. Yet we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). There we must be fit for the judge. A dirty man is fit to be washed, a debtor for one who comes to pay his debts, but a righteous person for a judgment-seat; and we have here the measure of this: Christ, who sits to judge, is my righteousness. When I appear there, I shall appear in glory, shall be like Him, bear His image, having been raised in glory -- my vile body fashioned like His glorious body. Here there is no room for fear. Grace has put the believer in Christ now, and through His work he is accepted in the Beloved; as He is so is the believer in this world.
How can I fear if I am as Christ? Note, it is not as He was. He was without sin, knew no sin even when He was down here. If I say I have none, I deceive myself, and the truth is not in me. But my place before God is in Christ, not in the flesh. There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. But as He is, now He has finished the work and by Himself purged our sins, having by one offering perfected for ever those who are sanctified, through the offering of His body once for all, and now as He is, so are we in this world, accepted in the Beloved. I repeat, what room is there for fear? Is not this love, perfect, thoughtful love, that in the place of judgment, there we find perfection? Then, I know I am like the judge, like the Lord in glory, like my Savior. Gracious love that has thought of my sins, and spiritual death in them; blessed and blessing love, God’s dwelling in me; and perfected love, in that I am as Christ, God’s own Son, so that where surely fear might be, fear is cast out. Love has made me know now what love has done, and while it makes me enjoy itself now, God dwells in me and I in Him, makes me look back and see it active when I was a dead sinner, a love that flows from itself out to me, so that I reckon on it, yea, learn its perfectness when I might fear, and find that love had counsels of infinite wonder, to make me as Christ the Son of God, a man in glory, and righteousness of divine perfection, even the one before whose judgment-seat I shall stand, like Him, His righteousness mine. Love has left nothing unthought of that could make me exalt God as infinite in grace, and enjoy His goodness in a righteousness which He has made mine. There is no fear in love. Where shall fear find a place, from my state of death in sins up to the judgment-seat of Christ? He cannot love me too much, but He cannot love me more, and my heart is at rest.

And note here, though we pass through it, and it is very natural that we should, yet hope as to the judgment day is not the true feeling of a believer at all. We hope because we see goodness, and know there is such a thing as redemption; and we fear because we see that there is that in us which cannot stand before the judgment of God. We vacillate, are ill at ease, and when the thought of judgment comes in, there is torment because there is fear. God would not have us so. He would not have torment. He would have us walk with Him happy, and in confidence. Fear is not confidence. But if we have to be judged, that is, our state decided according to our works in that day (for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat), we shall certainly be condemned. Enter not, says the heart that knows what sin, and what flesh is in God’s sight -- enter not, into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. But the believer has learned this as to himself before the judgment comes, and has fled for refuge to the hope set before him, and knows that redemption is as certain as complete, and divine righteousness as satisfactory, if I may use so feeble a word, as his condemnation was certain. He does not mix up as his portion judgment for sin, and redemption from sin. He owns fully the one and his own deserved
condemnation, and believes fully in the other. He does not destroy the force of both by mixing them together. Judgment according to what he is, would, he knows, have been certain condemnation. Divine righteousness (and we are the righteousness of God in Christ) is necessary and perfect acceptance. Grace has given it to him, has made it his. As He is, so are we in this world, for we have it by faith, we have boldness in the day of judgment, and there is no fear in love, our portion is perfected in this. Raised in glory, he is manifested before the judgment-seat, but glorified before he is there, his vile body fashioned like Christ’s glorious body, by that power which can subdue all things to itself. Knowing then as he is known, he looks back from that blessedness, bearing the image of the heavenly, on the countless ways of love, which has brought a poor feeble creature, justified through Christ the Lord, all the way along, that he might know himself, and the love which has led, thought of, sustained, borne with, lifted up, and brought there to enjoy and praise, made like the Lord, the love that has done it, and to dwell in a holiness where no evil can enter, and which is only joy, and find Jesus the Lord of glory the First-born among many brethren. We love Him because He first loved us. But oh, how imperfect are our thoughts of that day. Our part is to dwell in and think of Christ, to serve Him with an undivided heart here.


GRACE AND GLORY

Titus 2

Even in the common things of life, the motives that govern us are what give character to the things we do. The apostle turns at once to the motive, which is Christ; and the moment he touches that spring (“that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things”), all wakes up in his soul. That is the motive; and then he goes on with the whole history of Christianity till Christ’s coming again.

It is a blessed thing in our common every-day life, that we can get Christ as our motive. If a man is fond of money or pleasure, it is the motive he has; that is what he is. If he is full of Christ, that is what he is. You may get two men doing exactly the same thing, only with different motives. With the Christian, Christ is his only motive, or ought to be. There may be a thousand things he has to do, common duties of life, but he can serve Christ in them, and there I get a motive powerful enough. Perhaps you have a froward master; well, you can glorify Christ in that. It is everything that the Christian should understand that he has no motive but Christ; many a thing to do, but no other motive but this. The common things of life do not unspiritualize a person; I must attend to them, and do them properly; but if my motive in doing them is Christ, it is a mistake to think that they hinder my soul in spirituality.
Supposing I was making anything for Christ, do you think I should not make it as well as I possibly could? Well, then, we ought to do everything for Christ. It is every-day walk that characterizes the Christian:

Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, because, if I cannot do it in His name, I ought not to do it at all. If I can do it in His name, there is the motive.

To be guided, this is the thing:

They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way.

There is no way in this world. How did the Israelites get any way -- the way which the vulture’s eye hath not seen? Why, the cloud went before them. The fact that we have to find a way in which to walk, is a proof that we are all away from God. It is a world contrary to God, and I have to find my way.

When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them.

I get a way then, but it is a divine way, and I am following Christ in it. I get it by having Him going before me; and all I look for is the way here, because I am a pilgrim and a stranger. Christ has given Himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world; but He has left me in it, and He has left me His own spiritual pathway on my way to rejoin Him up there. If I have a single eye, it will be a bright path; and Paul said, I count all dross and dung, that I may win Christ. If we have not made up our minds to follow Christ, then it is not an easy path. In following Christ, of course there are difficulties; but a man with one object, it has been remarked, always has energy.

“God our Savior,” is the particular character of God in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. It is the blessed name He has taken, that He is God our Savior; it implies that we needed to be saved. Why did I need to be saved? Because I was lost: not only that I had done some wrong things, but that I was lost; and it is just in understanding that, that we get the full, blessed, clear apprehension that we are saved. I find that God has interfered, and done a work entirely His own; and the question then is, what is the value of that work? Well, I say, it is finished, and Christ is in glory in consequence.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Grace has appeared (Titus 2:11), teaching us to look for the appearing of the glory, and teaching us how to walk in this present world. There I get the Christian between these two points: the grace that brings salvation has appeared; but the glory has not. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be.” This appearing of grace teaches us how to walk, whilst we are waiting for the appearing of the glory. The Christian stands between the first coming of Christ (who revealed God the Father, and accomplished the work for our salvation) and His coming again, when He will take us into the full result in glory -- we receive the Holy Ghost meanwhile. First, I get what this grace is, and what its
character is. It has appeared -- a full manifestation of it in the gospel. It is God’s sovereign goodness to His people, when they were sinners, it is the love of God, when there was nothing loveable.

For a good man some would even dare to die: but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

That is, for what is vile and hateful, I find God giving the best thing possible that heaven could give, and that is, His own Son; I get to know God; and it is a blessed thing to say I know God. If I believe in the coming of Christ, I ask, what put that into God’s heart? It came from His heart, and that is the way I know God.

Who by him do believe in God -- that your faith and hope might be in God.

I know really what God is, in His unsought love; it is simply and entirely the spring of God’s own heart that has done all this, and this is the grace of God. I know God, for I know His love. He is a judge, and a righteous and holy One, too; but, still, I get this blessed truth, that, when I was a mere sinner, I have got to the spring in this perfect love (in its nature sovereign above all evil), which has brought Christ into the world -- that is what I have learned in the gospel. The gospel is that blessed truth, that He did not wait, and say, You behave yourselves, and then come up to me; but He came down into this world where we were. Oh what a blessed thought it is (though it may be humbling, too), that the Son of God has been down in this world in the midst of evil; it was nothing but love that brought Him, and that is how we begin to know God.

Then, I get what it brought me. Help to a man as he is? No -- how can you help a man who is lost already? He came to sinners in their sins, and brought “salvation” to them, because they were lost.

Let us see what that character of “lost” is. There were the two things; I was guilty before God (not merely lost, though “lost” goes a great deal further), and besides that, there was the state I was in. “Guilty” refers to judgment; but when I say “I am lost,” I speak of my present state. My carnal mind is enmity against God, so “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” I am “guilty” by reason of what I have done; but I am “lost” by reason of the state I am in. I am not in the earthly paradise in which Adam was, nor am I in the heavenly paradise where God is. Where am I? Totally away from God. It is not in the first moment of that awakening we learn the extent of this -- that it is all over with me (not that God cannot take me out of that place). You must make the tree good, as well as its fruit. It is not merely that I have done wrong -- the fruit -- by which I am guilty -- but the tree is bad. God is holy, and I am unholy; so I never can be with Him -- though, of course, grace comes in -- but that was our condition.

Christ came into the world, after men were sinners, and after they had broken the law, when it had been given them. He did not wait till the judgment.
But men would not have Him, and proved more completely that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Christ proved that a divine Person was in the world, for every power of evil fled before Him. He was there winning the confidence of men’s hearts, but when He had shown all this, they crucified Him. You never see a person ashamed of a false religion: but the moment it is the true God, he is ashamed: even the disciples were ashamed to confess Christ. What a deal that tells of man’s heart! God is light, as well as love, and that brought out things in their true light, and

men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Christ has come in love -- not to judge the world, but to save it -- and however bad a person was shown to be, if he cannot have confidence in a human being, he may have confidence in God. He came to win back the confidence of man’s heart to God. He came to where man was. Take the cross as the expression of it all; there I get man’s hatred, and God’s love in His Son, in the same act. God is not covering over my sins, they are all shown out in the light; and there I am in the presence of One who loves me perfectly, when they are all there -- that is salvation. God is the spring of His own heart, and He deals with my state of sin, not hiding it from me: and He manifests that He has sent Christ for me. God has dealt with my sins already; He has not waited till the day of judgment. What did Christ die for, if it was not for our sins? Did not God deal with Him at the cross about them? And what has He done with them? He bore them in His own body on the tree. But has He got them now? No; they are all gone; and Christ is “sitting” now, because He has nothing to do. I am not speaking as to our walk now, because we need Him every moment, but as regards the work -- it is all done. Seeing the Lord Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, shows me that God dealt with my sins when Christ bore them. The Person who is going to be the judge, is the One who has put away my sins. I have this blessed, true, infinite love, that did not even spare His own Son, and Christ took all my sins upon Himself and put them away. I am “in Christ” before God; not according to what I have done, but according to what Christ has done. I am not in my Adam-standing before God. Where are you then? I am in Christ. I have an entirely new place, condition, and standing before God. Just as Israel, not only had the blood on the door-posts, so that God did not touch them, but they were brought out of Egypt -- brought to God: so, we have been redeemed out of the condition in which we were in Adam, and brought to God: as it says in Rom. 8,

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Titus 2:12 is grosser sins; by which the world ensnares us. I am to live “soberly” with regard to what is within myself; “righteously,” because I have to do with other people; and “godly,” because I have to do with God. I walk subduedly before God, instead of in my own will and lusts. Look at the standard given us -- to
walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

But I must know God, or how can I walk worthy of Him? Are you going to commit sin with that which is a temple of the Holy Ghost? We are to walk worthy of God, because we are to manifest Christ. You are dear children; well then, go and walk like your Father. It raises the standard, because it raises the motive. We get the standard of walk in association with these things.

Well, the Christian has salvation; and the Holy Ghost, who makes him know it; and he cries, “Abba, Father,” for he knows he is a son of God, and thus he gets his place consciously, all founded on the unutterable love of God: Christ being his life, he reckons himself dead, as regards the flesh. There we have the past and present sins put away -- all that the flesh produced, done with -- and I am loved as Jesus is loved;

that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

It is all flowing from this blessed unthought-of and unsought love of God.

Then, where is our future? It is not merely dying and going to Christ, but the heart is set upon Christ, and I am “looking” now “for that blessed hope.”

What blessed hope? Why, Christ Himself. Christ has become precious to me. He has loved me beyond all my thoughts —

to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

Ah, I say, I want Christ Himself, when shall I get Him? We are not “looking for” death, but it is a profitable thing to look it in the face, and see that it is pure gain. We belonged to death in the first Adam, and in the second {last} Adam death belongs to us. For the Christian, the only thing that death is, is that he has done with temptation, sin, and sorrow, and he has begun with Christ; but death is not what we are looking for, for scripture says we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.

The worth of what Christ has done, in putting away sins and glorifying God, is such, that it puts us into God’s glory. Christ has entered as my forerunner -- the witness that I am to be there too:

where I am, there shall also my servant be.

When He comes, it will close this scene of grace -- that is going on now; therefore

He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering.

As long as He sees a soul to be gathered in, He does not come, but the promise is, I will come Myself. He is not content to send for us, but He must come Himself. “Our conversation is in heaven” -- that is our present condition. We look to be with Him -- and to be like Him too -- but the best of all is to be with Him. The thing by which He comforts the hearts of the disciples is, that He
was coming again to have them in the same glory as Himself -- it is the first thing that will happen. It may be happier to die, and so wait in heaven; but whether we are there or here, we shall then altogether be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. He has accomplished the work needed for it in His first coming in grace; and what He does now by the Holy Ghost, is to make us wait for Him, which is the original calling of the church of God.

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.

Have people been doing this? No, they have not; they went out to meet the bridegroom, but the wise virgins slept as well as the foolish.

Supposing I know salvation, what am I waiting for? For mortality to be swallowed up of life -- to be changed into the same glory as Christ -- to be raised, if I am dead -- I am looking to be like Him in the glory. I need two things to be able to call it a “blessed hope”: first, the grace that bringeth salvation -- that He has redeemed, purified, and saved me, and I have the certainty of His love. The second thing is, that He is the object of my delight. We must know the perfect salvation, but we must have the love of Christ in our hearts, to care about it.

Only one other thing I would desire should rest on our hearts, and that is the full, thorough, complete interest He takes in us. What satisfies Him? He is waiting in perfect, earnest love to us, but His heart will never be satisfied till He has us in the same glory with Himself and His Father. I know, poor unworthy creature as I am, that He will not be satisfied till He has me in the same glory as Himself, because He loves me. “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” How is it that He does not give like the world? If I give away a thing I no longer possess it -- is that the way Christ gives? Never! The way He gives is to bring us into the enjoyment of all He has Himself. Everything that Christ has (except His divinity) He brings us into, and then He is satisfied.

And now, beloved, is that the way you think about the Lord Jesus Christ? What made Him give it all to us -- did any one ask Him? It was the perfect love. And is that unre vealed? It is not; He has loved us and given Himself for us, and it is revealed from Christ in the glory and we have the Holy Ghost. If I am thinking of the things in the world, of course I cannot see the thing up there, for the eye is dimmed and cannot see afar off. Are you content to have such a place as that with Christ in glory? Are you content to be purified to Himself -- to give up the world? Are you content to have Christ your one and only object and motive? Of course it tests the flesh and heart of man, and God means it to be tested. Are you content to follow Christ? The apostle says that that is the whole bent of his mind, “That I may win Christ” -- and to know Him better. The secret of all that is the constant sense of dependence.

My strength is made perfect in weakness.

We are redeemed from this present evil world. It is a world that has rejected the Son of God already. Man is a judged being, but there is salvation for him.
Christ's work entitles me to the glory; and now, says Christ, I am come to have you for Myself, like Myself, and with Myself in glory. Beloved, are our hearts there? Have we tasted the love of Christ in all His life and death down here? And it is not wearied, or exhausted, or cooled, for He loves and cherishes us as His own flesh.

The Lord give us only to remember that the fashion of this world passeth away; but there is one thing that abides for ever, and that is the word of God -- that through His grace, we may follow hard after Him. Oh, it is a wonderful thing that the Son of God became a man, on purpose to win us back to God.

“THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST”
Philippians 3
Notes of an Address)

This epistle is not one of doctrine. We get, of course, in this chapter, the foundation laid (v. 9), but, as often remarked, it is an epistle that gives us the proper experience of the Christian, that is, the power of the Spirit of God working in him in his path; and, consequently, we get the spirit and character in which a Christian should walk down here. In Phil. 2 we see the graciousness of the spirit in which Christ walked. He always went down and humbled Himself, even down to the cross, and then God exalted Him as man to His right hand: even as Antichrist exalts himself, and is abased. Christ is the bright and perfect example of “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” In ch. 3 you get the energy of the Spirit.

Now, we cannot have too distinctly and clearly before our souls the great basis of the completeness of redemption. In the first place, the putting away of sins, and sin too -- the putting away of all that the first Adam produces, and then our introduction into a totally new place -- an entirely new standing -- we have peace with God. Jesus

was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is not all. Our place is in Christ, and there is no possibility of condemnation for a person in Christ. We see the efficacy of the work of Christ, we get the certainty of sins put away, are sealed by the Holy Ghost; consequently we are only waiting for Christ to come to take us to glory. That is our place, and all our duties flow from the place we are in, even as in natural things. We are brought into Christ -- made children of God, sons of God; then our duties flow from that place.

Be ye therefore imitators of God, as clear children.

Again,

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Therefore, the first great thing is to know our place: not only that we are forgiven (though that is the first thing we need), not only that we were guilty, but the believer finds out a great deal more than that, he finds out that he is lost. Guilty brings in the thought of judgment; but if we are lost we do not think of judgment, because we are ruined already. I speak not only of what I have done, but where I am outside Paradise, and totally ruined already. We
are lost in our own condition.

I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

So that I do not say merely that I am justified, but that I am saved, and in Christ. I do not believe we get into full liberty till we understand we are totally lost and saved -- not only what we have done, but what we are.

It is important that the Christian should distinctly get hold of that, for it is what redemption means. As with Israel in Egypt -- the blood upon the door-posts saved them from the judgment of God; but besides that, God took them out of Egypt, and put them into Canaan.

We are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

It is a new condition and place altogether, and this is deliverance -- not only forgiveness and justification, but deliverance; and, therefore, in Rom. 7 it is not “How shall I get forgiveness?” but “Who shall deliver me?” The answer is, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He finds his sins blotted out; defiled, he is washed; having offended, he is forgiven; guilty, he is justified. God has made that perfectly clear for ever. But the old man is dead before God, and the new man is in Christ. Christ is my righteousness. I was lost, without hope in myself, but now I am in Christ before God. That is deliverance. In Rom. 5 you are justified; but in Rom. 8

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

To find out, practically, that I am lost, is a very different thing from finding that I am guilty; because, if lost, I have finished my whole history, and I must get my whole condition made new (thank God it is, in Christ). If I am guilty, I may hope to get forgiveness; but if I am lost, I must get a new condition altogether -- a totally new creation in Christ Jesus. When I have this redemption, the effect is to leave me, as a matter of fact, down here, being thus delivered, and then I begin to run the race; for you and I have in this world to go through the wilderness (to find ourselves in heavenly places too). God has minded that we should be thus exercised to discern good and evil, and what we get in this chapter is power in that course. We have to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking off unto Jesus.

It is the expression, in Phil. 3, of the experience of one who was running the race faithfully.

Sin is never mentioned in the epistle; what you find in Paul was, that the power of the Holy Ghost was there. It was not that the flesh was not there, for he had a thorn in the flesh, but there was power to keep it down. You get complete deliverance here, entire freedom, for he was running his race free; and another thing you see is power, Christ’s power. He was perfectly free, or he could not have run on in that power, and also (which is practically a great thing), he had an object, which gave him singleness of eye and purpose. You
get the man set perfectly free:

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death {Rom. 8:2}.

The principle of sin, in which I was lost, is dead and gone for faith, because Christ has died, and, therefore, I can say I died:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The life that I have {is} in Christ, and as to the flesh, I say, “I died upon the cross.” That is the place the apostle was then in, and there was power, because “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” There is Christ’s power. His grace is sufficient for us; therefore we can never excuse ourselves if we commit sin because Christ’s grace is sufficient for us -- His strength is made perfect in weakness. It is not that the flesh is not there; but a dead person does not act. We fail; but the christian condition is, “Ye are dead.” If there is carelessness and want of prayer, failure does come; but there is no excuse for it. If Christ is in me, there is life and power, and the flesh is a dead thing. It is not only that Christ has died for your sins, but you have died with Christ; that is where real freedom comes in, and power comes in too, because Christ is there.

You will always find, that where Christ’s power is in us, Christ is the object of our life, as in Gal. 2,

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;

and then he adds,

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

There is the object: wherever Christ is the power of life in us, Christ is the object of that life. Christ having become a man, and gone into glory, God has given the object of His delight to be the object of our delight also, and given us His Spirit to enable us to make it so. It is a wonderful thing to see that God has so set Christ before us, and given us His Spirit, and a new nature, to be able to enjoy Him, linking us thus with Himself.

The next thing is, “I want to win Christ.” That is what he means by

That I may apprehend (or lay hold of) that for which also I am apprehended (laid hold of) by Christ.

Christ had laid hold of him, that was all settled; he had learnt Christ, and now he says, “I want to possess Him.” He is not looking at the salvation wrought out by Christ, but at the end; and therefore he says, at the close of the chapter,

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it
may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.

It is the salvation we are expecting that he speaks of now.

We have the man freed, and with power; and we have the man with Christ as his object and nothing else: and there is where we all are, and it is just a question of our faith as to how far it is true of us practically. It all depends on how far Christ is our object. You have the graciousness of deportment in ch. 2. Here we get the active energy of the Spirit of God; and mark, it is where there is one single object that there is practical energy and power.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

In some things, he acts like a Christian; in others, he does not. If he has two or three objects, he is unstable, but if he has one object, he walks with energy.

Now what characterized the apostle was that he had given up all things; not “did count them but dung,” but “do” now! Can we say that? At the moment of our conversion we all felt that all we had in the world had been deceiving us, and leading us to hell and its horrors. The pleasure, wealth, riches, ease, everything that was gain to us as men in this world, can we say of them,

I do count them but dung that I may win Christ?

Paul was not satisfied with having counted, but he says, “I do count,” and further than this, “All this will only hinder me.” Like a man running a race, he has on a beautiful cloak, we will suppose; he finds it hinders him, and he throws it off.

It is the object we have that always characterizes us -- blessed be God, we have it in Christ unto everlasting life. It was not any uncertainty with the apostle, it was not that he doubted that Christ had laid hold of him, but he wanted to get Christ. There was this honest purpose of heart -- the man was free, he had Christ’s strength; and then there was this purpose of heart -- spiritual energy and activity. There are two things which go together. The first, “That I may win Christ,” and then our resurrection from the dead, that is, our own glory, which comes in as the second thing. First, “That I may win Christ,” it was Christ Himself who possessed his heart; still he says, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Well, I can have but one thing as my object. If I am making tents, as Paul did, I shall do it well; it is our duty as Christians to be patient and gracious in meeting with hard men -- wrong doers. You will find that everything is judged of entirely by the object a man has. If he wants to get a thing, he will spend his money without stint to get it -- he estimates everything by his object. An avaricious man will say of a spendthrift, “Did you ever see such a fool!” And the spendthrift will say of the one fond of money, “He might as well have a stone, for his money is no good to him.” The moment I get Christ as my object everything else will be as dross and dung, and there will be no want {lack} of lowliness, because the nearer we get to Christ the less we think of
ourselves. I want to know Him, and the Spirit of God is not grieved. The path of the just grows brighter and brighter until the perfect day. His heart is more capable of knowing Christ, and he knows Him better -- he is not thinking of self. It is the privilege held out to us that we shall be so perfect that we shall only think of the Lord, and in any measure as we are near Him now, we think of Him and not of ourselves. The Christian looks at himself not only as forgiven, as justified, but as perfect, and going to be like Christ and with Christ. He has a new place; he is in Christ; he has it by the Spirit in faith now, and he wants actually to possess it.

Now how far can our souls say we are actually delivered, not only forgiven, but delivered? I do not mean that if you are careless you will not slip into sin, but there is a positive deliverance; we are not in the flesh at all. The world is there, Satan is there, and I have to watch every moment to have Christ sufficiently before my mind. You will find that nine-tenths of the things that are temptations to us would be no temptations at all if we walked with Christ. See a mother who has heard that her child has met with an accident on the railway, and lies at the station suffering; how she hastens to the spot, and does not even think of the show and vanity in the shop windows she may have to pass. Another time she might linger there, but not now. If our souls are filled with Christ, as I said, nine-tenths of the things that are temptations to us we shall not think of at all. It is living as Christ --

By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

The great mass of the temptations we should escape altogether, because we should be thinking of something entirely different. God has called me up to be with Christ and like Christ, and now I am after that, and am looking for nothing else. We all have some object that we follow with energy and life, and can we say that it is Christ, and that that is the one thing that governs our hearts from day to day?

The Lord give us, beloved, to know what that true liberty is;

where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty

-- liberty with God and from the things around: though we still have to contend, and shall have, too, yet it is with the joy of Christ in our hearts as we go on. God has called us in sovereign grace to be with Himself, like and with Christ for ever, and where the soul is full of the Holy Ghost, there is joy and sustained freshness.

“WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?”
Numbers 23:23
(Notes of an Address)
The thought here is that our state should answer to the state into which we have been brought. Where the conscience is good this is the case: we enjoy the thing into which we have been brought in the measure in which we enter into it. The soul must be broken down; the pride of man, that would meet God face to face, must be broken down -- that pride which is the worst of all. (I am not speaking of brutish sins.) In his natural course man has no idea that sin separates him from God.

But when we come to righteousness, it is another thing. We all know we have sinned, and that heaven is a holy place, and yet we expect to get there. Call it mercy, or what you will, but man would rather be something else than what he is if going to be judged now. The conscience must be awakened by a present revelation of God. The light comes in, and makes everything manifest, and puts us just as we are in the presence of God. There is no pride in the conscience, when we are before God; pride of heart is just being without God altogether. Whom am I to be afraid of if God is not in all my thoughts? When I have to do with God there is fear, right fear; that is the beginning of wisdom. There is never any pride in the conscience when we have to do with God.

These verses we find the most absolute justification; God sees no sin at all.

When you look at it as it is here -- an absolute judgment outside of what we have done -- what hath God wrought? I do not prescribe any particular course of experience, but the pride of heart must be gone to enjoy this.

All the failures of the wilderness had gone before this. (Ch. 23.) Could the enemy, the accuser of the brethren, take up all that Israel had done, and make it a barrier to their entering the land -- hinder our getting into heaven? -- for this is heaven for us. He could not. (Deut. 9.)

They were there at the same moment as when this question was raised by the accuser, Can you go in or not? Well, what is Moses’ account? Incessant murmuring.

Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.

What is the normal state of a Christian? The Christian’s path is clearly living up to his privileges -- Christ our life, walking in the Spirit, accepted in him.

We must either be before God in the lowliness of the sense of the grace of God, or meet a God who breaks us down. What is man’s place with God? -- Lowliness. And that being so, all the man’s delight is being nothing, and receiving everything.
The judgment of the Spirit in a saint is another thing from the judgment about him. By the Spirit of God I see such a thing was not meekness, no gentleness on my part. The Spirit of God judges me according to what I am; that is all right, but when God judges me it is according to what Christ is.

The Spirit of God judges everything in us that is contrary to God; but when the question arises with the accuser, you see what God’s judgment actually, absolutely, is about me, and that is according to what Christ is and what He has wrought. “God is not a man that he should lie.” All the hostility comes to nothing. Why? Because it met God (v. 21);

He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.

Why, Moses had seen nothing else! In one sense God had seen it all. Why has He not seen it? Because He has put it away Himself. There is no such thing seen when you come to the judgment of God about us.

It was not that He allowed the evils. He had humbled the people, and proved them, to know what was in their hearts. They had gone all through the wilderness thus. He had chastened them about their sins. You get all God’s gracious dealings with them in Deut. 8. But here it rests upon God Himself, and I find Christ there, the Lamb that was slain, in the presence of God. Suppose I am broken down, and humbled, and go to God about it, what do I find there? I find the Lamb slain there; a man there. What tale does that tell? That Christ has finished the work and gone back there, and put our sins away.

Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

If I come at the beginning or at the end, I find Christ there. God does not see iniquity in me. Why? Because Christ has put it away. It is -- what God has wrought, not what I have wrought. He undertook that work, and there I find that

by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Christ could not allow sin. Well, then, did He put me away? No; He put my sin away!

We cannot judge ourselves too much and too earnestly. The converted man loves holiness. The question is now, Is God satisfied with what He has wrought? That, of course, is simple. It over-rides all experience. Experience is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but that is desert work.

Thou hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed.

Experience is right; but when you come to the end of all experience, it is -- what has God wrought?

Num. 24:6: “As the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted.” Well, He has wrought in our hearts that we should follow Him in righteousness and
true holiness. When God has wrought, that is the effect. He has taken me in hand, brought me out of Egypt. Who is to condemn? Condemn yourself when you are wrong. But what matter who condemns if God justifies; that is the true side. Are you satisfied with yourself? Then you do not know God at all. Satan may accuse, so as to bring chastisement for our good, but not judgment.

Num. 23:24. Now you get strength. “Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion.”

There I get power.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death {Rom. 8:2}.

Consequent on this we get power against the evil.

Reader, is your heart or conscience on that ground? When you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, are you there in your heart according to what God has wrought? or are you looking to the ground of your acceptance for what you have done yourself? Are you judging of yourself, by yourself, down in the wilderness, or by God, up in the mount? It is God that justifies; the whole thing is God’s work; that is a blessed thing.

Our hearts are able to rest and see there is an end, an utter condemnation of all that is of the old Adam state. The whole thing for the heart to rest in is, “What hath God wrought.” The human heart kicks against that, for man likes to be something. The more we look into it, the more we shall see the value of it. Let us judge ourselves, and walk according to what God has wrought in practical holiness. I am going to be like Him. Well, I must be like Him here, bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

The Lord break us down thoroughly; empty us of ourselves, of all thought that we can do anything; and keep us in His presence, that we may know that joy now; that we may stand there in peace!

PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY
Romans 5:1-11
(Notes of an Address)

The statements in this chapter are founded on the last verse of the previous one. God is calling back our hearts to have confidence in Himself, confidence which man had lost in the garden of Eden. Eve trusted Satan, and thought that God had kept back the thing which would make her happy. No matter how wicked, or how far a person may be from God, he may trust Him. A person that would be ashamed to show his face to any one in the world, may go to God and trust Him. The gospel wins back the heart to God,

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

What God has done in Christ, is, that before He comes to be a Judge, He came to be a Savior. He has anticipated the day of judgment, to win our hearts back to Himself, in Christ. If we neglect this salvation, we are doubly guilty. Before ever the day of judgment comes, God has sent His Son, that we might know His perfect grace, and know it in a work which was the most terrible judgment of sin possible.

Having gone through their sinfulness as Gentiles and Jews, in the first three chapters; and in ch. 4, death and resurrection; in the first eleven verses of ch. 5 he applies it. He speaks of the abundant and rich grace of God; and then in v. 11, you may joy in God; not merely in the salvation, but in God Himself; I may delight in my Father. It is all peace as regards the past; favor and grace as regards the present; and glory in the future.

The gospel is not, that some of our sins are hidden, but they are all out, and I have peace about them because Christ was delivered for them. We may have forgotten many things that we have done, but the Lord knows everything, and He has given His Son for me; there I get peace made by the blood of His cross.

Peace is a strong word. I may have joy, and some trouble along with it, but with peace I have no trouble at all. Christ has met God alone on the cross, and, in drinking that terrible cup, He has made peace for us. I see that Christ came down here for my sins, and the holiness and righteousness of God dealt with Him about them on the cross, so I get peace with God. Sins are the things that make us guilty. The fact of the existence of the flesh does not give me a bad conscience; it does so only when I have let it act. I am justified in respect of guilt; with regard to defilement, I am cleansed; I have offended, and am forgiven. If I am born of God, I see what my sins are; for when we get into the light, we see how dirty we are. Holiness comes in along with justification, but it is not the subject of this chapter. The moment I am born of God, the holy desires are there; and then comes in this beautiful chapter; and I am not merely
justified, but I have power. I am before God, not according to my sins, but
according to the value of Christ’s blood. Nobody put it into God’s heart to send
His Son -- Ah, I say, then I find perfect love in God’s heart. I have got into
God’s own perfect favor, that present grace wherein we stand. He loves me as
He loves Jesus. God never changes. It is not only that the grace is unchanging,
but that I as a present thing am standing in it, and if I look up to God, I have in
my soul the consciousness of infinite favor. I know, in thinking of the cross of
Christ, that it was God’s infinite love which passeth knowledge, that gave Him
to die for us. I know God’s heart a great deal better than I know my own, for I
cannot trust my heart and feelings a moment; but having God revealed to me I
know who He is. I cannot reckon on myself; but when I have learnt this love of
God

I say, Well I know He is not a poor creature like me, for I know who He is.
In that work on the cross, I had no part but my sins; nothing but the hatred that
killed Christ, and the guilt He bore. He was perfect love, and therefore I am on
my face in the dust at the sins He should have had to bear, but He was perfect
love. It is not only that the sins are cleared, but I also get the sense of divine
favor in my soul; it is my present standing with God. How could poor worms
like us talk of being in the glory of God, if God had not brought it about. It is
a wonderful thing. Where God has cleared away all the sins, He gives the glory
too.

I feel strongly the importance of this present “grace wherein we stand”; it
forms the condition of my soul now; I am standing in this favor of God. When
I look up to God, and I see nothing but the light of His countenance, the only
thought I have is, perfect love and favor.

That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.
We are first put into our place; and then it goes on, You are standing there in
favor.

Well, what am I going to get? The glory of God -- “Rejoice in the hope of
the glory of God.”

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.” May be, there is more
evil in my heart than I have yet discovered, “He withdraweth not his eye from
the righteous.” He is always looking at me, perhaps to correct me and help me.
Job was getting into a subtle kind of self-righteousness. With Job, it is God who
begins the battle, not Satan. God corrects and disciplines him, and sends all these
things to help him; until, instead of saying, “When the eye saw me, it blessed
me,” he says, “Now mine eye seeth THEE, wherefore I abhor myself.” “Ah,”
God says, “now you know yourself, and that is all I wanted to teach you; now
I can bless you.” That is the end of the discipline. Having this perfect love in the
heart, we have the key to all these tribulations.

“Patience worketh experience.” If I get my will broken, I know myself
better, and I know God better. The effect of all this is to break my will, and to
purify me of things that I wanted to get rid of. I get broken and exercised, and at the same time know the grace and love and faithfulness of God.

Then I get back to hope. I have the key in the perfect love, to all that comes upon me, and I say, In that, God has been thinking of me to do me good. I have the certainty of God’s love, for He gave His Son for me; and if I were to ask God to give me a proof of His love, He would say, He must give me a less proof than before, for He has already given me the greatest. The proof of the love is, that He has given His Son. The Holy Ghost is power; He is given us, so that there is the revelation of this love; I am in true liberty. In virtue of the blood of Christ, the Holy Ghost comes, and dwells in me.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? How can you go and use your body for sin, when it is the temple of the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost makes me know I am a child. I get the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost; He seals us too, and is the earnest of the inheritance.

Tribulation works patience, because it breaks my will. I kick against the tribulation if I do not see the key to it. A naughty child, put in the corner, knows very well that his father would not put him there if he did not need it. So with us, the Lord puts us in the corner, and there we must stay till He lets us out. I get the experience of God’s faithful love, for I am sure He would not put me there if I did not need it.

He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous. He is constantly and unceasingly watching for their good. In Job 33 it is inward things that have to be corrected; it is correcting a disposition, to withdraw man from his purpose. In Job 36 it is actual failure, discipline for positive faults, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” The Lord has laid His hand upon me, and I must bow. It may not be for a positive transgression, but perhaps a disposition to be corrected. He has something for me to learn; there is something wrong, so He puts His hand on me in discipline. The Holy Ghost being given me, I have the key to it all, in the love of God, and I believe in this love. There are many things to correct in me, which hinder me feeling the love. I know it better, the more I am disciplined and exercised; but I have learned it in God’s having given His Son.

We have the threefold blessing; peace, favor, and glory; then tribulations. How do I know He loves me?

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

He gave His Son for me. If I have the Holy Ghost I am enjoying the love (though that is no proof); but I know he loves me because He gave His Son for me when I was alienated.

God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
His love is emphatic here. God loved these ungodly sinners, who were in one sense a horror to Him. He gave the best thing in heaven for this vile thing on earth. So we joy in God. I have first got to know the blessings then the patience and goodness of God, and then I say, “Well, but what a God I have!” And that is everlasting blessedness. So I joy in God Himself. I have got to know God in this. Just think what a Father I have! My joy is in himself, and though we have it in an earthen vessel, yet we have it still. Along the road to the glory, He never withdraws His eyes from me. What a wonderful God I have! I do not glory in myself, I glory in the tribulation, because it is a proof to me that God is thinking of me.

We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.

It was a great deal to say, I always got the troubles for Jesus’ sake. We get them for our own sake, often. In the thorn in the flesh that Paul had, it was for Christ’s sake and his own as well. The highest kind of tribulation is the tribulation for Christ; only we need other kinds. The principle of sin working in us, often troubles people much. The remedy is, I am crucified with Christ; I reckon myself dead. I am alive to God in Christ, not in Adam; and as regards this old man I say, “I do not own you.” Not only Christ is my life, but I am crucified with Him. I am the same person living by the life of Christ, not by my own life. As a child of Adam I own myself totally lost. God comes and gives me a new life in Christ. All Christ’s death is available for me; so I reckon myself crucified with Christ. I not only have a new life, but I reckon the old one dead. I say to the flesh, You have been judged on the cross, I have nothing more to say to you. Then I ought to be always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, always living in this way. I am not in the flesh before God; I am in Christ, and I know it by the Holy Ghost. Col. 3:3 is God’s statement about death. Rom. 5, we believe it, reckon it true. 2 Cor. 4, we carry it out in practice.

GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN
Hebrews 12:18-29
(Notes of an Address)

The apostle here contrasts Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, and points out what the present testimony is. It is a mistake that we very often make that we are so many responsible persons going on to judgment, and there must give an account of ourselves. That is true of us, but that is very far from all. There has been a dealing of God with man, and He is now dealing with them for the last time; that makes it the more solemn.

It is not now a question of good and evil in us. What the Lord presents to our souls now is, that that question is all settled;

there is none righteous, no, not one;

that is the way He is dealing now. If His grace is refused, judgment is pronounced upon their state; that is what I mean by settled. Now, He comes either in judgment or in warning, and if that is slighted, there is condemnation. The contrast between the two mounts is exceedingly striking. People do not believe they are in this state of condemnation. There the law is exceedingly useful in awakening -- if they judge of good and evil, they cannot judge of what is beyond themselves. Man's judgment is no higher than the evil he has done. A man brought up in dirt sees nothing in dirt; so with the natural mind, it judges according to its own state. God brings in His estimate of what man ought to be. That is what the law is -- as a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. Therefore, “Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake.” “Felix trembled,” not that he was saved, but the word of God was awakening his conscience, because conscience was there. God has dealt probably with every heart here. The word breaks us up, and shows us we are not what God wants; but that is not the will being converted. The flesh abuses everything. God gave the law to convict of sin; man takes it to work out righteousness. But God is not leaving you to the day of judgment; He is dealing with you now, and this is the day of grace.

When the word of God comes home to man -- what man really ought to be -- who could “answer him one of a thousand”? Wherever the word reaches the conscience, it is a present dealing; not put off to the day of judgment, because it reaches it now. Man knows perfectly well he cannot meet it. You know you have not loved God with all your heart today; you have not loved your neighbor as yourself one day in your life. My conscience tells me the law is right -- though I may kick against it. You must not have any thought of your own righteousness in the day of judgment, because you have not got any.
The young man in Matt. 19:16, did not say, “What shall I do to be saved,” but, “that I may have eternal life”; and the Lord’s answer perfectly and entirely meets the question that was asked Him. “This do and live.” The young man said, “This I have done, and what lack I yet?” “Sell all, and come, follow me.” This tested him, for his heart was set on his possessions; he went away from grace. So, in John 8:9, one by one they went away from grace, because they dreaded the eye that could detect them. That is what people do still -- they cannot bear conviction. It is getting away from God, because the heart and conscience cannot bear that which comes out in the presence of God. What a terrible thing that is, if your only hope of comfort is to keep away from God -- to keep out of His sight!

Heb. 8:22. -- We are come, not to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion. Zion is a word of immense import, if we read it spiritually. Zion was not simply mercy and patience. The ark was the only possible means of intercourse with God that Israel had, and they had sent it away; so have we -- so to speak -- looking at our natural state. The importance of Zion was, that Israel had been already tested and had failed. Eli was a godly man, and when he found the ark was taken, and that all was over, we read that he fell backward and died.

You have to be brought to the conviction, like Eli, that it is all over. Then God comes in, not merely in mercy and patience -- that He had been all through -- but God comes in, as He did then, when all the responsibility was closed by the total failure of man, taking the ark out of the hands of Philistines, and placing it on Mount Zion, by David, as now by Christ, David’s seed.

Heb. 8:22, 23. -- The whole scene of millennial glory on earth and in heaven is exceedingly interesting, but I do not speak of that now.

Heb. 8:25. -- How does Christ speak from heaven? It is not, There is a day of judgment, and you must prepare yourself for it; but He comes and speaks to man, and deals with man on the ground of His being a man in heaven. If He speaks from heaven, He speaks not merely of mercy, but of grace, on the ground of an accomplished work. He appeals to our hearts upon the ground of what He is and has done. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, because He has nothing more to do as to making out a righteousness for us. As to the question of righteousness, that work that He has finished is the righteousness that brings us into glory, who through grace, have believed in Him. I get these two things -- the place that Christ speaks from, and the work that brings the people in. He does not reproach you. He comes and tells you, You must not think I am ignorant of what sin is, I bore it. He knows what the consequence is as none other can know it.

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.
Are you learning God in the presence of grace? The hearts of the sons of men are wholly set in them to do evil. Man’s history is a terrible one. Because Christ humbled Himself in grace, man profited by the occasion, in order that He should be despised and rejected of men. And is there not a rejection of Him now? Do not some of you reject Him; do not people know that they are sinners, and yet go on sinning? That is despising it. But where the heart has been brought down, what do I find? Suppose I am coming to God by Him, why, He tells me I am in heaven because your sins are put away. And what can God say if Christ, who bore my sins, is in the presence of God? The thing before me is not judgment, but Christ. If I come to God as a judge, why, Christ is there. He cannot but own that my sins are all put away -- Christ appearing in the presence of God is the witness of it.

The judgment day would be according to my works, but the present day is according to the efficacy of Christ’s work; so we see what a great thing it is for Him to speak to us from heaven. It is an appeal that ought to put to shame and confusion every one that does not bow to it.

By Him all that believe are justified from all things. That is the only faith God will have. Christ is so perfectly glorified that He says, I won’t have any other. If I own Christ, I am nothing; that is the thing that is wanted. Do you want to have a little share of your own pretension in the presence of a dying Savior? If you could get in a bit of your own righteousness, it would be like the dead flies, causing the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor {Eccl. 10:1}. Thank God, that voice, if it is in the soul, is eternal life; it is God’s way of communicating life.

Now, have you all taken this ground that God has taken with you, telling you that you are all lost -- still telling it in grace? Beloved friends, He is not waiting for the day of judgment, when judgment will be executed. He is speaking to you from the right hand of the Majesty on high, where He sat down when He had by Himself purged our sins. Are you going to refuse Him that speaks? I know our hearts drag us down, and the things around us are contrary to us, but it is Christ who has come and presented Himself before our eyes. Remember how He speaks; and are you going to refuse to hear Him, like the deaf adder? Are you going to take God in judgment, when you have despised Him in grace?

The Lord give us to see the truth, and taste the unspeakable love of Him who gave Himself for us, of Him who will with Him freely give us all things!

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST
AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE
(Notes of an Address)

There are two points which are on my mind to say a word about. First, the way in which the Lord’s own presence orders the path and gives character to testimony. Secondly, the way in which personal attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ gives intelligence in everything. The way to get spiritual intelligence as to all the things of God, is to have Christ as everything to the heart.

I turn to the Old Testament with regard to the first point, for there you get a striking history of the total failure of man. Stephen alludes to it in Acts 7, proving that man, dealt with by the law as responsible, was an entire failure, and at the cross man was fully rejected. Man is lost, but the process he goes through is to find it out. To get a clear apprehension of divine things, we must see that we are lost, and if that is the case, we are not in a state of probation. We may get the knowledge of sin by the law, but the thing a man must be brought to the knowledge of is, that he is lost! “If one died for all, then were all dead.” This is a very solemn position to recognize ourselves in, but it is not the first thing we learn; we learn first what we have done. If you ask persons if they are sinners, they say, We are all sinners: but if you say, Have you sinned enough to be lost? they say, Oh dear no, I hope not. In the death of Christ, man rejected the grace that had come in to him, and the One who had all the promises. The Gentiles were lawless, and the Jews broke the law; but when Christ came, there was a despising of mercy.

The condition of man from Adam, was that of sinners outside the garden. When God had given the law, it was broken -- and when there was “none righteous, no not one,” God comes into the world in love, and man turns Him out (though, of course, He fulfilled His own purposes at the same time). That was more than sinning against Him, it was positive hatred. First you get lawlessness, lust, and self-will -- then lawbreaking -- and then the positive rejection of God come in grace. The history of man is thus closed, and God begins on His own footing. It is not now what you have done, but as was said to Israel, “What hath God wrought?” The only possible relationship with God, depends now on what God has wrought.

First, the people make a golden calf -- giving up God: that is always the first thing man does. When God sets up something good, man spoils it. Take Adam in the garden of Eden -- take Noah; no sooner out of the ark, than he gets drunk -- then the law, it is scarcely given before it is broken. Aaron too, he never puts on the garments of glory and beauty after the day of consecration. So with Solomon, no sooner established in the kingdom, than he brings in
idolatry -- the same with Nebuchadnezzar, the first great Gentile power. But it is a distinct thing when God comes in grace, for they despise it altogether. Government began on the part of God with Noah (Gen. 9:5, 6), and went on till His Son came -- they rejected Him, and then all was over.

There was a little supplement in the beginning of Acts but when Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, testifies to a glorified Christ, they reject a glorified Christ, as they had rejected Christ in incarnation.

But you get everything in which man failed set up again in Christ -- failure in the first man, and God glorified in the second, where He had been dishonored in the first.

At the golden calf, the trial of man was really over. “Yea, he took up the tabernacle of Moloch,” Stephen quotes from Amos. That was the root that produced such horrible fruit afterwards. One finds in Moses what grace did. The Lord says to Moses, “Thou hast found grace in my sight, I know thee by name.” And Moses says, “Consider that this nation is thy people,” he pleads for them. There you get the fruits of grace, in contrast with the effects of sin. Moses is a beautiful picture of grace, but not as Christ was. God says to Moses that He will destroy the people in a moment, and they were to put off their ornaments, that He might know what to do. But Moses says,

If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people.

That is just what we have to do. Why must I insist on having God with me? Because, unless I have Him with me in His grace, I shall never get through the wilderness, with this terrible flesh about me. I give as a reason, because I am so bad; and through grace He can have me with Him, in spite of all my infirmities. I say, In my flesh dwells no good thing; if you do not go with me, I shall never get through the wilderness.

It is in separation that God deals in grace with Moses, in connection with his going outside the camp -- the camp was deserted, but God was outside. The tabernacle had not really been set up then: so now, the building of God is not finished. There was nothing established on earth when He said, “I will build my church”; but He did establish a church on earth, responsible in its place, which has failed altogether—that is why we speak of ruin. The Lord says, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”; they never will against what He builds. In 1 Cor. 3 Paul puts the church under the responsibility of builders; but man fails in that, as he does in everything. Paul says to the elders of Ephesus,

After my departing, even of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.

He says, As soon as I am gone you will see how it will all be; and we have seen. Not a stone that Christ builds but will be safe in glory. The history of the
so-called church is a history of iniquity -- if you read the history of the heathen, you will not find such a history as that of the church.

The thing that Moses does, is to take the tabernacle and put it outside the camp. What was the effect of this? The Lord was in it; He came down to the door and talked to Moses, as a man speaketh unto his friend. He comes down in the cloud; we have something better, for we go into the cloud. God refers to this speaking face-to-face as a special favor shown to Moses. When there had been this separation, Moses got such communion as he never had in the camp. When he was up in the mountain, and God tells him that Israel has made a golden calf, and says, I will consume them, but will make of thee a great nation; Moses says, No, Thy glory is concerned in that. Why? Because he identified God’s people with God’s glory; and when he comes down from the mount, he identifies God’s glory with God’s people, and says, “Slay every man his brother” -- you get the very same principle in both cases. If I see God’s people in evil, I say, You must be dealt with by the rod. Moses sets up the tabernacle outside the camp, and God owns it. There was no holy of holies then -- it was a meeting place with the Lord.

And it came to pass that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle. They sought the Lord, that is what governed the whole. The golden calf was in the camp; the Lord was in the tabernacle, which was not then set up in its completeness.

You will see what the communications were with Moses at this time (Ex. 33:13).

Show me now thy way, that I may know thee.

There you get knowledge. Then “That I may find grace in thy sight” -- not that he had not found grace, but he wanted to know it every moment. “Consider that this nation is thy people.” He never forgets God’s people, though God would not call them His people. God’s presence is the next thing. Moses must know God’s way and have His presence. (V.16.) They had sought the Lord when the tabernacle was set up outside the camp, but Moses now wants His manifest presence. Here I find that God’s presence was the center that governed the whole, that stamped the character of the whole thing, and if you have not that, you have nothing. It was when the sin was manifested in the camp, that Moses insists on the Lord’s presence. It was God’s way and God’s presence that were to separate them from all the people on the earth. Moses gets bolder in faith,

I beseech thee, show me thy glory.

But he could not see His glory, there was no atonement then -- the cloud was not His glory. We have here two principles -- one, the total failure of what God had set up, then we get the Lord’s presence and the Lord’s rest.
Two characters are brought out here, Moses and Joshua. Joshua did not leave the tabernacle, that is where the difference is between them. Joshua is the figure of Christ spiritually at the head of His people. We must be as near the Lord as Moses was, and the effect of nearness to Christ is love to all the people of God, even if they go wrong; but, at the same time, if I am near Christ I cannot go with any who are going wrong. It is only so far as we know how to separate the precious from the vile, that the Lord says we shall be as His mouth, but we must be close to Christ to be enabled to do it according to His mind. I am speaking now of broad principles.

The first point I desired to show you was, how the Lord’s presence governed everything; now I will show you some instances of personal attachment to Christ being the origin of intelligence. I was greatly struck with Mary Magdalene’s history in John 20. The disciples go to their own homes, but there was no home for Mary without her Lord, and she stands there weeping. Though she turns and sees Jesus, at first she thinks He is the gardener. Her attachment to Him leaves her all alone with Him; it will lead to communion with others, but there must be the soul alone with the Lord. The other women came early in the morning, but she came while it was yet dark. The disciples had gone home, but that would not do for Mary; she had not got Christ, and her heart could get nothing, if it did not get Him, and she is the first to whom He reveals Himself, and makes her the messenger of intelligence, for the disciples as yet knew not the scriptures. To her He says, “Touch me not.” He did not mind the other women touching Him, but He says to her, That is not for you yet, 31

But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my father, and your father; and to my God and your God.

This is the first time He calls them brethren. Mary got the truth from Himself; He tells it to the disciples, but it is by Mary He tells it. There I get the secret of divine knowledge, and so you will always find it. She was wrong in one sense, in seeking the living among the dead, but there was this thorough attachment to Christ, and the consequence is that she gets the first revelation of Christ. She was the vessel of knowledge because she was attached to Christ.

Take the woman who was a sinner, in Luke 7; there was thorough attachment to Christ, and what was the consequence of this poor wretched creature’s love? There was light, the knowledge of complete salvation, whilst the self-righteous Simon, delighting in his own heart, was in perfect darkness -- does not think God’s Son even a prophet! But the woman loved much, and the Lord turns to her and says,

31. {JND has not here really explained here why Mary was not to touch (or, hold on to) Him. Consult his writings on John.}
Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

One sees forgiveness, salvation, and peace, connected with that poor creature’s attachment to Christ. Her heart had been won to confidence, and she gets salvation revealed.

Take another instance. There was Martha and there was Mary. Martha was much cumbered about much serving, but Mary was sitting at the Lord’s feet, hearing His word: just what He wanted. And what is the consequence of this learning? That she knew His mind. When Lazarus is dead, Martha goes out in the haste of her temper to meet the Lord, but soon returns to call Mary, saying, “The Master is come, and calleth for thee.” Martha had the consciousness that she was not equal to this intercourse with Christ, so she goes and calls her sister. With Martha, there was no entering into the mind of Christ, but when He sees Mary weeping, He is moved deeply and groans in spirit. So when He comes to Bethany, it was this same Mary who poured the ointment on His head -- her heart did it. The disciples think it a mistake, but He says, “Let her alone” -- she knows all about it. It was not that she could have told prophetically what was the meaning of it, but her heart had got the instinct; she anointed Him for His burying.

Now look at the disciples in John 13. Peter could not ask Christ the question about His betrayal. Why? Because He was not on His breast. John did not place himself on Christ’s bosom to get knowledge, but in being there he got it. As the apostle Paul expresses it,

We have the mind of Christ.

John was in the place where he could get Christ’s ear -- know Christ’s secrets. But now all God’s wisdom and power are in Christ, and to have the understanding of them, we must have Christ; it is when to our hearts He is practically all, that we get into His secrets. Then you are in the right place, and the right thing is done as He would have it done. I shall never get “show me now thy way,” unless I have Christ -- unless He is everything to me. Whether the habits we indulge in, or the things in which we are walking, are grieving to Christ, or whether they are like Christ, we have to look to; because when we come to the end, there will be no life but what we have lived for Christ. The life that we live, answers to the Christ that we find when it is over. We would not like to be found not doing our duty, but faith makes present those unseen things, so that we live upon them, and we live Christ and can say, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

The Lord give us to find Him everything, beloved friends; He is far more full of love to us than we are to Him. May He lead our hearts closer to Himself, that we may get the secrets of His grace and wisdom, and then go forth in the Spirit, to live a life of practical sanctification to Christ, without losing the judgment of self!

“GOD WAS IN CHRIST”

2 Corinthians 5

There are two great aspects of the gospel in this chapter: first, That to which we are called, and for which we are made fit; second, The testimony God has brought out of sin in us, and Christ’s work meeting it. It is good to apprehend what the calling of God is, in order to know what is needed to be in it. There is no reconciliation of the old thing as such, but complete reconciliation in the new man. The judgment of man is pronounced, “now is the judgment of this world.” God’s dealings with man in the flesh are over, the flesh is set aside for ever. In the new state of things brought in by Christ in resurrection, “all things are of God.” As to the body we are not in it yet, therefore it is good to be “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” The moment we get hold of our calling “to his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12), we are brought into the presence of God. He is also enabling the soul to apprehend the glory. It sees that a work entirely of God must be done in order that man may enter glory. Could you put yourself into Christ’s glory? “He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God.” The presence of God revealed to the soul, gives true, thorough conviction of sin. It does not mind what man thinks, because it knows what God thinks. Sin is a shameful thing, but the presence of God produces thoughts that are beyond shame. The moment the soul is before God, it hates, judges sin, cannot think of hiding it, would rather be in truth before God -- “there is truth in the inward parts”; shame before man leads to the concealment of sin. God’s true light manifests everything, but when the heart is set right, it takes God’s side against sin -- there is forgiveness; all is right when looking at what we are in the presence of God. We are called to “God’s kingdom and glory” to be conformed to the image of His Son. We have a life -- divine glory belongs to that life. It is God that justifies. He says that is right in My eyes, God Himself pronounces. That is what I want, this full, blessed justification connects itself with glory -- “Whom he justified them he also glorified.” “We wait for the hope of righteousness” (Gal. 5:5). This is what God is calling us into in Christ, That which is announced in the gospel is: Christ as man is in divine glory. It is “the gospel of the glory of Christ.” That has been done which has put man into the glory of God. This new thing is man, the center of all the glory of God. It will be accomplished of course in Christ by-and-by,

that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth {Eph. 1:10}

-- or as it is expressed in Revelation,
the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

It is to this glory of Christ we are called. It shines in upon the soul. Are you fit for this glory? If not, what are you fit for? You cannot stay here on earth for ever. Where are you going? If not into the light it must be into the darkness, that is opposite to it. There is no medium. We have this in the parable of the king’s son -- Jesus had spoken of seeking fruit before; now He is speaking of grace that seeks nothing, it is a feast prepared. Those bidden are from the highways and hedges, and no matter what they were before, but they must have the wedding garment. The prodigal must have the best robe to enter the house -- he must be suited to the house. Have you, my reader, got that. We see what the calling is, can you say, “I have got what is fit for the glory I am going into?”

You may be getting it, the Lord leading you into it, but without it what are you fit for? You and I must either be outside or with the wedding garment inside.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Did He not suit Himself to all to win their hearts? He came with the invitation to turn back to God: but no -- they would not: for His love He got hatred -- terrible witness of man’s entire ruin -- he is dead; alive indeed for himself and for his fellow men, but there is no movement of his heart toward God.

He came to his own and his own received him not.

Yet in Christ there is perfect love -- no reproach. Paul saw the terribleness of the judgment and set about to persuade men. The love of Christ is still pressing upon men the truth we are dead: the link between man and God is broken and cannot be formed again. Does the cross say, “Christ had set the world right?” “One died for all,” unspeakable love, “then were all dead.” Has your soul been brought to the conviction “that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing?”

Could you say you would not have put Christ to death? Could you say, “He would not have died for me, He might have helped me, and purified me”? If not, then you must say, “I am dead, lost, I have no link in heart with God!” The old creation is a judged, condemned thing -- you, as children of Adam, belong to it, the question is, whether you get out of it? Man has emancipated himself from God; what infidelity does, is to justify and proclaim the fact: set up and cultivate man’s will. Cain began this world without God. He went and built a city and called it by his son’s name. They had instruments of music and artificers there -- all to make the world a pleasant place without God; and that is what man is doing still -- he says it is with the faculties God has given -- true: But what is the moral state of man’s heart? is he not away from God? Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” I do not ask whether you recognize yourself as wicked, but
whether you see yourself to be *lost -- dead*? By nature we reject Christ, all our thoughts cluster round self. We prefer pleasure -- everything in the world, our own will -- to Christ. This is the condition of all naturally, was the condition of every one of us, but the One who was not dead, who was acceptable to God, the only One who could be, who was made sin for us. He stood in our place. He, the Holy Blessed One, was made sin. The quickening power of God shows us sin, but we see the whole thing closed on the cross. I see what flesh is, it crucified Christ -- but I am not in it any longer, I belong to the new creation; I am in Christ, who is my righteousness, and gives me the title to enter in. We find the calling into God’s kingdom and glory. We see the veil rent, and Christ is within as man, and in getting there, He has put away all that we were in the flesh. We have to contend with the flesh daily as an enemy, but as to our standing before God it is ended. In Christ we have entered into the new place -- “you hath he reconciled” (Col. 1:21); there is not a thing left between me and God. We are brought into the glory of God. We wait for it indeed as to our bodies, and He has given us the earnest of the Spirit. We have the reconciliation -- reconciliation to what? to God. He did it according to what God is, and we must judge sin according to what God is. When do we know it? now by faith; but we cannot receive it, till we have judged darkness to be darkness. God says, “Where is my Son?” The world must plead guilty of His death; it saw no beauty in Christ, and now prefers pleasure, dress, money, science, anything to Him. I may have to learn a great deal, to go through much conflict, but if I belong to Christ, I am reconciled to God. “The love of Christ constraineth us” -- is the ground of all our walk. You may have been living to *yourself*; it may have been very decently, none of what the world calls great sins, but there are plenty of decent enemies of God, and will *reputation* stand in the judgment? A Christian cannot live to himself in *purpose*, but are you living to yourself in *practice*? You may say you are occupied in innocent things, but nothing can be innocent away from God. Have you judged yourself as belonging to a world that has rejected Christ? We have to leave it in detail -- the flesh continually showing itself in unexpected ways. But God has condemned sin in the flesh. He forgives *sins*, but the *state* He has condemned, not forgiven. Have you known Him, made sin and yourself the righteousness of God in Him. Can you say, I am reconciled to God, brought back to Him? Can you say, I am glad to know all about my sin, “search me, O Lord, and try my heart?”

SEARCHED AND KNOWN

Psalm 139

(Notes of an Address)

The way integrity of heart is produced is by grace, and by grace alone. In the beginning the psalmist trusts God. At the close of the psalm, after he is brought to know God, after he looked at himself as made by God, his whole desire is to be searched out.

There is nothing that produces integrity of heart but sovereign grace, reigning through righteousness. There are people not awakened at all, careless people, away from God, who can boast of their delight to gratify their passions: it is folly as well as wickedness. It is the simple folly of the human heart to go on with an eternity before it, looking to get good out of things here, not liking to think what is before it, because knowing what is at the end of it: judgment, because there is guilt.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; walk in the ways of thine heart, &c.; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

This is where the careless young man that hates the light is; he is gay like a drunken man. He does not know the care of wretchedness; well, he is drunken, morally drunken.

They say, “If you think of God it will make you melancholy.” Why should the thought of God make you melancholy? Because you have a bad conscience. If I saw a child that is melancholy always in the presence of his father and mother, I would say there is something going on there very bad. What kind of heaven would it be if the presence of God made it melancholy?

All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do,
is described in a strong way in this Psa. 5:4-12. “Whither shall I go from thy spirit?” What do souls want to go for? There is a soul before God and afraid of Him. It is a terrible thing, and terrible because it is true. How am I to get out of the sight of God? What a dreadful state, but a great deal better than the state I described before, because I should hope souls would get out of this. What would heaven be to such? “Thou art there.” Well, that is enough for one in that state not to desire to be there.

We know we are in His presence, because our conscience tells us. We may deny it; but when the conscience is at all awakened, it knows it is. It knows that it has to do with God, with One that has knowledge of right and wrong; and I have got a sense of right and wrong, and God has taken care I should. When
man was turned out of paradise, he got a sense of right and wrong, it may be very vague, in the mind; but when the truth comes, there is a distinctness about it; and I know then what I am, and what all things are, “naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” There is not a man in this city that would not be happier now if he could know that he would be happy for eternity.

Here the soul speaks of how it cannot stand in God’s presence, and yet cannot get out of it. If God does work, there must be some little sense of goodness, because He is goodness -- love, if you please. There is some hope in the soul where this is so.

Now, what man always attempts is to make excuse. It does not succeed with you about your children when they do it, and yet you try to impose it on God. The human heart, where it does not get to a thoroughly broken-down state, is always excusing itself. You will find it in the Christian who has fallen and is not really humbled about it: he tries to make excuses even to himself. The excuse was Eve’s condemnation. There is no good in an excuse, because it admits the evil. It leads into falseness if we try to excuse ourselves. Did you ever find a child in the habit of excusing itself that did not get into telling lies? Never! We deal with God as no one would let his child deal with him. We try to deceive God, but we cannot; we never did. You will get plenty of religion in the world, provided it is not God. They may have it from dread: it cannot be rooted out of the heart of man that there is a Being above him, though it may be perverted. There is no truth in the inward parts till we get the conscience thoroughly judged.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart.” Do you think that a person could say that if he knew it was as a judge? I could not do it if I thought I was going to be condemned. You may get carelessness, forgetting God, and you may find an honest heart that hates God’s presence, and cannot get out of it; or the religious heart that is always making excuses for itself. What idea have you of God if you make excuses? Why, you could not put off a sensible man with them.

Well, what gives integrity of heart? Suppose a physician comes to heal you, would not you tell him all your symptoms. This produces integrity of heart, and nothing else.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

No iniquity! no guile! I do not want to excuse what is all put away. Suppose I am in debt. I do not like any one to see my books; I do not like to look at them myself, and there is no integrity. But when forgiven the debts, I like to look at them and see how much is forgiven. I may blame myself, of course, for getting into debt; but a forgiven debt I do not want to hide. The poor woman in the city had got confidence in His love; the love of God manifested in Christ attracted
her heart to Him.

The burden of unconfessed sin is a terrible burden upon the heart. A secret is hard to keep, but a sin is dreadful to keep. One is always afraid of its coming out, and yet we know God knows it all. There is a comfort in being honest in the inward parts. And did the Lord ever reproach a poor sinner who owned his sin? Never! Though they had been insulting Him the day before, He tells them He came to seek them. Oh what a comfort to find I can perfectly trust Him! The heart rankling under the burden -- and now to be able to bring it all out to One we can perfectly trust! The thief says, “we indeed justly.” He tells it out because he can trust the Lord. I can go to Him and get my conscience perfectly relieved. I tell it out, and find nothing but love. He comes and presents Himself to us and says, “You may trust Me.” You say, “No! I have sinned too much.” “That is the very reason for coming to Him; you cannot escape judgment -- so I have come in grace.” I get the two names of God revealed (v. 12): and when everything is fully revealed, I meet perfect love. God is light: in Him is no darkness at all. Well, here I am in the light, and in the light just as I am; how came that about? Why, that He is love. What the gospel does is not to allow a single sin to stand in the presence of God, but to have it taken away in grace -- and that gives integrity of heart.

There I am weeping (Luke 7:38). It is an immense relief, but it is not peace. But then comes another fact. You all know that He died for sins to put them all away. The person of the Lord Jesus Christ brought down to man, in grace lifted up upon the cross, has wrought propitiation for our sins. When I know He has come in grace I can say, “Oh, but He has borne MY sins upon the tree”; it has nothing to do with any work in our hearts. As I have often said, the importance of it is, there is nothing of mine mixed up with it, only my sins and He finished the work according to the perfection of God, when there was not a single thought about it in my heart. I find that it was when I was an enemy the work was done for me. Whenever a person believes in God all the fulness of the work belongs to him. The heart that is utterly bad does not like to submit to the righteousness of God -- to a work done entirely outside ourselves, it is too humbling. We mix up in our hearts the work for us with the work in us. Good feelings we ought to have; as a result we ought to walk in them. God will have right feeling for Christ, but no right feeling along with Christ.

You say, My heart is not happy about my debts being paid. Well, the reason is you do not believe it: when you do, you will be happy. If you do not believe what God says you cannot be happy. Feelings are right, for they are the work of the Spirit in us: but that is not the work for us. We must have Christ and His work, and nothing else whatever.

The worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins.
The dread of consequences is not the motive of the Christian’s walk. You
cannot know the love of God and not love Him. A real love to God is a sense of His love in the soul. Love is shown in the child’s sense of the parents’ love to it. The moment I have my conscience cleansed for ever -- for ever, because the blood is always under God’s eye -- I find Christ, who has put them away. Then I take God’s side against myself.

Verses 23, 24:

Search me, O God, and see if there be any wicked way in me.

I can say to God, I want your eye to search my heart. There is the integrity of the saint. The integrity of the sinner is letting out all before God; the integrity of the saint is, “O God, search me.”

It does not say, “and see if there is any way of goodness in me.” That he found in God. He does not want to find any goodness in himself: God does, for He has put Christ in him. The more spiritual we grow, the more we find out what we are.

And now, beloved friends, can you honestly say, “Search me, O God?” Are your hearts honestly so before God? Have you so seen the love of God as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ that you, as sinners, can open your heart to Him? He does see it. It will come out in judgment, if it does not come out in your conscience now. The very thing God is exercising us ALL about is thinking “no eye shall see me.” A man cares for his character before man, who does not care about what God thinks. A man who would not cheat men is cheating God continually. We cannot, in reality; He knows it all.

Now, do you trust Him enough to tell all out to Him? As Christians, are you able to say, “See if there be any wicked way in me?” I am not afraid of His imputing it, but are you afraid of His taking it away? You may be afraid to say it, because He may cure you of it. There are some Christians that keep their own will in a little cabinet, locked up. They pray and get answers up to that; but that is locked, and they never get on. Such a man is preparing something for himself -- decay of soul, if not chastening. Whenever self works in anything Christ is not all: whatever hinders Christ is a wicked way. I am not now speaking of what is positively evil.

If you begin to think of your heart, are you glad that God should bring up what is in your heart, and say, That is the way I look at it? Could you say you would like God to give you His thoughts of it all? The Lord give us so to be under the eye that is never withdrawn from the righteous, as to be capable of enjoying Him without hindrance; every Christian in the bottom of His heart does wish it, but practically, if you knowingly keep a part in that way, you are sowing something for yourself that love must chasten. When I can see blessedness in the day of judgment, then I can say, Remove from me everything that hinders.

There is no integrity of heart without a perfect knowledge of grace. The
heart cannot be with desire before God, unless the work of Christ is known. The Lord give us to have truth in the inward parts -- and that we can have, because He visits us in perfect grace -- that we may grow unhindered as a garden of the Lord’s planting.


THE HEAVENS OPENED

Acts 7

(Notes of an Address)

This chapter is a very remarkable one in this respect: it is the Spirit of God summing up the whole history of man until Stephen was thus put to death. It is the rejection of the last testimony of God, all the dealings of God with man and the result of it as summed up by the Spirit of God; and what man’s condition was as under those dealings; and then the blessed truth that a Christian cut off goes straight into Paradise.

What makes the chapter striking is, that Stephen was the first man that was carried up into heaven this way after Christ; he went to heaven so as to close the then testimony to man upon the earth. It was the turning-point in the history of man under God’s dealings, and of what the ways of God were. Stephen went to join Christ in heaven; that gave back-bone to his testimony. He recounts everything that had passed since Abraham, right on to the death of Christ, and then goes to heaven.

We speak of salvation -- the grace of God that brings salvation. Salvation supposes something _lost_; if people are lost, I speak of the necessity of this salvation. It is not _help_ we want, salvation meets what is _lost_.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation . . .?

It is not merely the change in people, though there is a change in all their ways, habits, and spirit. God had come down and met people in the condition they were in; they could not meet Him at all, _but He brought them out of that condition_. Christ died

the just for the unjust, that he might _bring us to God_.

We were away from God then, and God has been dealing with us to bring us to Himself, because we are not with Himself at all. The death of Christ has nothing to do with help; if He had not been the Son of God He would not have done it. The testimony we have of the Lord Jesus Christ is, “He came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Now it is the summing up by Stephen here, that brings this out so distinctly and definitely. Man turned out of paradise -- the flood -- the law, after that we
all know the world that now is. There have been these provings, testings, and dealings of God with sinners, which is important, because man fancies he can remedy this. Now God has done everything He could do, and the result is man is proved to be lost; I do not mean finally lost, for God can save him, but as to the state he is in, entirely away from God. He has not got life. Life through whom? “This life is in his Son.” “He that hath the Son hath life.” If you have not the Son you have not life, there is nothing to be helped. You have not got the thing which puts us into relationship with God. There may be natural conviction of sin, or the law applied to the conscience, or the wonderful grace of the gospel making you feel confounded that you have lived without it at all. He is on the one side guilty, on the other lost. As regards his condition and state he has not righteousness. “None righteous, no, not one.” You may be extremely amiable, pleasing and sweet to nature like the young man in Mark 10; the Lord tests him, and directly he goes away from Christ, for he loved money. It is very pleasing, of course, to find amiability and the like, but it is a natural thing in man, as you may find in any other animal, one vicious, another well disposed.

Remark the perfect calmness of Stephen before the Sanhedrim, the way in which he goes through the whole history they gloried in (as God can go through your history and tell you all that ever you did), and brings their own path and conduct to themselves, to show them what they were and how it had all issued in their state. He begins at Abraham where everything began afresh. People built Babel, not as some have fancied so high that the flood could not reach them, but to make themselves a name that shall not be scattered. Then when they had been scattered they turned idolators, worshiping devils, and then God called out Abraham. Now you must leave your country, and your kindred, and your father’s house; grace comes and calls him entirely out from all this. He half went, first, and did not get there. Then when Terah was dead “he removed him into this land.” There is no condition whatever connected with Abraham.

In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed, blessing to the Gentiles. God comes in His own grace and promises His Son. Then He sets about to deal with man in every possible way. Four ways -- the law, the prophets, His Son and the working of the Holy Ghost. We sinners are not in paradise, even an earthly one -- man has been turned out too, for you cannot have corruptions, passions, and lusts walking with a holy God. It cannot and ought not to be. If you could take man and put him into heaven, he would get out of it as fast as he could.

You get these four steps.

He gives the law they did not keep it;

the prophets, “which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?”
His Son, “of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers”; the Holy Ghost, “ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.”

Everything in which God could deal with man had to be gone through and tried, and that is the way it turned out. This grace, this special mercy that spared them on the intercession of Jesus, and now there was a testimony of a glorified Christ if they would receive it, and they sent back the messenger, we will not have this man to reign over us.

They put to death the humbled Christ, and refuse the testimony of the glorified Christ.

There we get the history of man and the history of your hearts. Who has not had the law practically and broken it? Who has not had the testimony and neglected it? Who has not had Christ presented to him, and preferred money, vanity, dress, or a thousand things? and the testimony of the Holy Ghost remaining without any effect. It is the very history of the world and of the little world of your hearts. I find I am a sinner, that is God’s judgment of my state, but there is salvation for the vilest; I should not be here if there were not. But more; when

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, when He came into this ruined world in grace, they would not have Him. We forget we are in a world in which the Son of God has been and is not. How came that? God says to the world practically, what have you done with My Son? What can the world say but, we have crucified Him. Was there any reason for it, was He really a malefactor? Was He even like John the Baptist, severe? There He was healing all who were oppressed of the devil, removing every sorrow, even of death, manifesting God, for God was with Him. Ah, said the world, we will not have God, and as He willingly gave Himself He could be easily got rid of. And this is what man is! God came in grace into the midst of this world and man would not have Him, and there is this additional fact for us, that He died for us.

Go and introduce Christ where men are having their pleasures, quiet, gentle society, or rough society, what would be the effect? It would stop them directly. Take a man aside for a few hours, he will think of his pleasures or his troubles, but you never heard of a natural man thinking of Christ, for it is never on his heart, and if it is brought to him, his natural inclination rejects it. There is God’s account of all of you.

What does wisdom do? Justify God; not themselves. I justify God where the testimony of the condemnation comes; I say God is right, I ought to repent, and I justify God in the testimony of sovereign grace in His Son, I bow my head with thankfulness. When a man is really taught of God he justifies God.
Now we have to see how God meets this state, which is the gospel. Not what I have wrought but what hath God wrought, and I find

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;

also,

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

He saves what was lost, makes propitiation for guilt and gives life to those that have none in themselves. Christ has come into this world to show what God was to the sinner, that wonderful unspeakable fact that

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

God Himself has come as a man to show His interest in man, and has gone through it, the Holy One whom sin could not defile, to carry the blessedness of God’s own love to every one who had a need. What brought Him here? Did I ask Him to come? Just His own love. We get this blessed love of God come amongst us. I know God not in speculating about what He may be, but in the blessed knowledge of what He is. If He had not shown me all my sins, I might say, “If you knew all I was you would have nothing to say to me, I know my own heart but I know God’s heart too.”

People call God merciful, which means that they hope God will think as little about their sins as they do themselves; it is awful how little man thinks of sin. They think it horribly bad to wrong their fellows, but they may calumniate God as much as they like. God cannot and ought not to be indifferent to sin; He would not be the holy God if He were. Am I to go defiled into heaven and spoil heaven itself? The love is an idle love that never displayed itself; where love is thorough and real it measures the wants and takes the case thoroughly into account. He bearing my sins in His own body on the tree was made sin for us; whether as regards the tree or the fruit, He stands before God and these sins have been dealt with. I do not wait till the day of judgment to own them or to know that they are put away. Where there is faith, “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” and we stand, as God has told us, in His presence as white as snow.

When we look at the cross, the more we weigh it the more we see how perfectly God has been glorified. I own that my sins brought Him there. The only part I had in the cross was the sins that brought Christ there, and the hatred that put Him to death. If it humbles me in the dust, all the better. The work is divinely perfect between Christ and God about these sins. The wrath was such that even in the thought of bearing it, He sweat great drops of blood, and while it bows my heart and my conscience, I find that God has already dealt with the sins in the grace that put all away, before ever I come to the day.
of judgment.

I may have been attracted by grace or alarmed by the terror of the Lord; one is the love getting into your heart, the other the light getting into your conscience, and God is both light and love. The work in which He bore my sins and put them away, is perfectly done, in virtue of which God has set Him as man at His own right hand; there I find salvation. The work is finished, I accept it, I am only too glad to have it, but the thing that gives me peace is that God has accepted it, for He has raised Christ from the dead. The glory of God Himself now in the face of Jesus Christ is the witness that the believer’s sins never can be remembered any more. Whereas the glory of God formerly alarmed and frightened us, now God has set Him at His right hand that you might be able to look at it in perfect peace. How could I walk with God if I did not know whether He was going to condemn me or not. You cannot if you are afraid of Him; but I am made the righteousness of God in Him. He is in the glory as Savior. Oh, the thought that He became a Man, that God is unveiled, and came into this world in unbounded love, making the day of judgment a time of triumph for the believer! I say of triumph, beloved. The believer will be perfectly like Christ,

Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.

We are left here to have our senses exercised.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

I am in Christ. Not only the clearing away of all the wretched things that I have and am in the first Adam, but God has put me into all the blessed things in the second Adam, in Christ. I know before God I am as Christ is. People think this presumption -- if you ever think to be with God without it, it is presumption. If you are in the flesh you cannot please God. The Lord Jesus has said (when the Comforter is come),

at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

It is lovely the way it is brought out to Stephen; he was full of the Holy Ghost; I do not say every one is, though we have the Holy Ghost. The effect of seeing Christ in glory is that we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. He who is in the glory is the One who bore my sins. Now let me look upon that glory, let me think of it, let me tell it; He “loved me and gave himself for me,” and my heart delights to look at Him. The effect is I am “changed into the same image,” my heart gets full of Christ. Stephen in a certain sense becomes perfectly like Christ: he says, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”; the Lord Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Stephen says, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”; the Lord Jesus, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”
When the soul really sees and knows Christ by faith as the One who has saved us, we get like Him, though of course we have to be on the watch against temptations every day. What is very difficult for us in this world is entire superiority to circumstances. There were the people raging against Stephen, and not only that, when they set about dragging him out of the city, while the stones were flying round him, he kneels down and prays for them. Stephen, through the Lord’s grace, is the quiet person, entirely superior to circumstances, always himself with his heart in heaven. There I get the effect of realizing the presence of Christ. So far as we are above the circumstances we pass through, we are always ourselves, and we are the right thing in them. It is difficult, I grant, and requires communion with the Lord and diligence of heart in seeking Him in prayer. Supposing the world does kill us, why we go straight to Christ in heaven like Stephen did -- a witness for Christ here, and a companion of Christ up there, to whom he goes in blessed joy and gladness of heart.

Now, beloved, where are we as to this? Are our souls trusting in that grace in which the blessed Lord came, till He comes to receive to Himself those who have believed on Him. The Lord give us to have our eye fully open to Himself, to know and taste that the Lord is gracious, and then we shall be able to wait for His Son from heaven, the only thought we have, to please Him while here. May we have our eye on Him where He is in glory, so that we may be like Him, and rejoice with our hearts in joy unspeakable and full of glory.


**MATTHEW 16:13-28**

Dear Mr. Editor, I venture to send a few disconnected notes taken many years ago at a lecture by J. N. D. on Matt. 16:13-28. As they are disconnected and imperfect I must, of course, be responsible for them in case I have missed the teacher’s thoughts anywhere. I send them as I find them, in an old note book, the immense interest of the subject impelling.

E. L. B.

Milan, November 30th, 1894.

In this passage we find Christ rejected and a revelation of a higher glory than that of Messiah as an earthly king. I must own His rejection if I wish to understand this better glory (see vv. 22, 23 where Peter wishes to set aside the Lord’s rejection, because his flesh was unjudged).

All is founded on Christ having been crucified and raised . . . On the other side of the cross we have Christ glorified in heaven, and this is the
starting-point whether for the foundation of the church or for our own blessing.

He does not say here that He is the Christ merely, but more -- the Son of the living God. Then He says, “I will build.” Rejected as Christ, He had come in life, and in His death glorified God in the cross. The work was perfectly done, and its acceptance proved. God anticipated the day of judgment in the cross, by giving His Son to be made sin, so the question has been completely settled before the day of judgment arrives. The curse of God was borne, and the power of Satan has been overcome. Christ was heard from the horns of the unicorns, when His work was finished; the old state of things has been completely judged, and now there is a new creation.

The second Man stands alone acceptable to God; and we who are in Him are reconciled to God in a world which is not reconciled.

This may help us to understand the place into which the church is brought.

Now we find ourselves living in a time, when the truth about the church has been lost; and people have a form of godliness, whilst they deny its power. God has foreseen all the evil of the last days, and the perilous times that should come, and has given us this resource -- His word.

From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, &c. (2 Tim. 3).

Paul laid the foundation as a wise master-builder, but then responsibility came in as to those who should build after. Wood, hay, and stubble has been built in, and all that is false will be judged. Thus if people trust to the “church” which God is about to judge, they will be judged with that “church.”

Christ builds the true church after He had accomplished the work of redemption. He builds as One who has the title to build.


In 1 Cor. 3 it is different; God has put into the hands of man the responsibility of building, and this has failed like everything else. People say that man has done no harm in introducing wood, hay, and stubble into the building; but God calls us to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, and we have this history in the seven churches in Rev. 2, 3, where Christ judges all the evil in Christendom.

There are two distinct characters of the church of God.

One aspect is that of the body; the other that of the house.

As to the body, there can be no unreal member in it. We are all (true believers) united to Christ by one Spirit, and to one another.

The house gives a very different aspect; it is the place where God dwells, and it does not cease to be the house because evil has come in, and wood,
hay, and stubble have been introduced. The evil will be judged (see Rom. 9, where professing Gentiles shall be judged as the Jews were). The faithful will be called to heaven, and the apostasy will come in Christendom, after the church is taken away. The evil has already made great progress; compare the church in Acts 2, 4 with the present state of things. If a Chinese came to England, what would he think of Christianity? . . .

There is a new creation which brings us into a new place. No doubt we find ourselves in a very peculiar position, for our bodies still belong to the old creation. Christ bore all our guilt connected with the old creation; and there is a Man in heaven to whom we are to be like. The only perfection set before us is conformity to Christ in glory, and we shall never be satisfied till we have attained that glory. He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth Himself as He is pure.


**Papers From *Food for the Flock***

**THE LORD’S HOST**

Ephesians 6:10-18

It is a little strange that conflict has such a prominent position given to it in this epistle. We find here the fullest unfolding of our position and we get the walk of the Christian drawn from these; but here also it is that especially we are found to be in conflict, and are called upon to take on us “the whole armor of God.” Indeed such a conflict as this is never got into until we know our privileges. In Galatians we have conflict, but not the privileges of the Church; it is not the same thing as what we find here; of course the flesh is not the same thing as wicked spirits. Take the saints out of the world, make them vessels meet for the Master’s service, and that is the very reason they get into the conflict. If we stand in the place of privilege -- every Christian _stands_ in it of course -- but if we have _got hold_ of this place we must get into the conflict. In fact, as the apostle says, If you cross the Jordan you _must_ meet the Canaanite and the Perizzite. Wilderness exercise -- means of discovering what is in our hearts -- all of us know something of; but it is when we have got into the land
that we get into the conflict.

We have “died with Him,” which is just what Jordan is, and are “made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ.” It is the place of every Christian, but many a one does not realize it. Many a one is thinking whether he is not yet in Egypt, and is looking at the blood. But in the Red Sea I get the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the judgment which has fallen upon the Egyptians has saved me; I believe in God by Him who has raised Him up from the dead and given Him glory.

Just as I was driven out of an earthly Paradise because of sin -- of course by “I,” I mean every poor sinner in Adam -- so I am raised up and put into a heavenly Paradise because of righteousness. Passing through the wilderness we have exercises of heart -- we have the manna -- Christ come down from heaven to feed us; we have the water from the rock -- all most useful, that He may do us good in our latter end. Well, then, we come to Jordan, and then we pass death, so to say, and the land is ours -- we eat the old corn of the land.

You get the two places, the wilderness and the land, all through this epistle. He sets us there in our place -- of course we are here in our bodies -- but, you come to the fact, the Canaanite is here. We have our place in Him, but His enemies are not yet put under His feet. The effect is to put us into conflict. You will hear people talk of Jordan being death, and Canaan being heaven; but it never strikes them when they thus talk of Canaan and death that what characterizes the land is conflict.

Now as to those who enter the land they are so completely the Lord’s, that He uses them for conflict against His enemies. How can they fight the Lord’s battles if they are in the flesh? So if we are to have some one successful in these battles we must have someone who is practically dead. See how the Apostle fought them; he kept all that was of Paul completely down, so that nothing of Paul appeared; he always bore about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his mortal body. A man that is dead and risen again, what has he to do with this world? Associated with the Lord in those heavenly places, we are the witness and testimony of what He is there.

Now if you are seeking to maintain the saints in this place, do you think Satan will let you alone? So we get this instruction about putting on the whole armor of God; the moment we get into this place He says to us, You will not get through this in the flesh; you will have to put on the whole armor of God, for you wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all
to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.

In looking at these parts of the armor we may notice that we get first the subjective parts; that is to say, our state comes first, and then comes the activity. There is no divine activity until God has been divinely active with us. The loins must be girded up; the power of truth applied to everything in the heart. God has sent into the midst of this world all the thoughts that can bless man. Christ was the Light of the world, and He brought out everything that was in it. He comes and brings all that is divine and heavenly in a man right into contact with all that is wrong in man. Some people think now that the world is a very fine thing! People fancy that in the cross Satan has been done away with! Why he was never called the prince {god} of this world until after the cross. The truth came into the world, that is Christ Himself, the Truth of God now revealed in the Testament, is brought right into men’s hearts. Well, when it is effectually applied I get the girdle of truth about my loins — my heart well tucked up. In this kind of conflict in order to be able to meet Satan, the first thing of all is, that my heart be entirely subject to a heavenly word. He has brought this heavenly truth to bear upon me, it says, Is this heavenly in your heart? I get in this revelation of Christ, my loins girt about with truth; I get my heart into a strengthened, steadfast state; and whenever I get into this state there is conflict. But the soul goes naturally on; the man’s condition is the effect of truth; the affections are right; the heart is in the truth.

“And having on the breastplate of righteousness.” Beloved friends, all this is practical. It is not righteousness with God. I do not want armor against God. But if I am going to preach Christ, and one can say of me, Why, here is a man preaching who is worse than his neighbors, Satan will take hold of it immediately. We must have on the breastplate of righteousness, the soul and walk all right.

Next, my feet are to be “shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.” Selfishness will always be a contending thing; it says, I must maintain my rights. But the christian carries peace, because he has peace within; he carries through the world the spirit and character of Christ. He had his loins girt about with truth, of course, perfectly; He had on the breast-late of righteousness perfectly; so He could walk through this world, through every thing, passing on in perfect peace. A man can thus walk untouched through everything that they can bring against him; his feet are shod.

Now that I have got all subjectively right, as they say, I can take up “the shield of faith.” The existence of a sinful nature does not give a bad conscience, but it is when we yield to it that we get a bad conscience, and that is why we are told to confess our sins, not our sin. When the heart is right in the first three pieces we can take up the shield of faith. When we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.
There is blessed confidence in God. Satan may do what he can; he may lurk in secret places, -- he cannot break through my shield of faith. He has done his best to seduce, his worst to dismay: a Man in His standing for us has completely overcome him. Therefore it is, “resist the devil, and he will flee from you,” not overcome him; if he is once honestly resisted he has met Christ in us, and at once he runs away; he never can get through confidence in God; the shield of faith is up, and he can do nothing.

So, beloved friends, you find it is the defensive armor that comes first, and the state of the soul. Many a one has got into activity without knowing himself; but with this “helmet of salvation” on he can hold his head up, he knows that salvation is his, and that on to the glory is his portion. He is a man in Christ, -- all that is a settled thing, -- and now he takes “the sword of the Spirit,” he can set about the fight. The first great thing, if we are to be active in the service of the Lord, is that we are to be perfectly right with the Lord. The apostle was always self-judging. It is the man who has the secret of the Lord in power in his own soul who can go out in service. He will not be amazed and distracted with half-a-dozen thoughts, he has the secret of the Lord.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” These two have been always running through together, ever since the time of Mary. She sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His words, -- the word of God and prayer. The moment I get to apprehend that the conflict is against Satan and the wiles of Satan, I find that half the battle has to be carried on with God. Look at the Lord Himself. We find Him in Gethsemane earnestly praying, earnestly praying; and then, when it came, He was perfectly calm; whilst Peter, who was sleeping, cursed and swore he did not know Him, the Lord witnessed a good confession. This earnestness and supplication is from being in God’s interests in the world. People have a fancy that an apostle would go sailing over everything. When Paul was at Corinth he was there “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.”

The blessed Lord went down to where we were, -- made sin for ourselves in the lower parts of the earth, -- all Satan’s power against him; then when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive. He takes us so entirely out of the hands of the enemy that He sets us in a place where we have the same interests as Christ, -- the same interests as Christ, -- a most blessed place, if we only have the power to hold it. But the more you are in the fore-front of the battle, the more you are exposed to the fiery darts; if anyone lags behind he will keep out of it. There is no place calls for more dependence on Christ than when we are in the fore-front of the battle. This leads us to this constant, unceasing dependance, when the apostle leaves figure altogether; it is praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.
Now let me ask you this, Do you find you can intercede much for all saints? I find nothing tests the state of my own soul more than this. Of course, I can pray for myself; if not I shall have a fall. But am I so walking in fellowship with God that I can be in continued intercession for all saints? If I get into God’s presence and find myself not right in the light, of course I begin to think about myself, and rightly too, and there is an end to intercession.

Well, beloved, it is so far this armor of God that I am to keep on while I am here; when I have passed the Jordan, and the reproach of this world is rolled away, I can be in the Lord’s host. It is the wiles of Satan that we have to fear; it is not learning, -- it is not human wisdom. Satan is a great deal more clever than that; he will let a person be as orthodox as you like, but the moment redemption is believed in, the power of superstition is gone. When redemption is really known, all the ritualists in the world will not touch me. People often say, How can such learned and wise men as these give in to Ritualism, infidelity, and such like things? Why, they forget that Satan is behind it all.

Men speak of the incarnation, -- of the person of the Lord very beautifully; but it is never redemption, -- never that Christ has gone before God and settled the question of sin for me. Hold fast, — beloved friends, -- fast hold of that precious truth that Christ has done the work. Infidelity comes and says, Where is the proof of it? I say, I know Him; I have got Him in my heart; that will not do! But the moment we get out of the conscious presence of God we are in danger.

The Lord keep us in this consciousness until the day that He shall come and take us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also.

Food for the Flock, sec. ed. 1875, pp. 39-46.

FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION

People do not really believe that they are lost; they believe that they have sins; but that does not touch the question of being lost. Your sins make you guilty, but your state by nature is, that you are lost. It is quite another thing to, seeing that I have sins, the consciousness that I am lost now. In my natural condition, they go together, but they are distinct; guilt looks forward to judgment; lost is my present state. If I get clear hold of that, then I get Christ dealing with it, and the consciousness that I am saved now. But people neither know that they are lost, nor that they are saved. But, in the Christian, God has brought in a new thing -- he is a new creation; and thus my place is either in the first man or in the second. And, to get hold of what this new creation is, is of immense moment in this day.

All the ordinances and religion that are going on in the world are for man in the flesh. Do you think we shall have such things in heaven? The first man, though the flesh be in us, is done with for faith; God takes me entirely out of
my condition by nature -- though my poor body is here yet of course -- has separated me entirely from the world, though still in it. “Now once in the end of the world,” we read, “hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Do you believe that the world has morally come to an end? God’s dealings with the first man were then thoroughly, perfectly closed. Man may get up an imitation of the Jewish ritual, but it is all over. The religiousness that is going on around us all hangs upon this question: Am I alive in this world, looked at in my relationship with God, or not? I am not! -- Where does the believer get his life from? From heaven. Christ could say: “The Son of man which is in heaven.” We, as united to Him, live of the life which is in Him who is on high. Will you occupy yourself in the improvement of the first Adam? Will you get good out of him? You never will. God has tried, but He could get nothing. The flesh that is in me has had Christ presented to it, and has rejected Him. It does so still. It cannot crucify Him now, but it rejects Him just as much. Lawless, if left to itself, it is not subject to the law of God when under it, neither indeed can be {Rom. 8:7}, and, if Christ be presented to it, prefers everything in the world to Him.

Whenever God set up anything good, the first thing man did was to spoil it. Take the history in order as it comes. What is the first thing? Man himself -- in the garden. And what did he do? -- Then after the flood; you would say if ever anything could have mended man’s manners, surely that would. But no, it is all ruined; the first thing Noah does is to get drunk. Abram is called out of it by grace. But the law is then given. The first thing Israel did was to make the golden calf. The priesthood was set up but Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire on the very first day. The son of David is established; but Solomon loved many strange women, and the kingdom is ruined. Nebuchadnezzar, set up as the head of gold, sets up an idol. And the church is in ruins. “All,” we read in the apostle’s time, “seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” Who says that? The apostle; while he was yet alive that was the state of things. “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God.” Have you not got that nature? Speaking of us as men, have we not got that nature, which is -- what? Enmity against God! And are you going to educate it? to cultivate it? Cultivate enmity against God?

This is what I mean when I say that men do not know that they are lost. When Christ came into the world and went about doing good because God was with Him, men did not like Him. Why? Because God was manifested in Him! -- It is natural that infidels should try to get what good they can out of the old tree; but I am speaking of Christians. It is the first question with the soul, and must be, if I want to get glory -- this truth that I am lost already; you will never get hold of what it is to be saved already until you see that.

It was just at this point, when Pharisaic flesh made its most of religion, that
Christ came into the world. He came in and found a magnificent temple; and that is what people want now. If I go into a church I take my hat off. I do not mean I, of course, when I say this, because I would not go into one, but that is what people do. And they take it off to what? There was a time when God had such a thing -- a temple -- priests -- everything, to try what man in the flesh could do. And now man will go back to it, and says: Oh, you must have music, temple, vestments, to influence people. Influence what? Their flesh! But I am “not in the flesh.”

“Once in the end of the world.” There ended man’s history morally. They said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him”; and there was an end of the world as to the judgment of God, not executed indeed, but pronounced. But then there was the beginning of God, and where was that? In the grave of Christ, as come in the flesh -- the cross, if you please, but it was death -- in the grave. He accomplished the work in perfectness of love to God and perfect obedience in a man -- One who was God, of course, but as man dying on the cross, closing all association with man in the flesh, fully tested by grace as well as law, and God set the Man who had done it at His own right hand. The first man’s wickedness was proved in the death of Christ, and the second Man was taken out of the world; it is convicted of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment {John 16:8}. Of sin, in rejecting Him; of righteousness in that He is gone to the Father, and the world sees Him no more as so come in grace, and the prince of this world proved to be Satan; but there is the Man in heaven; and Christianity is founded upon that. The end is made of the first man in death, and a totally new place is taken in the second Man, in which man innocent had no more place than man guilty, and till I know that, I shall not know what salvation is.

Forgiveness applies to what I have done as the first man. I may sin now, surely, as a Christian, but, if I do, that is the first man -- the flesh. Salvation is connected with my condition as a child of Adam. When I speak of sins, I do not say I am saved; I say I am forgiven. People think that their guilt, as children of Adam, is cleared away, and so it is; but that is only forgiveness; it does not in itself take me out of the position that I am in. But God has judged man; the prince of this world is cast out; and I am now in Christ at the right hand of God.

If any man be in Christ it is a new creation.

Of course, as to my body, I have not got into the new scene yet, but am left here to have my senses exercised to discern good and evil, and to walk by faith and not by sight. He is not talking of the sight of things down here, but he means you have not yet got a sight of heavenly things. But I can go through the things down here, they do not affect me. I have to live down here -- perfectly true; but that has nothing to do with the moral question of the object that leads us:
We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

And then what does he say? Why, I am groaning in this tabernacle meanwhile, desiring to be clothed upon with my house which is from heaven, for He that hath wrought me for the self-same thing is God. God has wrought me. It is not only a prepared place there, but he has wrought me for it -- for that place where is the glory of Christ. The world may come and tempt me, but it is the things that are inside the veil that are mine, and I belong to that scene and that is what is salvation.

A man in Rom. 7 is a renewed man, but he has not salvation; he is a renewed man under the law {in his conscience}. The law was God’s rule for a child of Adam. Well, but what are you? -- I am a child of God. The law deals with a man in the flesh; I am “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.” I get salvation when I get into a place where I am not in the flesh at all. “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” The law is a very useful thing to kill me. The law says: Death and the curse are your portion. I say: Yes; but I died on the cross when the curse was borne. If a guilty man fall into the law’s hands and die there, what can it do with him? Give him up to be buried!

So a Christian is not in the flesh before God; my place -- my standing -- is not there at all. You say: Where is it then? -- Why it is in Christ. I find that

when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;

and what we learn in Rom. 7 is, not guilt, but that we have no power to get out of the condition in which we are. Christ has come and taken me out of the condition in which I was, and put me into His own; by the power which God wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

He has

quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ {Eph. 2:6}.

Well, if I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ, am I saved, or am I not?

What salvation has done is not the merely forgiving me my sins; forgiveness, cleansing, justifying, applies to my responsible and guilty condition in the first Adam; but salvation applies to my state in the second Man. It is a new creation. What would you do if you wanted to make something of a crab tree? Not nurture, and prune, and dig about, and dung it. That God has done with his fig tree. If you know anything about it, you will cut it down and graft it. Until you find out that the old man is utterly bad, and that there is no mending it, you will not give it up. If you cultivate the old crab tree you will have fair flowers but only bigger crabs.
God has gone through the moral history of man’s probation up to the cross, and a little supplementary trial too, if you like, through Christ’s intercession on it for Israel, and He has come to the end of it. I get the whole thing. God’s grace in seeking man in the condition he was in, giving His Son to die for him, and then Christ rising into a totally new place as man, what man as Adam was not at all, and has brought me there in Him -- of course I am not physically there -- and then gives me His Spirit that I may walk in the place He has set me in. In the death of Christ the whole thing on man’s part has closed, and then God begins with His own work. A Man, the Lord of glory, goes down, takes this dreadful cup, goes on the cross into death for us, into the judgment, into the curse alone with God, settles that question with God, and has so settled it for God’s glory that God has set a Man at His own right hand in glory. All the thoughts and the counsels of God came out consequently on that.

One passage we may refer to on this is 2 Tim. 1:9.

_Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest._

I am not saved according to my responsibility; “our works”; saving and calling does not come to me upon this ground. I am saved by the cross. Well, I say, and what part had you in the cross? If you are saved by the cross the only part you had in it was your sins; your enmity too, if you like, in putting Him there. But I find in the cross a death which on the one hand clears away my sins, and on the other hand brings me salvation. The whole of it is God’s work. All alone between Him and God was that work; the darkness was the outward testimony that He was alone with God; His divine power not saving Him from the cup, but enabling Him to drink it. And then He goes to His Father, and the world sees Him, in grace, never any more, till He comes to it in judgment.

“It is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” And again in the beginning of Titus:

_Eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested._

For this purpose of God, to bring us into the second Man, the ground was not laid until the cross.

But when He came it was not only this; He had also in His person the promises for Israel; recollect this. And it is well we should recollect, that there is no promise to the flesh. It was said, in passing sentence on the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head; it was not said to Adam. Was Adam the seed of the woman? He was the only man who was not. The promise was to the seed of the woman -- to Christ. God had had purposes of grace before the world existed, but He began His dealings with Adam -- the responsible man -- and tried him. And, having proved what _he_ was, then I get God’s work; _God_ wrought. If I get what man wrought it was sin and
condemnation. But God has raised His Son from the dead, and my place with God being in Christ after His death -- after the power of Satan being broken -- after my sins being put away, judged in Him -- I am a new creation, I am in the second Man, I am not in the flesh. You will never know what salvation is until you know that you are in Christ; then

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh {Rom. 8:2, 3}.

Sin in the flesh is condemned, not forgiven, but condemned where Christ was a sacrifice for sin, and, where the condemnation was, death was; so that there is no condemnation for me now, but I am dead to sin.

I will not say any more, but I am anxious this should dwell upon your minds; it is of great moment now. We have come back to the Father, kissed, robed, the ring on our finger, and the fatted calf killed {Luke 15}. We have come back. But was it the fruit of what the prodigal did? He was perishing; if he stay where he is he will perish. But he sets out on his way to God. And what is the effect of that? The effect that is on the minds of many: it is -- “Make me one of thy hired servants.” But his reasoning thus only proved he had not yet met Him. And after all what does his experience bring him to? To the Father in his rags! I may say I am running too slow, perhaps stumble in the way, though seeking to go right; but I am always in my rags till I come to my Father. It is the Father who says,

Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.

It is He who had the best robe brought forth; till then the prodigal son was not fit to enter into the house, though he had been going right, and his father’s love shown to him.

Of course then we must bring forth good fruit. If I have got the life of Christ in me, I must bring it out in everything:

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I say, Are you doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus? If not, you have in that case given Him up for some foolish thing or other.

If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living (alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?

I am dead to flesh -- to sin:

The body is dead, because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness.

I am crucified to the world, and dead to the law by the body of Christ. The fact then is this, that I do not belong to the world any more than a dead and buried man does -- of course I mean in the moral sense of it. If I take my privileges, I say I am seated in heavenly places. If I take my position in the world, I have
nothing to do but to go through it as He did.

The Lord give us clearly to see what salvation is: that it is the taking me out of the first Adam and putting me into the second Man.

He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

I entirely acquiesce in the general purpose of H. C. G. B. The I of individuality needs no proof; it is in the consciousness of everybody. I cannot use the word without declaring it. So that I have not accepted the famous dictum of Descartes: “I think, therefore I am.” The moment I say “I,” all is said and proved, and better known than if attempted to be proved. The thought of excusing oneself because it is the old man who acts is utterly false and evil. I am responsible, and ought through the power of Christ who has set me free, to have kept the old man, or the flesh, if we are so to speak, down. Not merely reckoning it dead, but bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

But it seems to me this paper is defective in not adequately recognizing the existence of flesh -- of what lusts against the Spirit.

I do not think there is any difficulty in scriptural statements, where difficulties have not been made by those who wished to obscure the truth. When I say, “Not I, but Christ liveth in me,” the soul taught of God knows that the I which does not live -- is not owned -- is the old Adam I. And when it says, “Not I, but sin that dwelleth in me,” it gets the comfort of knowing, though not yet delivered, that the new life is a distinct thing, and that I can judge the working of sin in me as a distinct thing. To the heart that walks experimentally, and is taught of God, all this is light, not obscurity. It is only so when false teachers seek to puzzle the soul.

“As in Adam he has died” is an unhappy phrase, though I understand it, because in Scripture it is used in the exactly opposite sense, and all have died in Adam. By man came death, but that was by, not to, sin, which is what the writer means here.

Next I do attribute all evil found within to the old man. Negatives are always dangerous things. “As though” qualifies it, I admit, but very inadequately, because the evil is in and from the old man, or at least the flesh. The object of the sentence is right, but the form regrettable.

So again: “Strictly speaking, the old man has no present existence.” -- Now what is the meaning of this? Has the flesh no present existence? and am I not to distinguish it? I admit my responsibility fully to keep the flesh down, and I am to blame if I do not. But, though the old man may be used to signify my Adam existence without Christ, yet it is so used here as that the distinct existence of what lusts against the Spirit is ignored.

We are told: “If he find sin there, he must not plead for it in excuse that it
is his old man (So far very well, only I should have left out “for it,” and say “in excuse” -- meaning plead for himself in excuse, not for it.) But must honestly confess that it is himself.” I admit his fault, his responsibility fully. Through the Spirit he should have mortified the deeds of the body, and been full of Christ in the new man. But to say that is himself, with the rejection of its being the old man, destroys, it seems to me, the force of the apostle’s words: “Not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

I admit the personal I. I admit the responsibility, and no excuse because the sin is there, but there is an ignoring the flesh, the two things contrary the one to the other, because Scripture teaches, which it does, that the old man is put off. We are told the old man is of the past. In one passage the fact is admitted that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, but then how is what people really and experimentally mean by the old man, a part which has no present existence?

If the paper adequately recognized the fact that the flesh is a present thing, I should not object at all to saying that the old man is a past thing. But this is not the case. I have put it off and put on the new. I am not in the flesh. And this is important, very important, to make clear. But the old man being habitually used for the flesh, even if incorrectly, and this being said to have no present existence, while the flesh is practically ignored, I fear that defectiveness as to this latter point may mislead, as well as the error the paper justly combats.


A READING ON GALATIANS 2:19-21

You get four things brought out in this passage: the law, the cross, Christ the life, and Christ the object.

First. It is the righteousness of the law; the rule and measure of what man as a child of Adam ought to be -- loving God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, and doing nothing forbidden in the ten commandments.

People forget the character of the law; it comes and requires obedience, and pronounces a curse if you do not keep it. It is very different to come and exact a debt, and to come and pay it. The law only exacts; and the moment we have got a sense, not merely of being outward sinners, which a man may escape, but of the law reaching the inner man, it is all up with us: “sin revived and I died”; “I through the law am dead to the law.” Just because the law is perfect, it says you must not have lusts; but I have when under it, and I like to gratify them too; and, if not, cannot get rid of them. Then it kills. And that is just what we want as to the old man.

But then there is another thing. If it kills, it condemns too; and that is why
it is said to be a ministration of death and a ministration of condemnation. But the way God has set about it is this: “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God”; and the way to that is, He did it through Christ; He took the condemnation, and I have got the death, and lost the condemnation.

He takes the law in its nature first, and through it I am dead. But being by Christ, and the crucifixion of Christ, I get the death, but not the condemnation; that Christ took; and then I am to reckon myself dead. Not merely Christ crucified for my sins, but I with Christ -- the way of getting rid of the old man and the condemnation together. The old man condemned in Christ, and I dead: “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh.”

Very well then, I say, I am dead. -- Then there’s an end of you! -- No, say I; “nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ.” It is death for the old man, and I have got another life: “not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

We have got thus three things spoken of: the law, the cross, and the life. Now there is the fourth, the object. “The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.” As it is said in Colossians: He is “all” as the object of life, and “in all” as the power of life.

It is the same thing here in other words. His only object in living was Christ.

What is “the faith of the Son of God”? The faith which has Him for its object.

Is “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (James 2) the same thing? Yes. Some take it as if it were the faith Christ had; quite true, He did live by faith in perfect dependence; but when you say, “the faith of God” -- which it is, where translated, “have faith in God” -- you cannot take it as God’s faith.

It is sweet to see how Paul’s heart turns to what the Christ is whom he knows: “Who loved me, and gave himself for me.” God speaks of my loving Him, but I must know first that He loved me: “Not that we loved God, but that he loved us.”

It is a distinct thing to hold ourselves dead, knowing that we died with Christ, and to say he died for our sins. The Red Sea and the Jordan give us {respectively} His death for us, and ours with Him. At Jordan the ark went down, and stayed there till all Israel had passed over, and then they were circumcised; the reproach of Egypt was never rolled away in the wilderness, it was at Gilgal.

What is “the reproach of Egypt”? They were not dead -- had not put off the body of the flesh. Worldliness, is the reproach of Egypt; we are “dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.” If the world sticks to a Christian, he is going on as one who is not dead. It was a reproach for Israel to be in Egypt; he ought to be in Canaan. Till
a person is dead and risen he does not get out of Egypt. If I see dress, money-loving, etc., I see Egypt in people. There are plenty of other things, of course. I cannot bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, unless I reckon myself dead. Through Jesus, I have died with Him and am in Canaan; and then comes the practice. They went and won victories, and came back to Gilgal. So you will find with us; if one has been blessed in ministry, and does not come back there, he goes back in his soul.

Does the Red Sea go beyond forgiveness?

Yes; it is redemption: “stand still and see the deliverance of Jehovah.” He is a Savior, and He takes them out.

As to doctrine; will it go as far as Colossians?

Not quite.

As far as Romans?

Yes. But you do not get the full result in Romans.

Is the Red Sea being risen with Christ?

Yes. The Red Sea and Jordan coalesce. The wilderness is no part of the purpose of God. It is of His ways. The wilderness is not spoken of in Ex.3 and 6, nor in 15. The Red Sea is Christ’s death and resurrection, which deliver us; Jordan our death and resurrection with Him, which brings us into a new position -- into Canaan. All is complete, in a certain sense, at the Red Sea -- they are brought to God; but there is a new position in heavenly places not revealed there.

Where would Colossians come in?

Colossians takes a man as risen with Christ, but does not take him into heaven. In Ephesians he is in heavenly places, just where you want the armor. People do not understand what that means. The moment the Israelites cross Jordan, the man with the drawn sword meets them. Satan says: I will not have that. -- But I am {in} the Lord’s host. It is no question now of saving me, but I have to act for the Lord in spiritual service.

There are two distinct things in which the Ephesians’ starting-point is completely different from Romans. The starting-point in Romans is man’s responsibility: he is guilty, all the world is guilty. There are proofs of sin both in Jew and Gentile; man is looked at as alive in sins. In Ephesians he is dead in them; a different thought altogether. Alive in sin in Romans, but, for that very reason, dead towards God -- not a movement in his heart towards God. After a man is dead he neither speaks, nor moves, nor feels. I want to be dead to sin, and alive to God, and then everything changes. The point is to get sins and sin dealt with; the fruit cleared away, and the tree dead; and this is fully brought out in Romans: “Propitiation through faith in his blood”; and then, “Reckon ye yourselves dead to sin.”
In Ephesians I get nothing of the responsibility at all, nor a man being justified, but the counsels of God according to the good pleasure of His will. Dead in sins, quickened together with Christ, and so you can get all the fulness of blessing in Ephesians. Christ comes into that place for us, and having put away our sins, in coming down to death, God raises us all up together. In Ephesians you do not see Christ till He is dead: “Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavens.” It is a new creation; there is nothing about being justified, for I am a new creation.

In Colossians you get both (Col. 2); only he does not pursue it on to put us into heavenly places. “The hope laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5) -- not yet in heaven: “Seek those things which are above”(3:1) -- seek them.

In ch. 2 you get both things: “In him dwelleth all the completeness (I put it so to connect the two words) of the Godhead.” He, all the completeness of God, and I, complete in Him. “In whom also ye are circumcised . . . in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” True Christian circumcision is practically realizing that I have died. “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.” Here I get Romans and something more. Then in v. 13 I get Ephesian doctrine as to our natural state: “You, being dead in sins, hath he quickened together with him.” But it is not carried on to sitting in heavenly places. In Romans he speaks of being dead with Christ, but does not go on to show us risen with Him. The moment I am risen with Christ, I am getting into the same place as Christ; not merely justified as an individual before God, but on the way into the new place of being united to Christ in heaven.

“You being dead in your sins . . . hath he quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses.” I was dead in my sins, and Christ dies and puts them all away, and the sins I was guilty of are all gone. He has forgiven us all trespasses because He put them away; and then God comes and takes Christ, and takes me, and raises me up from the dead; and He goes further and says: “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” Now you are to have your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Ephesians takes us on from having our affections in heaven, to being ourselves in heavenly places.

Food for the Flock, 1876, vol. 3, pp. 153-159.

FRAGMENT

You cannot touch pitch without being defiled, and there is a great deal of pitch in these days. Thinking with the world, and talking like the world, the heart gets into the color of the world. It is not Christ. But the heart that is set free
lives in the things that Christ’s heart delights in, and lives in the atmosphere where Christ’s heart dwells, instead of being dragged after a thousand things.

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