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Introductory Notes

The papers, books, and articles herein are taken from editions in print while F. G. Patterson lived. Sometimes latter editions are “edited” and do not always reflect the original writer’s thoughts. The reader has before him, then, unedited copies of the originals. The reader will find material added in braces { }. Some of these are added Scripture references for Scriptures cited by the writer. In some cases where he referred to a chapter only, the book and verse was substituted without the use of braces. That is not what is meant by editorial change. Moreover, this assists creating a Scripture index.

Some footnotes have been added, and all added footnotes are enclosed in braces { } so that the reader knows such a footnote was not written by F. G. Patterson. On occasion a few words have been inserted, in braces, in the text to smooth the sentence a little.

A paper on Baptism is found in an appendix because the paper from which this was copied stated that it had not been published. Therefore it was copied stated that it had not been published. Therefore it was not included in Part Two: From Published Pamphlets.

Collecting F. G. Patterson’s writings in one book has made it possible to create both a Scripture and a Subject Index to his writings.

F. G. Patterson edited a periodical, Words of Truth, vols. 1-8, and Words of Truth, New Series, vols. 1-3. It seems that this periodical ceased at the end of 1876. Articles in this periodical which had his initials appended are included herein. Possibly he wrote some other articles to which his initials are not appended. Present Truth Publishers is not aware of this, if that be the case. However, all answers to questions in Words of Truth are assumed to be his answers unless otherwise indicated. These answers to questions form Part 3 of this book; and, no doubt, the reader will find them helpful.

Concerning personalia regarding F. G. Patterson, it appears that at present nothing is known of him. A number of letters of J. N. Darby were written to him. Which ones may be determined in The Correspondents of John Nelson Darby, 1800-1882 available from Present Truth Publishers.

The last book herein, Lessons from the Wilderness, is dated Wellington, N.Z., April, 1883. This seems to be one of two of the last things he wrote. His paper, Forty Days, pp. 5-24 herein, was printed in a periodical edited by Christopher Woolston, Words of Faith, during 1883.
Part 1:
Articles from Various Magazines

Paul’s Doctrine:
Is There Ever a Time When
It is of No Practical Value?

(Col. 1; 2 Tim. 3)

The truths unfolded and warnings given in the Epistles of Paul, invaluable at all times, are of incalculable value at a day like the present. The seeds and first symptoms of all that which is now seen in well-developed character around us had their existence thus early in the history of the Church; and divine wisdom, foreseeing the results of them all, has not only foreseen but provided for the difficulties and exigencies of such an evil day. This is one of the blessed characters of the ever-living word of God. It proves, as the difficulties arise and complicate themselves, how matchlessly full of divine and unerring wisdom it is. One is not surprised at anything that tears arisen. Scripture has prepared us to expect that the evils would arise, and the truth would be surrendered, and falsehood glossed over with an appearance of the truth, as we painfully discover around us. Still the unerring and unfailing manner in which it meets, and guides, and directs the Christian who is subject to it in every difficulty of his path, in a labyrinth of evil, and unfolds its varied and wondrous beauty and resources for the Church’s need, elicits a note of praise, often silent, but deep, to Him who is its author, and whose perfect wisdom shines in that which is so worthy of Him!

One is struck with the wisdom and beauty of the style in which Paul, when writing to the Colossians unfolds before their eyes the glories and magnificence of Christ, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell (Col. 1:19). The work of the Father for them and in them, in making them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, translating them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, the center of all His counsels. Their danger lay in “not holding the head”; and thus they were allowing themselves to be deceived by the craft of Satan under the presence of humility and lowliness, and were turning ordinances into a means of gaining a standing before God, instead of using them as a memorial of their having been introduced into a standing known, and enjoyed, and possessed before Him.

Before one word of warning or upbraiding falls from his pen, he discloses the glories of the Son, the center of the Father’s counsels; by whom, through sin-bearing, and death, and judgment, the fulness of the Godhead had cleared the ground for the reconciliation of “all things,” in the new creation, of which He was the center, and through whom believer had been reconciled to God.

What a rebuke to the state of things which we find touched upon in the second chapter of the epistle! -- “philosophy,” “vain deceit,” “traditions of men,” “elements of the world,” “meats,” “drinks,” “keeping of holy-days,” “new moons,” “sabbaths” (which were shadows which had vanished into their nothingness, when the substance, Christ, had come, “voluntary humility,” and such like. Things with which the natural mind could occupy itself, and which had a “show of wisdom” and worship devised by the human will, so gratifying to the flesh.

The apostle ranges as it were through the region of creation, providence, redemption, and glory (Col. 1:16-22); as if he said, “There is not a spot in the wide universe of these things that I will not fill with Christ. I will so unfold and expand Him before your eyes, that I will only have to mention the follies of ch. 2 which have occupied your minds, to make you blush about them; and this is the very One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and who dwells in you (Col. 1:27), and ye are complete in Him (Col. 2:10). Foolish people, see what you have been doing. Is not that a more touching rebuke for you, than if I had charged you with the infantile follies of which I have heard?”
I desire to put before my readers a line of truth which has
struck me much of late in Col. 1, coupled with 2 Tim. 3; and to
bring before their minds certain truths of great importance
which the apostle presses, when the seeds of the evil had begun
to show themselves, and which in this day have grown up and
ripened into such a harvest. It seems to me that he has them
specially in his mind as the grand preservatives which would
guard the faithful against all that was coming. This is the more
remarkable when we find that he presses the very same things
on the consciences of the faithful in the perilous times of the
last days. So that whether in the beginning, or the ending of
the church’s sojourn here, the truths which would preserve and
gird the loins of God’s people would be the same.

I gather from the general teaching of the epistle that the
apostle, who had never seen the Colossians (ch. 2:1), had heard
of them through Epaphras, whose ministry of the gospel had
evidently been blessed to them. He had brought tidings of them
to the apostle (Col. 1:8), of their fruit-bearing reception of the
gospel. The apostle contemplates a double condition of soul:
first, that of the knowledge of the glad tidings; and secondly,
a condition produced by being filled with the knowledge of
God’s will, for which be prayed (Col. 1:9, 10); in order that,
through it, they might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all
pleasing, and be fruitful in every good work, and thus grow
through the knowledge of God. In a word, it is the knowledge
of the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Consequently, he contemplates his own ministry under
these two heads: first, that of the gospel to every creature under
heaven (Col. 1:23); and, secondly, that of the Church, which
completed all the counsels of God (Col. 1:22-26). Revelation
up to the point of Paul’s ministry had embraced creation, the
law, redemption, the person of Christ, the ways of God, His
government, &c. There was but one thing now, and that was
the revelation of the mystery of the Church, which when given,
completed or filled up the word of God.

Christ -- the Son of David and heir of his throne -- rejected
by the Jews and by the world; crucified and slain; raised up
again by the power of God, and by the glory of the Father,
seated in the heavens in the righteousness of God, having
answered God’s righteous judgment against sin, death,
judgment, wrath, the curse of a broken law, all borne and
passed through to the glory of God; sin put away, sins borne;
the “old man” judicially dealt with, and set aside for ever; a
man -- the Second man -- the last Adam -- in heaven in divine
righteousness. The Holy Ghost personally on earth witnessed
the righteousness of God, and to the justification of the
believer according to its full display. Eternal life by and in
the Spirit, and its conscious possession, communicated to the
believer by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost acting as the
power of this life in his walk, guiding, directing, controlling,
and rebuking him. The believer in Jesus sealed with the Spirit,
his body a temple for His indwelling, uniting him to Christ --
a Man in glory; and thus the bond of union between all those
who are His, one with another, and with Christ. His presence
and baptism constituting “one body,” composed of such, here
in this world. God dwelling amongst His saints here, as a
habitation, in Spirit, not in flesh. The Holy Ghost, the power
for the exercise of the gifts that Christ, when He rose and
ascended up on high, received as man, and bestowed on men --
members of His body -- thus “dividing to every man severally
as he will”; reproducing too, “Christ,” the “life of Jesus,” in
the mortal bodies of the saints the power also of worship,
communion, joy, love, rejoicing, and prayer. Teaching them to
await the hope of righteousness by faith, even the glory itself.
Leading them to await for Christ, and producing the longing
“Come” in the “Bride”; while her Lord still continues, the
object of her hope, in the hearers, as the “Bright and the
Morning Star.” Meanwhile transforming them into Christ’s
image by unfolding in the liberty of grace, the glories of Him
in whose face shines all the glory of God.

Such are some of the features of the “doctrine” of Paul.

We find then a condition of soul in the Colossians for
which the apostle can give thanks (Col. 1:8-6). They had
received the gospel, and it was bringing forth fruit in them
since the day they knew the grace of God in truth. But he will
know that the mere knowledge of the gospel, blessed even as
it is, would not enable them to “walk worthy of the Lord unto
all pleasing.” It needed something more than the mere
acceptance of the glad tidings to guide the steps of the Lord’s
people in a walk worthy of Him; and hence, while he can give
thanks for the first condition of soul produced by the glad
tidings, he ceased not to pray for them that they might have the
second.

How many of the Lord’s people are in the first state in the
present day rejoicing in the grace of the gospel and yet who
never have attained to the second! nay, who even think that
anything beyond the mere knowledge of the gospel is but
speculation, or opinions of men, without power or value for the
practical walk of the saints. I think I am warranted in saying
that after Epaphras saw Paul, and learned the deep and
paramount importance of that knowledge for which Paul
prayed that they might know that Epaphras was so fully
convinced of the value and importance of their learning the
second character of the apostle’s ministry, that he himself
likewise, labored earnestly in prayer for them that they might
“stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Compare
Paul’s prayer in ch. 1:9, 10, with Epaphras’ prayer in ch. 4:12).

We see therefore three prominent and important matters
which the apostle presses in Col. 1.

First, the importance that the saints should be instructed in
the second character of the ministry, of the Church -- the body
of Christ, its Head. So that understanding the deep
responsibility which flowed from membership of such, they
might hold fast the Head, and walk worthy of the Lord unto
all pleasing.

Secondly. That the scriptures were now filled up, or
completed, by the revelation of this mystery. No room was left
consequently for tradition or development of any kind. It was
the grand summing up of all the revealed counsels and
purposes of God the Father, for the glory of the Son. They had,
up to this, embraced and treated of creation, law, government,
the kingdom, the person of Christ, the Son; redemption, &c.
There might be, and doubtless was, still further development
of the details of these subjects, as by John in the Apocalypse, &c., but still it would only be the unfolding, and the summing up of the details of what had been the subject of inspiration. Paul’s ministry it was then revealing the mystery concerning Christ and the Church, which completed the word of God (Col. 1:25).

Thirdly. The glory of the person of the Son, who is the image of the invisible God. No man had seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, had declared Him (John 1:18). He had created all things. By Him all things were upheld. He was the first-begotten from among the dead, and as such the Head of His body, the Church. All fulness was pleased to dwell in Him, and to reconcile all things to Himself; and He had reconciled the saints, who before had been aliens, and enemies in their minds by wicked works, in the body of His flesh through death. Thus the regions of creation, providence, redemption, and glory, are ranged through by the apostle, and Christ unfolded as filling all things. It is the glory of the person of the Son.

To repeat them, that the mind may recall them simply, they are three: viz.,

1st, the doctrine of Paul;
2ndly, the scriptures, which had been now completed by his ministry; and,
3rdly, the person of Christ.

These were the truths on which so much hung and flowed from, which would be the safeguards for the faithful in an evil day.

I do not here enter into more detail, but notice them as those truths to which he directs special attention to meet the dangers he foresaw in the beginning of the history of the Church.

I now turn to the instruction which he gives in the Second Epistle to Timothy, which would afford an unerring guide to the faithful in the closing of the history of the Church in the last days. The mournful heart of the apostle unbosoms itself to one whom he loved, and to whom he could communicate his thoughts freely; he unfolds to him the irreparable ruin into which the Church was fast drifting in her outward, responsible condition. He does not look for any restoration -- not even the ability on the part of the faithful to leave the outward professing mass. He does not in the Epistles to Timothy speak of the inward graces and Christian affections, which are to be the more cultivated than ever in such a state of thing, as he does in the Epistle to the Philippians. He does not speak in them of the Church as the body of Christ or bride, nor of the relationships of father and children as elsewhere. What he treats of is the outward thing before the world, in the character (as in 1 Tim. 3:14-16) of what it had been set in the world to be for God. It was His house, the assembly of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, the vessel in which the truth was to be displayed; and the mystery of godliness -- the manifestation of God in Christ, and the surrounding truths -- was to be her testimony in the world. She was as a light-bearer to reflect Him as His epistle, and respond to God’s purposes in this place. In the second epistle the apostle sees that all was now hopelessly and irrevocably gone. The house of God had become a great house in which iniquity was rife, and vessels to dishonor had found a lodgment and were at home in it. Paul had been “turned away from” by all in Asia. He is here, I doubt not, a representative man, one through whom the Holy Ghost can say, “Be ye followers together of me” (Phil. 3); and one who walked in the power of his own doctrine. He marks out in a clear line the pathway of the faithful in such a state of things: they were to depart from iniquity --

Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord (κυρίου), depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19).

Every one who owned Him as Lord. Whatever form it would take, the simple and primary step should be to depart from iniquity. From vessels which were not honoring Christ in their walk, one was to purge oneself, and thus that one might become a vessel unto honor, suited and meet for the Master’s use. Fleeing from youthful lusts (i.e., inward personal holiness) was to be the character of one’s walk. And then (all before this being negative) the positive following of righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who were calling on the Lord out of a purged heart. (See 2 Tim. 2:19-22).

But the question now comes, When the saints had done this, when they had departed from iniquity, purged themselves from the vessels to dishonor, were walking in holiness and following these things together, is there anything provided for them, when corruption surrounds them on all sides, to keep them together after a divine fashion in the midst of it all? Would they not be open to the admission of evil amongst them again, and thus find that separation from it was of no avail? In the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul had shown an Epaphras the necessity of having the saints instructed in the second part of his ministry when they had been established in the first; that is, when they had received the grace of the gospel, that they might know the full counsels of God in the doctrine of Paul, in order to walk worthily of the Lord. Yea, that he ceased not in all earnestness and in the Holy Ghost, to pray that they might be thus instructed. Would this now be that to which he would again point them? Here then comes the grand truth, he recalls the very same three things as those which at the beginning he had pressed upon the Colossians as the safeguard for the faithful in the perilous times -- times when the profession of Christianity is described in words so nearly like those by which he had described the corruptions of the heathen world, when sunk down into the lowest ebb of degradation and departure from God. If the closing verses of Rom. 1 are compared with the first four verses of 2 Tim. 3, this will at once be seen. In describing the various manifestations of evil in these verses, three prominent features will be found in them: viz.,

1st, Self predominating (Christianity is the denial of self);
2ndly, a form of godliness, while the power would be denied; and,
3rdly, active opposition to the truth by the most subtle device of the enemy -- that of imitation -- the device of Satan in Egypt by the magicians, by copying Moses’ miracles performed by the power of God, and thus Satan’s
power practically nullifying that of God.

To counterbalance those characteristic features, and to keep the faithful after a divine fashion, the apostle names the same things as before we noticed to the Colossians:

1st, “my doctrine”;  
2ndly, the “Scriptures”; and,  
3rdly, the person of Christ as an object of faith.

These he unfolds in the remaining portion of the chapter (vv. 10-17).

The doctrine of Paul (see also the manner of life which flowed from it) is that which is to keep divinely together those who would call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It embraces all the principles and truths connected with it, as when first revealed. Ruin and failure could not affect it nor hinder the practice flowing from it. Nor would it ever be impracticable for the faithful few to exercise the godly discipline and exclusion of evil from their midst, inculcated by him. (See 1 Cor.) Outward unity, seen to such a beautiful degree at the first (Acts 2, 4), might be gone for ever. The unity of the Spirit in the body of Christ would never fail, and this the Christian was exhorted to endeavor to keep (Eph. 4:3, 4). Come what would, there never would be a time while the Church would sojourn here, when Paul’s doctrine would be a nullity or impracticable to the veriest handful of the faithful who sought to call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and live godly in Christ Jesus.

Such then is the prominent and first-named point in the chapter. “But thou hast fully known my doctrine,” &c. The resource -- the safeguard -- the ground or principle of action of the saints in an evil day. Without Paul’s doctrine, they had nothing stable to preserve them and keep them together on divine ground in the midst of corruption; with it, they would find that under their feet which would never fail.

Have we then Paul’s doctrine? We may boast, as all do, that we have the scriptures -- surely it is well. We may have confidence that an ever faithful Lord will never leave or forsake His people, and that He knows them that are His, and will keep them unto the end. But can we say that we have Paul’s doctrine of the Church -- the body of Christ on earth formed by the presence and baptism of the Holy Ghost? Having it, can we say that we are as living members, acting upon the truth of it through the never-failing supply of grace He gives? Or, do we come under the character of those who are described as “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?” -- Those whose mind and intellect the truth has reached, but without faith, and hence without practical value in our lives? Of the truth, we can say as of faith: “What profit, my brethren, if a man say he have the truth?” if he have not shown that he has faith in it; and thus has learned to act upon it as something in which he believes? It is always a sign that a man has faith in the truth which he knows, when it has had its corresponding effect upon his life -- when it has been acted upon in practice. No man has ever had the joy and power of a divine truth till he has accepted it, and walked therein. Many are thus ever learning and never able to come to a divinely confirmed knowledge of it, because the practice is wanting. It is learned in the intellect; the natural mind is touched perhaps with the beauty and divine excellence of it; it cannot be denied, but there is no faith in it. It has not been learned in the conscience and in the soul; and when tribulation or persecution arises because of it, he is offended -- deems it non-essential perhaps -- and surrenders that to which he has never come to a divinely given knowledge. If ever there was a day when there was such a thing as “salt which had lost its savor,” it is the present. The most touching -- the very highest -- truths of God have become the topics of the world’s conversation. They are held by many after a fashion, in which the edge and power of them are lost. A worldly walk and conversation are coupled with the intellectual knowledge of the highest truths of God; and like salt that has lost its saltiness, one can but ask of it, “Wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but (even) men cast it out” (Luke 14:34, 35).

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them (2 Tim. 3:10-14).

May the Lord open the understanding of His beloved people, that in the midst of the confusion and corruption of such in evil day -- when men are saying, “What is truth?” and yet not caring for the reply, they may find that there are such principles in the word of God as no amount of man’s failure can ever touch, and which are ever practicable to those who desire humbly to walk with God, and to keep the word of the patience of Jesus, till He comes. May they learn to walk together in unity, and peace, and love in the truth, for His name’s sake. -- Amen.

Bible Treasury 6:342-346.
“Forty Days”

There are hardly any who have read the scriptures, with even a small measure of intelligence, who will not have remarked how constantly the period of “Forty days” occurs. Various interpretations have been suggested as to the typical meaning of the number “forty” -- composed as it is of the multiple of “four” with “ten.” However, without dogmatizing on it, it is happy to be able to draw some real spiritual lessons from the places where the “Forty days” occur in the word of God, remembering that our God has deigned to use these periods Himself, with profound wisdom, and for the blessing and instruction of His people, in that book which contains the revelation of Himself, and His ways for the glory of His Son.

The number “Forty,” then, is, I judge, intimately connected with the probation or testing of man; as also with the penalty, or confession, or punishment of sin under the government of God. We read of the “forty days and forty nights” of the temptations of Christ; of the “forty days and forty nights” that the waters of the flood prevailed on the earth (Gen. 7.); of the “forty years” that Israel was condemned to wander in the desert for their sin (Num. 14); of the “forty stripes” an offender against the law of Moses, in certain matters, was to receive (Deut. 25; cf. 2 Cor. 11:24). Egypt was to be desolate for “forty years” (Ezek. 39). Moses, too, intercedes for Israel for “forty days” (Deut. 9) The Ninevites proclaim a fast for “forty days” (Jonah 3). Ezekiel must bear the transgression of Judah “forty days” (Ezek. 4).

Many other cases might be cited, leading to the conclusion that this typical number is always connected with the probation or testing of man; and having reference to sin, and the condition into which sin had brought man, with the confession of it; its penalty or its punishment.

There is one very remarkable feature, however, in this interesting study; we find these instances of “Forty days” begin at a certain moment in the history of man in scripture, and end at another of remarkable significance.

The first time “Forty days” is spoken of is at the waters of the flood. “Forty days and forty nights” the rain was upon the earth; a moment which was marked by this awful judgment of God.

The last time we find these “Forty days” in scripture was after the resurrection of Christ, and is bright with hopes of better things; when He remained on earth amongst His disciples, “being seen of them forty days” (Acts 1). Within, and comprising these two cases, the sevenfold series of “forty days” is found, presenting a picture of the whole moral relations of God with man, and man with God. A well-ordered and comprehensive picture, which cannot fail to strike us as designed and planned by the Author of scripture Himself, in His infinite wisdom and grace.

Let us enumerate the instances where they are found:

1st. We have the “Forty days” of the flood, which are characterized by sin and its judgment.
2nd. Next we have the “Forty days” of Moses on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law (with the second “Forty days” of his intercession for Israel). This may be characterized by law and mercy.
3rd. We have after this the “Forty days” searching of Canaan (Num. 13, 14), which speak to us of faith and unbelief.
4th. In the “Forty days” journey of Elijah from Beersheba to Horeb (1 Kings 19:1-8) we see human weakness and divine strength.
5th. In the “Forty days” of Nineveh (Jonah 3), repentance and forgiveness.
6th. The “Forty days” of the Lord’s temptation present most blessedly conflict and victory.
7th. And the “Forty days” after the resurrection, redemption and glory.

Thus the picture is complete: the utter corruption of the world opens the sequence of these “Forty days”; they run their course through scripture, presenting the varied claims of God, His ways of mercy and forgiveness, and the exercises of heart of His people; until, fittingly, the blessed Lord’s own conflicts and sufferings close them when, as Man, He takes His place at God’s right hand in glory.

The “Forty Days” of the Flood

The subject before us now is the moment when God for the first time judged the world for sin. An awful, resistless, overwhelming judgment fell upon the earth, washing away every trace of the violence and corruption which filled the scene, by the waters of the flood.

This scene is alluded to nine times in scripture, by patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, and apostles, and by the Son of God Himself, more than once. It is used as a type also, though only a type, a faint shadow, of that awful moment of judgment which must overtake the world -- a greater judgment than that of water, of the fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty. It is not the judgment of the dead that is here before us, but of the living, those who are taken in the avocations of...
life -- eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; pursuing the ordinary course of things, but sinning, sinning sinning, till that awful moment comes, when resistless judgment falls on the world that God, in longsuffering, has borne with for six thousand years.

What, then, was it that caused God to judge the world in this way in Noah’s time? The answer is, “SIN.” Sin caused God to resolve on judgment the most awful that ever yet came from the hands of perfect love. And yet how faint is it the shadow of that eternal judgment which must come, when mercy is past, when the day of grace is over, when no cry for mercy will receive an answer of peace.

I think it is a common human expression -- which is not to be found in the word of God -- that “in the midst of judgment He remembers mercy.” There is nothing in the word of God, that I have discovered, which would carry out such a thought. When judgment falls, it falls with resistless power, and mercy then has ceased. Mercy and judgment cannot go together. No doubt “mercy glorieth against judgment” (James 2:13) -- that is blessedly true now; and the cry of that is, “In wrath remember mercy” (Hab. 3:2); but the moment that judgment -- God’s strange act -- begins, then mercy, in which God delights, has closed; judgment will then accomplish its solemn mission.

How awful is the delusion under which men lie as to this! They think that God is too merciful to damn them. Oh, do not so delude yourselves -- do not suppose you can cry for mercy in that day, and be heard. Mercy waits in long-suffering now; but that solemn day will not come till mercy’s day is past for ever.

A flood of “SIN” filled the earth; violence and corruption characterized that fair world that God had made “very good.” It began in individual hearts, it spread in families, it corrupted homes and communities with its leavening power. God describes the state of things by these well-chosen, weighty words (Gen. 6:5):

God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

How comprehensive are those words! -- “every,” “only,” “continually.” “Every” means without exception. One would have thought, perhaps, that that conscience which God took care man should receive when he fell (Gen. 3:5, 22) might have retained some trace of God’s handy-work left, and some mixture of good. Nay, we read again, these imaginations were “only evil” -- that is, evil without admixture or trace of good. And they were “continually”; morning, noon, and night the aggregate of his heart’s thoughts were only evil, without exception, without admixture, without interchange! Sin, without restraint, thus came forth in its hideous deformity.

Is the world better now? It is just the same. We have moral, social, religious, political restraints on man; sin cannot break forth unhindered, nor do in broad day what it can when the world’s eye cannot gaze upon it. But remove these restraints, let them stand in abeyance for an hour, put the world on its trial, and see how it would behave itself. The result would be, that every peaceful home in the land would be filled with bloodshed and abomination.

Man’s heart is man’s heart, and there it is. Much more responsible, I grant you, now than in the days of the flood; and that tide of evil is swelling, till it breaks forth again, and is met once more by the resistless judgment of God.

“The world of the ungodly” was once judged by the waters of the flood, and “as it was in the days that were before the flood, so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until!” -- no warning for aught but faith -- “the flood came, and took them all away.”

No wonder, then, that “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth,” and it “grieved him to his heart.” We should not like our handy-work corrupted; nor does He; He resolves, therefore, to destroy it. But before He strikes the blow, He will give time, and a testimony to man’s heart, “whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear.”

Thrice forty years, then, were the days of repose. “Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” Yet when judgment is resolved upon, God says, I will give them time! The “long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” It “is salvation.” But more: He will send them a preacher. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the world of the ungodly. I do not think that God told Noah the length of time He had accorded to the world to repent: this one hundred and twenty years. To have done so would have been to break the threefold cord of faith, hope, and love. All three were in exercise in the patriarch’s heart while He preached and testified, and the ark was a-preparing. God knew Himself the allotted time, as He knows all. During that strange one hundred and twenty years there were four testimonies going on, side by side, to man’s conscience.

1st. God’s Spirit was striving with man. He would not always strive. Where, in many a heart, are the stirrings of God’s Spirit which found a voice there, time after time, in years gone by? “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” tells its solemn tale.

2nd. Noah was preaching. Christ’s blessed Spirit was in him, as we read of the Spirit of Christ being in the prophets (1 Pet. 1:11). By that Spirit of Christ Noah testified to the spirits of the lost now in prison, while once the

3rd. Long-suffering of God waited; and we learn in another place that that “long-suffering is salvation.” Has it been so with my readers, or have they forgotten that every day or hour of that blessed trait of God’s character adds to their condemnation? Are you an unbeliever still? -- a man with whom God has been striving -- one on whom His long-suffering waits?

4th. There was a silent, eloquent appeal, too, going on for that one hundred and twenty years. Noah’s ark was a-preparing; its strange superstructure rearing itself daily before their eyes. It appealed to his inmost soul. It proved the reality of the preacher’s faith -- he was governed by the word he announced.
-- it formed himself. To others it was, perhaps, a jest, something to be laughed at by the old-world wits in their humor. Perhaps science, too, would pronounce that it could not float, could not bear its burden, or weather the storm. The construction was faulty, the “lines” were not laid down according to the world’s then best skill.

These four testimonies spake, day by day, in the ears of men, with the results of which now we have to do. How many heard and believed them? I am bold enough to say, Not one! The blessed Lord’s own words, which said, “They knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away,” decide me in believing this; nevertheless they perished not without God’s testimony, but they believed not after all.

At last the one hundred and twenty years ran to their close. The seasons had gone on as before. The sun had shone as brightly, and the earth had yielded her increase, and corruption ripened for judgment in the sight of Him who cannot look upon sin, and coalesce with it. The one hundred and twentieth year drew to its close, and no sign was seen. Unbelief grew bold in its wickedness. But “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11).

And now the blow of judgment is about to fall, when God (none but He is worthy of such a deed) Stayed the blow! How we read and recall such a word as this -- He is “not willing that any should perish.” And the voice of mercy is again heard: “Yet seven days!” -- seven days more of the long-suffering of God -- seven days of the strivings of God’s Spirit -- seven days for the preacher to preach -- seven days for one last sermon, one last appeal -- an appeal that none ever heard the like before; seven days for the beasts that perish to preach their sermon to unbelieving man -- more obedient to a Creator’s voice than he! They trooped in by twos and twos, and by sevens, into the ark!

The seven days became six -- five -- four -- three -- two -- one; and still no sign of impending wrath; unbelief could triumph its short triumph still. The ox knew his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, better than man his Creator’s voice. The stupor of death is over men’s souls! There are times when the frenzy of despair is seen; and even, at times, when hope is gone, and the soul has settled into dark despair; and dull sense of ruin falls on men’s hearts in a shipwreck at sea, and men anticipate the judgment, and plunge into the seething waters. Worse stupor here on men’s souls, for no sign of a relenting heart or a troubled conscience is to be found. The stupor of death has fallen on man, and God’s long-suffering is past. “The Lord shut him [Noah] in,” we read, and then went back to heaven.

Now came a strange sight -- unknown in “the world that then was.” From paradise, and onwards, we read of no rain -- “a mist came up, and watered the earth,” before the flood. Now the rain began to descend, and the waters began to rise, and rise, and rise. Then the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were unstoppered: God’s controversy waxed fiercer and fiercer, and it rained upon the earth forty days and forty nights. The ark was lifted up above the earth: and the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered: the mountains too were covered, and all flesh died. Every living substance was destroyed, man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowls of heaven. In these few short days the world’s life was gone! Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. The pall of mighty waters shrouded the scene, wrapping all living in its folds of death and judgment. One man remained, and they who were with him, saved by that which was death and judgment to all the rest.

God has drawn a veil over the scene; the cries for mercy are not recorded; the sense in men’s souls, in which despair now filled, and the details of all that passed, are not told us. We may well believe the terrors of despair which filled their hearts, as one by one dropped down into the flood of waters; but this has not been recorded. Enough for Him to say that they were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came, and took them all away.”

Of Noah we read that he possessed two things, which made him to differ from all the world around: reverent faith in God’s way of escape; and holy fear of that mighty judgment of which he had heard. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” The fear of God -- who, if He be God, must vindicate His outraged name by judgment, the faith of Him who, before that day comes, has sent the Judge first to be the Savior. To know Him as a Judge is never to know Him as a Judge; to know Him as a Judge is never to know Him as a Savior. He has already been at the cross, where, in holy and righteous judgment against sin in Him who was made sin for us, He has fully dealt with the whole question, and settled it for ever! There He bore the wrath -- there He drank the cup -- there He bore our sins -- and there He died, accomplishing redemption for all who come unto God by Him.

But He is not there now. Mark the crucifix that is presented religiously to man -- Christ is there. Man’s thought gets no further than Christ upon the cross, and unaccomplished redemption! Christ is not there. He was there -- He is not there now. God’s thought is not a crucifix with Christ upon it, but off it, and in the glory! He did not carry the sins He bore there; they were purged before He left the cross, and blotted out for ever for those who are His. He settled that question before ever there was a Christian on the earth. All the sins of every Christian were future when He bore them. Then, having purged them, He went on high, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The conscience is purged when we believe; the sins were purged at the cross. Faith knows this; God knows this. “The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise” (that of which Noah became heir): “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?” -- God wants no great thing of you -- “or who shall descend into the deep?” Nay, “The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. That is the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in shine
heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” And again: “Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed.”

Does your heart, my reader, rejoice that He is long-suffering, and waits upon sinners? Well, have you bowed to this, and believed? That His Spirit still strives with man? Yes, but He has also said, He “shall not always strive.” Say, then, have His strivings found an answer in your soul? If so, how blessed is your lot!

But you may still be uncertain -- still a doubting one. How often has it been preached that that is a healthful state of soul! How often have souls doubted, and doubted their lives through, until they found themselves in heaven, and then they could doubt no more! Faith was mingled with fear too long, but now is passed away. Faith has changed to sight, and fear is cast out by His perfect love for ever!


“The Forty Days” No. 2
The Forty Days of Moses on Mount Sinai. Law and Mercy

The second of those remarkable “Forty Days” of scripture we find in the case of Moses on Mount Sinai, when he received the law for the first time from Jehovah. In this case there were two periods of forty days, as afterwards in the Lord Jesus’ ministry: the first, before He entered upon it, when in the temptations in the wilderness; and the second, after His resurrection.

In Moses’ case these two periods are spoken of distinctly in Deut. 9, 10, where we find two givings of the law connected with these two “Forty Days”: first, the law, pure and simple; and, second, the revelation of mercy and long-suffering added to the law. We read,

When I was gone up into the mount, to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made for you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights: I neither did eat bread, nor drink water: and the Lord delivered me two tables of stone, written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. And the Lord said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves: they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them, they have made them a molten image. . . So I turned, and came down from the mount . . . And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the Lord your God, and had made you a molten calf. . . And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water; because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. Then I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said he would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance . . .

At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood; and I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. And there they be, as the Lord commanded me (Deut. 9:9 - 10:5).

There were altogether -- as we may see -- three givings of the law.

First, by the voice of God out of the midst of the fire (Ex. 19, 20);

Secondly, by the first tables of the law, written by the finger of God. These Moses broke after he came down from the mount the first time -- his face darkened with wrath at the sin of Israel;

And thirdly, by the second tables which Moses brought back after the second forty days’ and forty nights’ intercession for Israel, at which time the skin of his face shone with the glory of Jehovah’s mercy. These tables he placed in the ark (the figure of Christ, by whom, and in whom only, they would be kept fully). There was no breaking of them this second time, and, as we read, “there they be” unto this day.

We have thus Israel dancing round the calf, and the broken tables of the law, figure of their condition, after the first forty days.

And Israel spared in mercy, but with the law still in their midst -- within the ark of the covenant -- unbroken, at the end of the second forty days.

I do not dwell much on the first announcement of the law, by the voice of God in Ex. 19, 20. It was given by One who shut Himself up in the “thick darkness,” and spoke amidst thunderings, and lightnings, and the voice of words. So terrible was the sight, that even Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” God had proposed these terms, and Israel, ignorant of themselves accepted them, in the words, “All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do.” Mark the two things -- first, the word of the Lord, expressing His claim; and, secondly man supposing he is capable to take it up, and do it. No doubt he is responsible to do so, but he has not the power. No man ever heard the law of God, and denied his responsibility to obey it; his conscience accepts it, whether he like, or no. When the “Ten Words” were spoken, the result was the people removed, and stood afar off. Immediately, when man finds there is a claim from God to which his conscience must bow, he desires some one to stand between him and God -- he wants a Mediator (Ex. 20:18, 19). “Speak thou with us,” they say to Moses, “and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” At once God answers this desire with directions for an altar, and sacrifices of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, in
all places where He would record His name.

These four things are the result of God’s expressing His claim:
the desire of a mediator by the people;
God’s answer in the work of such;
an altar, and sacrifices of acceptance and communion;
and His presence with them in all places where He would record His name, to be with them, and to bless them.

How touchingly does His unvarying grace break out, even in the midst of the solemn scene of law-giving on Mount Sinai!

Now, if we examine Ex. 24, where Moses was called up into the mount to receive the law, we find it was prefaced by a seven days of preparation. (Just as, before the blow of judgment of sin at the flood, there were also seven days of respite.)

And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and get him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights (Ex. 24:15-18).

In the seven chapters that follow we find the unfolding, in type, of what afterwards shone in the full blessedness of Christ, there given in the “shadows of things to come.” Moses could dismiss the history of creation with one chapter, but what spake of Christ, and of God’s desire to dwell amongst men, seven chapters are devoted to that theme (Ex. 25 - 29), unfolding the heart of God, afterwards to be fully revealed in His Son.

The order and arrangement of these chapters are very beautiful. First, in the various parts of the tabernacle and its furniture, He reveals how He can approach man -- coming out from the light of the glory in the holy of holies, from the ark and its mercy-seat (Ex. 25), until, step by step, He reaches the brazen altar (Ex. 27), type of the cross of Christ. There He meets man as a sinner, and then He returns with the saved one, as each step of His backward path testifies in the furniture of the tabernacle, now needed -- such as the laver, which was for him (Ex. 30), not a display of God in Himself as such -- to meet all the saved one’s requirements by the way, in returning to God’s own presence.

Meanwhile the high priest’s garments are introduced -- garments of glory and beauty; and the names of the redeemed are graven upon the stones of memorial on His shoulders, and on the breastplate, where all were borne, in the light of God’s presence, in Him. Thus, the believer dwells in the light, and is borne upon the strength, and carried in the affections of Christ, in the presence of God for us.

When all this was being transacted in the mount with God, a dark and terrible scene was being enacted below, on the plain, by Israel (Ex. 32); their great original and corporate sin was committed, which reaped its bitter fruits to the end, in Babylon and judgment. I refer to the making of the golden calf.

The seed of Abraham, who had been himself called out of idolatry, now turning back from Jehovah, to dance round the similitude of a “calf that eateth hay” -- and Aaron the great actor in this revolt against God.

God desires Moses to go down, telling him that the people had revolted, and made them gods of gold, and that He would cut them off, and make of Moses a great nation. Moses uses his place of nearness, not for himself, but for the people he loved; and beseeches the Lord for Israel, and God is entreated of him. Then Moses comes down with the first tables of the law in his hand, and breaks them ere he reaches the guilty camp, thus preserving both the people from judgment, and the honor of Jehovah. They never, therefore, stood under pure law at all.

The tribe of Levi consecrate themselves in the discipline of that moment, and take the Lord’s side against their guilty brethren. Moses returns, with the words, “I will go up, peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.” He pleads, “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and made them gods of gold: yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” He asks that he, not they, should beblotted out of God’s book. The answer is, “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.”

Moses then, when the people are convicted, and stripped of their ornaments, takes the tent, and pitches it outside the camp, afar from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. Every one, therefore, that sought the Lord, went out there.

The most touching scene follows. The most glorious moment in all the history of Moses, and the most blessed revelation of God he ever had, was then made. The cloud came down, and talked with Moses as a man speaks with his friend! He pleads there with God, and God answers the one who never stood under law at all, but had found grace in His sight. Still, he does not feel that all is clear; his spirit has no rest yet, for two things press on his heart --

(1) the people are not relieved, therefore
(2) God is not yet fully revealed.

He cries, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” Nay, this would but consume them -- it was not the time. He would afterwards be seen in the same glory with Christ in the mount of transfiguration; but another deeper spring was now to be reached. Something was now to be known of God’s nature, never before revealed in its true and real depths. This was “Mercy!” Never was its true meaning known before. Doubtless the word was there, and used too in scripture; but that deep spring in God’s own being, so rich, so full, so blessed; that in which He delights -- taking pleasure in them that hope in it. The theme ever after for Israel’s song was to be made known; the chorus of every divine melody of theirs from that moment would be, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever!”

How touching the subsequent words --

And he said, I will make all [yes, “all”] my goodness pass before thee. and I will proclaim the name of the Lord
before thee; and I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion!  

Who could have seen His face, and lived? Moses might “bow his head, and worship,” when that deep spring was reached. When He passes by we can see His back parts, but His face, who could know? Who could have anticipated the incarnation, the cross, the counsels and ways of God; or this -- His mercy? None indeed. We may be placed in the “cleft of the rock,” and, covered by His hand, gaze upon Him as He passes by, and see His back parts; but none can see His face -- none can anticipate His ways, and live!

The deep spring was reached at that dire extremity. The divine outflow of grace had been abused. The law had been broken. All ordered relations had been disrupted by the rebellion and ruin of Israel. Now, mercy -- sovereign and absolute -- was the resource of Him who retires into Himself, and who chooses to act from Himself; -- who alone can say, “I will,” and who can hinder? It presupposes a condition of things, and the absolute necessity for God to act from Himself in some way, either to vindicate Himself by resistless judgment, or to extricate the people in absolute mercy. It was not now of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Brethren, do our souls understand that attribute in which God is so rich? Do we not constantly find it confounded with grace (which is the divine outflow of His unconditional favor), to the soul’s great loss indeed? Have we never sinned against and outraged His grace, as well as broken His law? What then is left for us -- absolute sovereign mercy, which presupposes all this condition of things. Can I explain it to the soul that has never tasted it? Nay: it must be tasted in those moments of deep, deep need, which nothing can meet but the revelation of His character and nature as sovereign and absolute -- but who chooses to act in that sovereignty, and absoluteness in mercy, and not in judgment.

From the moment that Moses saw that strange sight -- the Bush burning with fire, and which was not consumed, at the back side of the desert; until the waters gushed out of the Rock at Rephidim -- all was a pure stream of grace. This grace-history is taken up, even going back to the Patriarchs, in Psa. 105, and the Psalm recounts what “He” did for them: it runs on to the Smitten Rock, and there it stops. But when we turn to Psa. 106 we find the mercy-history -- and it recounts what “They” had done. What then is the burden of the Psalm? “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever!” “Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them”; and He “repented according to the multitude of his mercies.”

Do Israel’s songs ever recount His grace? Ah no; it was too late after the golden calf was made. Too late after grace was abused and thrown back in His face, as it was, and Law was hopelessly broken. What has been the burden of their songs in the past; as well as those for the time to come? Their burden and theme is mercy for evermore!

What an absence of this “mercy” do we find in those chapters of Romans (1-8) which unfolds the relations of our souls with God, by grace through righteousness!

But if we turn to the next three chapters (Rom. 9 - 11) all is mercy, for Israel is in view! Yet the last does not close without shutting up all, Jew and Gentile, in unbelief, that He may have mercy upon all! “O the depth of the riches,” says the apostle, in the contemplation of His ways -- past finding out, yet how blessed when revealed!

Look again at the fact, that in the church Epistles we find them addressed in grace and peace; but not mercy. Yet, when we come to the Epistles to individuals, mercy is added there. But in that of Jude, which gives the full tide of the corruption of Christendom surging on to judgment, we find “Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied”: and the saints are taught to look for the “mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.” Why is this? because the grace, in which all were set, has been abused and outraged; and nothing remains but absolute and sovereign mercy for all!

“Who,” says Micah, “is a God like unto thee, that pardonneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy!”

The soul of David, in singing the praises of the Lord for His lovingkindnesses and His tender mercies (Psa. 103), seeks to measure this mercy which so suited his case. “As the heaven,” sang he, “is high above the earth, so great is his mercy.” Still that does not reach it, for the soul that has tasted its heights and its depths. Again he essays, in the words, “as far as the east is from the west”; but it is infinite, and greater than the finite -- great as it may be. At last he finds its only measure is the nature of Him who, “from everlasting to everlasting,” is God (Psa. 90). So His “mercy is . . . from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him” -- who grasp His outstretched hand reached down into the abyss of sin, which none have ever grasped in vain.

Hear him again, who so learned its sweetness to his own soul:

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

O that men would praise the Lord for his mercy; and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the mercy of the Lord!

How blessed, too, in Eph. 2, if “God, who is rich in mercy,” would act according to that deep spring in His being, He must

2. I have given the rendering of the LXX [Septuagint] of the latter part of this verse, as it has been accepted by the apostle Paul in Rom. 9, exactly as given there. It is thus shown to be the more correct meaning of the Spirit of God.

3. And so in vv. 15, 21, 31, 43: see Heb. and LXX.

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do so in a manner becoming that mercy; and as “the angle of incidence is equal to that of refraction,” so, if He acts, in forming His church out of the materials we find in Eph. 2, and from that deep spring, He will place those who have been reached by mercy, far above all heavens; above all principality and might and dominion, in Him in whom it is expressed!

Ah yes, beloved brethren, mercy and grace are never mixed up in the thoughts of God, as in ours. We do it to our deep loss indeed. Mercy was first really learned in scripture, when Moses “bowed his head and worshiped,” at the suited name and character and attribute of Him, who chose to act -- not according to the insolence of sin in Israel; but according to His sovereignty in mercy.

May it, in all the depth and fulness of God, be my own and my readers’ portion, in Christ Himself for ever! In Him, whose own blessed lips spake those words to those who hated Him:

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners (Matt. 9:13).

Sacrifice was what they could do for God, and failed to do. But mercy was what He could, in spite of all, show to them. And again,

But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless (Matt. 12:7).

How sweet it is for the soul to rest thus in the Lord in His known nature and character, learned, too, in measure, through the deep needs of the soul, as a sinner as a failing saint. To know nature and character, learned, too, in measure, through the deep loss indeed. Mercy was first really learned in scripture, written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world happened unto them [Israel] for examples [types], and are come. It is not that the people are the type; but the “things which happened unto them” a most important distinction.

Let us not be discouraged then because of evil: God is able to turn it all to blessing in His own way.

The Book of Numbers has a very peculiar place and significance in the word of God. It is the Book of the Wilderness: of the journeying or itinerary of the children of Israel, after redemption was accomplished, and they had been brought out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, to go onwards and upwards to the Land of Canaan.

The wilderness way never was in the purpose of God for Israel, though it took forty years to accomplish it; just as your pathway here, as a saint, does not enter into the purpose of God for you. It is His place to test and try you, to see what is in your heart; to teach you lessons which could be learned in no other place. But God has not redeemed you for earth, but for heaven; not for this world, but for glory; this is His purpose.

You will notice here a very solemn thing. This journey, which took forty years to accomplish, was really a pathway of only eleven days. This we see from Deut. 1: “There are eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadesh Barnea . . .” Kadesh is on the very borders of the land, at the southeast extremity. But mark the next verse, “And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month,” &c. It was a short journey if taken direct, right into the land of promise; but through unbelief it took forty long weary years to accomplish it.

How long, may we not ask, would the journey have been, from the day that the Lord had ascended up on high, after He had risen from the dead, and sent the Holy Ghost to form the church of God, until He would return again, had she been faithful to His desire, “that they all may be one, that the world may believe”? (John 17). How soon all would have been gathered together, and the Lord have taken her home! But soon all was ruin -- and God’s longsuffering waited ever since, in patience, to accomplish His purpose; and we ourselves are the fruit of man’s unfaithfulness and His delay.

Let us not be discouraged then because of evil: God is able to turn it all to blessing in His own way.

Now we know from 1 Cor. 10:11, that “all these things happened unto them [Israel] for examples [types], and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” It is not that the people are the type; but the “things which happened unto them” a most important distinction.

We will now turn to some passages of scripture to show that the wilderness never entered into the purpose of God at all.

Let us look at Ex. 3, at “the section on the bush.” When God appeared to Moses by that strange sight, “A bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” Israel was in the furnace of Egypt; therefore God will be in the bush burning with fire. He would identify Himself with His people --

Words of Faith, 1882, pp. 155-164.

4. I do not here distinguish between governmental mercy, and mercy for eternal salvation. Nor do I notice the fact of the law being still left, accompanied by mercy, and Israel left under it, in this paper.
wherever they are, when about to deliver.

We find this purpose told us in the seventh verse concerning Israel:

I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows.

How blessed to think that even when no cry was addressed to Him, He could say, “I have seen”; “I have heard”; “I know.” These touching words unfold to us three degrees of suffering and sorrow in His own. There is the outward sorrow that can be seen by others. This is the easiest to bear, and that in which often most sympathy is known from others. It may be with us a sickness, or some outward thing which may be recognized, and which others can share. Of this God says, “I have seen the affliction of my people.” There is a deeper sorrow than this, which may be expressed by a cry out of the depths of the heart to God. “I have heard their cry,” saith the Lord. It is a sorrow which can be put in words before Him, or before a sympathizing friend, and in which the heart often finds that friend’s sympathy, and God Himself hears the cry which expressed the agony. But there is a deeper sorrow still; a sorrow in which the kindest friend can have no share -- the sorrow that eats away the heart, and could not be expressed in words, which, if it were possible to be expressed, had better be left untold; the unuttered sorrow of the anguished heart, which cannot even be told to God in words -- the “groan which cannot be uttered.” Such can only be laid before Him in the silence of His presence, while the soul is sustained by those lessons; humbling us to the dust, as they should do; but filling the heart with a deeper, fuller knowledge of Him who has redeemed us, and of what was ever in His heart the while.

And I am come down to deliver . . . and to bring them out of that land, unto a good land, and a large; a land flowing with milk and honey.

This, then, was His purpose. Not one word of the waste deserts which lay between.

When the Lawgiver comes (Ex. 6) to announce this purpose to them, he tells them, in those sevenfold “I wills” of the Lord:

“I will bring you out,”
“I will rid you out of their bondage,”
“I will redeem you,”
“I will take you to me,”
“I will be to you a God,”
“I will bring you into the land,”
“I will give it you for an heritage.”

Here, again, no word of the wilderness is expressed. It was not His purpose.

Thus faith takes up this wondrous purpose in its song -- the first we ever find in scripture -- (Ex. 15):

Till the people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of shine inheritance.

Through the wilderness? No; not a word about it in the song of faith; for faith takes up God’s thoughts because He has revealed them.

So in Ephesians, we kind no time, no earth, no wilderness there. We are taken out of the depths of ruin, a set in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 2:6), without the pathway there at all. Like the robber on the cross beside the Lord: he is taken from the depths of degradation at once into the paradise of God with Christ!

Why, then, does the wilderness intervene? Why the pathway of sorrow and distress, unredeemed by a single feature of good in ourselves, as from ourselves? Why bring in that dreary journey where our failures are seen, and our hearts exposed?

The eighth chapter of Deuteronomy is the reply. It is a synopsis of the whole book that is before us.

And 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 shine heart, &c.

There are two things God would always have us remember: “The day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life” (Deut. 16:3), and “all the way” they passed through. Not an incident was to be forgotten; but all was turned to blessing by Him who alone could say it was “To do them good at the latter end” (Deut. 16:8).

It was the trying of their faith; and the testing of patience too; disclosing what was in the hearts of His redeemed. He knew it well, before they were tested; but they learned it, as we do, through those testings by the way. Bitter, too, are these lessons; humbling us to the dust, as they should do; but filling the heart with a deeper, fuller knowledge of Him who has redeemed us, and of what was ever in His heart the while.

The people of Israel are now at Kadesh Barnea, (Num. 13). They had gone the “eleven days’ journey,” and were on the borders of the land of promise. There were its sunny plains, stretching out before their view -- the garden of the Lord; that good land, which flowed with milk and honey. Their feet were almost treading upon their possessions; when in one short moment the prospect is clouded through unbelief!

These things are written for our admonition, that they may warn and instruct our souls. I speak to you who are Christians, who profess to believe in Him -- the Christ of God. Many of you are true Christians; many, alas, only Christians in name, Christless Christians and lost. Yet all profess His name. This is the state of things that Christendom presents before the Lord. A place of privilege, yet a place of solemn responsibility as well.

They had all come out of Egypt: all seemed to be nearing the land of Canaan; yet thousands fell in the wilderness, and
never got there at all. Why was this? The answer is ready:

So we see they could not enter in because of unbelief (Heb. 3:19).

Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief (Heb. 4:11).

The people then were at Kadesh Barnea -- just a step from the land -- where every hope, and every promise could be fulfilled. Immediately the hitherto secret cloud of unbelief, not larger at first than a man’s hand, is seen growing black, and full of sorrow. It seemed so very wise; so like prudence and caution to send up men to spy out the land. It looked well, as it reads in Num. 13, and as if all was according to the mind of the Lord. He spake to Moses saying,

Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I have given unto the children of Israel.

This is most solemn. There is no secret spring seen in the opening of this chapter which would lead us to suppose anything was wrong.

Do we not find oftentimes the same kind of thing in our own histories? You do a thing; you seem fully to have the Lord’s mind and word for what you are then carrying out. I may meet you in six months’ time, and you will say to me, “It was all unbelief”! How solemn! How sad to discern that the Lord often permits a thing; yea, orders a thing “because of unbelief,” as He does here. The thermometer of faith had gone down: the bright first song of faith in Ex. 15, which seized unbelief,” as He does here. The thermometer of faith had gone down: the bright first song of faith in Ex. 15, which seized unbelief,” as He does here. The thermometer of faith had gone down: the bright first song of faith in Ex. 15, which seized unbelief,” as He does here. The thermometer of faith had gone down: the bright first song of faith in Ex. 15, which seized

Indeed, we might take a pencil and write across the pages of the Book of Numbers, “According unto your faith, be it unto you.” This is the motto of the book: Each one got according to what faith or unbelief counted on. Moses says, “I am not able to bear all this people alone -- and the unbelieving word had scarcely passed his lips, when God says: “Gather me seventy men of the elders of Israel! (Num. 11:14, 16). Israel says: “Would God we had died in this wilderness.” In the same chapter we read, “As truly as I live, as ye have spoken in mine ears so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness” (Num. 14: 2, 28, 29). “Who shall give us flesh to eat?” was the cry of lusting Israel (Num. 11:18). “The Lord shall give you flesh to eat,” was the reply of Moses. But what was the result, “He gave them their request, but sent leanness to their souls.” What a comment on that whole chapter (11) is the word of James! (1:15). Lust had concealed; it had brought forth sin, and sin when finished had brought forth death, as Kibroth Hataavah solemnly witnessed.

Caleb, in the splendid language of faith, cried out,

Let us go up at once and possess it [i.e., the land]; for we are well able to overcome it; and God took him, too, at his word, and said as it were, “You shall have the land!” And Joshua: If the Lord delight in us then he will bring us into this land, and give it us.

Beautiful language of faith -- so fully answered in his own words at the end:

Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof (Josh. 23:14).

The twelve men are then appointed to search the land. They go through it in the length and in the breadth of it. They see its beauty and fertility; its streams and springs, its mountains and its valleys. Full forty days did they journey through it, kept by the hand of God. No son of Anak molested them; no enemy barred their way. They cut down the cluster of grapes at
Eshcol, with the pomegranates and the figs; and they returned to their brethren “from searching of the land after forty days!”

Now hear their report. The land is good, say they, and God’s word as to it is true; all agree as to this, all agreed, too, as to the difficulties, and the obstacles, and the enemies that were there. Caleb cries, “Let us go up at once, and possess it.” To this Joshua agrees in the next chapter: “If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us in.” But ten men of the spies now give an evil report of it: “We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we!” The horizon was clouded by unbelief and the fear of man, and in one moment God was forgotten. His strength was not measured against the sons of Anak, but their own; and in very deed they were but grasshoppers in their own sight, as they were also in the sight of Anak’s sons -- “for they are stronger than we.”

Ah, beloved reader, have you never seen this? Have you never seen a soul in a divine position, rejoicing there before the Lord, seeking, too, to bring others into the same blessedness? Perhaps that soul has got away from the Lord, and you meet it again in a short time, and hear it speaking evil of the place so recently the boast of its lips. Can we not recall the tendency of our own hearts to do so, even without openly avowing it? We are disappointed with the place where God has brought us, when faith has lost sight of Him.

Look at these spies; at one moment delighting in the land of promise, the next, condemning it, from first to last, as the difficulties rose before their eyes. Mark, too, the two witnesses for God -- Caleb and Joshua. How lovely is the meaning of Caleb’s name -- “all heart” -- the man who followed the Lord fully. (Of Joshua I do not speak, for he is more the type of a heavenly Christ, who leads His people into the possession of all.) He (Caleb) took the scales of the sanctuary in the hand of God; yet God preserving two witnesses for Himself, of that energy which counts on God with undimmed faith, and runs the whole way through, to the very end. All fail but they: Moses fails; Aaron fails; the people fail; yet God brings in the power of the enemy, and the cities walled up to heaven; in the one scale he put the children of Anak, and all the power of the enemy, and the cities walled up to heaven; in the other scale he placed the promise of the living God. The scale he held did not hesitate in the beam; the single word of Jehovah outweighed them all. “We shall be,” said he, “more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Yes, beloved brethren, Numbers is the testing and total failure of man walking in the wilderness under the government of God; yet God preserving two witnesses for Himself, of that energy which counts on God with undimmed faith, and runs the whole way through, to the very end. All fail but they: Moses fails; Aaron fails; the people fail; yet God brings in the little ones whom they said would be a prey. He takes care of and glorifies Himself in weakness, as that in which His strength is perfected; for His power is made perfect in weakness itself.

We find, then, the first thing Israel does is to speak evil of what God gives them; and next, they speak evil of Himself:

Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? 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.

Caleb and Joshua seek to cast the people back on God’s heart, but hopeless unbelief had thoroughly set in. The Lord then speaks of smiting and disinherit them; and Moses pleads that “mercy” -- His resource which never failed. The Lord answered, “I have pardoned according to thy word” (Num. 14:20). Then He sentences the people, and commends Caleb:

Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: but my servant, Caleb, because he hath another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Thus, then, runs the sentence of the Lord:

Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me; doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years; and ye shall know my breach of promise.

They had waited for “forty days” for human testimony, and when they had received it, they believed it not; nor had they believed the testimony of God. Fit testimony to the world and its character through which we pass. Man does not trust God, nor trust his fellow. Ask yourselves -- is it not so? We have a lock on our door; a bank in which to put our money; a policeman to guard it. No man naturally trusts his fellow, and the last thing he does is to trust God, and this only when grace had taught him that he had nothing else that will avail.

Forty years’ wandering was the result of the unbelief of a moment, and to the sin which flowed from it. How often is a life marred, and a forty years of sorrow prefaced and introduced by one moment of sin and unbelief. It may be a sin introduction by one moment of sin and unbelief. It may be a sin breach of promise.

We find, then, the first thing Israel does is to speak evil of what God gives them; and next, they speak evil of Himself:

Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? 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.
The ten spies were judged for their sin. Israel, repentant, say, We will go up, we will obey; we plead His promise; we will confess our sin. What more, we might say, than these, then, could they do? “And they rose up early, and get them to the top of the mount” — and they do these things. But Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? But it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites [mark it well, beloved, this had been the reason of unbelief not to go when the Lord had commanded] and the Canaanites are there before you; and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you. But they presumed to go up unto the hill-top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah [destruction].

We must accept and bow to God’s government when He has so ordained, and take the consequences of our sin.

We turn now to another man -- the man of “another spirit” -- Caleb, the man with an undivided heart. These two men (Joshua and he) went right into the land of Canaan, and passed through it for forty days: then they came back, and traversed the desert the whole forty years. Did it not seem hard that such should be to those faithful men? To have to bear the consequences of the sins of others, if they had not shared in them? Nay, they would not have been without the journey; they learned wondrous things of the God of Israel by the way. They saw the rod of Aaron budded, and blossomed, and fruitful. They saw the judgment on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; the brazen serpent too. And they walked with God all through the way, and at the end they had an “abundant entrance” ministered unto them into the glorious land!

If we turn to Josh. 14, where Caleb’s history is referred to, we read,

Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenzite, said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-Barnea. Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land; and I brought word again, as it was in my heart [this man of an undivided heart; and] I wholly followed the Lord my God.

When a man can stand up before his fellows of forty years, and say this, he is entitled to our belief. None could say it without fear of contradiction, were it not true. It is not often a man can testify of himself; when he can, I believe him! And Moses testifies, too, of him, and said (v. 9), “Thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God.” The Lord, too, had said of him (Num. 14:24), “My servant, Caleb . . . hath followed me fully,” and now Joshua, at the end:

And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance . . . because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

Four precious testimonies of that single-hearted man.

Would you like to be a Caleb, my reader; or to be of that great multitude whose carcases fell in the wilderness? Can you put yourself with that man in spirit and say, “From henceforth we will live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again”? “From henceforth”: how often have these words been but the purpose of an hour, and then have passed away. We want more of “another spirit,” like Caleb. “We have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God,” my brethren; and those two spirits are in full opposition, each claiming the allegiance of our souls.

If we turn for a moment to 1 Chron. 2:18-55, we find how God carries out the promise that his seed should inherit the land. We may have passed over this chapter as a dry list of names, and never have seen any of the divine principles that even such can teach us. We find here the genealogy of Caleb traced onwards, till we read at the end, “These are the Kenites (cf. Judg. 1:16) that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.” We find their descendants still in the possession of their portion, in the words of one of the last prophets of Israel -- Jeremiah. If you turn to Jer. 25, you will find how the Rechabites would not forfeit the vow that their father had put upon them. They were the descendants of this very man, who wholly followed the Lord God of Israel; and in the very end we read, “Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me (said the Lord) for ever!” Such is God’s reward of faith; and His faithfulness to a faithful, undivided heart.

Words of Faith, 1882, pp. 234-240.
“Forty Days” No. 4: Human Weakness and Divine Strength (1 Kings 19)

We have in this scripture an episode in the history of one of God’s most remarkable servants. The place, too, where we find him had been the scene of several striking incidents, or at least that mountain range, of which this mount Horeb forms a part, in the history of Israel.

There was the scene of the burning bush, when Moses turned aside to see that great sight. There, too, Israel drank of the water from the rock at Rephidim; and discomfited Amalek and his hosts, with the edge of the sword. There Moses received the Law from Jehovah; and now we find the great prophet of the Lord fleeing in weakness to the same place, at the voice of a woman.

Elijah was a most remarkable man. He played, and will again play, a striking part in the history of Israel. He was one of those who were on the mount of transfiguration with Christ. He and Moses appeared with the Lord there. All had been, at different times and in different conditions, sustained for “forty days” without food. They, to be separate from nature and nature’s support, to be with the Lord: He, to be tempted of the devil. And both of them “spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” They passed in review, and spake of things, which in their natural life here they had not known. Moses -- buried long before by the Lord upon mount Nebo; and Elijah, caught up to heaven without dying at all: yet both in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration, do not seem to have lost intelligence as to what had passed on earth, in that interval, up to the scene of the transfiguration.

Elijah was a man subject to like passion as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave forth her fruit.

Here was the spring of inward communion with God that He owned. It was not the great outward acts of service; it was the secret exercises of heart in dependence on God, which felt for His honor and for Israel’s sin, expressed by his earnest prayers. James would say of this, “He prayed in prayer.” This, beloved readers, was what made him great in the sight of the Lord.

Let us see somewhat of what this man’s service was. We do not find anything of those secret exercises of soul in the seventeenth chapter of first Kings. It is the history of the care of God for His servant, whom He was training in secret for His great outward work in Israel.

And Elijah, the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

How true it is that perfect exercises of soul before God, lead to perfect calmness before men! What simple power was expressed in those words: yet not a power of man, but of God, in which the complete sense of God’s mind and God’s power had so absorbed the prophet’s thoughts that self, and all the wisdom of man, were absolutely forgotten. His inward springs of life were in communion with the Lord God of Israel; and he could stand forth at this terrible moment of apostasy, braving all the terrors of an apostate age, and speak thus.

Israel was worshiping Baal. Ahab, the son of Omri, had done evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. He had made a grove, and reared up an altar for Baal, in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. In his days Jericho, the city of the curse (Josh. 6:26), was rebuilt; and all was complete apostasy. In the face of all this, Elijah dares to stand forth for Jehovah, and speak those words to Ahab. Then he retires for fresh lessons for his own soul. The brook Cherith sustains his thirst for a time, and the ravens feed him there morning and evening. After a while the brook dries up, and God sends him to the widow of Zarephath. There he is sustained for a whole year: the widow’s cruse failed not; nor did the barrel of meal waste, until the time of judgment was past, and God sent rain upon the earth.

Thus was he trained in secret, and thus did he slowly but surely advance in the school of God, until greater things still were to be shown in Israel. These we find in chapter eighteen, when the apostasy of Israel is exposed.

Picture to yourselves this scene of solemn grandeur: On the one side Baal’s prophets -- four hundred and fifty men; on the other side one solitary man standing for the true God of Israel. Elijah waits until all the incantations of Baal’s prophets had failed to bring forth a reply. Satan had beguiled his votaries into their delusions, and then forsook them -- mocking them, as it were, in their extremity. Then God’s prophet raises his voice: “How long halt ye between two opinions? if Jehovah be God follow him, but if Baal follow him.” He had proposed that the God who would answer by fire would prove himself to be...
Elijah is overpowered by the poor effort of nature in fleeing away: he sleeps under the bitter shrub; and what do we find? A loving God watching over His servant while he sleeps; preparing food for his wearied body; carrying a cruse of water to slake his thirst; and then awaking him by the angel’s touch, saying, “Arise and eat!” Still filled with self, he does what he is told, and lies down again. Again, the second time, the angel of the Lord came and touched him, saying tenderly, “Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.” Surely it was! though it was but “a day’s journey” (cf. v. 4), taken without dependence on God!

Was there ever a moment he deserved this tender care less than now? and yet it was now God Himself directly -- not even by a raven, or by a widow’s cruse -- who now cared for him. This is touchingly lovely. Have I, have you, my reader, if you are His servant, ever experienced this? Have you found that at moments when you only deserved to be cast out, as man would do; or even your brethren might do; then God’s care, God’s ministry both to soul andbody were the more conspicuous? Blessed, ever blessed God! He alone is worthy.

But God had his soul in view, and He was about to convince him of his sin, of his human weakness and frailty; but before He does this, He will convince him of His own unchanging love.

God never gives a man up! Let him be a successful man, and he will command the respect of others: others will crowd after him. The moment he fails -- even in measure, his fellows will give him up; they will search and find, if possible, ten thousand things against him that never would have been questioned before. Not so God. He will rebuke, and chastise, and train His servants, and use them too; but He never gives them up. Aye, He will use them too, sooner or later, to do the very things they assayed to do in their own strength, and in which they failed. But first they must learn that power is of God, and that it only works in their weakness.

Look at this man at another day, on the mount of transfiguration with Christ, and hear the prophet Malachi as to the service he will yet accomplish before the end:

Behold I will send Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal. 4).

He will accomplish yet what he assayed to do in the day of Ahab, but which was but a type of the end!

Elijah was thus in the desert solitude in the bitterness of his soul. One day’s journey had been too much for him, as taken in his own strength, and he laid himself down, and wished for death, to end his misery. He wakens to his sorrow, to find a gracious and loving God seeking to break his heart by His perfect goodness. But his heart is not yet reached. Like many, he took God’s tender care as a matter of course. Alas, how many do this! How many murmur at the least sorrow or cross that comes, and never dream of counting up the ten thousand mercies of each day and hour! Alas! there are others, too, who are spoiled by blessings, or what they deem such; their hearts are taken away from God by the very blessing His hand bestows. Blessings are always a hindrance when they do

the true God. Baal’s prophets had cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives until the blood came; but Baal answered not. Elijah lifts up his dependent and prayerful voice to the Lord, and at the time of the evening sacrifice, the answer comes. The Lord sends the fire from heaven and consumes the sacrifice, the people fall on their faces when they behold, and answer, “Jehovah, he is the God; Jehovah, he is the God!” Israel confesses Jehovah once more; Baal’s power is destroyed (for the time). Final judgment is executed on his worshippers and three years of judgment have passed away. Again Elijah is on his knees before God. He gets him to the top of Carmel to prayer; while Ahab gets him to eat and to drink. Elijah casts himself to the earth with his face between his knees in prayer. The answer, at first a cloud no bigger than a man’s hand, comes, but soon the fruitful rains (type of the “latter rain “when Israel is restored) fall, proving the goodness of the Lord.

This was great outward service -- “turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just,” as it were; yet with all this there was much to be corrected in the heart of Elijah. His outward service of power had taken him away from his inward communion with God. So when Israel returns to his apostasy and Ahab to his sin, he finds all in failure again, and instead of standing before the Lord God of Israel he flees away from his work, which had exalted him in the eyes of men, at the threat of the wicked Jezebel.

This is what we have constantly to discover in our own history. A man is never nearer failure than when he has done well! This is to be observed much, and guarded against. We must learn, too, that if we serve outwardly before men, we must preserve the inner life of communion with God, or all will be but failure and shame.

Now, at the very moment when Elijah ought to have been most particularly at his post, and have trusted the same God that had been his strength in times gone by, in the flood of evil, he flees in cowardice from his duty; he murmurs against God, that had been his strength in times gone by, in the flood of evil, and he will command the respect of others: others will crowd after him. The moment he fails -- even in measure, his fellows will give him up; they will search and find, if possible, ten thousand things against him that never would have been questioned before. Not so God. He will rebuke, and chastise, and train His servants, and use them too; but He never gives them up. Aye, He will use them too, sooner or later, to do the very things they assayed to do in their own strength, and in which they failed. But first they must learn that power is of God, and that it only works in their weakness.

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At the second time he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God.

At length, when these “forty days” are over, he is found in the cave lodged there. God’s eye had been on him in his wanderings in the desert for those forty days, and now His eye is on him in the cave at Horeb. His object is to break that proud and petulant spirit, to destroy that self, which so hindered His servant — yea took him away from his work. He is about to send him back to other work, but He must deal with Elijah first; so He sustains him in that “forty days and forty nights” by the meat of His own providing, to bring him to His own true “end,” which is “very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

Elijah had but little confidence in the virtues of other people. This is a had sign; it is a worse sign even when you find people lose confidence, too, in God about His people. It has been well said, “Confidence in the virtues of another is no slight proof of your own!” How much more when confidence in God about His own is there! Now Elijah had not a bit of confidence in Israel, and, as a consequence, he had lost confidence in God about His people too. The word of the Lord reaches him in the cave:

What doest thou here, Elijah?

There were two things in that question: first, reproof from God; and, secondly, a recall to his duties which had been forsaken. Elijah answers in what the Spirit of God calls his “intercession against Israel” (Rom. 11:2).

I have been jealous for the Lord God of Hosts.

Now this is striking indeed. When he was in the flush of faith and nearness to God, at the opening of his career, he could turn to the wicked Ahab, and say, “As the Lord, God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.” But this was now forgotten. “The Lord God of sabaoth” is substituted in his mind and soul for “the Lord God of Israel.” This is most instructive.

I [oh, that selfish “I”] have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down shine altars, and slain thy prophets [had it ever crossed his mind that he had just been throwing down altars, and slaying prophets, himself?] with the sword; and I, even I, only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Thus far to justify himself at the expense of others.

Now the Lord replies — taking no notice of that self-justifying spirit, but sending him back to his work again — in the words, “Go, return”; he was to anoint Hazael, and Jehu, and Elisha, the son of Shaphet, of Abel-meholah. But now come the lovely, upbraiding, instructive, corrective words of the Lord --

Yet have I reserved to myself seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

How worthy of God is all this! First, sending him back to do further work in Israel; and then, disclosing what his heart had never discovered, the true godly ones of that day, who had refrained from evil when all others had been carried away. Yes, even those whom God owned, who had no outward appearance before others, but characterized by the “not” of that solemn day of evil; whom God noticed and valued, when Elijah knew them not.

How sweet is all this! to find that in a day of deep declension God owns and values the abstention of those who, though not outwardly witnesses for Him as Elijah was, had, in separation of soul and heart to Him, not done what others had done against His name. They had, so to say, “kept his word, and not denied his name,” and God would say of them, “I know their works,” though others know them not.

Elijah had never discovered those faithful souls; too much occupied with self and great acts of power, his heart and spirit had got away from the Lord until now. Now self was reached, and, without a rebuking word, he is sent back to his duty, and the blessed news told him that God had His remnant then, and they had loved His name, and not denied it, in a day of total apostasy and ruin: Elijah had never known of them till now.

Broken to pieces, he learned now what human weakness is, and what divine strength can accomplish working in the weakness of man. To this he yielded himself without a faltering spirit, until the day when he was rapt to heaven in the chariot of fire — a suited exit for a servant such as he. From heaven he returned to stand before the gaze of Peter, James, and John, with his Lord and Moses His servant, in the holy mount; and he will return, ere His people are restored, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5, 6).

John the Baptist came “in the spirit and power of Elias,” when the Lord first came to Israel. Israel refused her Messiah, but for...
faith John was he: “If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come.” He was such for the faith of the few who attached themselves to Christ. But Elias himself will come, and do what he could not do before. The Lord will then take away the names of Baalim out of Israel’s mouth, and they shall be no more remembered by their name (Hos. 2). May we learn, then, some lessons of our own weakness, and of the strength of God, from the glance we have taken of the history of that remarkable man, and of his “forty days” journey from Beersheba to Horeb, the mount of God.

Words of Faith, 1882, pp. 269-278.

“Forty Days” No. 5:
Repentance and Forgiveness

The word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.

Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey; and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh, by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God, yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

“And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not (Jonah 3).

And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here (Luke 11:29, 30, 32).

Before entering on my present subject, I would note how the well-spring of God’s living grace rises up, and bursts forth at times, and under circumstances, even when the dispensation is dealing with other things. In the OT, grace was not flowing out dispensationally, as now, to the Gentiles -- “to all men everywhere.” Yet God was God; and His grace is seen here, in sending a mission to the Gentiles, even in those days of dealing with Israel alone, “of all the nations of the earth.” It was a bright foretaste of the overflows of His heart, to be fully made known when Jesus had accomplished His work on the cross, when God’s heart was free to flow forth in grace through righteousness.

Now it would appear that Jonah really understood, in some measure, this truth: God had sent him on a special mission to the Gentile city of Nineveh. He was to go and announce the judgment of God against it. God had said, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me (Jonah 1:2).

But Jonah feared that if he announced this judgment, and that the people repented, God would forgive and spare them; and thus his self-importance would be compromised. And so Jonah fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

Now let us look for a moment at Nineveh. At this time of the earth’s history it was the greatest city in the world. It was “an exceeding great city of three days’ journey,” that is, it was about twenty miles across: far larger than London. It was one of those enormous cities of ancient days, whose ruins, when discovered, seem almost fabulous to behold. It was the Capital of the Assyrian Empire: surrounded by walls, we are told, one hundred feet in height; with twelve hundred towers. All the “entourage” of Eastern splendor was there. It stood alone in its greatness -- a city that seemed to be unconquerable. But its sins cried aloud to God for Judgment.

The striking narrative of Jonah himself unfolds God’s preparation of His messenger for this mission; the discipline, too, through which He passes him, until the vessel is prepared according to His mind, and ready to His hand. First, he flees by ship from God, to escape this duty; then the storm overtakes him, finding him asleep in the ship: the cry of the mariners awakes him; the lot singles Jonah out as the man for whose sake the storm was sent. Conscience now convicts him, owning that he is the man. The sea receives him. The fish swallows him up: and in the “Belly of Hell [Sheol],” as he calls his prison house, he passes through those deep and agonizing exercises of soul, detailed in ch. 2, until he owns that “salvation “was “of the Lord,” and then only does he stand on the dry ground -- a man prepared for his work.

In all this he was eminently a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sign, too, that would be given to the Jews, as the Lord told them. A sign that would be no use for them -- as they should have received a living Messiah. A dead and risen Savior, who would go away to the Gentiles; it would be too late for them to know when they had slain Him. Of course I thus look upon them as the people of God. Individuals He would bless at any time.

Jonah then goes his way. He enters Nineveh, a day’s journey”; and he proclaims the solemn message, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” This was the “preaching of Jonas.” Doubtless he told them his own strange history: a more striking text could hardly have been chosen. A man just emerging from a living tomb, and standing now on the
ground of resurrection in figure, could vouch in himself for the
truth of what God had done.

It will not be out of place here to say a word on the great
truth of repentance. I trust it is becoming more generally
known in its real meaning and power than hitherto; but still I
feel there are many who are quite astray on this all-important
subject. I say “all-important,” because you will find that it is
one of the great leading doctrines of the NT.

The disciples when they went forth, being sent by the
Lord, “preached that men should repent” (Mark 6:12). The
Lord Himself, when John was cast into prison, came to Galilee,
and preached “the gospel of the kingdom of God,” saying,
“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand:
repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

When He sent His disciples forth, after His resurrection,
His commission to them was --

That repentance and remission of sins, should be preached
in his name. among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem

Paul, too, announces, amidst the learning and heathenism of
Athens, how God “now commandeth all men everywhere to
repent (Acts 17:30).

“Repentance,” then, is an integral part of the gospel on
man’s side, while “forgiveness” belongs to God, and is
accorded by Him to every repentant soul.

Some, doubtless finding it such an important element,
have lost the balance of the divine meaning of it, and,
supposing it to be a prefatory preparation towards the reception
of forgiveness, have construed it into a certain amount of
meritorious sorrow for sin; which, when sufficient, is met by
forgiveness from God. Others have taken different views, but
it is not my purpose to enter now upon what it is not; but in
some measure to illustrate what it is, the Lord so guiding me.

Jonah’s preaching to Nineveh affords a most instructive
and striking illustration of its true meaning: for “they repented
at the preaching of Jonas.”

Now suppose he had gone to Nineveh and said to that
great city, “Repent;” as one might suppose a case even now of
a man going to the center of Africa and calling upon the
heathen there to “Repent” -- what would be thought of such?
Nay; the first thing Jonah presented to the Ninevites was a
certain truth from God, well calculated to inspire great
searchings of heart amongst them. He announces God’s
judgment being, as we might say, at the doors. Now what was
the effect of this? The very first initiatory effect was, that the
announcement was received in faith; and we read, “So the men
of Nineveh believed God.” Here faith at once in the testimony
was seen. This was necessary in order to produce what so
eminently shone in these people -- true full, and godly
repentance: both as to the past, in the present, and for the time
to come.

1st. They put them on sackcloth for the past.
2nd. They amended their ways in the present.
3rd. They purposed a turning from their sins for the future.

Here was true repentance, and this even before they knew
anything of God’s forgiving grace. Up to this they only hope
in God, with the words,

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away
from his fierce anger, that we perish not? (Jonah 3:9).

But let us remember that the first thing was -- they “believed
God.” Faith was the initial movement in their souls. And I am
bold to say there never was true repentance yet, without this
being the case. Get up what frames and feelings you may; let
sorrow for sin be there as deep as you please; let the soul be
prepared for all that is coming as well as possible -- faith in
God, or in something which He has revealed, must and ever
does go before it. I do not say that the soul may yet have
entered on peace; rather I would say I do not believe it has: nor
has it got hold of forgiveness yet, but the tender root of faith
in God and His word, has struck deeply into the heart of that man,
which never can be eradicated.

Thus it was with Nineveh. The solemn sound of judgment
had burst on their astonished ears from the lips of that strange
preacher, and had sunk down on hearts, ploughing up the way
for that which sprang up at the same moment within -- faith in
God and His word. True repentance followed; and “God saw
their works,” and the golden scepter of forgiveness was at once
extended, and Nineveh was spared! Thus it is always. Let a
soul be in the true attitude before God, and at once it is
forgiven.

There is a passage in Mark 1:15, already alluded to, which
may seem to contradict this, as may others also; but, when
rightly seen, it will but confirm all we have said. It would
seem, then, as if repentance preceded faith: the words are,
“Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” But if we only cast our
eyes on the preceding clause, we read, Jesus came . . . saying,
“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.”
This presentation of something from God -- no matter what He
uses -- produced a work in the soul; faith was there in that
word, and such would bring repentance most surely, and belief
in the glad tidings, as well as the sad tidings that had first
moved their souls, that they were unfit for that kingdom of
God.

What magnificent and soul-stirring results we find here
from that “one day’s” journey and “preaching of Jonah”!
Picture to yourself the king leaving his throne, and, doffing his
royal robes, covering himself with sackcloth and sitting in
ashes. His courtiers, too, and his people, with their wives and
little children -- perhaps six hundred thousand souls (for there
were, even of that great number, one hundred and twenty
thousand who were not able to discern their right hand from
their left) “much cattle,” too -- all partaking of the
soul-humblings of that mighty City.

“One day” was enough for them. What a contrast to the
thousands now-a-days who hear, year after year, the message
of grace, and never yet have bowed down in true repentance
before the Lord!

What does God use now to produce that work in the souls
of men? Judgment was what sounded in the ears of Nineveh,
and still judgment forms a part of the gospel testimony. It is still the dark background of the picture; while the presentation of Christ, of the “goodness of God” now, “leads” the soul to repentance.” (See Rom. 2:4.) A loving God beseeches men to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:20), while dark and solemn judgment to come looms over the scene as the terrible alternative if men do not hear. “Despisest thou,” says the apostle, “the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” -- leads them to that blessed spot where forgiveness is found by a truly repentant heart. Like the woman of the city of old, she was drawn to Him “by the cords of a man, by the bands of love.” True faith in Him had taken root in her soul (Luke 7), and led her to His feet, to shed those tears of self-judgment for her ten thousand sins; this was true repentance, ere she was forgiven. When there her soul was ready for all the rest which was so freely bestowed: “Thy sins be forgiven thee”; “Thy faith hath saved thee”; “Go in peace,” were the blessed words that greeted her ear. The root of repentance and forgiveness was faith, while the fruit of faith was love, and then she learned His whole heart.

Mark how different was the thought in the heart of the king of Nineveh, compared with the certainty of the gospel day, “Who can tell,” said he, “if God will turn and repent”? Now-a-days there is no “Who can tell” in the clear trumpet-sound of grace. “Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more” is now the word. We say, “Well, I forgive that man, but I cannot forget.” With God it is more than this; He remembers our iniquities no more!

Alas, poor Jonah! he was right about God, but it touched the self-importance of the man. God found them bowed to the earth in true repentance, and at once, as always, His forgiveness is extended to souls in such a state.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth thee of the evil.

Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live (Jonah 4:1-3).

Oh the heart of man, what it is! angry and sore displeased because God would not justify his words, and destroy a repentant city! Nay, the soul that would think thus has much to learn of His infinite and tender mercy. Poor messenger of judgment! you could be angry at God sparing the ten thousands of Nineveh but Jesus can, and does, rejoice over one repentant sinner. “Rejoice with me,” is the Savior’s word, “for I have found the sheep that I had lost.” “It was meet,” says the Father, “that we should make merry, and be glad; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found.”

Repentance, then, is that solemn judgment which I form of, and consciously pronounce about, myself in hearing a testimony from the Lord. I must believe something ere I could possibly repent. It may be that judgment has aroused my conscience; it may be that His goodness has drawn out my heart towards Him; but one thing is certain -- faith in that something is there, and by faith the soul lives before God. Faith is the spring of life, the life of Jesus in the soul. That life may express itself in agonizing exercises for a time, but it is a proof that the soul is not dead, but lives. It is judging itself in view of the divine requirements; weighing itself in the balances, and finding itself wanting. The work of repentance, or self-judgment, proceeds, and the deeper the better. This leads to the spot where, hopeless in itself, it turns away, in despair of amendment, and finds its all in Christ. Forgiveness is now known and enjoyed as the result of Christ’s work alone, and the work of repentance was only leading the soul to the place and condition where forgiveness is applied -- namely, where we have believed somewhat of our own hopeless ruin in our own sight, as hitherto in the sight of God.


“Forty Days” No. 6:
Conflict and Victory

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matt. 4:1-11).

And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of
And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time; and the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

And Jesus, answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season (Luke 4:1-13).

We may recall very easily another scene that was enacted about a thousand years before this (of which we have two detailed accounts given by two of the writers of the Gospels); the former happened in the valley of Elah, as narrated in I Sam. 17. David -- then a stripling, and just about to enter on his public service in the reign of Saul -- had come down from his father’s house to the aid of his brethren and the people of God, who were trembling in terror at the power of the Philistines. Goliath, their champion, had challenged them each day for forty days, when David arrived on the scene. At once he is rejected by his brethren, and then entered into the conflict alone -- a conflict, of which the issue was complete victory for the armies of God, and deliverance for His people, at that day.

It was but a shadow, forecasting that greater conflict of the greater than David, who came from His Father’s house to re-open that great question, commenced four thousand years before in Paradise, between man and Satan, and to shew what the true “Man after God’s own heart” could do in the presence of the foe. It was but a faint type, but it points, as all things did in God’s hand, to Jesus.

If we examine these two accounts of the temptation of Christ, we find that He not only enters on this scene and conflict to prove His right as the Second man, the Lord from God, who were trembling in terror at the power of the Philistines. Goliath, their champion, had challenged them each day for forty days, when David arrived on the scene. At once he is rejected by his brethren, and then entered into the conflict alone -- a conflict, of which the issue was complete victory for the armies of God, and deliverance for His people, at that day.

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Over those “forty days” temptations God has drawn a veil. “Afterward [mark the word] he hungered.” Note now the wisdom of the foe. We shall always find that the tempter adapts the temptation to our present state. With Christ it was ever perfection. He hungered; but this was not sin; there was nothing evil in being an hungered. Still, the temptation was suited to His then state by this father of lies.

Is not this the case with us? Does not the tempter know how to suit his temptation to our present state? Does he not know what is suited to move our lusts -- to seduce us out of the path of obedience? Does he not know the love of the world in our hearts? -- the ambition of another -- the pride of a third -- the vanity of another? Does he not see the covetousness of that heart -- the lust working in this? Does not the tempter know how to draw each one away of his own lust, and entice such? There is a poor man struggling with the world and his children’s need. The tempter tempts him to be discontented with his lot. There is a godly woman with a bad husband. She is tempted to impatience with her life of sorrow. There is that rich man who hoards his money. He has been often deceived, he thinks, in giving it away. There is a corner of his heart over which “covetous” may be written. He gives way to the temptation to close his purse-strings, and the tempter has his victory.

I might go on in this strain; but all who read these words know well how the thing that suited the “old man, which is corrupt,” within them, has been ministered to by the tempter, and how, perhaps unknown to themselves, they have fallen his prey for the moment. I say “for the moment,” for I speak of those who are open to his devices -- saints of God with the flesh in them. The poor child of Adam is often left alone by the tempter; he is his sure and certain prey, and needs no special watchful care from the enemy of Christ. With him, his course seems in Satan’s highway, and unless grace turns his heart there is no need; his own heart and his own lusts, and the world around, answer well enough for him.

But Jesus “hungered.” This was the will of God Could it happen without such? Nay. “Command that these stones be made bread,” suggested the tempter. “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,” had passed the lips of the Eternal Son, and now on earth He will obey. Have we never satisfied our hunger, our need, at the expense of the word of God? Look at our daily life, reader; does it not cut home deeply into every motive of our life and ways? Our needs, too, each day, are they ever satisfied independently of God? Alas, for the reply, even from the lips and hearts of the brightest Saints! How “Christ” detects our souls, yet, blessed be His name, forms us after the image of Himself who thus lays bare Jesus. Came Jesus to be the subject of God, who had His God His

Men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

No word had passed His “mouth” to “make stones bread” to satisfy hunger, apart from His will. Thus was the tempter stripped of his power; obedience to the word of God left him a conquered foe, and Christ was victor by obedience over man’s mighty conqueror.

We have a nature capable of being drawn aside, and an ever watchful enemy ready with his temptations. Christ had not this; but still, whether for Him or for us, obedience is victory. We never can be in a single circumstance where we cannot -- nay, are not bound -- to do the will of God, be that what it may. Thus we may ever be conquerors, as He was here. But let us ever remember that it is the state of soul in which we are to which the tempter presents his wife, adapting it to that which is uppermost at the moment in our heart; and each moment of each day and hour is the opportunity for his defeat or victory. If the latter, the soul may be restored, but the scar remains, telling us of a moment’s defeat in us, and of a victory of the enemy.

Now mark what ensues. The skillful general does not continue to attack the point where he has been repulsed successfully, he changes his mode, and turns the flank of his foe. How rapidly, too, is this accomplished by the successful tempter. How well the human heart is known. How frequently have those who have resisted well in his attacks fallen, forgetful that they were never nearer a fall than when they had resisted well.

In the case of Jesus how sudden was the change.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, &c.

So with us: one thing is tried, and we resist, and foil the foe; the next moment we fail where we least expected to have done so. Our success was thought to be our own. We ceased to be dependent, and withdrew our eyes from Him who withdraweth not His eyes from us; and thus, and only thus, we fall. A heart distrustful of itself, which ever looks to Him, He succors with His timely help to keep us from a fall.

Will Jesus, too, be a dependent One, and teach us so? The tempter says -- using, as it were, the word of God, by which He lived, that to which He had appealed as His guide, and the director of His life -- he says, “If thou be Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” The promise of God to His Messiah who dwelt in the secret of the Most High, and lodged under the shadow of Abraham’s God, who had made Jehovah His refuge and fortress; His God, in whom He would trust. It was to Him this promise was made, just quoted by the enemy. But mark the word which accompanied this promise; how God, as it were, delighted to unite with His promise the dependent heart of this blessed One, which only brought out His deep perfections. “Because thou hast made the Lord my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation.” This was the dependence of Jesus; this, what drew forth the promise of the Lord just quoted by the enemy. He had made His God His
refuge and His trust: no need, then, to try would He be as good as He had said -- no need to test One fully trusted. We put the test to those we do not fully trust, not to those we do. To do so, would be to "tempt the Lord." Satan sought to inspire Him with confidence in the word of God in spite of disobedience. He quotes the promised security, omitting the required trust. Jesus quotes that word to Israel which made the obedience the ground of His security, and kept His blessings as the dependent Man!

Oh, my reader, have we no word in this for our own souls? Have the promises of our God been clung to, and even rejoiced in, by us when walking in disobedience? Have we never beheld this in those we love and esteem as His own? What He has done for them in salvation trusted in and enjoyed; while a disobedient pathway speaks so plainly as to need no word from us to point it out? In this, too, Jesus was the blessed Conqueror -- in this the enemy of souls was foiled.

"Again" (v. 8). What, "Again!" Yes, my reader, and "again," and onwards to the end. No truce here in this path for us, no time here is allowed to put off the armor of God, even for a moment. "Again," then, all the glory of the world is presented to Him whose own it is, but refused by Him from any hand but from His Father's. The distant time might have been shortened, the path of suffering spared, the cross and shame avoided. But this was not to be. The Giver was valued in His gift, and the Son chose to have it alone from His Father's hand. Let the blessing come only from Him, and all would be well. The malignant foe is discomfited, and Jesus stands at the close of this conflict a Victor! "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," closes the scene.

Satan departs from Him "for a season," and angels came and ministered unto Him. Mark, this striking scene. How it reminds one of that final day of victory which ushers in the millennial glory: "The kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," stretched out beneath His gaze; then all His own. Satan cast into the bottomless pit for the thousand years' restraint; God's unfallen creatures ministering to their true and only Lord with willing hearts and hands. It only wanted His own blood-bought ones, His church, to complete the scene. But the day is coming fast when she, too, will be there, and when Satan, as lightning, will fall from heaven, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

There is a calm for human hearts, too, which conquer in temptation even now -- a holy sense of deep dependence and of joy felt by those who have resisted, in the strength of Christ, the tempter's power. The angels who ministered to those who shall inherit salvation may thus be employed even now. But the day is approaching when every trial of our faith will come forth as gold tried in the fire, and be found unto His praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Would not the Lord, too, as He looked across that scene of sin, and sorrow, and evil which stretched before His view, as Satan was cast down before Him -- the obedient and dependent Man -- would He not think of all who then were His; and all who would come after, for whom He had thus learned what it was to "suffer, being tempted," and how to speak a "word in season" to every weary heart? This, too, ere He descended to traverse that path which led only to His cross and shame.

But remember, dear friends, that, while the tempter thinks of your state of soul, and suits his temptations to your desires, there is Another, too, who thinks of us, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," One who has been in conflict and in victory, and thus has shown us how to obey, and how to conquer too. We have to do with a beaten foe, and to be sustained by his Conqueror. But this must ever be as dependent ones, who, like Himself, should "learn obedience by things which we suffer." He learned as One to whom to obey was a new thing -- new, for One who commanded all from eternity. We learn obedience, too, as a new thing as well as He, but new to us in another way; new, because God's will is now taking its place in hearts hitherto opposed in will to Him, but taking its place surely, though it may be slowly, in hearts renewed by grace, to which the deepest joy will be, that His will shall flow in unhindered blessedness in that scene of rest, from our restless wills, when God will rest in His love for ever.

Words of Faith, 1882, pp. 308-318.

"Forty Days" No. 7: Redemption and Glory

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. To whom also he showed Himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me: for John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye
have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:1-11).

The last of these striking periods of “Forty days” “is now before us, and suitably concludes the series which scripture presents, and which we have in measure received. The opening of the passage above, from Acts 1 begins with a risen Savior in the midst of His disciples, and closes with an opened heaven; and a Man, who having accomplished redemption, passes from the earth into the glory of God. The interval between the resurrection of Christ, until He went on high, was “forty days.” In the opening of His ministry there was the period of “forty days” of His conflict and victory, in the temptations in the wilderness. In the close there was the other “forty days” characterized by accomplished redemption and glory. (We may here recall that there were also two periods of “forty days” “in the ministry of His servant Moses. The first, when he returned from Mount Sinai with the tables of the law, which he broke before he entered the camp of revolted Israel. And the second, when he returned -- his face reflecting the mercy of Jehovah -- to place them unbroken, eventually, in the Ark of the Lord.) There is thus a certain analogy lying between the two. But in the first period the Lord came down after His conflict with the Tempter, with His title made good by obedience, as a Jew, to the land of Israel (Deut. 8; Matt. 4). And as the second Man before God, His Messiah blessings also secured by His full answer to the dependence depicted of Him in Psa. 91; and much more indeed. Then in the second “forty days” He went on high after having made atonement, and borne the curse of the law, to begin a new service, then, in the glory.

The blessed Lord, too, as well as His servant, had His “seven days” of preface to these “forty days” -- that solemn work after His entry into Jerusalem; His passion and His atoning death; His tomb, and His resurrection.

It needed but three days to establish the fact of His death; forty were needed to do so as to His resurrection. “Jesus” had been revealed, and proclaimed on earth. His “resurrection” was to be coupled with that theme. These two things were the grand subject now. “Jesus and Resurrection” -- His Person, and His victory over death, were to meet all the need of man, and display the power and glory of God. God had intervened, when man in weakness as a sinner, and Man in grace in Jesus had met, and when the enemy’s power could go no further, and had wrought a new thing, against which the “gates of hades” could not prevail: Christ had died and risen again: He had emerged from the tomb, into that new sphere where Satan could no more reach, or man defeile. The Conqueror of death -- His mighty work was done: nought now remained but to enter upon its results on high, and make good its power in all who bow to that Name, and mighty victory.

Resurrection was but little taught in the OT scriptures. Enough, that it had been spoken of, and hoped for -- vaguely it is true, still it was there. But when that mighty triumph of God had entered the scene and the Son of David was declared “Son of God in power by resurrection of dead [ones],” either in those He had raised to human life again, or in His own (Rom. 1:5), then it was the constant theme of His Spirit by His chosen witnesses; and the NT is lighted with the glories of resurrection. If Satan had his ready tools, to oppose Himself in life and ways on earth, in the Pharisee, full of his superstition, and his tradition, which made void the word of God; he had his fresh tools ready to his hand, when Jesus rose, to oppose His resurrection, which was the triumph of God over all that under which man had fallen, in the infidel, freethinking Sadducee.

But not merely was the resurrection of Jesus, and the resurrection of His people, and of those who had died in their sins -- “both the just and the unjust” to be the preaching now, when the Lord had gone on high, but a resurrection, not of -- but from the dead was to be the theme. One, of which Jesus was the “firstfruits;” from among the dead. No small wonder was it when the disciples heard for the first time of this, and “questioned one with another what rising [not “the rising”] from among the dead should mean” (Mark 9:9, 10), a resurrection which taking place for some, would leave the mass of men behind, who had died in their sins.

The resurrection was the divine proof of the accomplished mission and work of the Son of God. It was the foundation on which all was now to rest. “If Christ be not raised your faith is vain,” said the apostle, “you are yet in your sins.” “Yea,” he continues, “and we are found false witnesses of God, because we testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up if the dead rise not” (1 Cor. 15). Satan, in the last days too, would seek to deny this, and find fresh instruments to say, “The resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2).

These “forty days,” then, were used of God to bring out, by the most incontestable proofs, the great and stupendous fact that Christ was risen. Without that, all the testimony was, we may say, worthless: with it, all would flow easily, and as a consequence. The disciples themselves were but slow to believe it: they looked upon the story of it as “idle tales, and believed it not”; Jesus, as it were, forces it upon their acceptance, in the most tender and gracious way, till every heart was convinced; and all were made bright and living witnesses of this new thing. He appeared to them in various ways, and at various moments, about twelve times, during those “forty days.” He did not seek to convince them by miracles; for there was but one enacted while He remained on earth: if indeed everything He did was not a miracle (cp. John 20, 21). But He took up His pledges given in His lifetime, and made them good in resurrection. What as a ministering Christ He had promised, as a risen Christ He performed. “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you,” said the Lord, when He would assure their hearts and say, “It is I myself: handle me and see.” He would eat, too, before them, assuring them that He who had been their human yet divine Companion, was still the same. Yet not the same, for since He had left them, and they had fled from Him in His hour of need, He had made peace with God, and the proof that it was made was a risen Savior in their midst -- its first and blessed Preacher!

Let us look now at some of these appearings of the Lord to His disciples after His resurrection. The most touching one, and full of blessed teaching for our souls, is that to Mary the
Magdalen. We find how the risen Christ is the answer to every condition of soul. Is there an ignorant but devoted heart? The risen Jesus will meet it in fullest sympathy and instruction. Is there one who has denied His Lord, when he had the opportunity of confessing Him? The risen Savior will restore. Are there ignorant ones, whose hearts are under the power of unbelief, and false hopes as to their own aggrandizement? He will correct and instruct and reveal Himself afresh, and fill their souls with joy; proving thus to each and all how truly He would meet every heart, with suited and needed instruction.

See this in Mary of Magdala. She was one who proves to us that the Lord does not teach us through the intelligence merely (while using it), but teaches us through the conscience or the affections. How often has that verse in John 14 (v. 21) been used amiss! Have we never thought His meaning was that all His own have His commandments, and they that love Him keep them, and thus show their affection? Nay. Let us be clear in this -- that all His people, alas! have not His commands. They live too far from Him; their affections are not stirred in love to Jesus. Does this not challenge our hearts, beloved? Nay, He means that, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, that is the one that loveth me.” Yes, but the love to Him came first, and thus he received His commands! So it was with Mary. Her ignorance is plain to all; but so is her affection: that of a true heart which had lost its all, as she supposed, when Christ had died. The world was His tomb for her, and the shadow of death shrouded the scene. Angels may speak to her, she heeds them not. Others might go to their homes: she now had none. The night and the day were both alike to her. There was no dawn on her soul, for the Light of her life had been quenched, and all was darkness and tears. That heart loved Christ with deep, though ignorant affection. Once it had been the abode of seven devils; now it was the shrine of a crucified Savior. To such He will reveal Himself -- the risen One: He will remove the sorrow, dry the tears, and make her a blessing. “And He gives her His commands, for her own will remove the sorrow, dry the tears, and make her a blessing Savior. To such He will reveal Himself -- the risen One: He will correct and instruct and reveal Himself afresh, and fill their souls with joy; proving thus to each and all how truly He would meet every heart, with suited and needed instruction.

We hoped that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel.

But the Author of scripture, and the Subject of scripture was there, beside them on the road, in the darkness of that night of their sorrow. He was there to make their hearts “burn within them by the way.” To create new hopes; impart fresh energy; unfold His glory; and make scripture tune with Christ Himself:

O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Would He send a message to His disciples that He was risen, and not think of one whose soul first wandered in self-trust and fallen -- oh, how deeply; and forget to couple the name of “Peter” with that general message to all? To do so might be just: but He who had seen His poor servant’s bitter tears when no other eye beheld, and saw the right moment for a loving message to reach his heart, couples that name, which He Himself had given him, with the rest, in special recollection. A risen Savior meets and restores His warm-hearted, though erring disciple. Every heart is met; every ignorance instructed; every soul which erred restored, at the suited moment, in the erring disciple. Every heart is met; every ignorance instructed; every soul which erred restored, at the suited moment, in the suited way; and by those ways of grace which would be least known to each one personally. What splendid proofs were these, that “he himself” was there! Proofs which none could analyze for another. Such proofs that make us feel even now, in these poor cold days, that we still have to do with Him and He with us, by ways which are known best and only by him who has received them yet all tended to one great point Jesus the Lord is risen!

When this resurrection is, “by many infallible proofs,” made known, then comes His mission as the risen One (not yet the ascended One) to His disciples. In Acts 1:6 at the close of those “Forty Days, the disciples asked the Lord, if He would at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He replied that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons: such were for the earth and Israel, not for heaven and a heavenly company. “The Father” had such times and seasons in His own power: they would receive the power of the Holy Ghost in “not many days”; and they would be His witnesses -- witnesses of a Christ risen from among the dead.

But now mark well the force of His reply. When He, in His incarnate days, was presenting the kingdom to Israel, and when sending forth the twelve on this behalf, He said, in

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5. ἵκεινς ἡστιν ὁ ἄγαπῶν με.
detailing their mission in Matt. 10.

Go not into the way of the Gentiles; and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Here was the extent of this mission of former days. Strictly confined to the “lost sheep” of “Israel.” But all this had been refused. Israel’s day was past, and Zion had refused her King. The old enactment ceased then when Israel “would not.”

The barriers were thus broken down; the cross of a malefactor being the answer of Israel, to Him in grace, when they exclaimed, “We have no king but Caesar.”

As in enacting fresh decrees a nation must repeal the old, which only suited another day, so the Lord, it might be said, repeals the mission of former days: His heart is free now to go beyond the narrow circle of Israel. He was then “the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers”; now He would inaugurate a new thing whereby the “Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy,” and yet still as Israel was now on sinner’s ground, not withdraw the hand of mercy from them.

He was now passing out to the Mount of Olives amongst His disciples; leading them out to the spot where He would say His last farewell on earth As His footfall grew lighter, and as the moment for Him to be received up drew nigh, He turns to them with those words, which repeal their old mission, and extend it on its fresh basis from the risen Savior: “Ye shall be my witnesses,” said He, “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

As the stone, dropped into the peaceful waters, sends ripple after ripple from the spot where first it entered, till they are lost in the expanse around; so does this mission, now begun in Himself, extend with its waves and ripples of mercy, embracing the world of sinners within its ever-increasing circles!

Jerusalem had been the scene of His death and shame, there they should begin, where faith was dead and a lifeless form.

Samaria lay beyond that once-holy spot, with a faith corrupted for centuries: half heathen, half Jewish in its forms and its Gerizim.

The “uttermost part of the earth” had no faith at all! but lay in all its heathen darkness under the “veil of covering” upon all its peoples.

But whether for Jerusalem with her dead faith, or Samaria with her corrupt faith, or the uttermost part of the earth where no faith was, a risen Savior would be their testimony and meet it all! And thus they went forth in the “Acts of the Apostles”; those three concentric circles gradually unfolding themselves before us in the Book. For it is worthy of note that they divide the Book in a remarkable way. “Jerusalem” was the center of testimony from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until she refused finally the “sure mercies of David” when Stephen yielded up his spirit to the Lord. Then came “Samaria” with Philip and Peter and John. And lastly the scene enlarged to the “uttermost part of the earth “through the great apostle to the Gentiles, and those who companied with him (see Acts 2 - 7, 8 - 22). God Himself had been revealed; His grace made known. Therefore He could not now confine His dealings to the “smallest nation under heaven,” as in the day of His testing man. The cross had broken down the “middle wall of partition” on earth; it had opened up the way for God to man, and man to God, through a veil rent from top to bottom; and thus the breadth of His ways should now take in all its scope and aspect. All “had sinned” and are “come short of his glory,” and His glory was then the measure of the grace of His salvation. What a message to a world of sinners! None were left out: His parting words declare it. His heart was unchanged, and only more deeply and fully revealed through the revolted heart of man; and thus His heart, in grace, is still turned towards man, until that day comes when “This same Jesus “will come again to “judge the world in righteousness.” Thus He blest them, and in that attitude, with uplifted hands, He passed to His glory; and they returned to Jerusalem to begin their task, “praising and blessing God.”

We have now come to the close of our meditations on those “Forty days.” May the Lord in His good mercy apply some sweet lesson, to the hearts of His own beloved people, from what we have reviewed; and lead our souls into deeper, fuller communion with Him, of whom all scripture speaks, separating us more distinctly to Himself in these our days of weakness; and preparing our souls by that education which He knows so well how to apply, while we “look for his Son from heaven,” “even Jesus, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Words of Faith, 1883, pp. 9-18.
Is the Christian in Adam or in Christ?  
And What is the Result of This  
as Regards His Standing and Walk?

A deeply important question strikes the thoughtful Christian mind at the present day, when words are multiplied without knowledge -- a question which affects the whole tone and character of Christian practice, and the steady, solid peace of the soul. The question is, Is his standing before God in the first or the second [last] Adam?

Is he in the first Adam, responsible before God since he chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the error of his way, and was driven out from the presence of the Lord God, the ruined head of a lost world, his access in such a state, cut off for ever from the tree of life, death his portion here and the second death his end? Or is he in the second [last] Adam (who entered, in divine grace and love, into the place of responsibility, death, sin-bearing, and judgment, in which he lay, but who has passed out of that state, risen, ascended, glorified, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, head of the new creation of God), and is he made partaker, as born of Him, of a risen life, justified, sanctified, and waiting to be glorified?

Deeply important questions these, not only for individual peace of soul, but for walk and practice before God. May the gracious Lord vouchsafe His own guidance and teaching while we endeavor to answer these questions according to His truth and for His own glory.

In Rom. 5:12-21 we find these two great fountains, or heads of nature and of faith, contrasted. And the effect of the acts of Adam and Christ upon the two families, viz., that which ranges itself under the headship of the first Adam, and that which ranges itself under the Second. The question of sin and its results -- death, and of grace and its results -- life and righteousness towards each family, is discussed.

By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more, the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many . . . For if by one offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by one offence upon all men to condemnation, even as by one righteousness upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Thus the effect of the transgression of Adam was not confined to himself but passed upon all his posterity, constituting them sinners before God. Even so Christ’s one accomplished act of righteousness and obedience, which reached unto death, the death of the cross, was not confined in effect with Himself, but flows to many, constituting them righteous before God. And as Adam, fallen and driven out from the presence of God, entered upon the headship of the family of nature, after his disobedience unto death; even so, Christ, enters upon the Headship of the family of faith, the new creation of God, after His one accomplished act of obedience unto death, the death of the cross.

Let us now look at the first of these. We turn to Gen. 3, and there we find Adam created in innocence, set in the garden of Eden, an earthly paradise, surrounded with blessing and good; and in this paradise there were two trees, the tree of life and the tree of responsibility (of knowledge of good and evil). He was left there to maintain himself in a position and in a condition in which he had been placed. He had access to the tree of life, but had no promise. He had simply to enjoy what God had given Him, and own the Giver in His gifts which surrounded him. He was given to understand that he had no further responsibility than to observe the command of God, to abstain from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, failing which, death would be the effect and consequence of his breach of the command. This was the measure of his responsibility. He had no position to attain to or object to gain by his obedience to the command. Alive in a certain condition, and observing it, he maintained himself in that condition. He was not told to “Do this and live”; but, alive in the position God had placed him in, he was to retain it by doing as commanded, and so enjoy all the blessings of his position.

Satan now comes upon the scene. He suggests the thought to his mind that God was withholding the richest blessing in prohibiting him to eat of the tree of responsibility; that His love was not such a love as he supposed; and, moreover, that God had not been truthful as to the result He had placed before him; for that, instead of death, God knew that they would become as gods, “knowing good and evil.” Man’s heart, already turned away from God, opened itself to these suggestions -- doubted the love that was thus withholding the best blessing from him -- despised the truth, and offended the majesty of God, and aspired to be a god himself, knowing good and evil. Satan thus obtained the place in his mind that God should have had. Adam’s heart -- turned away from God -- readily hearkened to the suggestions of Satan and fell! He thus constituted God the judge by his fall. If God had judged His creature before this, He would have been judging Himself; for He had made man after His own image and likeness and had pronounced His work “very good.” This was His judgment upon His own workmanship when it came forth from His hands. But when Adam transgressed, he constituted God a judge, and obtained the knowledge of good and evil -- good, without the power to accomplish it; and evil, without the power to avoid it. His
conscience, thus obtained, told him that he had made God his judge; for when the voice of the Lord God was heard in the garden, the man and his wife felt that the covering they had made to hide their nakedness, and which had, perhaps, satisfied them for the time, was no covering when God spoke. So when challenged by God he says, “I was afraid, because I was naked.” Conscience awoke under the voice of God, and thus drove Adam to hide amongst the trees of the garden. The knowledge he had obtained when he fell had no power to make him draw near to God, but rather drove him from His presence. It was the sense of responsibility, united to the knowledge of good and evil. And so we find that God “drove out the man,” cutting off his access to the tree of life. It was a blessing and a mercy, in such a condition as that which he now had attained; access to the tree of life would only have perpetuated a life of misery and separation from God and good. The man and his wife pass out from the presence of God with a knowledge they can never unlearn, and with a nature that never can be innocent again. We cannot return to innocence, and we never can unlearn the knowledge of good and evil. Nor can we ever return to paradise again, such as that from which Adam was driven. The man and his wife, thus driven out, become the root and head of a lost world. Their sin does not stop in effect with themselves; but condemnation passes upon the whole race, which is driven out from the presence of God in them. Death is their portion in this world. Judgment, the second death, the lake of fire is the end. In the judgment-resurrection (Rev. 20) we find the two things brought on the scene again, the principle of the two trees -- life and responsibility. The book of life is opened, and the books, I doubt not, of their responsibility. They are judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works, “and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Let us now look upon the Second. We turn to Luke 4, and there we find the last Adam -- Christ. Instead of a garden eastward in Eden, surrounded with every good, as we saw at the beginning, we find Him led of the Spirit into the wilderness, and there He is confronted by Satan, who had succeeded in gaining the ear of the first Adam. Satan and Christ, then, stood face to face. The proof was there to undo Satan’s lie at the first, that God was withholding the best gifts in prohibiting to the man access to the tree of responsibility; for Christ, the Son of the Father, was there! The Son had come to prove God’s love as a Giver; and the Son, who was the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of His person, had renounced everything, and humbled Himself -- took upon Himself a bondsman’s form -- to vindicate the outraged majesty of God -- outraged by the first man, who had aspired to be a god. Confronted by the enemy, He stood in His inheritance, and found it in Satan’s hands.

The devil ... showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it (Luke 4:5-6), defiled by sin, and in ruins. Had He put forth His power as God, there would have been no conflict; it would then have been merely the question of God’s power, and that of a rebellious creature. But all the tempter’s wiles were put forth against the self-emptied, obedient man, who had come to obey, and to conquer by obedience where the other had failed; and not only so but in circumstances of trial and difficulty, where dependence and perfect subjection to the will of God were needed. By His obedience He bound the strong man who was in possession of His goods, and presented in the midst of a ruined, sin-defiled world, a perfect, spotless man to God. Satan then departed from Him for a season. He found nothing in Him to act upon, or by which he might draw Him aside. With a perfect will as man, He did not put forth His will; He waited upon the will of God; and by the words of His lips He kept Him from the paths of the destroyer (Psa. 17), and triumphed where the first man had fallen, and in the midst of the circumstances brought in by his fall.

But, again, and now at the close of His ministry -- of His course through a sin-defiled world, Satan comes again. Had He picked up any of the defilement of the scene through which He had passed? Had the Lamb of God contracted a spot or a blemish to unfit Him for God’s altar? And were the terrors of death in the hands of Satan, and the horrors of the moment when the Father’s face, which had shined upon Him all the pathway through, would be alerted? When He would be forsaken, not only by those whom He loved, but also of God? Would all these be sufficient to turn Him aside from the path He had taken upon Himself to walk in? We follow Him to Gethsemane, at the close of the pathway through the world, and there we find the dependent, obedient Man again, meeting with “the prince of this world.” He had tried to allure Him from the pathway of obedience at the first; but here he tries his other power, which he had wielded so effectually in the hearts of men; and he tries by the terrors of the hour of darkness to drive Him out of the obedient place, but no! “the cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?” He who was the Prince of life, and had a title to it personally, accepted the responsibility of His people inherited from the first Adam, that He might vindicate the truth of God, who had said, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” For here we find those early principles of the garden again -- life and responsibility. His presence in the world was the proof of the love of God. He had emptied Himself, as One who alone could do it, to vindicate the majesty of God. But there was His truth to vindicate as well, and we follow Him to His cross! There He offered to the righteousness of God a perfect, spotless victim; and He received from the righteousness of God the cup of wrath -- the blow of divine judgment and wrath on account of sin. Spotless Himself, He was made sin on the cross. He could not be made sin otherwise than this. He stood there responsible for the glory of God on account of sin; and as the substitute for His people’s sins. Let us look at His cross. There the full evil of the heart of the first Adam, estranged from God, burst forth in its unmingled enmity against perfect good. The judge, into whose hands God had entrusted power and judgment, uses it to condemn the guiltless! Priests appointed to “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way” (Heb. 5:2), set on their false witnesses, and plead against a righteous man, and urge on the multitude to clamor for the blood of One
in whom no fault had been found. Disciples who had followed and leaned upon, and loved the Man who stood there, find the place too dangerous now. The most warm-hearted amongst them denies Him at the voice of a serving-maid -- His “friend” betrays -- the others forsake Him -- and there He stands alone at the hour of the consummation of Adam’s wickedness! The cross of a rejected Christ exhibits the hatred of man’s heart against God and good. It displays ourselves by nature to ourselves. There we can read of what the heart of man, under every circumstance, is capable. It tells us of what we can be urged on by Satan to do under the plea of religion, loyalty, or what you will! But I follow on, and I find something more. I find God in judgment, and man in sin-bearing, face to face. The sword of divine judgment satisfying itself to the uttermost, and yet glorified in the sacrifice that presented itself to its demands. The cup of wrath wrung out and drunk to the dregs, and yet all the while the cry of conscious guiltlessness, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The truth of God -- His majesty -- love -- holiness -- every moral attribute, was displayed, vindicated, and glorified in the death of Christ!

We read in Luke 23 that there were crucified with Him two malefactors, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Let us pause for a moment and contemplate this scene. Around the cross of Jesus every expression of fallen man grouped itself; some “reaping the due reward for their deeds,” others mocking the Man who had professed His perfect trust in God, and yet, strange to say, who was there forsaken of Him. In Him we find the spotless Man who had “done nothing amiss.” He had denounced all that He might go down to the place of ruin in which the sinner lay. There the crucifiers and the crucified met, in the place of moral death and darkness that surrounded the cross. One amongst that company of fallen children of Adam was destined to be something more -- to be the first trophy of the victory to be held up before the world as the spoils of the hour, snatched out of the hands of the enemy; one of the blaspheming malefactors who had joined with his comrades in railing upon the One who hung beside him, with no better a portion than himself. Before the scene closes, his convicted conscience confesses that he was only reaping the due reward for his deeds, but that the Sufferer between him and the other malefactor had “done nothing amiss.” Blessed position, the first step of faith; a convicted conscience consciously guilty, and a spotless Christ, met together in the same place of death and ruin; the one reaping what he had sowed, the other full of grace! The first step of faith, a convicted conscience, led to faith’s second step; it turned from the darkened scene within to light outside itself. Faith opened his eyes, “and turned them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18). “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.” He had forgotten the cross, the pain, every surrounding circumstance in the scene; and instead of the darkness that hung around the cross to the children of Adam around, it was light to his soul, and in the far distant future he sees the Man who hung beside him, coming in His kingdom, and He merely asks to be remembered at that hour. Little did he anticipate the answer that awaited him. Place in the kingdom, perhaps a very lowly place, was his hope. “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” The veil of the temple was rent for his soul, and already he had passed into that Paradise of God with his Lord. Happy thief, thrice happy thief! The ruffian soldiers broke his legs, to be sure, to hasten his death, and to please religion in the world that was about to keep high Sabbath! But Christ had converted the gloomy portal, the entrance to the second death to the sons of Adam, into the entrance to the Paradise of God.

But the soul of Jesus had passed away meanwhile and the spear of the soldier is answered by the blood that expiates, and the water that cleanses. The responsibility was borne, and life and atonement come from a dead Christ.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:9, 10).

Here we have the two things again life and responsibility: the one communicated, the other borne and atoned for. Life, when dead in trespasses and sins; propitiation, when responsible and guilty. The responsibility of the first Adam borne for His people, and the sin that attached to the responsibility put away. The whole scene cleansed of the first man and his belongings, and the Second man introduced into the glory of God.

They take His body down from the cross and lay it in a tomb in the garden. Let us contrast the two gardens -- that of Gen. 3 with that of John 19. In the one was placed the first Adam, innocent, with access to the tree of life; but he chose the tree of responsibility, in the error of his way, and fell. In the other, lay He who had a right to the tree of life, but who had answered the responsibility in the dust of death. To the one, the garden eastward in Eden became the portals to a lost world, which ends in the lake of fire. To the other, the second garden becomes the portals for His people, not to Paradise regained, but to the Paradise of God.

The life was gone to which the responsibility attached, and the sin that accompanied the responsibility with the life -- sins borne, sin put away, to the glory of God. Sin had constituted God a Judge at the beginning; to put away sin had also constituted Him a Savior. Adam’s sin had made God a Judge, but grace in presence of it made Him a Savior.

We have traced Him to the tomb, and God had been glorified in Him. The mercy-seat had been set forth and the blood had been sprinkled upon it; the claims of the throne had been answered as well as the end of the worshiper, and now God comes in and takes up the surety from among the dead, and seats Him at His own right hand in heaven. In divine love He took the place of death and ruin in which the children of Adam, fallen, lay; and the righteousness of God takes up the Man in whom He had been glorified, and seats Him in heaven.

And God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4-6).
Dead together -- we in sin -- He for sin -- quickened together --
made partakers of a risen, justified life, beyond the reach of
death, sin, judgment, wrath everything (Christ having made
satisfaction for all these, before He left the place of death), we
are now one with Him in heaven. Dying for us on the cross we
are one with Him in life, and

there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in
Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).

We are in the second {last} Adam, not in the first; in the Spirit,
not in the flesh; under His headship. Responsibility was borne
by Him in grace. Propitiation flows to us from the death of
Christ, and His people are introduced into the new creation of
God.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old
things are passed away; behold all things are become new.
And all thing are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself
by Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17, 18).

God has substituted His own righteousness and the person of
the second {last} Adam for the sin and person of the first!

What now is the result of all this in practical life?

Before we answer this question, we must look back and
ascertain what it was that applied to Adam, fallen, under the
sentence of death. Man, alive and innocent in the garden, had
but to retain the state or condition in which he had been placed;
but to man fallen and driven out from God’s presence, with a
conscience which he had received when he fell, is addressed
the law, the requirement from God to him, a sinner, and which
proposed life in the things of it, and gave him a rule to walk in,
which would have been his righteousness if he observed it. In
the law we find again the principle of the two trees, life and
responsibility. It came in between Adam and Christ to propose
the question, Had fallen man any righteousness for God? And
it proposed “life in them,” upon the condition of man, thus
responsible, fulfilling perfectly its requirements. His
conscience tells him that he ought to fulfil all its demands; and
he owns his responsibility to be all that it requires of him -- to
love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself; that he
should not lust, &c. Had it been addressed to Adam in the
garden, it would have had no meaning whatsoever, for it
proposed to give life whereas Adam had not forfeited life; and
it prohibited lusts which had no existence. To man, fallen,
alone has it any application. It prohibited lusts in a heart that
was full of lust, and brought to light and defined the lusts of a
heart that had departed from God. It found him a sinner, and
instead of bringing life, as it proposed on man’s observing it,
it brought death to his conscience, constituted him an offender,
a transgressor; for “by the law is the knowledge of sin.” We
read, “The law entered (i.e., between Adam and Christ) that the
offence might abound,” not sin, for sin was there.
Consequently “death reigned from Adam to Moses,” by whom
was given the law. It could not, therefore, give life, and as a
result, it could not give righteousness; for “If there had been a
law given which could have given life, verily righteousness
should have been by the law” (Gal. 3:21). “It is not (therefore)
made for a righteous man” (1 Tim. 1), but belongs to the first
man, fallen and driven out from God, and has its direct
application to none else.

What then is the guide for the practical life of the
Christian, who has been made partaker of the risen justified life
of the Second {last} Adam? The very essence of this flows
from the fact that he has been brought to God in Christ, and
placed in a new condition altogether in and by virtue of
redemption. The life of the first man was forfeited; but Christ
took the responsibility which belonged to His people, and bore
it fully to God’s glory, when He went down into the place of
death in which they lay as children of fallen Adam; and now
life is come to them from the death of Christ, and their
responsibility springs from the position in which they have been
placed. As in earthly relationships, the responsibility of
the child to his father flows from the relationship which exists
-- from the fact of his being a child; the wife’s to her husband,
from the fact of the relationship she is in -- that of being his
wife. So the true Christian responsibility is founded on the
existence of the relationship and the position he is in. Life has
been communicated and he is before God, in the full light of
His presence, in the Second Adam risen from the dead and
gone up into the presence of God. It is the principle of real
responsibility which sets him to act up to the place he is in, and
to judge everything inconsistent with that place in his ways. It
is not that he is to live up to what Adam, innocent, ought to
have been; or to what the law required from fallen man; or
according to the course of this world. But as dead to sin, dead
to the world, dead to the law, in the body of Christ he is to let
the life of Jesus be manifested in his body; to live the life that
has been imparted to him, which was exhibited in Christ -- a
life that connects him with heaven, but is to be exercised in the
world, and thus to bring forth fruit unto God. The law desired
fallen Adam to love his neighbor as himself, and gave no
higher standard or aim with regard to his neighbor than this.
The new man has Christ for the measure of his walk and
practice, and is not merely to love his neighbor as himself, but
to renounce and surrender altogether, even as Christ did -- “to
lay down our lives for the brethren.” He is told to be an
imitator of God, as a dear child, and to walk in love, having
Christ for his example and standard; and abiding in Him, he
ought so to walk even as He walked -- surrendering self, life,
everything for His enemies.

Bible Treasury 5:316-320.
There would seem to be a difficulty from the position which the words “He will swallow up death in victory” occupy in the strain of the prophet Isaiah, which, containing many subjects, begins with ch. 13, and ends with ch. 27. But, as usual, every difficulty of Scripture serves only as an occasion to discover its perfection. The difficulty is that, according to the order in which the prophet brings the statement into his strain (Isa. 25:8), the event would seem to follow the great crash of universal judgment related in Isa. 24, embracing, as it does, the world and all its systems, the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. Yet we know that St. Paul applies the passage to the resurrection of the Church, or first resurrection, embracing, of course, the saints of the OT days. This event we know happens previously to this crisis of judgment detailed in Isa. 24, introductory of the kingdom -- a clear proof, by the way, that the Church does not pass through the tribulation: her promise being that she would be kept from the hour of temptation which comes upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3:10).

It would seem to mean that, in a general way, without giving the order of the events, the first resurrection would take place at such a time as that spoken of in the group of chs. 24 - 27, and without pointing out the order of the occurrences, or the moment of time for their fulfilment -- a general thing with this prophet.

But the order is much more precise than this when we come to examine Rev. 20:4. We have there three classes of persons spoken of:

1st. Those who are received up when the Lord comes, i.e., the OT saints and the Church.
2ndly. Those of the Jewish remnant who had been martyred under the 6th seal (Rev. 6:9), and
3rdly. Those who had not worshiped the beast, etc.

The last two classes would, of course, lose their lives, and with their lives the earthly blessings of the kingdom about to be established; and they receive, instead, a heavenly blessing, and a place in the first resurrection, having loved not their lives unto death. All three classes enumerated compose the first resurrection, which, as we know, is not a period of time, but a class of persons, although not raised at the same moment of time but within a period extending from the taking up of the saints at the Lord’s coming {the rapture}, and through the period of judgment which passes over the world, {the tribulation} and till the eve of the kingdom.

Now the last two classes not being raised at the same moment with the former, and being comprised especially of the slain remnant of the Jews, it is towards those the Prophet Isaiah has his attention specially directed, forming as they do the prominent subject in his burthen. Hence the order in which we find them in Isa. 25, after the judgment of the world, and at the time when the Lord establishes His kingdom in Zion. This answers so beautifully to the word in Rev. 20:4, “They lived (this word applying especially to the two latter classes) and reigned with Christ a thousand years”, while the first mentioned class who raised previously to the time when the crisis or tribulation took place.

The mind of the Spirit in the prophet is chiefly occupied with these last mentioned classes, while Paul, who is the instrument used in the revelation of the higher and subsequently revealed truth of the Church, uses the same passage when speaking of the resurrection of the saints who compose it when Christ comes; the passage thus embracing all those of the first resurrection, and the order of resurrection of the Jewish prophet having in primary view the slain ones of the Jewish remnant who are raised last in order of time, and at the closing moment of the events related in Isa. 24 - 27.

Bible Treasury 6:292, 293.
**The Lord’s Supper**

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake (it), and said, This is my body which (is) for you: this do for a remembrance of me. After the same manner he took the cup, when he had supped saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

We have here the special marked and distinct revelation given to the apostle Paul of this blessed feast; and like all revelations to him, we find it differing from those given to the other apostles, in this grand feature, namely, that Christ in glory, a man in the glory of God, Head of His body the Church, is He who communicates it to him.

We also read in 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

> The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread; and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Here it receives a fresh character, unknown before Paul’s doctrine unfolded it, in that the Lord’s Supper -- partaken of according to the divine thought -- is the symbol of the unity of Christ’s mystical body, the Church; and the great outward center of the gathering together of the Church of God on earth. It expresses its unity as formed by the Holy Ghost: it is then in a special way that the Lord Himself and His presence in the Assembly are realized. It is that moral center, in view of which each member of Christ judges himself and his ways, that he may eat thereof “worthily” -- in a manner suited to the holiness and truth of Him to whom he is united by the Holy Ghost given him. It is that great moral center with respect to which the partaking thereof or otherwise shows that the person is outwardly confessing and professing the reality of his portion in Christ. It is with respect to it that, in failing to judge himself and partake worthily thereof, the assembled saints must deal with the failing brother, and put him out from among themselves, as a “wicked person.” It is in view of it that, when the individual has failed to judge himself, and it has fallen to the responsibility of the assembled saints to do so; or when the assembled saints have failed (as at Corinth) to deal with what was unsuited to Christ and the table of the Lord, the Lord Himself had as over His own house, acted, removing some by death, and laid His chastening hand on others by sickness and weakness of body: for amongst them “many were weak and sickly and many slept” (1 Cor. 11).

It is in fact the great moral symbol and center outwardly and expressly of the existence of the Church of God here below.

It is too, yet more blessedly, when partaken of in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, the most touching of all the “services of faith” of the people of the Lord: where the Lord is most sweetly realized as in the moment which God nor saint never can forget, when He gave Himself up for His glory and for our eternal salvation. The ministry of the gospel, from God’s heart to the world may be sweet to the soul. Souls are blessed, and the Spirit’s power is felt, and God is made known in a world that knows Him not. The ministry of Christ too for His saints, feeding them, and building them up, and producing worship in their hearts for all His unspeakable goodness, is touching to the soul, searching to the conscience, and freshness of love is shed abroad in the heart. All these and many more, are good and blessed; but at the Supper the soul and God meet as never otherwise: the heart of the saint and the sufferings of Christ Himself are together; His love is tasted; His perfections fed upon; in short the Lord himself is there in a way, that next to Heaven itself there is nothing like it here below. Man is not before us at such an hour. All this is put aside in the presence of a greater. It is indeed the gate of heaven, we may well say.

How we should therefore seek to get at God’s own mind about this feast. How we should seek to divest it from every thought and practice that mar the simple blessedness of what He -- the Lord -- has meant it to be to us. We shall sit down by and by at the marriage supper of the Lamb. We have no description of this scene. The Holy Ghost uses but one word to describe it, “Blessed” “Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And He adds, “These are the true sayings of God.” But here at the “Lordly Supper,” (kuriakon deipnon) one sits down with others like himself, still in bodies of humiliation, though saved by grace, and made meet for glory, to feed afresh upon Christ in His death. The night when all the world was against Him, and God forsook him as well as His own who loved Him truly. When Satan’s power and glamour was over men’s souls, and Our perfect, blessed Savior passed through that night -- His last with His disciples; and eat that paschal supper of which He speaks in those touching words, “With desire ("earnest yearning, longing;" as the word means ) have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22). From that paschal feast, and the institution of His own Supper, He passes to His agony in the garden, where He receives from His Father’s hands His cup of sorrow. Bearing it (as it were) in His hands, and before He leaves the scene of His agony, He is betrayed by His “friend”: he who had eaten bread with Him; and lifted up his hand against Him. He passes onwards, and next He is denied with oaths by one who thought no power could make his love for his Master to fail. Then, after His “good confession,” He is mocked and arrayed in the scarlet robe and crown of thorns. From this He passes into other hands.
and is scourged and condemned. At last came the cross of a malefactor where He was numbered with the transgressors, and the things concerning Him had their end. Forsaken now of God, He enters the darkness of that scene, where no ray of light penetrated to relieve His soul; He cries to God at the hour of prayer -- the “ninth hour,” and is “not heard.” What soul-depths were expressed in that unheard cry? But He who in view of all this, when instituting the feast, could twice “give thanks,” knew the light that was beyond it all, and the depths of that heart of God the Father, whose love He shared from past eternity.

These are some of the features which come before us as we remember Him. We could not “remember” one we knew not: we remember One we know. We know Him but in poor small measure: but it is the Lord who loves us we know, and we remember Him in the hour of His death and shame.

Now, although simplicity as to the line in which the Spirit of God would lead the gathered saints, in this “service of faith,” is what should characterize them: that is, in the remembrance of the Lord at that night of His betrayal, there is no special line of remembrance to be looked for prominently from the saints; still we must remember that “in the midst of the assembly (says the Lord) I will sing praise unto thee” {Heb. 2:12}. We should therefore look for His presence most specially at such a time. But when Christ leads the praises of His own, we should not find many thoughts about our former state, or our deliverance therefrom through His word. It is Himself we are to remember, and all that this remembrance would embrace. I would dread much therefore to see souls thinking of their own blessing -- their own side of things too much. It would seem to me that they have not come together with a true thought in their souls.

We know happily, that the “babes know the Father”; it is the spirit of adoption which characterizes them and they rejoice more in their own blessing than in Him, the Blesser. The fathers in Christ know Him. I am sure too, that in the Lord’s Supper we have every chord touched that every heart, blessed through Christ, can ever feel and rejoice in. No chord has ever been tuned in any heart which does not find its echo there, and while every soul who comes together to eat the Lord’s Supper is doubtless in a different spiritual state, the chords in each are divinely strung, and when Christ is before the soul they must yield harmony.

Just as the varied aspects of Christ in His perfect life, His death and sin-bearing, and all, are presented in the offerings (see Lev. 1 - 7), many offerings taken to make one blessed Christ. So in the Supper there is found that which meets the song of every heart even though the note struck may sound more of its own blessing.

Still I think true worship always has Him as its food and its object: “they worshiped Him.” He reveals and displays the Father, and where the Father is worshiped in the Son, the Son reveals Him: and the Father seeketh such to worship Him. When God is seen in Christ the Son, and the Father in Him, and the Spirit in us is free to unfold His things to us, there worship has its true and proper level, and He dwells now in the praises of His church, as before Jehovah dwelt in the praises of Israel.

So as of old we find that that which prefigured the communion of the church of God, (the peace-offering {1 Cor. 10:18}) came third in the order of the five offerings in Leviticus, to show us that the worship of the saints is grounded upon what Christ was to God as a burnt-offering and its meat-offering, which accompanied it, both of them offerings of sweet savor. They pointed to all that Christ was to God in His devotedness to death for God’s glory; bringing glory to His nature as to sin, in the place where sin was; and yielding Himself wholly up to God; this the burnt-offering typified. And this was accompanied by a meat offering, called “his meat offering.” (”The burnt offering and his meat offering.”) This was Christ’s person in its purity and grace, and was bloodless and not atoning, though it accompanied that which was. Even when the ashes of both were on the altar of burnt-offering, there, on those ashes, was the peace-offering (or its memorial) burnt (see Lev. 3:5). The fourth and fifth offerings, i.e., Sin-offering, and Trespass-offering, were what Christ was made for us -- not what He was in Himself personally; and they come after the Peace or Communion offering (Lev. 3).

Has this no voice for us? Can we not see here that he who best can enter upon what Christ was to God as burnt-offering and meat-offering, in His sweet savor, can best sustain and lead the worship of the assembled saints -- for he is on the true ground of the soul’s power of worship to the Father.

It is a cause of deep joy surely, and never to be forgotten, to know that Christ bore our sins, and brought us into this place of blessing: but it is not the prominent thought in praise. Was the prodigal thinking much of the far country, and his rags and misery, and the change that had come, when he ate the fatted calf with the father? His father’s heart and house and joy silenced him. It would have no kindred note in his father’s remembrance of the prodigal: he would have reminded him of the rags and the debt he owed his father: he must joy in his father’s joy, be that what it may {Luke 15}. These and such like praises are those which Christ can sing and lead in the midst of His assembled saints. Could a soul uncertain of its salvation have a place at such a feast? Nay. In conscience and in faith we stand alone. But when seated with the Spirit, He leads our souls into communion with the Father and the Son. But all converted souls are not there. Surely not. Many souls are quickened but not at peace. The very life they have makes them feel their sins; feel their misery; but when they have believed, God seals them {Eph. 1:13}, having done so with the Holy Spirit of promise. Until then they are not members of Christ, nor in union with Him, Head of His body in heavenly places. How needful then that it should be seen to, that the person has received the Holy Ghost since he believed {Acts 19}.

The Supper therefore is for such only: members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. It is celebrated according to Scripture by such, as the expression of the unity of the whole body of Christ on earth. It must be spread, and the Lord’s Table be gathered, to express this. Tables of varied sects and parties in the professing church
could not be owned as the “Table of the Lord.” They are not so. A sect or system in it has its own dogmas and rules, and creeds, and ministers -- generally framed for the unconverted as well as the saved. Perhaps a human ministry is theirs, or some one person, who absorbs all the functions of the members of Christ’s body professedly in himself The free action of the Spirit of God is shut out in the members. These and such like preclude and shut out the godly from its communion.

But when the Lord’s Table is spread according to God it must be,

1st. The expression of the whole body of Christ on earth.

2d. There must be nothing then, amongst those who are together, which would hinder in a doctrinal or a moral way, one single member of Christ on earth seeing them. To have it so would make it cease to be the Table of the Lord; and become the Table of a sect or party in Christendom. It is not that each there is compelled to see and understand all and every truth and doctrine that others do: not in any wise. This would be but to make the intelligence of the members of Christ and their unanimity in doctrine a term of fellowship, instead of it really being this, that they are members of that one body, and sound in faith and morals. Nay: the great foundation truths of God’s holy Word must be held aright. These would be such as the pure and holy person of Christ the Son of God; His incarnation; His atoning work; His resurrection and ascension; His eternal Sonship; His coming in flesh. The doctrines too of eternal punishment; of the Holy Ghost’s presence in the Church; of the trinity of the persons of the Godhead, all such must be clearly defined in the soul. The babes in Christ know all these things. When the Holy Spirit dwells in a saint He has received the anointing that teaches all things. He is sensitive as to three things: touch Christ in any way and you touch the apple of His eye. Let him be true in the faith of Christ’s person, and you may depend that he is right in all these. Let him be false in his thoughts of Jesus, and his whole soul will more or less be filled with error. I trust no soul who has not God’s Christ then. He is the true test; the touchstone of true faith. All this assumes that he is at peace with God, and possesses His Spirit dwelling in him.

3d. The first day of the week is the day of its celebration; as of all the great gatherings of the members of the church’s risen Head. When she was first formed at Pentecost His members continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and “broke bread” at home, “praising God,” &c. But when the Assembly was broken up at Jerusalem, and was no more to be found connected with the Jewish center of things, the Spirit of God led them together habitually on the first day of the week for this distinct purpose.

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:7).

And this was endorsed by the Apostle abiding there to be with them at this feast. How sensitive is the spiritually minded saint at this wondrous center of the church’s gathering. How spiritual one needs to be, to venture in the Lord’s blessed presence to aid in the worship of God. The more he thinks of the presence of his Lord and Master the more careful he is lest one word, one note he strikes, should not be in keeping with the Lord’s own heart, in communion with which the present Spirit leads His people’s songs. How the heart feels a discordant note at such a moment, when the ear of the soul is watching for the note to strike truly in the hearts of saints with the Lord’s. A hymn ill-chosen: the music unsuited to the words of the spiritual song: the haste of one: the tardiness of another: the lengthiness of some. What exercise of soul do not these things produce, and how they mar the meeting which should refresh and feed the soul. How frequently too the judgment of self is neglected till the moment when the Lord’s presence is felt; and then for the first time the soul feels that it is not in spiritual power, and it must think of self instead of Christ!

O that my brethren might ponder these things, and that, poor and feeble though we are, we may grow in the sense of what it is to gather around our Lord: to realize His presence: to forget ourselves: to wait on Him: to know our strength: to carry clear, though empty vessels, into His presence: to find them filled to overflowing by Him whose fulness is inexhaustible; so full that the overflowing cup returns to Him, as living waters refresh the soul and find again their own level in His presence, and the presence of the Father.

I feel sure too that at times there are many whose hearts would refresh their Lord and brethren with “five words “of praise, who hold back and “quench the Spirit” -- forcing some other to speak out of the true order of the Spirit of God (because forced upon him), and lose much for their own souls as well as for the souls of their brethren.

The heart yearns to see the assemblies of God’s saints filled with the Spirit, and such freshness of power and worship which sets man aside, and gives only place to Christ, or what is of the Spirit of our God.

What comfort to know that every “first day of the week "brings us nearer to that glorious day, in view of which we show forth the Lord’s death till He come! When that day arrives, and when we see Him, He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; and every spiritual desire and longing will in us, as well as in Him, find its answer; and we shall enter that scene of which it is said: “They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

And it is His glory which touches the heart even in that scene, and leads those who surround His throne to forget their own blessing, and their own glory, to leave the one, and divest themselves of the other, in the sweeter occupation of enjoying His glory and to say, “Thou art worthy, O Lord.” “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they shall be praising Thee to the ages of ages”’(LXX of Psa. 84:4).

*Helps by the Way*, New Series, 2:7-16.
“The Water of Purification”

Numbers 19

How rare it is to find the child of God walking in the consciousness of his true position before Him! Numbers there are (we bless God for the numbers) whose souls have felt the sting of sin, and who are trusting in Jesus, but who have not yet realized the full results of the work of Christ in their souls; and thereby fail to walk in the consciousness of sonship before the Father -- fail to walk so as to please God, through the world; as those who have been separated and redeemed for a higher and better scene. Such souls have doubtless felt more or less deeply the fact of indwelling sin. Like the Jews of old, who when he committed a sin, brought a sacrifice -- again and again a sin and a sacrifice -- they have daily recourse to the blood of Jesus for cleansing from the workings of sin in their members. They do not see that sin has been once and for ever, effectually and completely, put away from before God. Such is not the Christian state. It lowers the whole tone of practical Christianity, reduces the apprehension of the value of the blood of Jesus almost to the level of the oft-repeated sacrifices of the Levitical ceremonial, and weakens the apprehension of the character of purity and holiness of the place into which the believer has been brought, the unsullied presence of God, there to walk before Him. Jesus “died the just for the unjust to bring believer has been brought, the unsullied presence of God, there to walk conformable to the place, it is then that he can estimate the Beloved, and has apprehended somewhat of the holiness of His presence in light. When the believer has realized, even in some measure, that God has thus brought him to Himself, and accepted him in the Beloved, and has apprehended somewhat of the holiness of walk conformable to the place, it is then that he can estimate the provision that God has made in the work of Jesus, as typified in Num. 19, that the believer may thus enjoy unclouded fellowship with the Father and the Son. We can see in it the great fact that it is God’s thought that the worshiper once purged should have no more conscience of sin {sin; Heb. 10:2}; and yet, such being the case, that when he is conscious of the workings of indwelling sin in his members, he has no need to go back to be re-washed in the blood, and, more than all, he learns in the precious type before us the jealous boldness of God, who will not go on with even a thought of sin in His child; and that in this type the provision He has made for all these exigencies stands in marked and precious precision before the renewed mind.

Let us now look at its varied and beauteous features. We read,

This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, speak to the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke.

In this the person of our Lord Jesus Christ is brought before us. One wherein is no blemish and on whom never came yoke of sin. In His own person, free from every stain or taint of sin, take Him when you will, and where you will, and as you will, from the womb of the virgin to the cross, and you will find One who, while surrounded by evil on every side, in the midst of evil, and in contact with it, notwithstanding never was defiled, beauteous in the perfection of personal purity as man in the midst of a defiled world; One who, ever above the evil, adapted His heart to the need around, never in fellowship with evil, but morally above it; perfect in the holy calmness and evenness of divine goodness and love in His perfect pathway through the world. Paul, while such a wondrous instrument in the hands of God, had to say, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest.” And again, be “had no rest in his spirit because he found not Titus.” Moses too “spake unadvisedly with his lips.” As one has beautifully said in words that I deeply enjoy, such as Paul are chords on which God strikes, and on which He produces a wondrous music, but Christ is the music itself.

Compare them both in Matt. 16. Christ could be on the mount in glory with Moses and Elias, and be owned as Son by the Father Himself, and He can be on the plain in the presence of the multitude and Satan; but although the scenes are different, He is alike perfect in each. In 2 Cor. 3, Paul could glory as a man in Christ, one who had been in the third heavens; but when he comes down into ordinary life he must have a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble, lest he should be exalted above measure.

Thus was Jesus, and thus He walked -- never equaled. The Lamb for God’s altar must be without spot and blemish, and such was He!

But when we turn to look at His cross, we find something else, perfect in His person, as perfect in the act He came to accomplish, we find Him then. We read,

And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.

Would that the trembling one, whose heart has not yet found peace, or the anxious one whose conscience is still unpurged, the weak one who desires to realize all the blessings of acceptance and forgiveness, -- would that such would read
aright the soul-emancipating truth conveyed in the verse before us! We read of a sevenfold sprinkling at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This suggests to us two thoughts. First, the place where true sprinkling was accomplished; and secondly, the value of the act that was done there. In Ex. 29:42, 43, we read about the place; and it was the place of fellowship or communion between God and Israel. "There will I meet with the children of Israel." There was the blood of the unblemished heifer sprinkled seven times before God, at the place where He met His people.

Seven is the well-known number which conveys to us the thought of perfection in spiritual things. Every claim that a God of righteousness and truth and justice and boldness could righteously demand was answered there according to the divine standard of these things, in the sevenfold sprinkled blood His holy eye saw before Him that which responded to every claim as to sin and uncleanness, and proved Him a "just God" and yet "a Savior" -- "Just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Sevenfold was the sprinkling of the blood of the unblemished heifer, and in its sevenfold perfection was the blood of Christ, once offered to answer every claim of God and need of the sinner. He "made peace by the blood of his cross."

But in Num. 19:5 we learn something more, we read And one shall burn the heifer in his sight, her skin, her flesh, and her blood with her dung, shall he burn. Here we get another view of the cross of Jesus, that meeting place between God and the sinner. We learn here that Christ was entirely consumed by the fire of the judgment of God on account of sin. The accents of His soul at that moment were I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. Entirely was He consumed by the fire of judgment on account of sin; the very levity of thought and sins we think so lightly of, wretched creatures that we are, -- for these was He consumed to ashes, in exhausting the cup of wrath for His people!

Again, in Num. 19:6, another phase of the cross unfolds before us. We read, And the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Another wondrous truth is here, one we may deeply ponder with subdued hearts before God. How many are the schemes around us to improve man, as he is, and to adorn the world which has departed from God. Here we find them all judged and set in their true light. Nature from its highest to its lowest is typified here; "From the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." This takes in the full range of the natural man. Let it be the moralist or the philosopher, the teetotaler or the drunkard the amiable or the churl, all are included here. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and never can be anything else. No doubt many of the schemes of morality, and self-improvement, and reform, have done much for men; but this, while good in its place, never alters the great fact that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." The cross has revealed this, has written death upon all its varied plans, for improvement and amelioration; and the word of God comes alike to it all, "it must be born again!" This is its sentence after 4,000 years of probation and trial, it had been "weighed in the balances and found wanting."

Now to apply this to the conscience of the believer who has been called to walk in fellowship with [the Lord] Jesus. Such an one has doubtless rested for acceptance more or less in the cross and blood-shedding of Jesus. He has been washed in the precious blood, it has been sprinkled on his conscience by faith, once and forever in its divine efficacy and sufficiency. Then has come his walk before God, in the light of His presence within the vail. Being there makes him feel the consciousness of indwelling sin, of sin in his members. Perhaps in an unguarded moment the evil fruit has come forth in the form of sins, which has clouded his perception of his place, and his communion with the Father and Son has been interrupted. How then is he to be restored? How has God provided in His jealous holiness against the least thought of sin in the practical walk of His people? The sevenfold sprinkled blood precludes the thought of the sin ever coming into His presence. He sees before Him that which has answered every claim according to the divine holiness of that presence. Nevertheless it has clouded the soul of His child, and He will not permit him to enjoy his place and fellowship with Him while the cloud remains.

We read then in v. 11, &c.,

He that toucheth the dead body of a man shall be unclean seven days, he shall purify himself with it on the third day; and on the seventh day he shall be clean. But if he purify not himself the third day, then on the seventh day he shall not be clean . . . And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put there in a vessel, and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon . . . him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave. And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall purify himself and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water and shall be clean at even. But the man that shall be unclean and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord; the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him: he is unclean.

Here we learn first of all, that even contact with evil, or its smallest workings, defiles. Completely and perfectly has the
soul lost the enjoyment of its communion with God: seven days was the Israelite unclean. As perfectly as had the
sevenfold sprinkling answered the claims of God at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as well as the need of the convicted conscience which approached there, so as perfectly had the soul lost its fellowship with God. And God would have one feel the loss, and feel it deeply too. The unclean person lay two days under his defilement; he must feel the privation of communion with God. There was no haste in bringing the water of purification till he had this adequate twofold testimony (as required under the law) that he had lost his communion, and that he was in the truth as to his state. Then, having lain two days under his uncleanness, the clean person was to take the ashes of the burnt heifer and running water, and with hyssop sprinkle it upon the unclean person the third day.

When we have fully felt the want of communion through having lost it, then we find these two things -- the ashes and the water. To the Israelite, it was for purifying the flesh from ceremonial defilement; with us, it is spiritual purification. The ashes proved to the Israelite that the sacrifice was entirely consumed: it was the memorial of the perfect offering which had been consumed outside the camp, some of the blood of which had been sprinkled before God. To us, it is the remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ once offered in its perfection, brought to our minds by the Holy Ghost (typified in the running water; see Eph. 5:20), proving to us that He was entirely consumed on account of sin, by the searching fire of judgment. The ashes testified that the sin was gone forever.

When the soul has felt that it has lost communion through carelessness or sin, the sacrifice of Christ, in all its perfection, is applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost. The first application on the third day did not restore the Israelite. Nor does the first apprehension of the sacrifice of Christ, as applied by the Holy Ghost to the conscience of the believer, restore the soul to communion. It is the sense of the sin having been put away by the sacrifice of Christ, and then the second application, is the full restoration of the soul to God, with the sense of His grace triumphing over the sin. The unclean Israelite purified himself the third day, but the result of the second sprinkling on the seventh day, was that “he shall be clean” -- perfectly restored.

How perfect in all its divine precision is the figure before us! It shows the jealousy of God about the holiness of His house, and the care He has shown that there should be practical holiness in His people and truth in the inward parts; the type divinely provides for both. And then we find, v. 19, that after his full restoration to communion, he had one thing more to do -- he had to wash his clothes and bathe himself in water. He was to cleanse himself, by the washing of water by the word, from every defiling circumstance which surrounded him; and to cleanse himself, as having been in those circumstances and having thus become defiled by them; to lay the edge of the word to them, so that they might not affect him again in his walk, and that he himself might not be found in them so as to become defiled.

Such are some of the wondrous beauties of the type of the red heifer. We find that not only as sinners has the grace of our Savior God given us a place before Him, the work of Christ having fitted us to be there, and the Holy Ghost having brought us into the understanding and enjoyment of our place, but that as believers, God (the Father, Son and Holy Ghost) is engaged in keeping us in the place, in practical holiness, and fitness to walk in fellowship in the power of the Holy Ghost with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bible Treasury 5:203-205.
The Red Sea and Jordan
Rom. 6 and Col. 2

Why are we said to be co-risen with Christ in Col. 2:11, before we are said to be co-quickened with Him in Col. 2:12?

The doctrine of the Epistle to the Colossians lies between that of the Romans and the Ephesians. In Romans the believer is dead with Christ to sin, dead to the law, but not risen. Rom. 6 does not go so far as being risen with Christ. Our responsibilities, as in the old creation, are discussed most fully; all are under sin, all under judgment before God. The death of Christ -- His precious blood presented to God -- meets all our guilt, and we are justified freely by His grace, through righteousness. Our state then is taken up from Rom. 5:12 and onwards, and deliverance from that [our old state] by our having died with Christ to sin and from under law, which had its application to our old state, as in Adam. Ch. 6 unfolds this truth with regard to sin; Rom. 7 as regards the law, which is the strength of sin. But we are not seen as risen with Christ. The nearest approach to such is the statement of Rom. 6:8:

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him;

and this verse leads us onwards towards the Colossians -- putting it as a result of the doctrine there unfolded -- forming the link with that Epistle. The saint, however, is not risen with Christ; but is dead with Him to sin, and to the law.

In Colossians we get a step further. Here he is risen, co-raised with Christ, and he is dead absolutely. “Ye are dead”; not merely dead to this or that, though “with Christ.” He is “dead with Christ” -- “dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world” -- but he is not in heavenly places yet. He has a hope laid up in heaven; and his state is a subjective one suited to heaven, though not there.

In Ephesians we find his responsibility in and of the new creation unfolded {cp. Eph. 2:10}; and he is not only dead with Christ to sin and the law (Romans), with the hope and result before him in the words,

If we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live through Him (Rom. 6:8),

nor merely “dead” absolutely and co-risen with Christ (Colossians), but he is co-quickened, co-raised, and co-seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, both Jew and Gentile {Eph. 2}. He has left the place of death as a sinner, and the world as formed for the first man, and he is brought into the full place of being in Christ Jesus in heavenly places.

This ground has been gone over before, and I do not follow out what has been before many; but desire to present other features of truth.

First of all, let me remark that I do not think we find the typical teaching of the “Jordan” in Rom. 6. It is the Red Sea; though, like it, Israel passed through, and enjoyed full deliverance from their enemies. In the type they saw sins, and death, and judgment all behind them. Sins were their part; death was Satan’s, who wields its power (Heb. 2); judgment was God’s part; and all are passed for ever. They were, so to speak, dead to all these. But remark, it is never stated that they came up out of the Red Sea. Historically, of course, we know it was so; but it would have marred the type to have recorded it, as it would in Rom. 6 to have said, we were risen with Christ. It is fully stated afterwards that the people came up out of the Jordan; and there it was needed to say so, but not before. Thus the Red Sea is one aspect of the truth -- that which is seen in Rom. 6 -- and like as in this ch. (v. 8) we have to look out for more. So in the song of Moses (v. 16) they anticipate the truth, yet to be experienced, in their passing over the Jordan, and, being planted in the mountain of the Lord’s inheritance -- in the place He had made for Himself to dwell in; in the sanctuary which His hands had established. But they only looked for this in the hope of faith. They are not therefore said to have come up out of the Red Sea, as they are not said in Rom. 6 to be risen with Christ. But in Josh. 4:17, 19, we read that Joshua said to the priests, “Come ye up out of Jordan.” “And the people came up out of Jordan,” which rolled on in his channel as heretofore. And they were thus cut off from the world, as the death of Christ has done for us. And as at the Red Sea they looked forward to the Jordan, so now at the Jordan they look back at the Red Sea, as we read:

For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over (v. 23).

The Red Sea and the Jordan thus coalesce, and form two sides of the same truth, though quite distinct. We cannot confound, and we cannot separate them. Rom. 6 does not take in the Jordan and risen with Christ, though it looks out for it. Col. 2 does not take merely dead to sin and the law and the type of the Red Sea, though it looks back at it, as we shall see. Ex. 14, 15 does not say that Israel came up out of the Red Sea, though they sang a song, which looked for more to come. At Jordan they are said to have come up out of the Jordan, and are taught to look back at it and connect it with the deliverance of the Red Sea. Let the Red Sea and the Jordan coalesce for a moment in our minds, and let us drop out the wilderness from our thoughts. (Eph. 1 does this; as will Israel’s future deliverance, which bases the nameless Psa. 114 on this likewise. “The sea saw it and fled, Jordan was driven back.”) Let these two waters lie together, and let the wilderness lip of the Red Sea touch the side of Jordan eastward. Israel enter death from all who pursued at the Egyptian lip of the sea, and rise on the Canaan side of Jordan in full and complete deliverance and redemption, into the land of promise. The wilderness is never
in the purpose of God, though it is His plan to test and prove
Himself and ours.

When He announced this purpose He left out all allusion to it.

I am come down to deliver them . . . and to bring them up
out of that land into a good land and a large, unto a land
flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the
Canaanites, &c. (Ex. 3:8).

When Moses proclaimed it, He said,

I am the Lord, and I will bring you out . . . and I will bring
you in unto the land (Ex. 6:6, 8).

When Faith accepted it, it sang,

Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast
redeemed. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the
mountain of shine inheritance (Ex. 15:13, 17).

When Experience looked back upon it with the words,

And He brought us out from them, that He might bring us
in (Deut. 6:23).

Now when we turn to Col. 2 we find an apparent difficulty;
but, like all such, if we wait on divine instruction we shall get
it from God. “If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God,” surely
applies indirectly even in these things. Why are we said to be
“risen” with Christ before we are said to have been
co-quickened with Him? (Col. 2:12, 13). Let me draw your
attention to it for a little. I must leave full details aside in doing
so, interesting though they are. One first thought in his mind is
to establish their souls (as all others whom he had never seen
in the flesh, Col. 2:1) in conscious union with Christ in glory,
and this without naming the bond -- the Holy Ghost. He saw
the danger in the want of this; and how the soul was open to
every device of the enemy; and he would unfold the glories of
Christ as he never had before, and give them the consciousness
of “completeness in him.” To have even named the bond of
union -- the Spirit of God, to such a state would have been to
occupy them with the Holy Ghost rather than Christ Himself,
and damage their souls. Instead of this he would lead them
most blessedly, as in Col. 1:9-14, into the true experience of the
Spirit in the soul which is at peace -- i.e., the thoughts
begin with God, and flow downwards from the light of His
glory into the conscience of him who is their recipient. The
Spirit of God reasons ever from God to us; and when the soul
is at peace and the heart free, the reasonings and experience of
the soul flow in the same direction. How strange, and yet how
lovely, then, to find the apostle in the one passage praying to
God, writing Scripture, teaching the saints, and giving the true
experience of the soul who stands in grace, by the same words!
In Col. 2:12-14, he begins in the light of the Father’s presence
with praise, and by seven steps he reasons downwards from
His heart, to the conscience of the worshiper, giving them the
true direction of thought, when the soul is right with God.

1. “Giving thanks unto the Father.”
2. “Which hath made us meet.”
3. “To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in
light.”
4. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,”
5. “And hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear
Son,”
6. “In whom we have redemption,”
7. “And the forgiveness of our sins.”

We learn this in the inverse way, from us to Him: from the
deeps of the need of conscience, to the light of the Father’s
presence. We see this in the order of the offerings, and in their
application. How in the unfolding of the doctrine of them He
begins with God, and in their application to the sinner he
begins with him, and so on constantly.

I allude to the first chapter of Colossians, because it helps
us in the second. It gives us our apprehension, experimentally
known, what we have through grace. Col. 2 gives us God’s
side rather. He looks at Christ Jesus, the Lord; He beholds
Him in whom dwelleth all the completeness (πληροφορία) of the
Godhead bodily, as man. In Him “we are complete.” From
Him he reasons in the same way as in the first chapter -- from
God downwards to our depths of need. Here Christ and His
identification with His people, that they may be thus
“complete in Him,” is his theme. Again we find seven steps in
the train of thought:

1. “In Him dwelleth all the completeness of the Godhead
bodily. And ye are complete in Him.” “God is complete
in Christ for us; we are complete in Him for God,” as one
has said.

2. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision
made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh
by the circumcision of Christ.” He has left the scene,
given up His life here below, and all that connected Him
to this scene and Israel His people. He is gone on high,
the beginning of the creation of God.

3. “In whom also ye are co-risen through the faith of the
operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.”
[Remark here that in v.12 I have omitted the first clause --
“Buried with Him in baptism.” I would read that clause as
a parenthesis. Just as Rom. 6 was the link forward with
Colossians (see also Ex. 15:16), so this parenthesis is the
link backwards with Rom. 6. (See also Josh. 4:23.) This,
too, relieves us from any controversy as to whether év ϑέρα
should be translated “in whom “or “in which; “either
translation being possible from the original words; the
spiritual sense alone determines the true translation. Read
verses 11 and 12 for a moment, omitting the parenthesis,
and the meaning is plain. “In putting off the body of the
flesh by the circumcision of Christ . . . in whom also ye
are co-raised through the faith of the operation of God,”
&c. This leaves baptism its own true meaning, that of the
person baptized being buried to death. It does not, in my
mind, go farther than that, and just ends there; the person
is buried to death, as we read in Rom. 6. “Therefore we
are buried with Him by baptism unto death.” Read the
first clause of Col. 2:12 as a parenthetic link connecting
us with Rom. 6, and read what follows as in connection
with “Christ . . . in whom ye also are co-risen,” &c., and
all is plain. Faith in God’s operation comes in there and
clears baptism of the thought of resurrection, though it follows where there is faith in God’s operation.

4. “And you being dead in your offences, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He co-quickened us together with Him.”

5. “Having forgiven us all the offences.”

6. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us . . . nailing it to His cross.”

7. “And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Thus we see the reason why the co-raising us up with Christ should come before the co-quickenings; because the Spirit of God reasons in the true divine order -- from God in Christ to us, and down to all our ruin in which we lay, by the seven steps of His truth.

(1) Complete in Him;
(2) circumcised in Him;
(3) co-risen with Him;
(4) co-quickened together with Him;
(5) forgiven through Him;
(6) the law 6 nailed to His cross; and
(7) the whole power of Satan destroyed.

Now let me notice another thing which is very fine. The seven steps of Col. 1 give us our subjective consciousness, what we possess and know in our own soul’s experience, what we have from God. Those in Col. 2 give us rather the objective unfolding by revelation -- what is in Christ for us, apart from our experience, though known to faith, of course. Both lines of thought reasoning from God to us, whether in a revelation objectively presented in Christ, or what our own souls consciously possess in Him.


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6. [The reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that no Scripture says that the law itself was nailed to the cross. The handwriting in ordinances was nailed to the cross, meaning the sentence of the law against us. But that left the law just where it was. Cp. 1 Tim. 1:8].
**The Personal and Corporate Actions of the Holy Spirit**

**The Holy Spirit as a Quickener and a Witness**

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected in perpetuity them that are sanctified.

Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Now where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin (Heb. 10:12-18).

In these two scriptures we find the two great truths which I desire to present to my reader --

1. The action of the Holy Spirit of God here on earth in quickening the souls of sinners, thus awakening them to the sense of their need in the sight of God; and --

2. His presence here on earth as a Witness to us of the perfection of the work of the Lord Jesus, and of its acceptance by God; thus providing an answer to the awakened soul by a testimony of the value of that work by which it is saved.

First of all, let us be clear as to the fact, that while the Son of God is the Actor by whom all divine actions are performed, the Spirit of God has always been the direct Agent in every action of the Godhead which has ever been done, whether of creation, or providence, or government, or redemption. We see references to this in all parts of scripture, even as to those actions which took place before the world was. In Gen. 1:14-19, where the appointment of the sun and the moon to rule the day and the night was made, we read of God having made these two great lights (the sun and the moon), “and the stars also.” And we read in Job (ch. 26:13) that the Spirit of God was the Agent in doing so, for “by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens.” So also, when from the chaos of matter found in Gen. 1:1, God would form the Adamic earth as an abode for man, we read that “the Spirit of God brooded [or moved] upon the face of the waters.” He also filled Bezaleel, the son of Uri; and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding and knowledge to do all the work of the tabernacle in which God was about to dwell in Israel. So also David had the pattern of the temple which Solomon built “by the Spirit” from God (1 Chron. 28:12). He came on the prophets; inspired the word of God; gave Samson his great strength; and, in short, all divine actions have ever been by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. This is seen more fully when we come to the NT, both in the Lord’s ministry and acts of power (“by the Spirit of God cast out devils,” &c), as afterwards in the church of God formed at Pentecost, which brings us down to the present interval. I only refer to these facts in passing, that we may have this great truth established in our minds, before we pass on to the special subject before us.

It will also be needful here to remark, that God had not fully revealed Himself in the OT days He is known there under various names, in connection with certain actions, and relationships entered into, whether in creation, or after the fall of man, or with individual souls of the elect, or with the nation of Israel -- His elect earthly people. We find Him then as Elohim, and its derivatives; Jehovah, El Shaddai (Almighty God) Gnelion; Adonai, and its cognate words; as well as by other names.

Still, “One God” was the great truth presented, in contrast with the plurality of the gods of the heathen; and to witness to this unity of the Godhead, Israel was chosen and called apart from the world: “Hear, O Israel; Jehovah, our God is one Jehovah (Deut. 6:4). But the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead was not then the subject of direct revelation. There were hints as to it at all times; but the fact was not then made known. I might adduce many instances of this, such as the plural character of the name of Elohim -- God; and also the thrice holy ascription of the seraphim in Isa. 6 compared with John 12:39-41, and with Acts 28:25-27. See also Isa. 48:16, “Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me.” The triune Persons of the Godhead are here plainly seen.

It was therefore reserved for the advent of the Son of God into this world, when He had definitely assumed manhood, and taken His place as man on earth, that the Trinity of the Persons
of the Godhead should be made known. This took place at the moment when the Lord Jesus commenced His service on earth, at thirty years of age. The Baptist had been arousing Israel with the testimony of the solemn issues of his mission, and as the one who was going before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. His cry to Israel was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The axe was laid at the root of the trees; it was not now the time of the lopping off of branches; the root was reached, and every tree which bore not good fruit was to be hewn down and cast into the fire. Judgment was impending over all. The Lord appeared amongst the crowd which came to be baptized of John -- confessing their sins. John resents this approach of Jesus, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” The Messiah could pardon sins; but could not confess them, for He had none. But grace was moving in the hearts of Israel. God had touched their souls; and instead of saying, “We have Abraham to our father,” they were accepting their true place of convicted sinners -- having no title on any ground to the promises, but that of sovereign mercy. With this movement of grace in their souls Jesus identifies Himself. The sheep of Israel were in the waters; the Shepherd of Israel would be there too! And His reply to the Baptist is,

Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us [He and thee] to fulfil all righteousness;
you to receive Israel’s confession of their sins; I to go with the grace which brought them there; and to receive, and delight in them as the excellent of the earth (Psa. 16). Straightway the heavens were opened! An object worthy of all heaven was seen for the first time. The Lord as a man on earth receives the Spirit of God. He is sealed as man by the Holy Spirit -- proof of the excellency and perfection of His Person, on which the Spirit could descend as a dove and abide, without bloodshedding or sacrifice. The Father’s voice is heard from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The whole Trinity is here first definitely made known -- Father, Son, and Spirit -- the Godhead’s glory is revealed, in the Trinity of the Persons by whom the operations of grace are performed.

But we must now retrace our steps a little, in order to ascertain the varied spheres in which the Spirit of God had wrought with men in former days. We must, therefore, go back to the days before the flood. Here we find that the strivings of God’s Spirit had for their object the whole race of man. During the one hundred and twenty years previous to that moment of judgment, the word was, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen. 6:3). It could not be said at any subsequent period that the race was the subject of His strivings. Hence we can say there is now really no salvation for man as a race in scripture; while there is salvation for men. “He turneth man to destruction; but saith, return ye children of men” (Psa. 90:3).

That period of dealing passed away. His Spirit strove for that allotted time, and the flood of waters closed the scene. The race would no more be the subject of such grace. But when the earth renewed itself, and men again re-peopled its surface, and then were scattered at Babel for their pride, God called out one man (Abraham) and in him a nation, by whom and in whom a fresh dealing began. This was the fresh sphere in which or by which the Holy Spirit would again carry on His operations -- either working within, amidst that people by the many ways of grace then used, or by that people to draw the nations of the earth to that center of God’s ways.

This fresh platform corrupted its way, and was cast forth out of the land of Canaan. Still, the word for faith was, “My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not” (Hag. 2:1). And the godly remnant was sustained in faith until Messiah came. When that time came, Jesus alone was the One to whom the Spirit is given without measure. He is the Center to whom all must now gather, in the ways of God. But, cast out and slain, He ascends to heaven, and receives the Holy Spirit afresh there from the Father, and “shed forth this [as said Peter on the day of Pentecost], which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:32, 33). This sending of the Spirit forms the disciples into a spiritual house on earth, a “Habitation of God through the Spirit,” which becomes (as it is still, though enlarged into Christendom) the fresh sphere of the operations of the Spirit of God. There is now no action of God’s Spirit directly from heaven, on the heathen around us. There is no action apart from that sphere where the Spirit of God now dwells. God works in it, or through it, wherever His work is done. Many instances may be adduced to illustrate this fact. God had lit up a light-bearer on the earth, to be the “Epistle of Christ, known and read of all men”: “A city set on a hill which could not be hid.” He owns no other light, and works through no other channel than the church of God. We see this in the Acts of the Apostles at the first, when this habitation of God was formed. The Jews must be convicted by the Holy Spirit from that platform, through the mouth of Peter, of their sin, and find Gods remedy for it, and come into God’s habitation. The Gentile (Acts 10) who had been hitherto drawn towards the God of Israel, and had loved His people, as the channel of mercy in a former day, must now “send for Peter” and “hear words of him” whereby “he and all his house should be saved.” The angel sent from heaven to him can only point to the true sphere on earth where salvation, would be found.

And although the church of God has corrupted her way in the earth, God knows no other channel to those “without,” nor sphere of action for His Spirit but “within,” where the good word of God is heard, and the operations of His Spirit are carried on. The heathen or the Jew, whenever reached by the word of the gospel, hears it through the testimony of Christianity. The professing Christian within that sphere is the object of the varied operations of the Spirit of God. We hear of a heathen, the chief man in --, who used to reason, “I made this canoe; some one formed the tree from which I made it,” but he was a heathen, the chief man in --, who used to reason, “I made this canoe; some one formed the tree from which I made it.” But there his reasoning ended. The Christians had established a missionary settlement in those parts many years before, but had found no fruit. At last this man came to hear. He heard of a Creator God, and one who had given His Son when His creature fell. “Ah,” said he, “this is what I have been looking for,” and he embraced the gospel. He learns the truth through the light God had set up on earth. His reasoning prepared the way for the testimony of Christ and His word to shine in upon his heart; but he must learn it through God’s ordered way. Like
the centurion of old, whose faith eventually rose above that of Israel (Luke 7), he had loved their nation, and had built them a synagogue; yet now that Christ had come, his faith was directed to a higher object, and he learns from Christ Himself of His grace.

We hear, too (to cite a case from “within”), of two miners who met one day in the depth of their mine in --, when one said to the other, “Do you know that there are people come about here preaching, who say you should know your sins forgiven in this life?” “Oh” said his fellow, “that is nonsense; no one could ever know that here.” They parted for the moment, but happened to meet again in the course of some days. “Do you know,” said one to the other, “I know my sins forgiven?” “You!” said his comrade; “impossible!” “Not at all,” said the other; “come and hear for yourself.” He came, and he, too, learned the gospel! Here was one of the ten thousand cases “within,” as the other was from “without,” illustrating the sphere of action or channel of blessing, from which God does not depart while present things remain, even though the light is dim, and the candlestick no more shines with its early light. Still the Spirit of God remains and works, abiding in the church of God during her whole pathway here, though outwardly enlarged to Christendom.

I will now draw your attention to the way in which the promise of the Holy Spirit came out during the Lord’s sojourn with His people on earth; that “other Comforter,” who was to take His place amongst them -- “in you” and “with you” -- when the Lord Jesus was gone away. He would abide with them for ever; while the Lord Jesus must depart after His short sojourn with them on earth. This comes out definitely in the gospel of John. In the gospel of Luke, when the hearts and the consciences are so much exercised by the Lord; and the needs of the soul are suggested in advance of their then state, we find the Lord, after teaching His disciples to pray (Luke 11), and by parables showing how that while man needed to be importuned to grant a request, when his own convenience was at stake, God as a Father to His own, would “how much more, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” Thus, while in reality the Spirit of God remains and works, abiding in the church of God during her whole pathway here, though outwardly enlarged to Christendom.

When we turn to John 14, we learn that He was about to go away, and that ere He would return again to receive them to Himself, the Holy Spirit would be given to dwell with them -- not for a few years, and then depart, as Jesus, but “for ever.”

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth [or ‘shall dwell’] with you, and shall be in you (John 14:16, 17).

Again,

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you of all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

In these passages we find the Lord praying the Father for the Holy Spirit to be given: and then the Father sending Him in the Son’s name.

In John 15:26, yet another step in advance of these,

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

In this passage the Lord Jesus, gone on high, is the sender of the Holy Spirit Himself.

And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go unto my Father, and ye see me no more. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged (John 16:8-11).

All this came to pass in Acts 2. When the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, which filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

And in explaining this, Peter says,

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 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 (Acts 2:1-4, 32, 33).

Thus was the promise fulfilled -- the Holy Spirit was sent, and filling each one, also filled all the house where they were sitting -- forming these disciples into a habitation of God by the Spirit. This was from thenceforth that sphere in or through which, as we have seen the work of grace would be carried on on earth.

Now, the faculty in man in which, and by which, the Spirit works is the conscience; faith springs up in the soul thus wrought upon. The soul is thus alive to its true state, in some measure, before God. This is, in general, followed by great distress in the soul. But it is thus a proof of life being there, and as a consequence the soul turns to God, though in misery. There are times also when only the natural conscience of man is moved by the word or truth used by the Holy Spirit; and the effect then is to cause the soul to turn away from God. This is always the case where only the natural conscience of man is roused. The case of Adam when he fell, and ate the forbidden fruit, proves this. He became as God, knowing good and evil. This was conscience; the principle he received in eating the fruit which was forbidden. It was the interdict given of God to be the test if his will would be subject to his Creator or not. The man and his wife fell -- the sense of guilt and nakedness was theirs, and as they cannot change it they seek to hide it from each other. This being done, they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hide from God. This is the effect of the word on the natural conscience of the sinner: it drives him away from God. But the moment God speaks to the man -- “Adam, where art thou?” --
the conscience is wrought upon by the word of God, and they come forth -- guilty and naked, yet they are drawn towards Him.

This will be found the constantly-presented fact in scripture, especially when conscience is directly before us in God’s dealings in the NT. When awakened or quickened it draws towards God, but often in misery. When unawakened, the effect of God’s word, or the current truths of it, drives it away from Him even farther than before; and man’s heart keeps him away from God. The case of the prodigal son, so full of divine instruction for us, shows us the effect of the awakening of the soul when absorbed in the wretchedness of the far country of this world. “When he came to himself “the sense of his condition reached his conscience, and at once the sense of goodness in God springs up in his soul, and he is drawn towards Him, yet in deep self-judgment and misery. He finds no answer to this awakening of soul until he meets the Father; then all is settled by the Father. “God is love,” and “God is light”; the only two things He is said to be. These answer to the heart and conscience in man. The light deals with the conscience, and exposes our true state as sinners in God’s sight; but the love attracts the heart, and draws out hope in Him in the soul. One or other may and does preponderate before God is fully known in Christ; and the soul is swayed between the two until then. The light presses upon the conscience of the prodigal, and shows him his unfitness; but the love sends him on his way to meet the Father. All the while the Father had anticipated all, and was ready to meet both the conscience and the heart with the answer they required. Many instances are found in the word of God as to this work of the Holy Spirit, and many are seen around us every day.

But at times the natural conscience is wrought upon for a while by the Spirit, and like Herod, in whom we see a man who, by hearing John Baptist preaching, “did many things and heard him gladly” (Mark 6), yet returned to his lusts and beheaded John; and when Christ stood before his judgment-seat (Luke 23) was given over to these lusts, and Christ answered him never a word. He was silent towards him, as one whose day was past.

Now in these truths we find the action of the Spirit of God upon souls in awakening them to a sense of their state before God; a needful and preparatory action to that of witnessing to that work of Christ, which provides an answer to the need thus produced.

We will now examine the truth presented in the second scripture quoted at the head of this paper. Of the first we have already treated, by showing the action of the Holy Spirit as a quickener, producing life in the soul of the sinner by a work in the conscience, effected by the word of God, the flesh profiting nothing. “The words that I speak unto you [said the Lord] they are spirit, and they are life.”

As to the second, we will turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews -- which we might characterize generally as God’s acceptance of the work of Christ, and the Holy Spirit’s witness on earth of this great truth. Heb. 9 is occupied specially in contrasting the old oft-repeated typical ritual in Israel with the one perfect work of Christ, which obtained eternal redemption for us by His offering Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God once and for all. In the close of this chapter we find Him represented as appearing in three distinct ways. In Heb. 9:26 we read,

Now once, in the consummation of the ages, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Then in Heb. 9:24,

For 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.

And in Heb. 9:28,

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.

The first of these “appearings,” was at the work of the cross, when the whole trial of the first man was over, there to accomplish that work, the final results of which will be seen in the state of eternal blessedness, in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The second is now aging on; He appears before the face of God for all who believe. And the third: His being seen by every eye, at His second coming, will be to introduce us into the result of all His work. This third appearing is manifestly future.

In the two last verses of this chapter we find the state of sinful man contrasted with that of those who believe. One verse (Heb. 9:27) begins with “As,” and the other with “So,” placing each in contrast with the other, “As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” Here we find the two solemn certainties which fill the heart of man with terror -- “Death,” and then the “judgment.” What worlds would not man give to escape these terrible realities! Then come the two blessed certainties for those who believe -- “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.” Blessed certainties indeed! The full result of His first coming known, and our sins borne, and put away for ever! The final result of His second coming presented for our hope; He will come again, apart from all question then of sin, for full and final salvation! We are placed, then, between the first and second comings of the Lord; cleared from our guilt by His first coming and His cross; the heart then set upon Him who is coming again to take us into the fruition of all.

With these two thoughts before us, we will read the next chapter aright. It opens with the grand results of His first coming, and work accomplished then, and closes with the hope of His return:

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10:37).

But in the interval between these points, we find from this chapter how the Holy Ghost is a witness to us” here below of the perfections of all. He calls upon our consciences to look back on the work of Jesus on the cross, and to know that the worshiper once purged should have no more conscience of sins. He leads us to look up into the holiest of all, and to enter
there, by faith and at rest, to praise our God; and He leads the heart to look forward to that moment when Christ will come again, and the affections are at rest.

How blessed! to have a Divine Person here as truly as it was so when the Lord Himself was here on earth, bearing testimony to us -- to every burdened, awakened soul -- Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more!" How sweet for such to bow to this assurance from this faithworthy Witness! We need not search our own poor hearts for such a testimony -- they will but tell the opposite tale. A Divine Person sent from heaven to dwell on earth; to bear witness that the one perfect work of Christ is accepted of God, instead of the works of our ruined souls; to lead our hearts, out of ourselves, to behold in Him the divinely-given answer to our guilt. Here we may rest in the full assurance of faith -- assured of God that our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. This requires no experience in us to realize; it needs but that the soul should turn to God, who thought of us when ruined and lost; to His Son who came to accomplish all His will, who, when He had done so, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and to the Holy Spirit who was sent from the Father and the Son to bring the news of God -- Father, Son, and Spirit, being all "for us," giving our souls perfect and eternal rest!

Leading us, too, to look, with souls at rest, for Him who shall come again to take us to be with Him and like Him for ever!

It is thus, dear reader, that the Holy Spirit not only awakens our souls to this need of a Savior, but becomes Himself the witness to us of that Savior's work, answering, the awakened conscience with that which alone can purge our sins, and cleanse our consciences, and make us as white as snow.

Words of Faith, 1883, p.. 113-125.

The Spirit as a Seal

2

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, 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. (But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified) (John 7:37-39).

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen unto the glory of God by us. Now he which testifieth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. 1:20-22).

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13).

These passages present to us three great facts.

First, that the Holy Spirit was never given to dwell in the believer, until Jesus had accomplished the work of redemption, and had entered His glory on high. He had wrought, as had the Lord Jesus, before He came; and then as the Lord Jesus had come into the world, so was the Holy Ghost sent down to dwell -- not merely to work, as in former days. This He did at Pentecost.

Secondly, we see that God anoints with the Spirit, and seals us in connection with the new place for man, “in Christ,” risen from the dead and ascended.

And, thirdly, in the last cited passage, we find that the believer in Him receives the Spirit as a seal, as a consequence of his faith in Christ.

I will ask you again, as in the former paper, to recall with me some of God’s dealings in the OT days, which will cause His present dealings to stand out in contrast with all that went before.

I pass over the pro-patriarchal days, and commence with Abraham, in whom these dealings of God began. We first find promise given to Abraham.

I will bless thee, [said the Lord to him] and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:2, 3).

These promises were confirmed and repeated to Abraham at the figurative resurrection from the dead of Isaac (Gen. 22), which was typical of Christ risen from the dead.

There were afterwards promises given to David, as the root of the royalty of Israel, Abraham and David being the two great vessels of promise on the earth.

But previously to David we find an intermediate dealing of God with Israel by the law, which brought Israel under a covenant of faithfulness on their part to perform the terms of a covenant which was the ground of their blessing or otherwise. In the promises there was but one party who entered into certain obligations in perfect free will, to fail in which would be for God, who made them to fail -- which can never be. If I were to say to a person, “I will give you this book to-morrow,” and I did not do so, it is I that would fail. But were I to say, “I will give you this book: to-morrow if you do so-and-so,” it depends both on his accomplishing the terms proposed, and then on my fulfilling my promise on his having complied with the conditions. This would be the principle of law; that of promise. If the latter were to fail, God would fail, which He cannot; all His promises and gifts and calling, are without repentance.

Now, these dealings of God were going on in the OT: Israel was being tested under law, and the promises of God, given before the law, stood in abeyance until God’s due time came. At last Jesus came to this world -- “Born of a woman,” through whom sin had entered the world; and “born under the law,” through which Israel was under the curse. In Him all the promises of God were yea and amen. In His own Person He embodied them all, whether to Abraham or to David; the former, the root of a race; the latter, the root of royalty in Israel. But He was cast out and slain. Those who had the
promises rejected them when they were fulfilled in Christ. And when this was so, and the work of the cross was accomplished, and Christ had risen and gone on high, a new thing is presented for faith, which is neither law, under which man was condemned, nor promise, which was now fulfilled. This was accomplishment; redemption was completed, and God’s righteousness established; His truth manifested, and His grace set free to act in sovereignty outside all former dealings, and to bring out what was in His mind before the foundation of the world.

Hence when the cross was past we have the “nows” of scripture brought fully out.

1st. “Now, once in the end of the world (consummation of the ages) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” This was Christ upon the cross (Heb. 9:26).

2nd. “Now the righteousness of God is manifested” apart from the law. This was seen in Christ upon the throne of God (Rom. 3:21).

3rd. “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 by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel (2 Tim. 1:9, 10). This was by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

4th. And again, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by means of the church, the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). In this was we find the church of God displayed.

Let me here remark that we possess four things (with many others) which were never known in the OT times:

The righteousness of God as the ground of His grace to us;

a purged conscience through the blood of Christ; and, as a consequence,

the indwelling of the Spirit; and, still more so,

the knowledge of the Father.

All these are ours now through the accomplished work of Christ.

Let us, also, state that the new place for man as “in Christ” before God was never known, nor could it be until Jesus had taken His place in a new sphere for man -- risen from among the dead. The patriarchs and saint in OT days could not be said to be “in Christ,” nor could such be said of those who were with Him in His sojourn here on earth. It would have no meaning to speak of such being “in Christ.” I name this, for it is in connection with this new place for man risen with Christ, as of a new creation, “If any man be in Christ [there is] a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) -- that the Holy Spirit is given. This new state for the believer came out when the Lord went up on high; and carries with it the complete blotting out of his whole previous state, with the guilt thereto attached, as a child of Adam.

We come now to what happens as a consequence of faith in the Holy Spirit’s witness of the work of Christ when received by faith. It is that the Holy Spirit is given him as a Seal; I say a “consequence,” because it does not need that the believer should ask for the Spirit to be given him (though when he possesses the Holy Ghost he may seek to be filled with the Spirit as a true state indeed); but when the work of Christ is presented and received by the awakened soul (for it is not a sinner that is sealed, but a believer) as an answer to his need of conscience, the Holy Spirit follows, as from God, who sets His seal of appropriation upon the person so blest. Just as Paul could appeal to the Galatians, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Of course it was by the “hearing of faith.”

Many instances may be seen in the Acts of the Apostles which illustrate this; such as that of the disciples who had previously been quickened as sinners during the Lord’s lifetime, and who received the Holy Spirit subsequently as believers on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). So also the Samaritans, through Philip’s preaching (Acts 8), afterwards receiving the Holy Ghost. Saul of Tarsus also, when quickened by the voice of Jesus from heaven, is three days after sealed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10). Cornelius, a truly-converted soul, who prayed to God alway, &c., must send for Peter, and hear words of him for salvation; and, as a consequence, the Spirit of God seals those who heard and received the word of grace.

In the passage from 2 Cor. 1, already referred to, we learn the progress of this great dealing of God very simply. Christ, in whom all the promises of God were yea and amen, is cast out and slain, and the children of Abraham who had them are themselves cast out -- having rejected them all in Christ. But all this only makes this new place for the redeemed, and “God establishes us [Jews] with you [Gentiles] in Christ” risen, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile -- and in keeping with this new place He anoints us with the Spirit. This unction or anointing is for power over the works of the flesh and knowledge of all things -- we “have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.” “Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” The same action of the Holy Ghost, doubtless, but having another character, that is, an appropriation on God’s part of those whom He has marked as His own, and an earnest to us of all that is coming in a future day, as in Eph. 1, “An earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

We will now examine some passages of scripture which show the effect of the possession of the Spirit individually in us.

1st. First we turn to Rom. 5:5, &c., where we read “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.”

Here is the first effect of the possession of the Spirit. We are assured of the love of God, who has saved us; it is assured to the heart. But lest in possessing the Spirit we should become...
mystical or introspective; lest we should turn inwardly upon ourselves to seek for evidences of this love of God, immediately the eye is turned outward upon that which is the full proof of God’s love to us in the verses which follow. There we learn how “God commends his own love” (this is omitted, but is in the Greek) toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

“Without strength” to appropriate this love of God;
“sinners,” still in our sins;
“ungodly,” for whom Christ died; and
“enemies,” who needed to be reconciled!

How full and abundant is the proof of that love which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts -- pointing us to God, outside ourselves; yet giving the assurance of it, and the joy of it within!

2nd. Then in Rom. 8:9 we are assured that we “are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be [or since it is true] that the Spirit of God dwells in us.” The standing is changed from “in Adam” to “in Christ,” from “in the flesh” to “in the Spirit,” and all proved by the Spirit being given unto us. God reveals this, faith receives it, and the Holy Spirit makes it good in the soul.

3rd. Again, in 1 Cor. 2, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things freely given to us of God.” Here “the things” which are ours are made known to us by the Spirit. In the OT it was said, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that wait for him.” But now our portion is all made plain, to be realized and possessed. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”

4th. Union with Christ, too, is known by our souls, for “He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:17). By the Spirit we know that we are in Christ, and Christ in us.

5th. Liberty is enjoyed in that new sphere to which we are brought. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17). The freedom of a soul which has done with all questions as to self, as to Satan, and as to God. Freedom with the Father in looking up to Him on high: freedom, too, with ourselves from all the workings of lust and flesh within. Alas, how little realized, but, nevertheless, ministered unto us by the Spirit of God given us from Christ in glory.

6th. Sonship, too, is known and enjoyed. “God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). Thus we are introduced into that positive relationship with the Father as already the children of God.

7th. Power for our walk here on earth over the works of the flesh is found in the possession of the Holy Ghost. “Walk,” says the apostle, “in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16-23). Walking after the Spirit is ever to have the soul’s vision on Him whom the Spirit glorifies. If Christ is before the soul, then the workings of the flesh are kept in the place of death. It is not by the effort to reduce ourselves to order and manage ourselves, but by the superior occupation with the Lord Himself. This gives power, not intrinsic power in one’s own soul, but in the sense of weakness in ourselves and as over ourselves; the eye is turned on Him, and power comes forth to draw the heart after Him, and thus gives us victory over the flesh.

8th. Our Inheritance with Christ is made sure to us by the Spirit of promise given us (Eph. 1:13, 14). He waits to redeem that inheritance of all created things from the enemy’s hand. He purchased it by His blood when here; took it with its load of guilt upon it, and died to redeem it all. But still the enemy is the usurper, and must be cast out. Power must be put forth to deliver it from the bondage in which it groans. Until then we also wait, but are sealed with the Spirit until the day of its redemption, when we shall inherit all as joint-heirs with Christ.

9th. We must “not grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed until the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30). How often, instead of being the source of joy in Christ, and in all that is ours, is the Spirit of God turned into a Rebuker of us! We turn after the things of time and sense; we run after the things of the world and we wonder why our souls are not in their fresh joy. Ah, the Spirit is grieved; the soil is felt by that most intimate Guest who dwells in us; and in faithful love we are made to feel the stain, the heart is rebuked, and the soul made to feel its pain, and brought back humbled, but instructed to hearken afresh to this word to us, “Grieve [him] not!”

10th. Thus we find that this same blessed Guest within us, is as a well of water springing up into everlasting life, the source and power of prayer, of singing the praises of God, of worship, too. “I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also” (1 Cor. 14:15). “Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18). “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). And “We are the circumcision, which worship God by the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:2).

Thus, dear friends, we see how great a sphere of enjoyment and privilege, and responsibility, too, is opened up to us by the possession of the Spirit of God -- given us as a Seal, consequent upon our faith in the work of Christ. The love of God is assured to our hearts: the New state, as “in the Spirit,” is made ours. The Things which God hath freely given us are made known. Our Union with Christ is by the Spirit given us. The true liberty of a saint from self and flesh and Satan’s power, and with our God, too, is enjoyed. By the Spirit of adoption we know our Sonship with the Father. Power for our walking outside the lusts of the flesh is ours. Our Inheritance is made sure, and we must not Grieve the Holy Spirit of God; and by the Spirit given us we Pray and Sing Praises, and Worship the Father who has sought and found us, and made us vessels for His eternal praise!

The “Body of Christ “Formed by The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

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 are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many (1 Cor. 12:12-14).

There is one body, and one Spirit (Eph. 4:4).

We come now to examine, not the individual action, on persons, of the Spirit of God, but His corporate action, seen in the formation of the church of God on earth -- the “body of Christ.”

Before doing so, I would note that the saint now has two callings: the one, an individual calling; the other, a corporate one. They are not confused, nor can they be separated. The first of these is his “heavenly calling”; the second, his church calling, as a member of the body of Christ. We must therefore examine each of these in some detail; for we shall find that certain scriptures in the NT treat of the one, and certain of the other. This shows us why it is that in certain scriptures of the NT we find ourselves in company with Abraham, and David, and other worthies of the OT, while in other scriptures we find ourselves apart from them altogether, and they are unnoticed, unless it may be casually, and in an inferior place in God’s glory. They may be seen as “principalities and powers,” while we are the body of Him who is set above them -- “the fulness of him who filleth all in all.”

Now, as soon as the earth became the scene of divine disappointment, when man fell, God retired from the scene, and the elect became “strangers and pilgrims in the earth,” being called out of it to seek “another and a better country.”

When God returned to visit the elect in it, He did so in gracious and condescending love; and when He concluded His momentary sojourn, eating with and sharing their hospitality, He then “arose and went his way,” for sin was there; and in such a scene God could not dwell. This is beautifully illustrated in His visit to Abraham, in Gen. 18. This, then, was the “heavenly calling” -- a calling out of the earth, by the revelation of Himself, to another scene. This calling is witnessed in all periods and ages of the world by the elect, or some typical person, which presents to us the features of this vocation in their day.

1st. It is witnessed in the antediluvian days, in Enoch, the seventh from Adam. The earth was corrupt before God; all flesh had corrupted his way in the earth; and “Enoch walked with God.” Wonderful testimony! embracing all that man could desire. For three hundred years (Gen. 5), as the world was ripening for judgment, every step of Enoch was “with God.”

His course began at the birth of his child; just as some striking incident in a man’s history becomes the divine voice to his soul. He names his son Methuselah, which signifies, “At his death he sends it.” Within the immediate circle of his family he witnessed that “the Lord cometh” in His judgments on the earth. His outward testimony amongst men was,

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 14, 15).

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God (Heb. 11:5).

He walked with God, and was not, for God took him (Gen. 5).

2nd. It was witnessed in the patriarchal days in Abraham. The God of glory appeared unto him, and said,

Get thee out of thy country, and thy kindred, and thy father’s house, and come into the land that I will show thee. He does so at last, and then when there, and he had left all behind, God says, “to thy seed will I give this land.” Here, then, was this man, outside of all he was linked to, and having nothing on earth but his tent and his altar -- a stranger and a worshiper in the earth; a pilgrim journeying to a “city which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God.” He possesses nothing here but a sepulcher, purchased from the sons of Heth, with these words on his lips,

I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight (Gen. 23:4).

3rd. It was witnessed in the Mosaic age by the great leader of the people of God. “I pray thee,” said he, “let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord . . . would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.”

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land . . . and the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth his sepulcher unto this day (Deut. 3, 24).

4th. It is expressed in the royal days by David, in the words which he sang by the Spirit as the sweet Psalmist of Israel:

7. [One may understand the heavenly calling to be in force only now, but there are types and foreshadows of it in the OT -- similar to, say, Caleb as a type of a heavenly one (cp. 1 Cor. 15:48).]

8. Or “He dies and then the arrow”; a figurative way of expressing that at his son’s death the arrow of destruction would speed its way. Methuselah lived up to the moment of the load, and passed away just as it came.
“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more (Psa. 39:12, 13).

5th. And in the prophetic age in Elijah, who went up to heaven, at the close of his prophetic task, by a whirlwind, with a chariot and horses of fire.

6th. And lastly, in the Christian period, in ourselves with our own heavenly hope, while here on earth as “strangers and pilgrims,” “partakers of the heavenly calling” {Heb. 3:1}, and waiting for God’s Son from heaven to receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also {John 14:1-3}. 9

In all this we see that we follow in the great line of saints, patriarchs and prophets, kings and people who have journeyed onwards through and out of this scene to their rest. We see them as “the spirits of just men made perfect,” but awaiting the “first resurrection,” when they will with us, as “children of the resurrection,” be clothed with their resurrection-bodies, and enter into their full heavenly glory {Heb. 11:40}. In the dispensation in which each lived, God marked and defined the manner in which they were to walk in existing things here on earth. Sometimes this was by an individual walk with God; at others as a member of His elect nation; but in none of them, before the present Christian interval, do we find that in which we ourselves are called to walk in, as members of the body of Christ, formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost {1 Cor. 12:13}.

Hence we find ourselves, not only in company with that great army of saints from the beginning to the end, having our place in that heavenly calling; but having a definite place in the counsels of God, which they will never share. In the church of God He glorifies Himself in a way beyond all that shall ever be. In us He displays in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace, and His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. While He has given His Son, as a Man, a place, setting Him above all principalities and powers, not only in this age, but in that which is to come, He has given us to be His bride, His body, His Joint-heirs; the Eve of the Second Adam for the Paradise of God!

It was His purpose “before the foundation of the world,” “His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.” Still He kept the best wine to the last; He kept as His secret the mystery “hid in God,” to display at last to those “principalities and powers in the heavenlies the manifold wisdom of God.” He calls it the “unsearchable riches of Christ.” None ever anticipated it in His ways. All else about Christ was “searchable” in the OT Scriptures. His Incarnation was there, His life of suffering, His atoning death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God, His receiving gifts in the man (Himself), His coming in power and glory, His glorious reign. All these are to be found; but that which lay between His going on high, and His coming again -- the valley that lay between the mountain tops, which when we behold them, is hidden from our view -- this was never told to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This was that which was “unsearchable,” “past finding out,” in His untraceable ways!

But we must now examine the scriptures as to the formation of this body, by the baptism of the Spirit. We will therefore look at the first prophetic mention of this “baptism” before it took place. We hear it first, then, from the lips of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. When announcing Him he says (Matt. 3:11),

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

In Mark 1:8, the announcement runs,

I indeed baptize you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

In Luke 3:16, it is,

I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

While in John 1:33, we read,

And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with: water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

And lastly, in Acts 1:5, the Lord tells His disciples,

For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Here, then, we find the several passages of scripture where this baptism of the Spirit is formally announced. It will be seen that there is the additional baptism of fire named in certain of these passages, in keeping with the scriptures where they are found.

We are possibly aware that the four Gospels present Christ in various ways and characters. Matthew presents Him as the Son of Abraham and Son of David -- the vessels of promise and Royalty in Israel. “He [thus] came unto his own, and his own people received him not”; and He will return to them again in power and great glory; thus having to do, in His first and second comings, both with grace and with judgment. Hence we have these two baptisms -- that of the Holy Ghost, having to do with grace, and that of fire, expressive of judgment by-and-by. In Mark’s Gospel we have Christ presented as the Servant of God, “who went about doing good.” As such, it is plain He has only to do with grace, hence in keeping with this characteristic we find in Mark only the one baptism -- of the Holy Ghost -- named. Now, in Luke we have the Lord’s human genealogy and His Person presented to us as the “Son of Man.” In keeping with which, and because He has so blesly, in that character, to do with grace, as well as with all judicial actions, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and that of fire are both named. God “has given him authority to execute

9. There will be another company of this great “heavenly calling,” seen in the martyred remnant, in the last final crisis of the earth before the appearing of Christ, who receive a heavenly reward, and are caught up there, having been slain for the testimony of Jesus and thus losing their earthly place in the earthly kingdom. They also belong to the “first resurrection.”
judgment also, because he is the Son of Man” (John 5:27). But all will see that as the Son of the Father -- the Son of God, as John’s Gospel presents Him -- He would only have to do with grace; therefore there is but one baptism, that of the Holy Ghost, mentioned. This same reason shows us why, in Acts 1, only one baptism, of the Spirit, is named, because the Acts of the Apostles present to us the work of grace begun after the cross is there unfolded to us. This makes all plain.

Now, “when the day of Pentecost was fully come,” this baptism of the Spirit took place. And it may be well to remark here that this baptism never has to do with an individual saint, but with a number of persons, as a corporate action; also that once it took place it never was repeated. These remarks will be found to have great importance in our true apprehension of the church of God or body of Christ.

The number of disciples together in prayer on the day of Pentecost were thus acted upon -- they were baptized into one body at that moment. Previously quickened and drawn after Christ, this fresh action changes their status from being mere individual believers to that of a body united to its Head in heaven. Christ had gone up there after redemption was accomplished, and He has entered into a new state for man by resurrection, and a new place for man, as ascended and seated in heavenly places. And in connection with this new state and new place, the Holy Ghost acts as such down from heaven, forming this “one body” “in union with Christ and with each other, as “members of Christ.” This is the only “membership” known in the word of God.

Now, here I would remark that, when this body was formed at Pentecost no one knew anything about it; because it was needful that a fresh offer be made, that Christ would return to Israel as a nation and bring in the times of the restitution of all things spoken of by the prophets, and bless His people on earth. The early chapters of Acts (2 - 7) are taken up with all things spoken of by the prophets, and bless His people on earth. The early chapters of Acts (2 - 7) are taken up with this tentative action towards that people; and it closed in the martyrdom of Stephen, and the message was sent after Christ, “We will not have this man to reign over us.” The ground was now cleared to bring out fully the “eternal purpose” of God; and Saul of Tarsus was converted by a heavenly Christ, and “separated from the people [Israel] and from the Gentiles, unto whom [said the Lord] I now send thee.” He was heavenly in his origin and destiny and ministry, to bring out that body, formed by the Spirit’s baptism on earth, while Christ hid His face from the house of Israel; those “unsearchable riches” never before made known to the sons of men; that valley between the mountain tops hitherto undiscovered and undisclosed. Saul of Tarsus hears from the Lord Himself that the saints on earth whom he was persecuting were Himself.

Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?
I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise [said he] and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen [that is, Christ in glory] and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee (Acts 26:15, 16).

Here he receives an intimation that further revelations would be given at some convenient time not then arrived.

Now all this happened after the whole assembly was scattered, at the persecution which arose about the death of Stephen, in Jerusalem. Outwardly, what was gathered together and formed in Jerusalem was destroyed; but Paul receives (he only of all the apostles ever speaks of the church of God) the revelation of that which had been formed at Pentecost into a divine unity, as one body, which never could be destroyed; nor could its unity ever be broken; God holds the unity of the body in His own hands.

The special revelations given to Paul (with that of his ministry generally), are noticed by his drawing marked attention to them in connection with this great subject. They are four in number:

1st. The unity of the body,

How, that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery [as I wrote afore in few words] which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men (Eph. 3:3-5).

He then proceeds to unfold this body, composed of Jew and Gentile, yet being neither when thus united into one.

2nd. He received a revelation of the Lord’s Supper in connection with these truths committed to him,

I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you,” &c., and he gives the details of the supper (1 Cor. 11:23, &c.), adding to it several new features not before given by the Lord in His institution of it on earth; but as now freshly instituted from heaven, as the Head of His body, which He was not until He went there. One marked feature being that it becomes, when observed in its truth, the symbol of the unity of the body of Christ on earth.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one loaf, one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).

3rd. A third marked revelation we find in 1 Cor. 15:51, 52, in connection with the resurrection of the saints who have fallen asleep, and the being changed of those who do not fall asleep before Christ comes.

Behold,” he says, I show you a mystery: We shall not [all] sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

4th. The fourth we find in 1 Thess. 4:15-17,

For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not go before them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with voice of the Archangel and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Thus we have in these four revelations: the unity of the body
of Christ; the symbol of its unity on earth in the Supper; the first resurrection of the sleeping saints, and change of the living; and then the rapture of all to the glory of God. These embrace the constitution, employment, resurrection, and catching up, or rapture from this scene of the church of God or body of Christ; and form a complete and comprehensive summary of its whole truth.

Now, I must still endeavor to present more distinctly the present actuality of this body as here on earth, where as to personal place the Holy Ghost is. It is here that all its members are seen at one given time -- as, for instance while I speak these words. It is true that when there is a general abstract statement of this body as the fulness of Christ, the church which is his body, the fulness [or, complement] of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22, 23), there is no time contemplated; and then the body is seen in union with Christ in heavenly places, as a matter of counsel, in connection with His exaltation as Man. But in all other places in scripture when this body is mentioned, it only includes those members of Christ who are alive on earth at any given moment of its existence as you hear these words! For there as to personal place the Holy Ghost is, who constitutes its unity, as dwelling in each member, and baptizing all into one body.

Let us put a figure as to this. The --th regiment of the British army fought in the battle of Waterloo. It is now in the roll of the army of England, having its identity, and the same number and name as then. Yet all its members have died off, not one man being in it now that was then in its strength. Others have come in, and filled up the ranks, and though the members are changed, the regiment is the same. So with the body of Christ; those who composed it in Paul’s day have died off, and others have come in, and filled up the ranks. Those who sleep, their bodies are in the dust, and their spirits with the Lord. As to personal place, they have lost their connection with the body for the present. They are of it, though not in it, now. They will all take their place in it when it is removed from this scene. Here, “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it,” &c. Suffering is not the part of those who have passed away from present connection with it.

Formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, it has been carried along those eighteen centuries past in unbroken unity, souls passing away, and others coming in; and it is here to-day on earth for God and for faith, as truly as when Paul wrote, “There is one body and one spirit.” The baptism never was repeated, but individual souls have been quickened and sealed, and thus united individually to that which the Holy Ghost formed by His baptism at Pentecost; and all its members can now, therefore, say, “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,” because we belong to that which was then definitely and permanently formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There is one further important truth in connection with this doctrine, or the body, to which I would now refer before closing this paper. It is this -- that wherever locally the members of this body were seen together “in assembly,” they were always treated as the body: this, of course, not separating them from the whole body on earth, but treated of God, as acting on the ground and principle of the body, and in unity with the whole body on earth. This is found in 1 Cor. 12:27:

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Here the principle is applied. The apostle had been teaching the great doctrine of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-26): first, its unity, and then the diversity of its members, each having (whether comely or uncomely members) their place in the whole; and he applies this practically to the local assembly at Corinth, in the verse (27) above quoted.

This, then, is the body of Christ; this the corporate place of every member of Christ on earth; this the only membership known in scripture. The divine, positive fact and truth of that which no ruin of its outward unity, no corruption of Christendom, can ever mar or destroy. Grasping this in our soul’s consciousness, and by faith, we have something stable, amidst the ruins of the professing church, on which to act; on which to rest in the last days. Of the practical use of the truth we shall hope to treat in the concluding paper.

Words of Faith, 1883, pp. 174-184.

The Walk of Saints
According to The Spirit

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3)

Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19).

Our present subject is to examine and ascertain, in some measure, from scripture what our path is at the present time, and our responsibility in connection with the Holy Spirit’s presence on earth, as members of the body of Christ, formed by His presence and baptism. May the blessed Lord guide us, as those who would say, “Show me now thy way,” and “Give me grace to walk therein.”

First of all, then, we must examine the testimonies of scripture as to the state of ruin into which the professing church has fallen, and in which we ourselves are involved. God permitted the roots and germs of all this state to come out in the apostolic days, so that He might give us the testimony of His word as to it all, and mark a path for His own in the scene of confusion which exists around us. We cannot escape from it to go outside; nor, at the same time, does God force us to abide in a path where the conscience is outraged, and the word of God discarded, and practices are found which have no warrant from Him. He gives us a plain path, where we may obey His voice, and have the joy of His presence with us in our course while here.

It is striking and instructive to see that the epistle from which we have cited our text for this evening’s lecture, was not written in a day when everything was in order, when the
church of God was walking, in the first freshness of power and blessing, with Christ. If this was the case when it was written, we might have admired it, and thought of its perfection and beauty in days gone by; but we should have found no practical value in it for our own path in days of weakness and failure and ruin. We see the wisdom of our God in giving us its teaching just when the days were darkest in apostolic times; when, as we read in Philippians (written at the same moment), “all were seeking their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ”; when “many walked,” of whom the apostle had told them before, and had now to tell them even weeping, that they were “enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end was destruction, whose god was their belly, who mind earthly things.” Such were the days when “Ephesians” was written: the aged apostle was in prison himself, and cut off from the work which he loved; all was rushing onward to ruin. It was then the time for God to bring forth by his means the most full and blessed unfolding ever given of the church of God. It was written in a day of ruin, as faith’s provision for a day of ruin, until we all would come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to full-grown men -- into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that we might no more be “babes,” &c. (Eph. 4:13, 14).

The gradual, but sure, decay had begun at once in the early church. Tares were sown amongst the wheat, and false persons were introduced from without, as Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8); the enemy, too, had begun to sow evil and discord within. (See Acts 5, 6.) This state of things is largely recognized in the various epistles. In Corinthians the wisdom of men and sectarianism were springing up, and moral evil had been allowed (1 Cor. 5), and doctrinal evil was spreading fast (1 Cor. 15). The law had been introduced in Galatia; asceticism and philosophy had been added to the law in Colosse. There was a return to Judaism and ceremonies on all sides (Hebrews), and the presence of the Spirit forgotten. All this may be seen largely in the epistles. But when we come to Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy, these things were there, and recognized as current, and all those of Asia had turned away from Paul, though not yet, perhaps, from Christ. It is then that the Holy Spirit in the apostle foretells the state of the “last days,” which was then coming in. “In the last days perilous times would be there,” and the state of nominal Christians would become like that of the heathen, as described in Rom. 1:29-31, compared with 2 Tim. 3:2-5, with the difference of “a form of godliness,” or “piety,” while they “denied the power thereof.” From such the servant should “turn away.”

This, then, was the state of the professing church which had been established on earth as the “pillar and ground of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:15). It was now the sphere where error and evil existed unchallenged.

We must now ask, What are God’s principles, when the sphere set up by Him at any time in the earth became corrupted as this before us? We may even see that these principles were His before evil entered the scene and were the true principles, unchanged by any circumstances, which ensued. They were “separation” and “largeness, -- separation to God because He is holy; largeness of heart because He is gracious! We see this in paradise before man fell. He planted a garden in Eden, and separated it from the rest of the scene, for the man to dwell in, and dress it and keep it; yet from it flowed four rivers, to carry its blessings to the four quarters of the earth. So, when the world was judged {at the flood of Noah}, and again peopled, and divided into nations at Babel, God called a man out of it, separating him to Himself, because He was holy; yet, because He was gracious, He promised that “in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” So also in Israel; He brought them out of Egypt, that He might dwell among them, and His word was, “Thou shalt be holy with the Lord thy God” (Deut. 17). Yet they were to be the center from which blessing should flow forth to the nations, who might there learn that He was God. “In Judah God was known; his name was great in Israel.” In the church of God, too, the saints were not of the world, even as He was not of the world; yet the desire He expressed was, “that they all might be one, that the world may believe” (John 17). These instances show us the principles that should guide His own.

We see this illustrated in the day when Israel corrupted themselves, and, under Aaron, made the golden calf. Moses had gone up, to receive the law, to the top of Mount Sinai, when the people revolted against God, and returned to idolatry, out of which they had been redeemed. Moses came down with the tables of the law in his hands, and saw the calf and the dancing; but, with the blessed intelligence of one who was in spirit with God, he acts in a moment in a way that saves the honor of Jehovah, and spares the people. Had he kept the tables of the law outside the camp unbroken, he would have compromised the authority of the Lord. And had he entered the camp with them, the people would have to be cut off. So he broke the tables before the mount! He then returns to God, after the tribe of Levi had executed the discipline of God upon their brethren, earning their place as the priestly tribe (Ex. 32). Moses then prayed to the Lord to spare the people, or to blot him out of the book He had written. Nay, said the Lord, “Him that sinneth will I blot out of my book.” Moses then returns to the desert, and while he waited to see what the Lord would do, and the people stripped themselves of their ornaments before the mount, Moses took the tent, and pitched it outside the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

Here was the most glorious moment of all his history. The moment when he so apprehended God, and His holy nature, that, without even a command from Him, he does that which was suited to Him; and the cloudy pillar, emblem of His presence, came down, and spoke to Moses, as a man speaks with his friend! Here was separation to God, yet largeness of heart for His people, and for their true blessing.

We might trace through scripture many instances of this kind, which show us that separation to Him is the true path for His own, when that which He had set up in blessing had
corrupted its way in the earth. We see it in Israel separated from Egypt; Moses separating from Israel at the moment cited. The Nazarite -- Samson separated from Israel, when they were under the domination of the Philistines. David’s men separated to him in his days of rejection. Jeremiah’s directions to separate himself from the people to the Lord (Jer. 15), that he might be God’s mouth, to separate the precious from the vile. So the “mark” to be set upon them who sighed and cried for the abominations in Jerusalem (Ezek. 9). The Baptist separating the repentant remnant to Christ. The church separated from the nation at Pentecost. Paul separating the disciples from the others (Acts 19). The directions, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,” &c. (2 Cor. 6). But when we turn to the Second Epistle to Timothy, we find this principle applied to our path in the simplest and most striking manner. The aged apostle turns to his own son in the faith, with his heart burdened with the sin in which the people of God now were involved; yet bright in the freshness of the courage needed to lift one above it all, and give the sense that God was above all the evil around. It is often the case that the soul gets under the power and sense of the evil to such a degree, that it becomes occupied with it, thus losing sight of God. This is a wrong state to drift into, and never will give power to surmount the evil in anywise. Grappling with the evils in the world, or the so-called Christian world, is not our path. But while persuaded of their existence and power, the heart can turn to God, and find Him and His ways superior to the evil; and we are called to separate ourselves to Him.

This character of things occupies the greater part of the epistle. The Spirit of God recognizes that there is no ecclesiastical recovery for the church of God, as a whole, to be looked for; while there always is individual recovery by the truth. He had been treating of the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus, and such like, when he adds,

Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

How refreshing to think that no amount of corruption had destroyed that sure foundation of God! There stood the everlasting truths which never altered, though the house of God had enlarged itself to what he likens to “a great house,” with “vessels of gold and of silver, of wood and of earth, some to honor, and some to dishonor,” yet scattered abroad by the devices of men, and by the craft of the enemy, within that sphere were those who were Christ’s. “The Lord knoweth them that are his,” said one inscription of the seal of God! The eye of man could not single them out, nor even the eye of faith discern them. They may be like the seven thousand who had not bowed to the image of Baal in Elijah’s day, whom the prophet had never discovered. Still, God knew them; they might be as the godly ones in the day when Israel’s heart was as hard as an adamant-stone, when Ezekiel prophesied in vain; they were known of Him who knows all hearts, and He called to the executors of judgment in Jerusalem --

Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof,

before judgment which would not permit of pity, fell on the rest (Ezek. 9:4). God knew those in that day those who were His; and He knows them now, as our passage in 2 Tim. 2:19 testifies. This is the privilege of all who belong to Him.

But now he turns to the reverse of the seal, and reads the second inscription:

Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

Here, then, is the way I may see those hidden ones of the Lord; they must be separate from evil to Him. Simple yet comprehensive step! Let the evil be moral, doctrinal, intellectual, or religious, the path is the same -- to “depart from iniquity” is the responsibility of the saint who names the name of the Lord. Vessels of honor and of dishonor -- precious and vile -- may be there. The Hymenaus and Philetus may have to be condemned, but the true soul must “purge himself from these,” that “he may be a vessel unto honor, sanctified [or, separated], and meet for the Master’s use.”

Let me remark as to that word, “purge.” It is found but twice in the original tongue of the NT scriptures. The first place we find is in 1 Cor. 5:7:

Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

This marked the responsibility of the whole church of God, set up on earth as “an unleavened lump.” She was to maintain her place in this, and to “purge out” all thatavored of the old leaven -- the evil which was then creeping in at Corinth, as this chapter shows. But she did not, as a whole, do this. She soon became indifferent to the evil, which soon, alas! became her characteristic, and not the holiness due to Christ. Now comes the second use of the word. The individual, finding himself in the midst of “a great house,” filled with “vessels to honor and dishonor,” was to “purge himself” “from such, by standing apart from them, as from all this which dishonored the Lord, in order to be a vessel unto honor for the Master’s use.

But when a soul has taken this step, it might engender a Pharisaic spirit in him, in standing thus apart because of his Lord, and so we have next,

But follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

He would find others who, like himself, had grace given to be separate to the Lord, and he was to walk with such, in holiness of conduct, and a pure heart likewise.

But this separation to the Lord has, so far, only a negative character. But this is the responsibility of the “house of God,” now become like “a great house” around him. We want something more, therefore; we require a positive ground of action for our souls in the midst of the scene. Here, then, comes in the never-changing truth of the unity of the body of Christ, of which he is a member. This abides here on earth in the midst of Christendom. It is within that sphere that the Holy Spirit
maintains, in unbroken unity, the body of Christ. Granted that outwardly it is broken to fragments to our vision, and the members of that body are scattered in every section of the professing church; granted, too, that it is utterly impossible to restore it to its original state, that no skill or power can ever set it right again -- all this is quite true; but then I am ever responsible to set myself to rights, before everything, with God. I am a member of Christ, and separate from evil; well, I am not the only one whom God has called so to act for Him because He is holy. I find others also; we meet as His members to worship the Father, to remember our Lord; but it is as members of Christ, and as acting in the truth of that body of which we are members -- we can be together -- and on no other ground! (I mean no other ground according to God.) We are thus in a breadth of truth which embraces every member of Christ on the face of the earth!

This is “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). We can neither keep, nor break the unity of the body -- that is kept by the Spirit Himself intact, spite of every failure of man. But we are called to “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

What, then, is this unity? It is the power and principle by which the saints are enabled to walk together in their proper relations in the body, and as members of Christ. It may involve my separation from one member because he is attached in practice, or religiously, to that which will not stand the test of the word of God. It may call me to walk with another who is walking in godliness, and in its truth. I may find a true soul who sees the truth up to a certain point, but no farther; I enjoy with such all that he enjoys in the unity of the Spirit. Suppose fresh light reaches his soul, and he refuses it, then we part! I must never weaken the path I am called to by compromise with him of the truth. All this involves the body of Christ; it is the ground of action, because the Spirit of God maintains it.

This unity, too, excludes individuality most fully. No one can take an isolated place if he is called to stand alone in some locality because of the word of the Lord, it puts him in communion, and on common ground, all over the world, in other localities, with all who are walking in such a truth. It excludes individuality, too, when together with others; one might be tempted to act in independency of other members of Christ to take action himself, not in communion with the rest. It throws us outside every system of man, too, but keeps us in that unity which is according to God!

Now here is the divine and positive foundation under our feet for this day of ruin. This is not merely a negative path. It is wide enough for all, because it embraces all in its breadth, whether they are there, or not. It is exclusive of evil from its midst, as known and accepted; to admit it would cause it to cease to be the unity of the Spirit. It is not merely the unity of Christians -- which is the effort of the many to effect, often to the refusal of the truth of the body of Christ. How often do we see the effort to be together apart from its truth, merely as believers in the Lord. Then may make many unities, and attach Christ’s name to them, and call it the church. God attaches unity to Christ, not Christ to unity! Then it must be true in nature to Him whose body it is; it must be practically holy and true (Rev. 3:7).

Trial may come in, and the enemy seek to mar this effort of the faithful to act for God. Discipline, too, may have to be resorted to, to keep those thus gathered together true and right. When this is so, the action taken in one place in the Spirit, and in obedience to the word, governs all others, where the people of God elsewhere are thus acting in the truth. The Lord’s table being spread, as that in which we own the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16, 17) is in the midst of those gathered together in the name of Christ. (Matt. 18:20). One in communion at it in one part of the world, as with those who are endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, is in communion with all, wherever they may be found. One ceasing to be in communion in one place, ceases in all. Thus individuality is impossible, apart from unity; or unity from individuality.

It is only in the church of God, or in its principle, we have both maintained. In popery we see unity, but no individuality; in other sects individuality, but no unity In the unity of the Spirit we have both, and there only.

Then the cry of others is, “You want us to come to you, and hear the truth; why do you not come to us?” The question is most natural, but the answer is plain: We never can make wrong right by mixing with it; we desire your blessing; we desire that you who are not with us may act on what you are, as members of Christ by one Spirit, and with us on the only divine platform on earth! You would be the first to blame us, did your conscience bow to the truth, for having weakened or falsified it by mingling with error, in order to win others to be with us. Your title is clear to be at the Lord’s table with us, if you are a member of Christ (we assume that you are walking with us). Your title is clear to be at the Lord’s table with us, if you are a member of Christ (we assume that you are walking with us). Your title is clear to be at the Lord’s table with us, if you are a member of Christ (we assume that you are walking with us).

A word now, in conclusion, as to the place of those who come to help us to be faithful to the Lord should receive a hearty welcome from us in His name. Let us not suspect any other motive in those who come than our own desire, through grace, to do the same. Often have I seen souls come in all simplicity, who would be scared away had they been placed under a condition; for when they came, they found His presence there, and never left again! A soul finding itself with Christ would not likely seek to wander away again to other paths, even though it may be a pathway of reproach “outside the camp” with Him.

A word now, in conclusion, as to the place of those who are together, in these last days, in the truth. We sometimes hear of being “a testimony.” I ask, To what? And I reply for all, We are a testimony to the present state of the church of God, not what it was once, but what it is. But suppose we are really thus

10. [Now, virtually every place is leavened.]
a testimony to its failure, this involves much more than at first
sight we would think. We must in such a case be as true in
principle and practice as that which has failed! Though but a
fragment of the whole, this must be really a true fragment. This
will ever keep us lowly in our own eyes, and nothing in the
sight of others. As long, therefore, as we are a testimony of this
character we shall, by grace, never fail! The Lord alone will be
our strength and our stay in days of ruin, and perilous times of
the last days.

In the great sphere of the profession of Christianity on
earth -- the responsible church, or “house of God,” where His
one Spirit dwells and operates, there is a divine current in
which the faithful will be found. In one of the great lakes, or
inland seas, of Switzerland we find what will illustrate my
meaning. One of the great European rivers runs into this inland
sea at one extremity, and out at the other; but it is found that
the current of the river is traceable all through the vast sheet of
water. There are also, as a matter of course, the eddies and the
back-water, which is near the current, and the dead water
outside its influence. Thus it is in the professing house. There
are those to be found in the current of the Spirit within the
great professing body; there are others whose position would
be near it, though not in the stream, but, as it were, in the
eddies which are close at hand. There are others who have
turned aside, and been drawn into the back-water, and never
seem to recover. Others, too, who are found in the dead-water,
out of the reach of the current, or even of its influence. It
becomes, therefore, a very real question for each -- “where am
I?” “Am I like a chip, or a withered leaf, in the eddies, or in the
back-water, or in the stream?” If in the last, we are carried
along in that one path, in the freshness and energy of the one
Spirit of God, in the truth of that one body of Christ, of which
we are living members; faithful to Him who loves us, yet
will-less and obedient in His hands, who can use for His own
glory, and the blessing of others, the weakest vessel, if in the
current of His Spirit, in the truth.

Words of Faith, 1883, pp. 207-218.

The Vine

The vine, as the symbol of a fruit-bearing system on the earth,
is used in a remarkable manner, and runs through a large body
of Scripture. We read in Psa. 80:8, that the nation of Israel is
likened to a vine which the Lord brought out of Egypt, casting
out the heathen from Canaan and placing it there to bring forth
fruit. Then in Isa. 5:1-7, we learn all the care and culture He
bestowed on His vine that it might bring forth grapes, “fruit
meet for him by whom it was dressed.” The result was that,
instead of fruit answering His culture, it brought forth “wild
grapes.” And He says in Jer. 2:21, “I had planted thee a noble
vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the
degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” And so the Lord
permitted the “wild boar out of the wood” to waste it. He also
says, “I will take away the hedge thereof”; “I will lay it waste”;
and “I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”
It was only fruitful in iniquity and false to Jehovah. “Israel,”
He says, “is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto
himself” (Hos. 10:1). So the Lord gave him up to the Gentile
king, Nebuchadnezzar, to rule over him, commanding him to
submit to this punishment as of the Lord. (Read Jer. 27:1-12,
especially v.12.) Under their last king, Zedekiah, they might
have remained tributary, as we read in Ezek. 17, the kingdom
might have remained “a spreading vine of low stature” under
the Gentile king; who took an oath from Zedekiah, and allowed
him to remain in his land. But this “vine of low stature,”

instead of observing the oath which Nebuchadnezzar accepted
of Zedekiah, and remaining tributary, he sent his ambassadors
to Egypt. Or, as the parable in Ezek. 17 says, “this vine did
bend her roots towards him,” and so the king of Babylon took
him captive, and broke down his city and laid it waste, and so
it ceased to be the “vine” of God in the earth, it ceased to be fit
for anything but “fuel for the fire.” (See Ezek. 5.)

And into this vineyard which had been laid waste, at last
came the Lord Jesus. Israel, as Jehovah’s vine, had been
brought out of Egypt. So Jesus replaces and recommences
morally the history of that people, and we read, “Out of Egypt
have I called my son” (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15). The Lord then
replaces Israel, which had been set aside as a fruit-bearing
system on the earth. He presents Himself not as the best branch
of that vine, but, “I am the true vine.” The root of the new
fruit-bearing system on the earth; and the disciples then
become the branches. Abiding in Christ, and Christ in them,
they would be fruit-bearing branches -- the Father glorified in
them -- and so they would practically be Jesus’ disciples. This
lasts in principle all through the time of the calling out of the
Church, but the point is fruit-bearing on the earth; not as raised
and seated together in Christ in heaven, where there is no
purgung or pruning, nor fruit-bearing.

When the present time of the heavenly calling {Heb. 3:1}
shall have passed, and the Church shall be taken away, Israel
comes before God again, not yet as owned, but previous to the kingdom being established in the world. We find their state in Isa. 18 aptly described as a “vine,” returned to their land by the help of some great maritime power, but not yet owned of God. “Afore the harvest [the harvest and vintage are figures of the last acts of judgment which take place before the kingdom is set up in glory], when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape ripening in the flower”; when all seems to man’s eye to go on well, the Lord does not interfere but considers apart in His dwelling, and then suffers the apparently re-established, fruit-bearing vine to be again trodden down and destroyed by the Gentile powers. And the end of what is again a corrupt fruit-bearing system in the world finds its judgment at the hand of the Lord in Rev. 14:15-20, as the “vine of the earth” whose grapes were fully ripe and which are then sent into the great winepress of the wrath of God. The Lord Jesus-Jehovah is seen in Isa. 63:1-6 coming from this judgment of the vine of the earth and winepress of the wrath of God, in which the nations of the world share (see Isa. 34). His garments red with judgment; and He comes to renew His relationship with the spared remnant of Israel, for the “year of His redeemed is come.” And the result of all this is, that Israel again becomes His fruit-bearing “vine” in the world. “A vineyard of red wine,” which the Lord Himself (now that they had failed under the old covenant) will keep night and day watering it every moment; and “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and till the face of the world with fruit” (Isa. 27:2-6).

Bible Treasury 6:224.

“His Will” – “His Work”

My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work (John 4:34).

There are two points to be observed in the reading of the OT, without which it cannot rightly be understood. The first is, that the gap or interval in time, from the ascension of Christ to heaven till the taking up, or rapture of His own, is never contemplated in its Scriptures; nor is it ever computed as time at all. And the second is, that what is said of the Lord in many cases in these Scriptures, is similar in language to what is said of the Church -- His body, in the NT. Thus it is that Paul, speaking of the mystery of Christ and the Church, calls these truths, with all collateral ones, “The unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

The searchable things were all there: Incarnation, Life of suffering, Atoning death, Resurrection, Ascension to heaven, Receiving gifts in the man, Coming again in glory, His glorious reign, or Kingdom. All these were to be found in the OT. But the interval in time from the ascension -- characterized by the presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Church -- as an habitation of God, His abiding with her during her earthly sojourn while Christ is hidden in the heavens, and His coming forth to receive her to Himself when caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air; these things were not in the Scriptures of the OT; they were “hid in God,” “according to the purpose of the ages.” Nor are they spoken of by any of the apostles or teachers of the New but Paul. OT Scriptures are silent as to them; so are NT apostles and prophets -- with the exception of him.

I mention one Scripture out of many as to the interval, or gap, of the NT times being unnoticed in the Old. The well-known passage from Isa. 51:1, 2, first clause, cited by the Lord in the opening of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:18, 19), as far as the middle of a sentence, when He closed the book and sat down, causing all in the synagogue to fasten their eyes upon Him. The parenthesis of grace thus falling between that moment and the fulfilment of the next clause -- “And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” Yet when He foretells the long centuries of judgment which ensued upon Israel, He touches upon His second coming in glory, according to Isa. 43:1-4, connecting with that “day of vengeance” the words -- “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come” (Isa. 43:4); also, “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21:23); and again these -- “Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

The parenthesis of grace thus lying between that day in Nazareth, and the day of His coming in power and great glory. The parenthesis of glory of which Paul treats, lying again within the other parenthesis of grace of Luke, from His ascension to the rapture of the saints on high, while the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” “the manifold wisdom of God” -- in Christ and the Church, are unfolded. These come forth when Christ is in the glory and the Holy Ghost here.

We see this, too, in the portion of the passages of Isa. 49:6-8, cited by Paul in the NT, which apply to Christ Himself in the Old, and to the Church, His body, in the New.

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.

This the prophet speaks of Christ. And Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:47),
For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

Again,

Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee (Isa. 49:8).

This of Christ. While Paul, of the Church, in 2 Cor. 6,

We then, as workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

In Rom. 8 also, speaking of the security of the believer,

It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?

While Isaiah, of Christ, in ch. 1,

I gave my back to the smilers, and my cheeks to them that pluck off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting . . . He is near that justifieth me . . . who is he that shall condemn me?

Now while all this is true, and the general matter of the OT is silent as to these things, when it deals with the world and Israel, and Jehovah Messiah’s connection with them; there are two Scriptures in the OT which touch upon the counsels of God outside the earth, the line of His eternal thoughts, at which I would now look for a little. I speak of His eternal counsels as those connected with things which are outside all His dispensational dealings with the world. Prophecy connects itself with “times and seasons, and days and years,” which belong to the world, and exist while it exists, ending when it ends; then the eternal counsels of God have their fruition, and time has passed away.

1. In Prov. 8:23-36, where Christ is seen as the Eternal One, the “wisdom of God.” He is there seen in two ways. First, as the resource of God; and second, as His delight, the One in whom all the good pleasure of the Eternal was.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

Then follows a lovely description of the priority of Him on whom all depended, before the mountains, or hills, or oceans, or clouds were.

Then, [says the Eternal One.] I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth (before it was formed); and my delights were with the sons of men.

2. Psa. 40 gives us the other; and while Prov. 8 unfolds to us those thoughts before the earth was, in Psa. 40 the silence of eternity is broken by the words here spoken by the Lord. Time and earth had intervened; sin had entered the fair scene, and man fell; Israel had been redeemed, and had been tried under law; prophets, priests, and kings had been there, and His people all had failed. These blessed words are then heard, and connected with the lowly path of faithfulness of Christ: “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.”

In the epistle to the Hebrews we find the establishment of this “will.” The sacrifices proved wanting, and only recalled sin to remembrance -- not putting it away; they are set aside by His one perfect blessed work, and the will of God is done. “He taketh away the first,” even these sacrifices, “that He may establish the second,” God’s eternal will. This had been outraged through man, under the enemy’s power; but could not be turned aside or disannulled (Heb. 10).

Thus we have in Psa. 40 the “will” of God to be made good in His cross on earth; and in Prov. 8 the “good pleasure in the sons of men” revealed. In Hebrews we have the eternal will established; while in the Ephesians we find the “good pleasure of his will” brought forth from the secrets of eternity, when He is gone on high; and this to the “sons of men,” in whom His “good pleasure,” or “delights,” ever were.

If ye have heard of the administration of the grace of God, which is given me to youward; [and that] Ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed, &c. (Eph. 3).

From creation until He came to the earth, Jesus, the eternal Son, the wisdom of God, was ever “by Him” -- His resource, and His delight.

Did the counsels of the Godhead resolve to create the universe, or to frame the world out of the chaos which is found in Gen. 1:2? The Son was the actor, for “by Him were all things created.” “Without Him nothing came into being that did exist.”

Did man in innocence succumb to the temptations of the enemy, the old serpent, the devil? Did sin and disobedience thus enter into the world? The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head; and in the foretold “bruising of his heel,” and in the death which Adam’s coats of skins required, ere he could walk forth from the garden consciously and manifestly clothed of God -- Jesus was again before the mind of the Father. How sweet to see that because of Him, in this first scene of the world’s youthful history, God was the first to move in approaching the sinful pair!

Again, when violence entered in, and Cain slew His brother, it was because Abel, finding himself “born in sin,” outside of paradise, his state as a sinner pressing upon his soul, and recognizing what a Righteous Being required to meet His nature and His claims, he brings “the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof.” He came with the pure and sinless life of another, but displaying in death the excellency of life. In all this he confessed that he could not provide that which God in His nature demanded, and he as a sinner needed; and God, as it were, seeing that faith apprehended something of His resource and His delight, pronounced him a righteous man.

Did Noah’s sacrifice ascend as a sweet savour in the sight of the Lord, after His judgment of the waters of the deluge, because of the earth’s corruption? He turns at once to His resource, His delight; and says in His heart,

I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; because the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done (Gen. 8:21).
Again, *idolatry* enters the scene; and all the world was worshiping demons rather than God. He calls Abram out, and "preaches the gospel" in him (Gal. 3:8). "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). And when Abraham ascends the mount Moriah, in company with his only son Isaac, his faith entered upon the thoughts of God Himself in Jesus, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb." The risen Isaac, "received from the dead in a figure," speaks in the sight of divine omniscience, of that scene yet to be enacted between the Father and the One then "by Him," "His delight." And God, "because He could swear by no greater, swear by Himself," to fill with "strong consolation" the feeblest heart that flies for refuge to Jesus (Heb. 6:16-18).

Mark the delight, the suddenness (Ex. 40) with which in after years, when Moses had reared the tabernacle, after the people had made the golden calf, and failed in their obedience to law, God enters, and fills the whole scene so fully, that even Moses himself could not but be an intruder -- none could share His company in that tabernacle, which was the pattern of things in the heavenlies reared up in the obedience of faith, but He of whom every cord and pillar, board and altar, curtain and hanging testified.

Thus and thus was Jesus, God’s resource, always "by Him," "His delight," "rejoicing always before Him."

But I need not go further. Step by step, Christ, in type and figure, in parable and shadow, kept God’s heart reminded of plans that never could be frustrated; but while hindered by Satan, and man, and sin, only disclosed the inexhaustible resource that Jesus was ever before Him.

The day came when Jesus, though always "by Him," the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, was to divest Himself of the glory He had there, before the world was; and taking manhood in the womb of the virgin, was to be "Emmanuel, God with us"; yet ever His delight, His good pleasure. In the lowly manger in Bethlehem, the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was laid; and the anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure (His delights) in men," is sung.

Thirty years elapse, and Jesus appears amongst the crowd who were confessing their sins in Jordan. The wandering sheep were in the waters, and the Shepherd would go there too. Grace was at work in their hearts, and Jesus would go with the grace; they were confessing their sins through grace, and Jesus would be with that grace, as He, in the Godhead, had produced its fruits. At once we hear the voice of the Father, as we had heard that of the angels at His birth, proclaiming, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I have good pleasure." And the Spirit, in bodily shape, as a dove, alights upon Him. Father, Son, and Spirit, seen and heard, for the first time on earth, when He stood in the waters of Jordan, charged with the bringing forth of God’s "good pleasure in the sons of men," and establishing on a revolted earth His will!

In a few short years we find Him on the mount of Transfiguration when about to be received up. His own had not received Him; the world, though made by Him, knew Him not. A momentary glimpse of His true glory evokes the words from a bystander, "Master, it is good for us to be here," and the Father’s voice again is heard owning His earth-rejected, though heaven-honored Son, as "my beloved Son, in whom I have good pleasure; hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5). He then returns to the scene of His sorrows, and steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. The seventy disciples return (Luke 10). He had not given them power over unclean spirits when sending them forth. But faith in Him had caused them to use the value of His name, and to their joy they were answered. They return to Him and say, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name" (Luke 10:17). How joy fills His heart, too, as they tell the tale, in the thought of the day of glory, when Satan will fall as lightning from heaven; and even the earth will yield no place for him, while he is chained in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

But hearken now to what He says in their hearing:

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it was thy good pleasure (Luke 10:21).

And, lastly, in the gospels, when Jesus would cast the light of God on all that man’s ways present (Luke 12), between His leaving them and His return, He speaks of His people as a little flock: but even so they were not to fear, “for it was their Father’s good pleasure to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32).

But to recall what we have touched upon, we have:

1. Before the world was, this “good pleasure” filled the heart of Jesus, "in the sons of men" (Prov. 8).
2. At the birth of Jesus it was shared by unjealous angels, and the heavenly hosts proclaimed from the excellent glory (Luke 2), “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men.”
3. When He came up out of the Jordan the Father’s voice again proclaims, “In thee I have good pleasure” (Matt. 3; Luke 3).
4. The same words are heard from the excellent glory; on the holy mount,

For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I have good pleasure” (Matt. 17; Luke 9; 2 Pet. 1).

5. And as He descends to His path of service, and sends forth the “seventy,” and receives them as they return, He tells of His Father’s “good pleasure” to reveal these heavenly secrets, not to wise and prudent, but even to babes, whose names were written in heaven.

6. And as He instructs them for their pathway (Luke 12) in this world of sin, He adds His “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” His “delights were with the sons of men.”

At last the hour was come, “Your hour, and the power of darkness,” when all was arrayed against Him, to stay the eternal Will being done on earth, as counseled in the heavens.

If in the gospel of Luke we found the “good pleasure” so often expressed, as Luke presents Him a Man, in whom all was centered, it is in the gospel of John we find His heart set, who...
was presented there as the Eternal Son, to do this Will of God.

   My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work (John 4).
   I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me (John 5).
   I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me (John 6:38).
   And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day (John 6:39).

He who expressed His own perfect will but twice in all His earthly path, was now to do His God's. Once in Gethsemane He expressed it, to lay it down in blessed submission to the Father, “Not my will, but thine be done”; and once again in John 17:24, for the eternal blessing of those whom His Father had given Him,

   I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

   Before the mountains were settled . . . Then I was by Him, one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him (Prov. 8).

This hour then came, and Jesus in that hour could repeat, as it were,

   Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering has thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart (Psalm 40).

And closing in the cross that work, and establishing that will, He cries, “It is finished.” His will is done, and “He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.”

   He died and lived again: He ascended on high in glory, and all now was removed which could frustrate that “will” of God. All was settled for ever that established it. The “good pleasure” of the “will” could now be made known to the “sons of men.” We hear the exponent of it, now by the Spirit, unfold it in our calling on high of God,

   Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:3-5).

How sweet those words, “accepted,” “taken into divine favor,” “in the beloved.” “Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord” (Proverbs 8).

Now the Ephesian Epistle unfolds these eternal thoughts and counsels of our God. In it we find (as in Christ and by the Spirit) God most fully revealed and seen. His Church displays Him in these two ways:

1. God Himself to man, to the universe, as God now fully known.

2. Man before Him, displayed according to His counsels, as seen in Christ. His Church, Christ’s body, in union with her Head, by the Spirit, now in mystery, and in full display in the day of glory. The Spirit too now gathering to the confession of His name on earth those who are His own, until the day when He with His Church becoming manifestly the center of an ordered universe. As we read that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He will gather together in one all things in heaven and earth, in Christ; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

   What a calling: God displayed in Christ, for “in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell” (Col. 1:19).

   Christ displayed in the Church His body, His bride, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22), the ordered center of a reconciled universe, the helpmeet, the Eve of the second Adam, in the day of power.

   How then is all this to be realized in the soul? How are we to walk in the power of this calling of God? We must be strengthened with all might, according to the riches of the glory of the Father, by His Spirit in the inner man. But for what? What need of such blessed living action of God in us? It is that this Christ, this center of all things, to whom heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings must bow the knee (Phil. 2:10), “may dwell in our hearts by faith!” That the soul’s affections may center in Him, surround Him, entwine themselves in Him; that being rooted and grounded in love, no Satan’s power can disturb this planting of our souls in the soil of love! Down deeply have struck the roots there, though this will be tried and tested; far and wide the soul has spread its branches. Sorrows but unfold it, and want but finds in it its rich supply. Temptations to disturb it are met by the power of it ministered to the soul. The coldness of our brethren deepens the joy of its being ours. The world’s sneer and scorn turn the heart more distinctly to Him who loves. The enthranced soul rises to the deeper contemplation of that central Sun, and looks out from the mountains to the valley, and the mountain to the valley, and looks out from the center of a reconciled universe, the helpmeet, the Eve of the second Adam, to the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, which center in Him, and is lost in the fields of illimitable glory. Yet it finds itself at home there, recalled by that well-known love which, as a sinner once it tasted, and found itself at peace with God; as a saint too who failed along the way, and who found its never-dying power humbling to the dust the soul with its unchangeableness; or as a chosen one of the Father before the world was -- the gift of His heart to the Son, one “whom thou hast given me.” How deep the wellspring of that love must be to one who was the object of His eternal choice, whose delights were in the sons of men!

   Yet this love of Christ is that which touches the heart, and makes it feel itself at home in those fields of glory. Yet while known and tasted, “it passeth knowledge.” Too great for finite hearts to grasp, yet, like the babe which knows its mother’s love, unable though it is to explain its power, it is the link of heart with Him whom not having seen, even now we love.

   The finite vessel is thus launched upon the infinite sea of
light, and love, and God -- filled into all His fulness!

Unto Him be glory by the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all generations of the ages of ages [see Greek]. Amen” (Eph. 3:21).

The more one enters upon and realizes what the Church of God is, and, connected with His counsels for Christ’s glory, what a place she holds in God’s plans for the ordered manifestation of His glory, the more one feels how hopeless is the ruin which lies far and wide around our path. How false is everything which pretends to be His Church on earth! How Satan has succeeded in destroying outwardly all that bears Christ’s name! How feebly do those, whose spiritual vision is opened to know somewhat of her blessing, grasp the thought of her place and calling in connection with her Head on high in glory! How few there are who care for more than that which speaks of their own blessing! How few even that have realized their personal blessing at all! How little is the voice of the Spirit heard in the bride, calling on the “bright and morning star” to “come!” How His people may say, even at their best, “My leanness, my leanness; woe is me!”

Yet God would gather a people in these days to the confession of the name of Jesus, and the truth of His body -- His bride. He would awaken bridal affections which Jesus looks for in His Church, for which He gave Himself. He has brought forth in living power these long-buried truths. He would awaken His people, and recall them to the state of those who at first looked for and awaited God’s Son from heaven. He would form a heavenly company of true whole-hearted souls, whose aims, and life, and work, are for the glory of His Son. Are there not those who would respond to those Spirit-wrought desires? who long to answer in all things to the heart of Christ? Surely there are. Surely when God has again brought these things to light, He will find a people who will value them, and answer to His heart’s desire.

Christian Friend, 1880, pp. 120-134.

“Zaphnath-Paaneah”

Gen. 41; John 4

To the Editor of the “Christian’s Friend”

Dear Brother, In Jacob’s blessing of his sons (Gen. 49) we find those familiar and lovely words about Joseph used by the aged patriarch: “Joseph is a fruitful bough, (even) a fruitful bough by a well, (whose) branches run over the wall.” We know now that a “greater than Joseph” was before the prophetic mind of the Spirit in the patriarch when he spake those words, of which I now only cite a part. The whole of the blessing may be seen in reading the chapter. The portion I have quoted will answer my present purpose in calling your attention to it.

If we turn back in the book of Genesis, and glance at the lovely narrative of Joseph (Gen. 37:1) -- evidently that of one of the most blameless of men whose histories are recorded in Scripture -- we find, in Gen. 41, the moment of his full exaltation over all the land of Egypt before us. At this time he was thirty years of age; he had been shamelessly and heartlessly rejected by his brethren, and sold to his captors, oppressed and afflicted, taken from prison and from judgment; the iron had entered into his soul. In all this, as in the many other details of his life, type of him who was to come. He had just interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh, and had counseled Pharaoh to be warned of God in preparing for the years of the famine that was to come. “And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find (such a one) as this (is), a man in whom the Spirit of God (is)?” (Gen. 41:38). And Pharaoh raises him to be head over all the land. There was none so discreet and wise as he. He would be over his house, and according to his word should all his people be ruled; only in the throne would Pharaoh be greater than he. Power over all flesh is his, and all is given into his hands (Gen. 41:43, 44).

He names him “Zaphnath-panneah,” or the “Revealer of secrets,” as the Coptic, it is said, indicates; and “Savior of the world,” as another authority. Of course I do not go further here than to notice the double significance of this title which Pharaoh gave to Joseph.

In the seven plenteous years -- those years of grace -- the earth brought forth by handfuls from the ripened fields. The reaper received his wage, and gathered fruit for the life to come, when famine would stalk through the land. Joseph too came, when famine would stalk through the land. The reaper received his wage, and gathered fruit for the life to come, when famine would stalk through the land. Joseph too married a wife in the land of his rejection, and to him were born his two sons -- Manasseh, his first-born, signifying “forgetting”; and Ephraim, the second, bearing the name which means “fruitful.” He forgot his toil, and his father’s house; and he was fruitful of God in the land of his affliction.

When we turn to the gospel of St. John (ch. 4), and read of the opening of the public ministry of the Lord, we find the One in whom the Spirit of God is, the One to whom God gave not “His Spirit by measure” (John 3), going forth, when thirty years of age to Samaria, on His mission of grace. “He left Judah”; He left His own to whom He had come, morally rejected by them. He had come to His own, and His own received Him not. He passes out in the fulness of grace to defiled Samaria, morally now, as actually again, with “power
over all flesh,” and all things given into His hand by the Father. There He proves Himself to be the true “Revealer of secrets” -- One who told the sinful woman all that ever she did [John 4]. He forgets His toil, and the long weary journey of that day through the burning heat, till He sat at noon on the side of the well -- the most fruitful bough that ever shadowed it. He forgets His thirst; His hunger too -- refreshed by the meat to eat of which the disciples as yet knew nothing. He forgets too His father’s house, and in the land of His affliction He is fruitful. The woman of Samaria is found by Him who came to seek and to save the lost. His word to the disciples in those years of plenty which now were dawning, was: “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.” Many of the Samaritans too believed on Him; they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the *Savior of the world.*

* The words, “the Christ,” are not read here by the best authorities.

He is the true “Zaphnath-paaneah” now as then. Surely we can say, as in 1 John 4:14, “We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son, the *Savior of the world.*” We have learned how surely He is the “Revealer of secrets,” as did the woman of Samaria, through the window of our souls. The conscience of each can vouch for this. We need no proof or evidence that we have had to do with Christ, and He with us.

I only touch upon those few features of this lovely type. Perhaps it may encourage others to look for the more minute details for themselves. But, dear brother, when we know Christ, is it not a happy task to find some lines of Him portrayed on those who went before, and in whom His grace and Spirit was working? Shall we deem it a less happy task now to trace in those who are Christ’s, the hues of His life and ways, as the Spirit of God has done so blessedly in those who had gone before?

Yours affectionately in His love,
F.G.P.


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**“Manna”**

How vain for an Israelite to have searched for a large piece of Manna -- yet when all the small pieces (the “small round thing.”) were put together, they formed a large piece, quite sufficient to each man “according to his eating.” While vainly searching for a large piece, he would neglect to gather up the small pieces which were like Coriander Seed, and thus his time was spent, and the large piece not found. Do we keep looking for signal mercies?-- or large revelations of Christ and do we neglect to gather together, and to store up and feed upon the little (?) mercies and revelations of Himself which strew our pathway all the day and in which we learn the heart of Him who has strewed them around us on all sides? Could my eyes be wandering in search of a large piece, when the wilderness is strewed on all sides around me with small pieces? Have I gathered them all up today? If so, depend upon it, I have more than my eating -- “I have all things and abound” -- surely I have enough at any rate.

The soul is on the way to find itself longing for fish, and onions, and garlic, if it is wandering after a large piece of Manna. Life here is made up of little things -- and the soul finds Christ in the little things -- (the “small round thing,” so to say) and finding Him I gather Him up, and feed upon Him, and find myself stronger and stronger.

I am almost afraid to say what I feel about the change in the taste of the Manna from Ex. 16: 31, to Num. 11:8. The color too was changed from “white” to the “color of bdellium.” Does the soul ever recover its first freshness of taste when it has longed after Egypt’s fleshpots? Has Christ the same freshness to the eye when it has been upon the “ends of the earth,” and the soul has been thinking of Egypt and of making a “captain”?

One has said with regard to the above remarks, “How could a soul which has tried again to satisfy itself with Egypt’s food, find Manna the same thing after restoration? The pure and sweet Manna which has sustained the virgin soul which has unwaveringly followed the guiding pillar, must for the *restored* soul, have its color changed into that of *tried* gold, and its taste to that of *healing* oil. Nothing else would supply its need now.”

*Words of Truth* 2:56, 57.
“O Wretched Man That I Am!
Who Shall Deliver Me?”

Romans 7

How often do we find a soul in the state which is in the Apostle’s mind in the closing verses of Rom. 7! And how often is it judged to be the proper healthy state in which a soul should be! To be sure, the deep work which we find there is most useful to be learned in the conscience, but we should ever remember that it is not proper Christian experience at all. It is plain enough that the soul there is awakened to the sense, more or less deeply, of what it is in God’s sight, and even this is blessed. It is so blessed to see consciences searched to the very deepest depths by whatever means the Lord uses to this end. There never is a true work of God done in the soul till this is so. Many and many a “stony ground” hearer has had a thorough intellectual knowledge of the Gospel, without a single bit of conscience, or life towards God. What a solemn truth for many a heart. May such be led to see to it that they have more than an intellectual interest in the Gospel of God’s grace. Many a soul who has had views of the salvation of God in the Gospel, as clear and as correct as might be, will be found as those of whom the Lord Jesus says, “Depart from me, I never knew you.”

This is not the case however in Rom. 7. There it is the feelings of a conscience which is thoroughly searched and awakened, but miserable, Occupied entirely with self, and the claims of the law upon a man alive in the flesh, and responsible before God, and not possessing any knowledge of Christ as a Savior, or enjoying the Spirit of adoption. It is not the state of a dead sinner, but of a quickened soul before deliverance, groaning under the sense of the nature of sin within it, which is so twisted round the heart, that when it would do good, evil only is present with it.

Just picture a friend on a bed of sickness, groaning and writhing in pain. Well, you say, “he is not dead -- he is alive; but that is a poor way of showing that he is alive.” So with the soul here, it is not dead. It is alive; but if alive, it should be happy to be in health: and not be showing that it is alive in such a miserable way as this.

There is an order too, in the discovery of self which we find here. For it is really the discovery of a nature, which the soul makes. It is not the fruits of that nature, or the sins which have come from the root within. It is [the discovery of] the nature and principle -- the root of sin, which we find twisted round the heart, desolating it under the thought that, while I would desire to do the good, and delight to do it, I am unable to do it, for sin is present with me. But what happiness to discover even so far as we find in Rom. 7:17, that “it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” That I have a nature apart from, and wholly distinct from the sinful principle which I find wrought into my very heart’s core. A nature which consents to the law that it is good, and hates the evil of which the other nature alone is capable. This is the first step of the soul here, but a step that is on the way to better things. How blessed for a soul that has been writhing under the sense of its own sinfulness, to make this discovery. To find out that what I thought was myself, was in truth only the workings of a bad, and hopelessly bad nature, which the possession of a good nature only brought to light. Blessed to discover that I have a better nature, which has the desire to do the right, even though I find that it has no power over the workings of the old.

But if I have made this discovery of two natures, I must find out something more. I discover that even this new nature has got no power to combat with, and contend with, the evil and bad nature. And that while “to will is present with me, how to perform that which is good I find not.” That even when with heart and soul I would do good, evil is present with me. That the law, or tendency, of the bad nature, “brings me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” I have discovered a new nature, but oh, desolating discovery, it has got no power, it cannot struggle successfully against the evil nature to which I am a captive. What then am I to do? Ah, there is the secret out. You want to Do! You want to get victory and peace by progress over this bad nature, and thus be delivered. Well, you never will get peace thus. If you did, you would be congratulating yourself for the victory. “What then must I learn?” you would say, “I have learned that I have got two natures. I have learned that the good nature has got no power in itself. What is now to be done?” “I am a wretched man, WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?” Ah, yes, now you have come to the end of yourself; you do not ask now “what shall I do?” You have discovered that you can do nothing -- that you must have some one else to come in and deliver you -- that you cannot deliver yourself. You have been like one floundering about in a quagmire -- every plunge for deliverance only putting you deeper; instead of getting you out. You have now come to the end of your strength -- the end of yourself; and to the conclusion when there, that you cannot deliver yourself -- that you must have another to deliver you. Blessed discovery. When the soul is driven, as it were, to the cry, “O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” -- It is not now, What shall I do? but the cry of a soul that has consciousness that it can do nothing to get free, and that it must have another to do for it -- another to deliver! And the moment the soul is there it discovers the soul-emancipating truth that all is done; and already it is thanking God for deliverance, “thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Yes, it has found that it was when we were without strength, in due time when this had been thoroughly proved, Christ died for the ungodly -- that He had been down in the very depths in sin-bearing and judgment on account of sin -- that what the law could not do, i.e., give deliverance, or bring to God. God has done. How? He sent His
own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, a sacrifice for sin; and He 
condemned sin in the flesh! condemned what He could not 
pardon, i.e., the nature of sin which was twisted and knotted 
round the heart of the groaner of Rom. 7:24; and now, instead of 
the law of sin in his members. bringing him into captivity, it is 
the law of the Spirit of life (in resurrection) in Christ Jesus, has 
made him free from the law of sin and death.

The deliverance is complete, and he is thanking God through 
Jesus Christ. But the natures remain and their tendencies are 
unaltered -- this he learns in Rom. 7:25. “So, then, with the mind, 
(the new nature which he alone acknowledges as himself) I 
myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” 
Not that he does serve it, but the characteristic tendencies of each 
are discovered; and he only speaks of the “the flesh” as an evil 
thing to be treated as an enemy and overcome.

It is remarkable that when the soul is in this state before the 
knowledge of deliverance, that it is all self -- I, I, I -- which 
occupies him. The passage shows us the soul under the 
knowledge of deliverance, that it is all self -- I, I, I -- which 
would say, “When we 
be to another, even to Christ risen from the dead, and thus, and 
coming into a new state in Christ risen from the dead, he might 
wherein he was held (v. 6, read margin, which is correct), in 
from under, the law, by the body of Christ. Having died to that 
thing to be treated as an enemy and overcome.

(2) are discovered; and he only speaks of the “the flesh” as an evil 
thing to be treated as an enemy and overcome.

The conflict, or breaking-up process, of Rom. 7 is that of the 
flesh under law. There is no knowledge of Christ as a Deliverer, 
a Savior, known in the soul as such; and the Spirit of Christ is not 
there. It has been confounded with the conflict of Gal. 5:17, and 
wrongly. There, it is the conflict between the flesh and the spirit 
which goes on. And there we find, “If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” And, “If we are led of the 
Spirit, we are not under law” at all. “The flesh lusteth against the 
Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the 
one to the other, so that ye may not (this is the force) do the 
things that ye would.” The whole context and teaching of the 
passage shows that living and walking in the Spirit, which is the 
proper Christian state, enables us to overcome the workings of 
the flesh, and walk in the liberty of grace. Therefore, where the 
Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17). No more the 
groanings of a soul under bondage, but entire and perfect liberty. 
A liberty for the new man to live unto God.

Words of Truth 1:192-197.
The Jews

Isaiah 18

It will be interesting at the present time to say a few words on the chapter at the head of this paper.

It is a sweet privilege to the Christian to know beforehand the things that are coming on the earth, although they do not immediately concern him. His hope is a heavenly one, where judgments cannot come. Those judgments happen preparatory to the establishment of the millennial kingdom. The Christian awaits the coming of the “Morning Star,” ere the darkness which now shrouds the world is dispelled by the rising of the “Sun of Righteousness” (Mal. 4), which fills the world with blessing -- he will then “shine forth as the sun” with Christ, in the Father’s kingdom.

The chapter gives us, in seven verses, a complete history of the events which take place at the time the Jews return to their land in a state of apostasy. The Lord does not interfere, but allows things to go on apparently prospering, and Israel having even the appearance of fruit bearing in the land of the fathers. The nations who had favored this return then recommence the old hostility to the Jews, who become their prey. The Lord then interferes with His mighty arm, and brings a remnant of them as a “present” to Himself to the place of His name -- the Mount Zion which He loved.

Verses 1-3. -- The prophet pronounces “woe” upon some great unnamed nation which lies outside the rivers of Ethiopia or Cush (the descendants of Cush, we are told, made a settlement on both these rivers), the Euphrates and the Nile -- the two great boundaries of the land of Israel. We read in Gen. 15:18, “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt (the Nile) unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” He pronounces woe upon this nation, which is evidently a great maritime power, and which is engaged in favoring and helping the return of the people of Israel, “scattered and peeled” -- wonderful from their beginning hitherto. The Lord Himself brings to Himself a present of the residue, or remnant of them as a “present” to Himself to the place of His name -- the Mount Zion which He loved.

Verse 4. -- The Lord then tells the prophet that He will take His rest, and consider, in His dwelling-place, all that goes on -- as yet He does not interfere. He allows man to run on to the height of his madness and folly, that He may show him his powerlessness.

Verses 5-6. -- Before the harvest -- a figure of separating and gathering for the vintage of judgment (both figures are used in many places of Scripture thus, see Rev. 4:14-20), when the returned Jews seem to be spreading out as a vine in the land; and even the appearance of fruit bearing putting itself forth -- “the sour grape ripening in the flower.” The vine is an old figure of the nation (see Isa. 5; Psa. 80:8-16, etc.) All is then destroyed. The old hatred of the nations is turned against Israel. They are cut down and destroyed. The emissaries of Satan shall summer upon them; and the nations shall winter upon them; and all that appeared so promising is dashed to the ground. The time of the “great tribulation,” or “Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30: 7) has come, “but he shall be saved out of it.” In the language of Deut. 28:26, “Thy carcass shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.” Or, as the Lord Jesus, talking of this time of trouble, says, “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matt. 24:28, and the whole chapter to v. 44).

Verse 7, -- “In that time” -- in such a state of things as will then be, “shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts.” A remnant of the people scattered and peeled -- from a people terrible (or wonderful) from their beginning hitherto. The Lord Himself brings to Himself a present of the residue, or spared remnant, of His people, “to the place of the Lord of hosts, the Mount Zion” which He loved. That little spot which is His rest for ever! “For the Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Psa. 132:13, 14). Having refused nationally to receive the Gospel of God’s grace, they {the remnant} are saved through the judgments of the Lord, which introduce the Kingdom.

As to the Christian’s hope, it is but one. The coming of the Lord Jesus to take His people out of the world, before these judgments take place. He has promised this. He has said to them,

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3:10).

This hour of temptation is detailed in Isa. 24, and takes place ere the Lord of Hosts reigns in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously. Isa. 25 tells us of the deliverance of the remnant of the Jews, who say, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord: we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” Isa. 26 gives us the song of the delivered remnant, and some details. Isa. 27, the completing of the work, and the gathering of the ten tribes, to worship with their brethren of Judah, the Lord of Hosts at Jerusalem, in the glorious days of the millennial age.

The Lord’s coming is the hope of the Church -- His appearing in glory with her, after this tribulation, which happens between these events, is the deliverance of the Jews, and the introduction of the Kingdom.

Words of Truth 1:209-212.
Noah Building the Ark, and Noah in the Ark
The Two-fold Christian Testimony

In the sixth and seventh chapters of Genesis we find Noah in two positions. In ch. 6 he is building the Ark, and in ch. 7 he is in the Ark.

In the first position he was surrounded by a hostile, unbelieving world, to which he was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2), this was his outward testimony towards it; while in his own personal walk, which was also a testimony to it of approaching judgment, he was building an Ark.

By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7), thus condemning the world. All his expectations, and hopes, and prospects, were centered in this Ark. It was the “one thing” which occupied his hands during that eventful time, when the “long-suffering of God waited” in his days (1 Pet. 3). Everything around him had its value according as it served his purpose. Nothing was of use but as it helped him on. The world had corrupted itself, and was filled with violence and the end of all flesh in God’s sight had come. Noah waited for the judgment of the world. He knew that nothing else would close the scene, as soon a God’s long-suffering had come to an end -- the world’s iniquity had long since come to the full, nothing now remained but the most dire and disastrous judgment, when the moment had arrived in the counsels of God.

In the second position he was shut in by the Lord’s own hand (Gen. 7:16), and seated in the Ark which floated securely over the waters of judgment, with which the world was ensnared, as by a funeral pall! For a whole year (Gen. 7:6; 8:1), while the changes and vicissitudes of season had gone round -- storm and calm -- sunshine and shower -- there he was securely floating over the waves and billows of judgment shut into the Ark. Not a drop of the mighty waters reached him in this secure place, which was pitched within and without with pitch. Ruin and death were all around and under him, the only place where there was life and sustenance of life was in the Ark.

All this speaks to the Christian, with this difference, that he is in a figure in both positions at the same time; and his testimony is defective when he does not witness to this. In Phil. 3, the Christian is building the Ark, and thus condemning the world which runs on to judgment; Christ is his only object and hope. Everything which does not serve his purpose in the “one thing” which occupies him, is “dross and dung.” It is set aside as worthless, savoring of human life and flesh which is about to be engulfed in the mighty waters -- or, it is dropped as a hindrance in the testimony of the workman towards a world which Christ has forsaken, and which in rejecting God in Christ, sealed its own doom. The world around is hostile and unbelieving -- speaking of progress and improvement, and adornment and beauty; confident in its own powers (“confident in the flesh”) to repair the distance between it and God. To remove the sentence of judgment under which it lies, by plucking up its “thorns and thistles,” and in “buying and selling, planting and building,” ignoring the tide of judgment which has flowed over it at the Cross. The Ark is his object -- to “know Him” (Christ), is his aim -- human righteousness is cast aside as worthless -- confidence in self ignored -- “what things” seemed to be gain, are counted loss for the Ark; they would not aid in the “one thing” which governed him. “All things” have got their own value -- they are as “dross and dung” to the soul who is thus building an Ark, and by his walk condemning those “whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things.” All his expectations, his hopes, his prospects, are centered in Christ, and in the desire to know Him in the glory, and the power of His resurrection, which works in him to bring him there, he desires fellowship with His sufferings, and conformity to His death, if by whatever means it may be, he might attain to the resurrection from among the dead. Confidence in flesh -- birthright -- righteousness by the law -- worldly things, were loss; while the power of Christ’s resurrection -- fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death were courted and desired, as helping to build the Ark, as it were, in which all his expectations are centered. Nothing was of use but those things which helped him on. All that could not be brought into the Ark was set aside as a weight -- all that could was cultivated and prized.

But while the Christian is thus as it were building an Ark, he is also shut in to Christ, and by His resurrection, and that power that wrought in Him, he is raised up together with Christ, and seated together in heavenly places in Him (Eph. 2). God has shut him in. He has a good conscience by the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 3); and while the world is shrouded in the waters of a mightier judgment than ever it was in the flood, he is in the secure place; not a drop of its waters can reach him -- the vicissitudes of the world, its changes of storm and sunshine -- wind and rain, do not affect him, for the entire period, till the judgment is removed. What has he to do with it all around? just to float over it all, enjoying the food and life which is shut into the Ark -- “All spiritual blessings in heavenly places” which he possesses in Christ (Eph. 1). Death and destruction are around him and below him, and in the midst of it all he is floating securely above it, and the mighty waters, the waves and billows do not affect him at all. He is above all the ruin and death here below, in Christ, and he finds it is infinite gain. Do you suppose Noah lost anything by being shut into the Ark from the scene of desolation around? Do you suppose he found that he was mistaken when he was actually.
shut into that which had been all his expectation for many a year -- for which he had surrendered all his earthly possessions? They were of but little value when they were sunk beneath the waters of death, while that which was his expectation and hope was riding triumphantly on the waves! Not a single living blessing was wanting in the Ark with him; not a single nourishing thing of “all food that is eaten” was absent. People talk as if they would lose a great deal if they were thus shut up to Christ. Not a beauty in all the creation was outside the Ark. -- Every beautiful living object was shut into it with Noah; while every deathful thing was shut out of it in the flood of waters. People are afraid to drop the things which hinder them enjoying Christ -- fearing that after all they would not be recompensed an hundred-fold if they did so. People try too, to realize that they are seated together in Christ in heavenly places, and at the same time hold on to all that savors of that which is under judgment here below. Would you think well of Noah if he had the desire, after God had shut him in, to go out again on the waters, and then try to realize that he was shut in? This is what many are doing. Do you think such people condemn the world by their walk? Do you think they have Noah’s faith? People talk of judgment which is hanging over the world as a thunder-cloud, and at the same time they are like Lot who said true things, but who “seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law” (Gen. 19). You see such persons perhaps preaching and teaching, and at the same time in the world, of the world -- ministering, by their position, or rank, or such things to its moral state. What business have such to preach like Lot of judgment, and at the same time be as he -- sitting in the gate -- even Lot’s own family circle did not believe him.

Can my reader say honestly, “I do want to be shut up to Christ. I want to feed on all the sustenance and life that is there. I want not only to build the Ark, but to be in the Ark -- shut into Him, and in Him realizing that all that is not in Him, savors of death and judgment.” If the Christian has any object before his soul than seeking to win Christ, he is not in his true place -- he is not building the Ark, and condemning the world. On the other hand if he is not plainly showing that he has accepted the fact, that the end of all flesh -- his own flesh, too -- has come in God’s sight, and that he is shut in to Christ -- riding triumphantly over the judgment with which the world is shrouded, seeking nothing outside Him; he is not witnessing and walking in the power of that which he has professed. His testimony is defective and comparatively worthless.

May the Lord give this condition of soul to His much loved people, and may they, on the other hand, desire such a condition of soul; for His name’s sake. Amen.

Words of Truth 2:43-47.

Correspondence On The Training of The Children of Believers.

Dear brother, I have had your letters seeking for help on the extremely interesting and important subject of the training of the children of those who are Christ’s -- I mean those of true children of God. I feel how poorly I can speak of such a subject; but am encouraged by that grace of which I learn so much every day.

You ask, How should we regard them As children of wrath even as others? Part of the “world lying in the wicked one” with the wrath of God “abiding on them, etc., etc. And here I think I would most clearly distinguish between a moral state in God’s eye, which all are in by nature, as dead in trespasses and sins, and the privileged place or sphere of blessing, in which God regards the “houses” of His people; i.e., all whom God looks upon as attached to the head of that house. That there has always been such a sphere of privilege, certainly from the flood downwards, if not always indeed, is clear to me from Scripture. A sphere of blessing into which God has brought His child, and in which He has surrounded him with wife and children, in order that the light which He has lit up in the heart of the head of that house may shine out brightly, and carry by His grace the knowledge of God into the hearts of those in the house around him.

All this is different from the nature of those thus privileged and outwardly blessed of God. Of course it is just the same ruined undone thing as in the rest of mankind around.

But if God regards them merely as “children of wrath,” He would not say to the Christian parent, “Bring them up in the Lord’s discipline and admonition” (as we may read the passage.) And here you must not settle it in your mind, that it is believing children who are before the mind of the Spirit in Eph. 6:1-4. The Apostle leaves it without defining whether they are or are not, addressing them simply as “children.” And He tells the parents to “bring them up” for Him (as Jochebed brought up Moses for Pharaoh’s daughter) “in the Lord’s nurture and admonition,” and surely He does not direct this if He intends to cast them off again.

I think there is much involved in the “Lord’s nurture and admonition.” He exercises it over and with us; and we are to observe a similar course with our children. His tender patience; His persevering love which never wearies, never casts off its object until the end is gained. His faithfulness which never flatters but deals with us, so that we may disallow practically all that savors of our evil nature, and the world from which He has delivered us. This disallowance of the flesh, and of all that
savors of the old Adam and his ways on the one side, and complete conformity to the Son of God on the other is His aim, and characterizes His ways of discipline with us that He may be glorified And as we grow conversant with them as observed towards us whom He has brought to Himself, we learn the sort of dealing we are to pass on to our children, under Him. We must seek to show them whence the tendencies and wills of the flesh spring, and where they end; we must disallow them in our children, as the Lord does in us, seeking to draw their minds and hearts to Jesus, and thus with patient grace and persevering love discipline and admonish them for their good.

I feel too, that now, the family circle is the normal place for the conversion of the child. I am sure that much of what we are told of children’s conversions is but the bringing to a definite point what has long been there in the soul. It is most desirable that it should take its definite form in the way of a confession of Christ in the child; but what I fear, is anything in the way of excitement, by which the young, susceptible heart is easily wrought upon, thus forcing into immature development the hardly perceptible pulsations of life in the soul. I believe that in general such cases give a weakly tone to the soul, and in result are often like the too early removal of the shell from the little bird, a feeble state of soul will supervene.

My impression too, is, (and the exception proves the rule,) that the child of the believing, Christian parent will, as a rule, seldom if ever, be able to tell when he was converted, as we speak. It is true that, at the same time, the child or the parent may be able to look back to some moment when the faith and life which had been already in his soul took definite shape, and burst forth into activity and energy. Like the bursting forth into beauty and fragrance of the flower, which has grown up from the little unseen germ, or hardly perceptible bud, until the genial warmth of the sun and the gentle showers of the rain caused it to open its petals for the first time.

How lovely was the unquestioning faith of Hannah! Her son, the fruit of her prayer, was brought up to Shiloh, not without the offerings of faith too in her own and her husband’s hands. At as early an age as his weaning time, ere living faith could work in the soul of the babe, she said to Eli,

Oh, my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman could work in the soul of the babe, she said to Eli, hands. At as early an age as his weaning time, ere living faith

speaking, dear brother, of the conversion of the child of a saint, and noticing that the time of such is but seldom known, if known at all, in the normal state of things, I would cite the case of young Timothy. Brought up “from infancy” (ἀπὸ βρέφους) in the knowledge of the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and trained by a pious believing mother, and perhaps grandmother, of the unfeigned faith of both of whom the aged apostle speaks in a most touching manner (2 Tim. 1:5); the blessed knowledge of the Word of God thus early imbibed into his young and impressive heart, and known as a child may know it too, paved the way for that moment when the life it brought to his soul burst forth into the liberty of grace and knowledge of Christ through the apostle Paul when at Lystra, who names him his “own son in the faith.”

Such, I believe, to be a true example of the conversion of the child of believing parents. He has the priceless boon of being in the circle where the name of Jesus is a household word, and the great circumstance and business of the lives of his parents. His parents feel that they have received him back from the Lord to be brought up under the yoke of Christ from the earliest moments of his existence, and they feel, too, that the One who has directed them to do this will not in vain be trusted in for that quickening of soul which he needs, as all do, that he may live indeed. They bring him up in the faith of Christ, never for a moment casting a doubt across his young and impressive heart that he is not the Lord’s. They teach him the way that God forgives and saves through the precious blood of Jesus Christ; they explain how the grace of God is received; they show the little one the awful results of unbelief, and of the rejection of Christ; they explain how real faith is known from the false and hollow profession around; they teach him that obedience and those desires to please the Lord under whose yoke he is brought up, are the true way in which the life of God displays itself in man. And thus by these teachings the conscience is awakened, and when, alas, failures in these things are seen, the necessity and meaning of the confession of sins, and the unburdening of the soul to Christ is pressed and encouraged. The desire, too, to make known to the Lord the wants of the heart for self or others are directed to their proper outflow—prayer: all these things lead the child onward to a confidence in God, and he grows up to Christ, as he does by the food of infancy by which his natural powers have been gradually developed.

While all this training goes on, how a true hearted parent will wait on God in secret, that that sovereign quickening power which belongs to Him alone may be put forth in behalf of his child, who he knows is by nature “dead in trespasses and sins.”

You will remark, too, dear brother, that it is in the “nurture (discipline) and admonition of the Lord.” This implies reverence for and owning the authority of One who is over the child. It does not imply a relationship as “Father” or “Christ”; the co-relatives of which would be “son” or “child” and “member of his body.” This is important too; because while none can truly please Him but those who are in relationship with Him, still the word “Lord” does not necessarily and exclusively mean this.

To treat children otherwise than thus, is in my mind to injure their souls, and hinder the work of God’s grace as far as we can do it. If a child finds his parent habitually treating him
as outside the pale even of external relationship with God (cf. Deut. 14: 2 with Eph. 2:3; also 1 Cor. 7:14) and hears him praying for him as an unsaved one, he grows up in the thought (which may be true) that this is so. He is led to look at conversion as something to come to him some day perhaps, and perhaps not. Instead of fixing the eye on Christ and wholly away from himself, he turns it inwards, and thus is injured and hindered in soul: thrown back, it may be for a long season, in darkness, which occupation with self must do, while, if dealt with otherwise, he might, through grace, have been enjoying the favor of God which is better than life.

How Moses indignantly refused such a compromise of Satan as that proposed by Pharaoh (Ex. 10). “Go now ye that are men” with his reply, “We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters,” &c., and how often do Christian parents fall into the same wile of the enemy, and separate as to the external ground of blessing, between the parents and the children both in their own minds and the

training they give them. Nay! All must be, as with Noah of old, in the same place of blessing. “Come thou and all thy house into the ark,” tells this blessed way of God’s goodness and mercy. “Thee have I seen righteous before me,” tells of the heal of the house being blessed in soul; and even his son, who alas, afterwards dishonored his father, entered with him into the place of safety.

Surely a wise parent will not regard his child as a child of God, ere he sees the signs of a quickened conscience, and the fear of the Lord in him, but he seeks to lead his heart to Christ in practice, conversation, and ways; and thus, dependence on God, thankfulness of heart for His mercies, obedience to His will, is impressed upon his heart, and the faith of a parent will be answered of God in giving living faith to his child. I believe we ought to count on God for our children—every one of them -- and where there is true faith in a parent as to this, He who gave it will answer it in making them His own.

There are many lines of thought in connection with this most interesting subject which we might enter upon, and, if the Lord will, we may do so in another letter.

Words of Truth 7:36-40,

**Correspondence**

**On Singing at The Graves of Our Brethren**

...I feel so thankful to know that there were no hymns sung at the graves of our dearly beloved ... I have long felt how much out of place they are on the sorrowful occasion of our committing the body of a beloved fellow-laborer or fellow-pilgrim to the tomb. If there is ever a moment in which hearts are torn asunder with grief, it is then; and I feel much that those who mourn for the departed one would rather weep and cry to our Father in prayer than sing. “Is any merry, let him sing psalms,” is the thought of God (James 5). How sacred are the sorrows of His people in the sight of the Lord! He “putteth their tears in his bottle,” and He “knoweth their sorrows.”

When I think of Him weeping, in going to the grave of His friend Lazarus, I feel that singing could not be there. It may be said that His was not the weeping of a sorrow stricken heart as was that of those around Him; and I say, Be it so. Theirs was the cry of bereavement or of sympathy; but His were tears indeed, and I love that wondrous word of Scripture, “Jesus wept.” He wept to see the power of death on the hearts and souls of those whom He dearly loved.

The Lord would have us feel the sorrows of the way, and when are they so keen as in a moment when one who has accompanied with us, and whom He has loved, has been called away? For them “to depart and to be with Christ is far better”; but what achings of heart for those who remain!

It has grated upon my spirit to hear hymns sung at such a time. If souls are filled with such joy that singing is its only expression I can say nothing; but I doubt this. In no case in Scripture do I find a thought of doing so amongst God’s elect. I need not cite the Old Testament, which in itself gives abundant proof of the contrary. The full joy of the departed one was not then made known as now we have it in New Testament Scriptures. It was seen in more or less measure, as were the hopes of those beyond the tomb at that day. The living, loving Savior, whose perfect human heart of hearts is now in glory, had not then taken manhood into union with His Godhead glory as Eternal Son. God Himself was not revealed, and the hopes of those beyond the tomb at that day. The living, loving Savior, whose perfect human heart of hearts is now in glory, had not then taken manhood into union with His Godhead glory as Eternal Son. God Himself was not revealed, and the bliss of the state beyond the tomb, as then known, did not embrace the wondrous thought of a departing to be “with Christ.” It could not then be known. When the elect at that day left this scene, it was their happiness, most surely, and the lines of the hymn which speaks of “soaring to worlds unknown” was, doubtless, more their experience than ours now. It could not be an unknown world to those who know Christ; for He occupies the scene.

Yet, while it is the joy of the departed, and in measure we may be able to rejoice because they have gone to be with Christ, what a blank they have left behind! Can we sing, then, at such a time? When the proto-martyr Stephen passed away, praying for his murderers, and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” we read that “Devout men carried Stephen to his burial praying for his murderers, and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” we read that “Devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him” (Acts 8:2). Singing could not have been at such scene. Yet here it maybe objected that these “devout men” were Jews, with their peculiar hopes
and thoughts; that they may not, and very likely did not, know what has since been told us in Scripture. Yet I do not find Paul rebuking the dear Thessalonians for their sorrow for those who had fallen asleep from their midst. Nay, he owns the sorrow, but says that they should not sorrow as the rest, who had no hope beyond this scene. He would rather give the sorrow and mourning a divine character, as mingled with a hope by which they might “comfort one another.” (See 1 Thess. 4:13-18.)

I would add here, too, that if any saints were in the tone of soul in which singing would be possible at such a time, it was those fresh-hearted, loving children of God at Thessalonica. In no place in Scripture do we find such bright freshness of soul portrayed as there. Yet we read of sorrow and mourning rather than joy and merriment of soul. Doubtless they needed to have the sorrow corrected in its hopelessness, rather than its existence, and this Paul does so biddingly here.

I say not a word if the hearts of mourners are so full of praise that it can find no other vent than in song. Far be it from me to quench the Spirit in any. But I do say that such will not frequently be found, and for my part I would rather hear the quiet, earnest prayer of those who surround the tomb of a loved one, ascending and rising up to praise, if such were in unison with the hearts clustered around, than to hear what so grates on the ear of most -- the hymn or song of praise -- Affectionately in the Lord, F. G. P.

Words of Truth 7:97, 98.

Dear -- I am glad you have written to me, as to my letter in “Words of Truth,” of May (p. 97), on the above subject, for I wished to have added a thought or so more to what I had written.

The letter, you will doubtless have perceived, left the matter quite open in cases which sometimes arise when there were no sorrowing mourners laying their dead in the grave, for the singing of hymns, as the Lord might lead, in the happy expression of Christian fellowship amongst those who are there. I have not the least objection to this. But I believe that those who go to the graves of their brethren, ostensibly do so, to “Weep with those that weep” (Rom. 13:15). If there are no weepers there, I am sure it is most happy to “Rejoice with those that do rejoice”; as it is to seize any occasion when we meet our brethren for Christian communion and joy.

I doubt if Paul could have sung at the grave of Epaphroditus had he died when performing this service for Paul, in bringing up the tender care -- the “odor of a sweet smell,” of the beloved Philippians to his prison. “God had mercy on him,” says the aged prisoner, “and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should heave sorrow upon sorrow” (Phil. 2:27).

When the relative, husband of beloved wives, parents of beloved children, widows of beloved husbands, and the like, are surrounding the grave, the wrench has just come, and the deep wound of the tears is felt in its keenness (though, doubtless, it may be more keen later still), I should doubt it were spiritual power in their hearts to sing around the graves of those whom they had lost. I should (for myself at least), feel it were callousness and the want of “natural affection,” which characterizes the “last days” (2 Tim. 3). I am sure God would not have us think lightly -- of these dealings of His hand. I would feel that His hand was upon me at such a moment, and that He was looking for a chastened, lowly spirit, that was bowing under the blow. I have no doubt but that “afterwards” these things “yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness” to the exercised heart. But it is “afterward,” and not at the moment. Then, in the calm and quiet of an exercised heart, when the bitterness of the blow has passed away, we may surely rise above it all, and be able to praise Him, and be glad and rejoice for the joy of those who are “with Christ,” and away from the sorrows of this scene.

I believe that in John 14:28, “If you loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father,” the Lord seeks such an interest in our hearts for His happiness, that He looks for our being happy in the thought of His happiness and joy, as gone on high, no more to be a “Man of sorrows” in this scene. I am sure none of them could have understood it at the moment. And besides it is not rejoicing that they were then about to lose Him; but, as I have said, present rejoicing in the consciousness of the happiness of Jesus as exalted in the Father’s glory. It may be in principle true of those who are His, but the application and meaning of the passage refers to what I have said. Thus when our sorrow will have subsided for a loved one, we do learn to rejoice no doubt, that they are with Him.

The substance of my letter was written to a brother, on the occasion of the funeral of a beloved co-laborer, who was snatched away in the midst of his field of usefulness. The brother to whom I wrote showed it to others, who approved much of it, and no hymns were sung. For this I was deeply thankful. Another wrote to me of the funeral, and said, None of us could have sung, there was not a dry eye there. This was as it should have been. The Lord’s people should collectively feel that God’s hand is upon them, when a valued laborer is taken away. They should do so individually, in like manner, when a loved one, closely linked by ties of flesh, or special ties, is removed.

I would hesitate to speak of what Scripture does not -- “The joy of the blessed Lord at receiving that loved one,” etc. I would rather speak of and enjoy His sympathy in the sorrow of the moment, when hearts are deeply feeling the death of one they loved. Affectionately in the Lord, F. G. P.

Words of Truth 7:138, 139.
State of The Saints Under Promise, Law, And Grace

Dear -- You ask -- “Can we say that Abraham and the patriarchs knew themselves to be eternally saved, when Heaven, Hades and Hell were unrevealed?” I do not cite all your question, but embody it in my reply.

Salvation, as now revealed by the gospel in the New Testament, was then unknown, in fact, the salvation of the soul was not then the subject of revelation. The first time it is definitely spoken of in Scripture is in Matt. 1:21, where the thought is that Jesus, i.e. Jehovah-the-Savior, would save His people -- not from their enemies, but from their sins. So also Peter speaks of the “salvation of your souls,” in contradistinction to that from their enemies, for which a Jew looked.

The great truths of Heaven, Hades and Hell were not then the subjects of revelation. Until the gospel was known, after the Cross was past, these things were but darkly hinted at, still they were there, and in measure referred to and known. The wrath of God from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom. 1:18) comes out with the righteousness of God to all, in the gospel, which is His power to salvation. Exclusion from God’s presence (Gen. 1) was seen in measure, as was the fact of the punishment of the wicked in a state beyond this life, but not in the clearness and distinctness which revelation has given it since then in the New Testament. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,” shows that a punishment beyond this scene was known.

Before the Law was given, the saints walked with God, and Abraham, finding that he was to be a stranger and a pilgrim here “looked for a city which had foundations”; something stable outside this shifting scene; but saw it dimly and vaguely, as far as we are told. Thus a state of blessing with God, and after death, was looked for by the faithful. Confidence in God was blessedly seen in them. He had as yet raised no question of righteousness between Himself and His people, as afterwards, by the Law. I do not therefore suppose they would have known the meaning of being “eternally saved.” They did not know that they were “lost” to which “saved” would be the correlative term. They lived and died in faith, no questions having been raised between them and God. The Son of God was there -- when the Son was revealing the Father on earth. He hung up a vail between Himself and His people. Before that He used to come in and eat and converse familiarly with them at the tent door. All was now changed, and free intercourse over. When conscience awaked under the Law, there was perfect misery unless grace was known, and unless there was confidence in God, but that was outside of the Law altogether.

All this time God Himself was unrevealed. Much about Him doubtless was known, but as yet He had not come out and revealed Himself. Then came the Son of God, and here below He became a man. The unity of the Godhead was the great doctrine of the Old Testament, and this in contrast to the plurality of the gods of the heathen. There were hints constantly given, and seen to faith doubtless in measure, that more was coming, and behind all this. But the unity of the Godhead was the subject in hand. “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim (God) is one Jehovah” (Deut. 6). “Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is Elohim (there is) none beside him” (Deut. 4).

The Trinity of the Persons was never known in the soul until the Holy Ghost was given to dwell in us. Hence even the apostles knew not fully who it was who graciously walked with them on earth. If it had been possible for them to know that God was there -- when the Son was revealing the Father on earth -- it would have been possible to know God in duality, i.e., that He could be known in but two persons. This could not be. The Son reveals the Father on earth, the Father dwells in Him and does the works; but the Holy Ghost was the power by which the Son cast out devils -- all was presented to man. But He must die and rise again, and go on high and give the Holy Ghost to those that obey Him, and now, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I know the Father, revealed in and by the Son. One God is thus known in the Trinity of the Persons, as a subjective truth in the consciousness of the soul. Peter might say, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and have a divinely-given revelation of this from the Father, but it was inoperative at the time, as many things are in ourselves, until known subjectively in our souls. A few verses on in the chapter (Matt. 16) he shows that flesh was not broken in him up to the height of the revelation, and indeed it never had its power until he afterwards received the Holy Ghost. The Spirit given when Jesus was glorified made all the difference.

In Jesus “all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.” There will never be, and there could not be, any further revelation of God, for all has been revealed, else the Son of God has not fulfilled His mission, which is simply impossible.
The Trinity of the Persons is made known, and the Son has taken manhood into the Godhead -- wrought redemption, and reconciled us to God by His death, and, risen with Him, we are sealed with the Spirit of God, and thus before Him in Christ Jesus, and He in us before men. The one settles our place before God, the other our duties before men (cf. John 14:10).

There is no confounding the Persons of the Trinity, yet there is no separating them. Each Person (as we speak) does different things, yet all work in concert and in the unity of the godhead. The Father sends the Son, the Son does not send the Father. The Son dies for me, not the Father. The Spirit sanctifies, quickens, yet so do the Father and the Son. All this is now known in Christianity and under grace, and is quite different from what was hoped for by those under Promise, or felt by those under Law. Under the former, the Patriarchs knew Him as El Shaddai (God Almighty). See Gen. 17:1; and Ex. 6:3. He was the all powerful One, to watch over the pilgrim of faith. With Israel it was Jehovah -- the self existing One, who would bring to pass all He had promised. With us it is the faith. With Israel it was Jehovah -- the self existing One, who reached, just as the words, “I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,” spoken to Moses (Ex. 3) were used in unfolding a deeper truth in the lips of the Lord Jesus afterwards, in Luke 20, than the Jews saw. Job’s hope rises up to God, and so he puts life in Him, in contrast with the corruption of skin and flesh, seeing that in Him was a power of deliverance from all this in God Himself, His spirit reaching onwards to a better resurrection.

Affectionately yours in the Lord, F.G.P.

Words of Truth 7:157-159.

Dead to Sin:
Dead to the Law

The only way in which a believer is not under the law, is by being dead with Christ. God counts the believer “dead to the law by the body of Christ”; faith accepts this and does likewise. Still, like other matters, experience and faith contradict each other when the soul is in a certain stage under the dealings of His hand; and until things, already true, are experimentally known. One finds in one’s own soul that many things are accepted as true abstractedly, and as of God, yet the soul’s experience has apprehended them but feebly, if at all. “If I may also apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” One can sometimes look back at the years it has taken under divine instruction and discipline, to learn experimentally some little sentence of Scripture that has just, as it were, dawned brightly upon one, and been as the voice of God.

One finds too, that there is no use saying to such and such a one, “you have not yet learned that!” with regard to certain truths. You could not make a soul understand that it had not! Thus, I have often said, there could be no proper doctrinal exposition of the Psalms by any man’s pen -- no matter how deeply taught of God he might be. No two souls have ever gone through the same experiences, or the same circumstances in which such experiences might be found. Hence, the spiritual experiences produced by the Holy Spirit in one, would not be the same as those in another. The Spirit of God is the same of course; but the feelings of the vessel are different, and the circumstances are not the same. Christ alone has tasted, in divine grace, all that man ever could, or did, or will experience in his own person. He has gone through all, having willingly entered, especially at the close of His life, upon that period of His earthly history when He learned all, so as to be a perfect High Priest, and to be enabled to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

In the Psalms we find these expressions of exercises of heart that must be felt to be understood. Hence, no one could make them intelligible to another. When the soul finds itself in the circumstances, it finds the suited expressions that never could be understood unless it were there. Sometimes it finds Christ giving it the joy of being able to join with and enjoy Him what He could say; at others, Christ in divine grace gives the words that express the soul’s personal experiences, and not His own. Hence, the mistakes that have been made in attributing all the words of Psalms to the Lord’s own feelings personally.

I believe, to speak generally, we have in the New Testament three kinds of experiences; or rather experiences suited to three conditions of the soul.

In Rom. 7 we find those of a soul before deliverance is known.
In Rom. 8, those of a delivered soul entering in the power of the Holy Spirit upon the sorrows of a creation of which it yet forms a part as having a body unredeemed; and having relationships with the old creation that cannot be severed with impunity; while, at the same time, it is itself of the new creation.

In the Epistle to the Philippians, we have experiences which are the fruit of conscious union with Christ, maintained in practical power in the soul. It might be very justly called the Book of Psalms of the New Testament. The Psalms are the beatings of the heart of the Old Testament: Philippians, those of the New. It has been frequently said by another, that in this Epistle you do not find sin mentioned; I may add, nor do we find the experience of an undelivered soul. It has also been noticed that the flesh is not spoken of, only to say that the writer has no confidence in it. I question if Paul would have been employed to write this Epistle when he wrote that to the Romans. Not that the Holy Spirit could not do so by any one; but the vessel was not yet formed, so that out of his belly (the inward affections and experiences of the soul) might flow rivers of living water from Christ. “I have learned” so and so, is his language here.

But to return. The only way in which the believer can have nothing to do with law as a prohibitory code, etc., is by being dead with Christ. But how few know this in practical power even for deliverance! And while souls are taught that they have nothing to do with the law, which I should not state in so many words, they are left really under law as a principle, and Rom. 7 describes their state; at least a modification of it, for this is an extreme case.

“Law, as a principle,” is not the same thought as “the law.” The former being the sense of responsibility to do God’s will, and to suppress all that is not suited to Him in my ways; the latter being a divine prohibitory code aimed against all that “sin” would bring forth in the form of “sins,” or rather “transgressions.” “In the flesh” and “under law” are correlative terms, describing a similar state of soul. The former describes the condition of a quickened soul which has not yet learned the liberty that is in Christ, nor deliverance from “the flesh.” In such a state the soul cannot take up the language of faith and liberty, and, say that the flesh is “not I myself.” It has not yet learned to look upon “sin,” and the new “I” as totally distinct and separate. The bond still exists in the soul’s experience, and though quickened it is “in the flesh.”

If verses 2 and 3 of Rom. 7 be read parenthetically -- taking verses 1 and 4 consecutively, we will arrive at the meaning more simply. The other two verses are a case put by the apostle by way of illustration, and in order to bring out in a fuller way what v. 4 teaches. The point the apostle is insisting on in the chapter is

1. the believer’s deliverance from law:
2. law is the strength of sin, and that which discovers it either as a code or a principle: and
3. that deliverance is through death to it by the body of Christ, in order to be to another -- even Christ risen, for fruit to God:
4. this being in power of life in resurrection which is possessed: and this
5. is the true “I.”

There is, in the experimental part of Rom 7, the discovery, first of all, -- of the thorough evil of “sin” -- the evil nature in me which, though my desires as a quickened soul are right, will not bend, nor do that which is good, but is ever fruitful in evil, and nothing but evil, continually. From whence come then the desires which aim, yet hopelessly aim at doing God’s blessed will, with desire and purpose of heart? Is there not -- yea, must there not be another “I” -- and a life and a nature which longs to fulfill the law of God, and to do His will? This dawns upon the soul. But there is the antagonism of “sin” to this right and proper will of the new man, which would do all God’s law most heartily if it possessed the power; and “the strength of sin is the law.” The law has provoked “sin,” and brought forth its latent evil and antagonism to the will of God. “I” -- with its right desires, and its delight in the law of God, the new “I” and “sin,” are thus pitted against each other, and the soul longs for strength to combat “sin,” but only failure and defeat ensue. The person has no settled peace with God in such a state; and is really “in the flesh.” The new I and sin are one to the soul’s consciousness. The more the struggle goes on to fulfil the blessed desires of the new “I” -- the more does the hopeless helplessness to do so become apparent. The “law of the mind”; (that is, its tendency or principle of action as we speak of the “law of gravitation” in accordance with which an apple falls to the ground,) of the new “I” is overcome by the “law of death,” that “other law” or tendency which is in my members -- which are subservient to “sin”; and instead of liberty, captivity and bondage ensue.

This useful, though bitter experience leads the soul to the sense of thorough and hopeless weakness and inability to attain to, or to obtain the freedom it seeks, and the new “I” is not yet known as “I myself” -- my proper self as before God; nor is “sin” yet known, nor “the flesh” -- hateful hating God with tendencies which never cease to be the “law of sin.” In result, when the soul is led to look away to Another, even to Christ for deliverance from what it cannot overcome, deliverance is at once found, and liberty is known. The very moment the soul looked away to Another it owned, even it might be unintelligently, that it had no further hope in self, and this alone brought freedom. It can now look at “sin” in the nature as “no more I,” and deny its every claim -- for notice in every way, even religiously; but only as a second person as it were that one is conscious of bearing about with them to the end, whose suggestions and thoughts and actions (if allowed) only inspire disgust and abhorrence, the more deeply and the better they are known: it only can be dealt with by being avoided, and by lending a deaf ear to its suggestions.

The person then is “not in the flesh.” The tie that existed between “sin” and “I” is for ever broken -- this tie was “the flesh,” and I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and am set free from the law of sin and of death {Rom. 8:2}.

“Law” and “sin” are correlative. But “sin” as an evil thing, that is “no more I,” is not what is first before it. The law, or law as a principle, is that which first presents itself to it, and which it seeks to obey. “Sin” is discovered by it, along with new desires which eventually are known as the new and true “I,” and the struggle leads to the discovery, unknown before, of the two in the
one person.

I am quite sure that the state of soul described in Rom. 7 from first to last does not portray one struggling against "sin" known as not the true and proper I, though there; but it is striving to obey law, or fulfill it as a principle, and the effort brings out the impossibility, by the discovery of "sin" as distinct from "I." To begin by seeking to be set free from "sin," would be to reverse the whole truth of the chapter. "Law" is before the soul; the discovery of "sin" is made in consequence; and the soul has to find deliverance through Another, in whom God has condemned sin in the flesh, and by being dead with Him to sin, and hence to law which was the strength of it.

"Reckon yourselves dead," &c., "and alive," &c. These are not to be taken up as reckoning "sin" dead, or the "old man" dead. It is, that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, &c., and "he that has died has been justified from sin. It is never said "sin" is dead at all, that I know of; but "I" am dead to sin -- to the law, &c., and thus set free from them. Thus, faith is always in exercise. Rom. 6:11 is abstractedly the bringing to bear upon the soul the great doctrine which he had been reasoning out; that is, our death with Christ to "sin," and its effects for justification from it; and as possessing justification from "sins" by blood, in one who has died to "sin" itself, even Christ. We must bear in mind the great point of the apostle, stated in v. 1: that we cannot be alive to a thing, and dead to a thing at the same time; and as we possess justification by blood from sins, and justification of life in the Christ who had died and risen; we must be dead to what He died to, &c. Therefore, Rom. 6:11 comes in as addressed to one who possesses all this in Christ Jesus, appropriating to faith the condition He was in as faith's possessions also.

It does not press the point whether it is for standing or practice; but it is an abstract reasoning by the apostle, of Christ having died to sin and being alive to God, presented to him who believes. It starts from the thought which he began with, that the unholiness of the thought that a person might continue in sin because grace was so free -- grace, which reigned through righteousness to eternal life, and which had cleared him and justified him by virtue of what another had done, even Christ. Certain blessings devolved upon him through his federal head -- Christ. The chapter takes up and applies Christ's death to sin, and all that He died to, and His living now to God, as entirely free from anything whatever to do with it, and further, that it is made good to faith's reckoning, and in the practice of the believer. To make a separation at Rom. 6:11, and say, it is for standing, and Rom. 6:12 for practice, is not, I conceive, fair or right. Take all the statements for standing or practice (as faith may appropriate them), as in the abstract, and all seems simple; bearing in mind that it treats of the believer's deliverance from sin, as ch. 7 shows his deliverance from law (from law as a principle, or basis, of standing before God), and that by being dead to both through Christ's death.


**Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy**

Four of Paul's Epistles have a special bearing one towards the other as to the truth.

I. Ephesians unfolds the doctrine of the Church of God as the body of Christ in heaven, and as built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit on earth, in its normal condition; ever true before God, and for faith. No ruin can affect what is thus maintained on earth, and will be finally presented in glory by the power of God.

II. First Timothy takes the Church up on the other side, also in its normal condition, but as presented before men. Consequently you do not find the Holy Ghost spoken of except as connected with Christ (1 Tim. 3:16); nor the relationships of Father and children -- body and head -- bridegroom and bride -- which are most fully brought out or hinted at in the Ephesians. 1 Timothy treats of what it is as presented before men as the pillar and ground of the truth; Ephesians as before God and for faith. Both take up the Church in her normal state.

III. The 2nd Epistle to Timothy, on the other hand, takes up the abnormal state of things with reference to the outward state of evil which had come in, and the pathway of the servant or of the saint through it all, as to external things; showing the energy of faith and ministerial service, and what faith and devotedness can accomplish counting on God, in the midst of the ruin and falling away of the Church as a whole.

IV. But while 2nd Timothy has its place of deep and lasting importance for us, as marking a pathway of separation from evil in the midst of the professing Church, Philippians has a specially lovely place marked, as in 2nd Timothy, by the absence of apostolic power.

Written in the prison at Rome, where the great apostle had now been for some years, this Epistle marks the resources of Christ (when the Church was deprived of apostolic ministry) in a special way.

To Paul, as has been said, were committed two special ministries. Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, and had his own place. Paul was

1. "The minister of the gospel to every creature under heaven"; and
2. "Minister of the Church (the mystery) to complete the
word of God” (cf. Col. 1:23-25; Eph. 3:8, 9).

Avowed and open enemy of that grace which rose above all
the enmity of man’s evil heart -- the apostle, as we may say,
of the hatred of man’s heart to God; he is converted by the
sight of Jesus in the glory, and the glory of God in the face of
Jesus Christ; and delivered from the people and from the
Gentiles, he is sent forth

(1) as the apostle or minister of that grace and glad
tidings which rose above his sin. Wasting too, and
persecuting the Church of God, he is converted to the
union of these scattered saints in one body to Christ -- the
mystery of Christ and the Church, and

(2) was “the minister of the Church to complete the word
of God.”

He had now (Philippians) been cut off for some years from
both; a chained prisoner in Rome; all that were in Asia had
turned away from him; the Church was settling outwardly into
the world, and departing from her heavenly calling; all sought
their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; many walked as
enemies of the Cross. Who then, of all men, would seem to
have been more needed than the devoted energetic Paul? But,

wonderful to say, prison had matured his confidence in Christ
and His resources; had made Christ increasingly his all, and
he can write with beautiful calmness.

(1) “I would not have you ignorant that the things which
happened unto me have turned out to the furtherance of
the gospel,” (Phil. 1:12); and

(2), in Phil. 2:12, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have
always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now
much more in my absence, work out your own salvation
with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in
you both to will and to do of (his) good pleasure.”

Thus the double ministry of Paul prospered in Christ’s hands,
even when the vessel was no more free. The gospel was
furthered by reason of his bonds, and the saints -- the Church
-- if obedient when he was there, were now cast more entirely
on God, and had the joy and opportunity of being more
obedient than ever -- God working in them to this end when
Paul was gone.

It is an interesting study to examine the history, in the
Acts of the Apostles, of the first planting of Christianity in
those places which were afterwards addressed by an epistle.

The Epistle to the Philippians illustrates this (Acts 16).
Satan’s opposition to the gospel, first by patronizing flattery,
and, failing this, by persecution, marks his work. In the midst
of all this, “rejoicing” characterizes the servants of Christ.
Paul and Silas, freshly scourged, their feet fast in the stocks,
“played and sang praises to God at midnight.” “Songs in the
night” ascended from those prison walls which no power of
Satan could silence. In the Epistle the saints are under the
persecuting hand of Satan, and the apostle in prison at the end
of his course, as he had been in the beginning of his work at
Philippi, in another, finds his heart overflowing with the rich
consolation of Christ, and he writes to these beloved saints --

“Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice.” The
Epistle is characterized by this rejoicing in the midst of the
enemy’s opposition, and the failure of the Church all the way
through.

In 2 Timothy we find there what we may term the
negative pathway of separation from evil. In Eph. 4, the
positive ground of action, and responsible place of the saints
corporately in the unity of the Spirit, while in Philippians we
have the practice of that platform -- the living fellowship of
the Spirit of God.

Ephesians presents the normal state of the Church to
Godward, corporately.

1st Timothy -- her normal state before man -- the world;
also in the corporate or collective condition.

Philippians, the abnormal condition before the Lord, and
the devotedness of individual faith.

2nd Timothy, the abnormal condition also, but more with
reference to the evil which is largely spoken of.

*Words of Truth*, New Series 2:141-143.
Aaron and His Sons

Leviticus 8

The characteristic place from which Jehovah spake to Moses for Israel, in the Books of Leviticus and Numbers, has been remarked by others. In the former, He spake from the tabernacle of the congregation, giving directions how He was to be approached who dwelt there; in the latter, from the wilderness of Sinai, to instruct a people passing through a wilderness themselves.

Let us look for a moment at the moral significance of this, rather than at the historic and suited fact of His having done so.

In Genesis, when God had created the world, and pronounced it “very good,” He came down and spake in the garden of Eden, where He walked in the cool of the day, to hold familiar intercourse with His creature -- man. But man had revolted from His Creator, and the blessed intercourse of God with him is over, on the ground of innocence; and while God drove him out of the garden, He Himself retired from the garden, never more to hold intercourse with man on this ground again.

In Exodus, when He had redeemed a people out of the nations, He bare them on eagle’s wings to bring them to Himself as a peculiar possession; He proposed terms of relationship between Himself and them in the Law. And when these terms were accepted in principle, He descended upon Mount Sinai -- not now to the garden of Eden -- and, amidst the terribleness of that sight, gave forth the just rule of conduct for man -- the sinner, with regard to Him and with his neighbor. Again, as we know the proposed relations as broken up, man having revolted still more from God.

When we open Leviticus we find that it is no more from the garden of Eden God speaks, nor from the mountain where He had surrounded Himself with blackness and darkness and tempest, but He has, as it were, retired into His own resources, to His own fit dwelling-place in light, and there, from the Shekinah of glory, reminding us of the inaccessible light in which He dwells, He proposes, not now that He should approach man as innocent, nor man a sinner, in relations suited to these respective conditions, but that man, a sinner, may come, and come with welcome into His blessed presence in light; but when this is so, unfoldings of the perfections of His blessed Son irradiate the scene, and fill to overflowing the heart of him who finds that he cannot come to God without finding Christ there! Christ, too, in His varied loveliness, whether in life or in death, is presented to the soul of him who comes, that he may be filled with joy, and comforted and refreshed by that which also fills the heart of God. Step by step God had retired from the scene, until in Leviticus He has gone back into Himself, so to speak; but if so we find that Christ occupies the whole scene, to the satisfaction both of God Himself, and the one who has come to Him.

I need hardly say that I speak now of Leviticus as read in the light of the New Testament, when the way into the holiest is made manifest, through the vail being rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

God speaks, then, from “inaccessible light,” yet He speaks of Christ, and in such a way as leaves the conscience at rest, and the soul free to delight itself in Him who is invisible, and who, while He reveals Himself, lays bare the heart of him who approaches Him, and yet cleanses the conscience, and constitutes him a worshiper; worship becomes the spontaneous outflow of his soul.

But while the foreground (chs. 1-7) of Leviticus is exclusively occupied with Christ, whether in His own person, or the manner of the use of Him by the worshiper, we find that which has ever occupied God’s heart and counsels before us at once in ch. 8. For God has had counsels and purposes before the world was, for His own glory; and we find unfolded the intentions of His Son becoming a man, and of His associating man, and the sons of men, in whom was His delight, with His Son in eternal blessedness and in His supremacy over all the works of God’s hands.

We find this thought entering much into the texture of Lev. 8 so as to lead to the question, Why are the Sons of Aaron clothed before the sin-offering is applied to them? We frequently find in the Scriptures the knitting together of the purposes of God about His elect before the world was, with the cleansing of them by the blessed work of Christ on the cross, looking upon them as sinners needing redemption. In other words, the blessed association and identification of Christ and His people -- as brought into the same place of blessing with Himself according to God’s intentions. And yet while perfect identity is theirs with Him, we shall always find that they are the redeemed while He is the Redeemer; they the sanctified while He is the Sanctifier, and so on. His divine place is preserved; while the highest blessings which they receive only prove the superiority of the Blesser who is the source of them.

It is remarkable the contrast and yet the complement -- the one to the other which Lev. 8 is with Lev. 16. The latter chapter is connected in the mind of the Spirit with the former, in the opening verse, which as it were, gives a basis or occasion for God to unfold the provisions of ch. 16. The sons of Aaron are, with Himself, clothed in ch. 8. Failure then ensues, and Lev. 16 opens with a reference to this failure. This connects them both.

In one chapter (8) we find that Moses was to take Aaron and his sons, the anointing oil, the bullock for a sin-offering, two rams for the burnt-offering and consecrations, with the basket of unleavened bread. All were thus prepared when the ceremony of the day began. And first we find that all -- both Aaron and his sons -- were “washed with water.” The same “word”which sanctified the Lord, and sent Him into the world (John 10:36) has set His people apart, and sent them into the...
world -- sent into it because they were not of it. You could not
send into it one who was of it in any wise. But those who are set
apart by the Eternal Word of God, are sent into it when
redeemed, as He was sent into it in virtue of who He was. The
Father sanctifies the Son -- sets Him apart and sends Him into
the world. The Son sanctifies Himself when His work is done,
and goes on high, in order that those whom the Father has
sanctified and He has sent into the world, may be “truly
sanctified” according to the pattern of Him, until they also go on
high.

But when it becomes a question of Aaron’s official place,
there he is alone. The coat and the girdle, the robe and the
ephod, with its curious girdle; the breast-plate also, with the
Urim and Thummim; the miter and its plate, and the holy crown
-- all these were put upon Aaron, and in this he stood alone.
Jesus might be clothed and honored, He might be set in the place
purposed for and suited to Him; but no need had He of blood
being shed. He is robed and clothed with priestly glory in virtue
of His own sacred person and its perfection, as answering to all
the mind of God as Man and Mediator, and being the display
and disclosure of it as Son.

But mark well. His sons do not come at once into further
association with Aaron. But Moses, who stood in God’s place
now anoints with the holy anointing oil the whole tabernacle and
all its contents, sanctifying them. He sprinkles the altar too with
oil; anoints it with its vessels, and both the laver and his foot, to
sanctify them. Thus in connection with them Aaron is anointed
all alone.

This is the more remarkable when we turn to Lev. 16 and
find that on the great day of atonement when Aaron alone, had
entered the presence of God, carrying the basin of the blood of
the bullock and sprinkled it before and on the golden mercy-
seat; that he then came out and sprinkled with blood the altar of
incense; and with blood reconciled the holy place, and the
tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar (of brass I suppose)
-- these same things which he had anointed with oil in Lev. 8,
and this before the other goat was offered.

Thus we have two distinct things before us.

Christ as Son is “appointed Heir of all things,” according to
Heb. 1. He will, according to God’s counsels, possess all things
as their true Head, in the power of the Holy Ghost -- the oil. But
sin having defiled the inheritance, He must take it with all its
responsibilities and inherit it; not only as Heir of all things, but
as Redeemer; and then follows Heb. 2. If, in Heb. 1, He is “Heir
of all things” as Son, by God’s appointment, in ch. 2. He, “by
the grace of God, tastes of death for all” (ταπευσάμενον). If in Lev.
8 He possesses all things by the power of the Holy Ghost; in
ch.16 He redeems all things by the virtue of His precious blood.
And thus God’s eternal counsels are brought to pass through the
work of the cross, and will be brought to fruition when the joint-
heirs are gathered together.

We have this like thought in Eph. 1. There we learn that
God will head up all things into Christ, in the “administration
of the fullness of the times.” He will take possession of God’s
universe as its Head -- as the Second Man. Then follows the
joint-heirs and their possessions in Him, and their being
gathered out by the power of God in accomplishing His counsels
(Eph. 2)

Still, in Lev. 8 it is not exactly in the condition of sinners
needing redemption that the sons of Aaron are seen. It is more
the value of Christ’s work in its various phases put upon them,
fitting them for their official place as priests in connection with
Aaron. The sin-offering and other sacrifices come in consequently after their investiture with their priestly robes in
connection with Aaron. Thus the connection through the cross,
of the counsels which associate the elect with Jesus, and their
standing in the acceptance of the worth of Christ on the cross, is
maintained. The sin-offering being brought, Aaron and his sons
place their hands upon its head, showing the connection and
identification, and yet the difference, between Him and them.
For Jesus was as surely made sin [2 Cor. 5:21] as we were sin
itself. He alone could be made what He was not. Still here there
is no sprinkling of the sons with blood. It is the purifying of
the altar by blood, which is poured out at its foot; and the fat and the
inwards burned upon the altar. It seems to be more the
identification of all with Him in the blessed act, by which the
basis of God’s glory was established, by which the elect were
brought into positive identity with Him who chose them, and
delighted in them before the world was.

So also when the “Ram of consecration” was offered, after
the burnt-offering, Aaron and his sons are again together. He
who acted in God’s place and for Him -- Moses (for it appears
to be him all through here), did this with the burnt-offering. And
Aaron and his sons are all anointed with the blood of
consecration. So that the thoughts, actions, and walk are all put
under the guardianship and value of the precious blood which
He shed. How wondrously blessed! How poorly responded to by
His people, is this place of blessing; yet how true it all is!

Then the meat-offering and the basket of consecrations --
the unleavened cake and oiled bread are all placed upon and
received from off Aaron’s and his son’s hands (vv. 27, 28). Thus
we learn in type what is taught in doctrine in Eph 5:1, 2, that the
elect who have been redeemed are to “Be therefore imitators of
God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved
us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering (meat-offering)
and a sacrifice (peace offering) to God for a sweet smelling
savor.” “An odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice (peace-offering)
acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (Phil. 4:18).

After the anointing of Aaron and his sons, and his garments,
and his sons’ garments with him, the Holy Ghost thus sealing
and constituting all the priestly family, high priest and priests,
in their persons and circumstances as one (vv. 30-36), they are
shut up for the seven days of their consecration, to feed upon the
consecrations, and “keep the charge of the Lord,” until the
eighth day of glory (Lev. 9) comes, when the Lord will reveal
Himself to Israel, and His glory appear to His earthly people,
and they will fall on their faces in repentance and adoration of
Jesus -- their Jehovah-Messiah.

A Brief Word
on Matthew 12:5

Have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless.

The Lord, in His reply to the Pharisees who charge His followers with breaking the Sabbath day in Matt. 12:1, 2, uses the above remarkable expression.

The disciples were an hungered, and had plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees had charged them with doing that which was unlawful to do upon it. It was quite lawful to “pluck the ears of thy neighbors’ standing corn” (see Deut. 23:25), but they made it an unlawful action when done on the Sabbath day. The gracious directions of God, were thus forced into the narrow lines of Pharisaism. The Lord does not vindicate the grace of Deut. 23:25, but by recalling cast-out David’s course with the show-bread in the days of Saul the usurper, He shows that when God’s anointed king was a wanderer and an-hungered, the shew-bread was in a manner common; there was no value in forms and ceremonies when God was rejected in the king of His choice. So by the force of reasoning when God was rejected in His Christ, the Sabbath was no more than any other day. He touches here the springs of evil in the “blind Pharisee,” and takes no notice of the plucking of the ears of corn charged on His followers.

But more, His answer in v. 5 conveys a fine and blessed principle not to be overlooked. The Sabbath, given with the law, was a command or claim upon man under that law. Priests and sacrifices were not contemplated under pure law at all. They came in as God’s provisions of grace when and after the law was broken! In fact, the whole ceremonial of Leviticus, and of Exodus after the giving of the law by Moses and its breach through making the golden calf, etc., with all that then happened, came in as gracious provisions for the approach to God Himself of those who had failed under law.

We might say in a few words as to v. 5: -- The Sabbath was the claim of law; the priesthood and sacrifices were the provisions of grace, and while under the law and its demands the provisions of grace through priesthood and sacrifices took the upper hand, its claims had to stand aside, that these provisions might express themselves; how much more should the Sabbath now stand aside in its claim, when God Himself was there in their midst in lowly grace -- in the person of Christ!

This system of priesthood and sacrifices is commonly called the “ceremonial law,” in contradistinction with that which is named the “moral law”; but we might the more correctly term them “ceremonial grace”!

Alas, when we look around us, in how much do we find the same thing under a different guise! God and his grace rejected that ordinances and ceremonies without meaning or value might have their place in the religious thought and practice of man!