

# PARDON. SALVATION. AND PEACE.

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# PARDON, SALVATION, AND PEACE.

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CONVICTED, CLEANSED, CLOTHED,  
CROWNED, AND COUNSELLED.

ZECHARIAH ii. 13 ; iii. 1-10.

**I**T is easy to see that this scripture has an application to a later day. My object now is not to interpret, but to preach the gospel from it; only I just say in passing that it is the way God will in the future bring back His people Israel, and then the last verses I read will have their proper fulfilment. That is the true interpretation of it; but I also find here the principles upon which God in grace deals with sinners now as well as then.

Now let us look for a moment at the verse with which I began: "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Have you ever been present in a law-court? Some poor creature is there, it may be, charged with murder. A great deal of curiosity is shown, there is a crowded court. The greater the crime the greater the crowd: nothing shows our depraved taste more than this. There is a hum of voices; all are curious to see the poor prisoner, and are discussing the case. Suddenly a little door opens and the clerk of the court cries with a loud voice: "Silence!" There is a hush at once. What has happened?

The judge has entered the court and taken his seat. So here in our scripture : silence is called before the Lord. He takes His place as Judge.

Our attention is next called to the prisoner. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord." He is standing in the dock. It is a great thing to take your place in the dock. You will have to one day if you do not now. You may evade the thought, endeavour to forget God and shut your eyes to the fact, but in spite of that the day is fast approaching when you will have to face God. The throne of God holds you responsible for what you have done. You must have to do with God then ; why not have to do with Him now ? May you have grace given you to go into the dock, and it shall be for you the dawning of an eternal day. Joshua the high priest stands at the bar. *It will be a solemn thing to stand before that awful tribunal, the great white throne. The heaven and the earth flee before the face of Him that sits on it. Solemn moment ! Sinner, how will you stand ? Thank God, I shall never stand there, because I have already taken my place in the dock by the side of Joshua. God give you to do the same even now, before it is too late. John says, "I saw . . . and the books were opened." Man, you live in sin and forget that God has got His ledger. What about all that black list down against your name ? God will be God. He will maintain the dignity of His throne. I will show you presently how God can maintain the dignity of His throne and yet save the sinner. "Another book was opneed, which is the book of life." There are two books, the book of deeds and the book of life. Professors may put their names in the book of life, but God will blot out the names of those who have not stood in the dock with Joshua. You may put down your name because it is respectable to do so, but it will not stand. There is the book of responsibility as well as the book of life. Mere profession will not do. If you have not life, your name will*

be blotted out of the book of life. You may resist God now, but He will bring you out of your grave and you will stand before Him at that terrible tribunal, and what will you do then? If you take your stand here with Joshua, you will anticipate morally that great white throne, and never have to stand before it.

We have seen the Judge and the prisoner at the bar; and now there is another thing, "Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." When God works you always find Satan busy. Satan is there to turn him away from God, and more, he is there to accuse him. The man is guilty, and he is speechless. What can be done for him? I pursue the illustration of the law-court. The day passes on, the witnesses are called, the case is thoroughly investigated, all that can be said for and against is said, and the judge has summed all up, and now the jury retire to consider their verdict. The prisoner looks at those men as they file off, for he knows his fate is in their hands. In the court the hum of voices is again heard, for the judge also has retired for a moment. Some are speculating as to what the verdict will be; some are even betting on it; all are waiting to know. At length the door opens and the jurymen appear. The judge resumes his seat. The clerk again calls, "Silence!" The jurymen have come to a decision. The prisoner looks at those men anxiously. There is silence; not a voice is heard. The clerk says, "Gentlemen of the jury, what say you? Guilty or not guilty?" How the poor prisoner stretches forward to catch the answer! "Guilty!" is the reply that settles his fate. The judge draws on the black cap and passes sentence, and the poor man is led away to await its execution. Solemn scene, but a feeble picture of what it shall be for the Christless soul in the day of judgment.

Sinner, will you come into the dock *now*? Will you take your place before God saying, I am guilty? If so, it shall be the dawn of an eternal day for you. Do you ask, Can I

take that place? Yes, though God be holy, that throne is favourable to you. It will not be in the day that is coming. I will tell you why it is favourable to you now. It is because all its claims have been met by the blood of Jesus, and God can say, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan: . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" The eternal burning—think of it, who can pluck you out of that? God Himself can do it. He can deliver your soul because He has found a ransom. He has found that in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it meets the claims of the throne in respect of any poor sinner who takes the place of a guilty one.

There were two men in America who had been brought up together; one got on in the world and rose, and the other went down. The one eventually became a judge, and the other a criminal at his bar. Their original connection was well known, and the court was crowded with people curious to see how the judge would treat his former friend. The case was gone into and the jury returned a verdict of "Guilty," and the judge inflicted the heaviest fine possible, an immense sum of money, or else imprisonment. People whispered, "What a shame!" They thought of their early days. But the case was not ended. Having pronounced the sentence, the judge stepped down from the bench, and coming to where the criminal was, said, "I remember our early days, how we were brought up together, and I have come down to pay the heavy fine I have inflicted; the prisoner may go free." It was an easy matter for that judge to pay the fine; but in order that we might be cleansed, the blessed Saviour had to come down here and pay the debt in *blood*, and thus He has turned that throne of judgment into a throne of grace.

"Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" How can you be plucked out of the fire? God says, as it were, My Son has been into the fire. Ah! dear soul, it is only because Jesus has been into the fire, that God can pluck thee as a brand out of the fire.



The first thing I see about Joshua is that he is *convicted*. The next thing is, he is *cleansed*. I come now to the cleansing. "Take away the filthy garments from him." *You* cannot take away filthy garments from a sinner, but *God can*. He can cleanse our sins. To the one who takes his place by the side of Joshua—to *you* if you take this place—come the words, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." My reader, has He cleansed you? Has He caused your iniquity to pass from you? He will do it now if you take your true place. In that awful moment when Jesus hung upon the cross, God caused our iniquity to pass on Him, and thus He can cause it to pass from us who believe. If He does not cause it to pass *from* thee now, He will cause it to pass *on* thee in that terrible day that is coming, and thou wilt be placed with all thy sins on thee in the lake of fire—that awful burning. But, oh! He desires to snatch thee as a brand from the burning: "The Lord . . . is long-suffering to us-ward, *not willing* that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9).

But you must stand where the fire has been. You have heard, no doubt, how that out in the far west of America, in the prairies, where the grass grows long, it gets very dry in the summer and readily catches fire. It is a terrible thing when it happens, for it rushes on as fast as a horse can gallop, overtaking everything that lies in the way, and men and animals flee for their lives. The only way of safety is to burn away a huge space around before the fire reaches you, and then to stand in that blackened spot. When the wave of fire comes up it has nothing to burn. Stand then, dear soul, where the fire has been. The cross is the place where the fire has been. Will you stand there? That is where the preacher stands. Own your guilt and stand there. You may know all about this, but you have not, it may be, *taken your stand* there yet. Take your stand there and hear the words, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee."

Have you taken your stand there, and yet are troubled about your sins? Let this word take every troubled thought out of your heart. God has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. From the throne that word comes. Stand back, Satan! Thou canst not say that God is unrighteous in doing this; on the contrary, He is perfectly righteous, and the blood of Jesus is the witness of it.

Well, that is the *cleansing*: now I come to the *clothing*: "I will clothe thee with change of raiment." He has caused our iniquities to pass away in the death of Christ. Sins and sin, gone for God in the burning. But that is not all; we are clothed. What is that? We are *in Christ*, "made the righteousness of God in him." "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." That is what Christ is to God; can you be more complete, more beautiful? Covered all over with Christ, you are thus made suitable to God. God makes you suitable to Himself. Can you better that?

What said the king when he came in and found the man without the wedding garment? You know the story. A wedding garment was provided for each guest, as was the custom in that country. I think I see that man as he comes into the hall. There hang all the wedding garments; he looks at them and then at his own coat, and he says, I think this will do. What will do? It is like your saying, I am a temperate, church-going man. I never cheat any one, I pay my way. There is no clothing for you in that. That will *not* do. Our first parents found that out. They found that a covering of their own providing left them naked in the presence of God. Well, the man goes in without the garment, and presently the king comes in and looks round on that festive scene with an eye that nothing can escape. The king's eyes rest on him; he has dishonoured the king and he has dishonoured the king's son, and the king says to him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to

the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." He is searched, silenced, and sentenced. Nothing but Christ will do for God ; if you are not clothed with Christ, God will search you out and there will be no escape.

" Let them set a fair mitre upon his head." He is *crowned*. They put a mitre of fine linen on the priests in Exodus xxxix., and on the mitre a plate of gold on which was engraved " Holiness to the Lord." So we are made priests to God. Every Christian is a priest. Many do not think so ; their idea is that only a certain class are priests. But Peter says in his first epistle, chapter ii., that we are a " holy priesthood " and a " royal priesthood." We are priests to worship God, brought from being *prisoners* in the dock to be *priests* to God. Look at that ! made a priest to praise Him for ever.

The next thing is that he is *counselled*. This comes last. God does everything first. When you know what it is to be convicted, cleansed, clothed, and crowned, God will speak to you about your ways. See what He says : " If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house," etc. And again, " Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee ; for they are men *wondered at*." Who are the men wondered at ? Those who are washed from their sins, clothed with Christ, and crowned as priests. Men wonder at or observe them. When a man is cleansed, clothed, and crowned, he shows it in his ways. God counsels us respecting our ways, and what does He counsel ? To look away to the Stone. " Behold," He says, " the stone that I have laid." How are you going to walk through this world on to the glory ? You must look away to the Stone. Keep your eye upon Christ. " Upon one stone shall be seven eyes." The stone is power and the eyes wisdom. There is the power and wisdom of God in Christ to carry us through this world to the

glory of God. You are left here, dear Christian, to exhibit in your ways the grace that has cleansed, clothed, and crowned you, and you will only do this by looking away to the Stone. I often think of that verse in Hosea xiv. : " Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols ? " God has met me and blessed me ; what have I to do any more with idols ? What is an idol ? Anything that keeps you away from God. Now listen. God says, " I have heard him and observed him." Then Ephraim speaks, " I am like a green fir tree." He is turned from idols, he is heard and observed, and is like a green fir tree. He has made us green fir trees, but where is our fruit to be found ? Another voice is heard, " From me is thy fruit found." " Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." " He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." In proportion as we look away to Christ, so will our ways be pleasing to God. There is perfect power and perfect wisdom there. " Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua ; upon one stone shall be seven eyes." God grant that we may look away to Christ !

And now, in conclusion, if not yet saved, will you take your place in the dock with Joshua as a *convicted* sinner ? If you do, you shall be *cleansed* from your sins, *clothed* with Christ, *crowned* as a priest to worship God, and *counselled* by God to walk to His glory.

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## THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

2 CORINTHIANS V.

YOU cannot read this chapter without being struck with the fact that it is a wonderful thing to be a Christian. There is a beautiful word at the beginning, " We know."

There is a fine ring about that word "know." We *know*; it is not, we *hope*. And what does the Christian know? The apostle here is looking at the possibility of death. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God." He is not dismayed at the thought of death, he is not afraid; he speaks with confidence about it. What fills man's heart with fear is the thought of death, the "evil day," the day of departure from this world. The poor Christless soul cannot face it, but here is a man who views it without fear, yea, with pleasure. He says in the previous chapter, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." The difference between a converted and an unconverted man is that the unconverted man is guided by what is *seen*, whilst the converted man is guided by what is *not seen*. A man who looks ahead in this world is praised, because he is thought to be prudent. But he does not look ahead far enough. The apostle looked ahead into eternity, and for him it was all gladsome. Christians have bright prospects there; have you? When a Christian thinks of eternity, he thinks of that word so dear to an Englishman—*Home*: I understand that you cannot find a word like it in any other language. It is very impressive. When I was a sailor, I remember well the feeling I had as we weighed anchor for home. The ship loaded, all ready, the command given, we are homeward bound. A thrill of delight passes through the whole ship. But home has a sweeter thought for me now. I am going to spend eternity in the Father's house. That is home for the Christian. Nearer home! What a prospect! Oh, poor unsaved sinner, dark is thy prospect. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The preacher sees out yonder a dark, dark cloud, you see none; he entreats you to wake up to this important matter.

I turn now to the latter part of the chapter. There we

read about the ministry of reconciliation. It sets before us God's attitude towards this poor world. You need reconciling to God, because, just as the prodigal went away from his father, so have you departed from God.

In chapter iii. the apostle speaks of another ministry, the ministry of death and condemnation. God came down upon Mount Sinai and gave Israel ten commandments, which told man what he ought to be. The first word that sounded out from the mount was, "Thou shalt." Even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." There were thunderings and lightnings and a thick cloud. All that was terrible. Can you get any hope from that? You cannot; it can only end in condemnation. That is not the ministry of reconciliation; it is a ministry of death.

The ministry of reconciliation began when Christ came into this world. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." He sent His Son into this world to tell out all that was in His heart towards man. You remember those well-known words in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world." The first word of the law was "Thou," the first word in the ministry of reconciliation is "God." "God so loved"—beautiful words! You have not loved God, but God has loved. He did not *demand*, He *loved* and He *gave*, and the one who believes *has*.

"God was in Christ." It was the unfolding of the heart of God in this world. The devil had lied about Him and the woman had listened, and so all the ruin came in. Christ came to tell men the truth. Would God keep back the fruit of a tree? He gave His Son! The source of it all was the love of God. If you sum up the life of Jesus in one sentence, it is this, "God was in Christ." Poor sinner, come home to God. God is love.

Let me give you two instances of this. One you will find in the end of Luke vii. The Lord is invited by a Pharisee to dinner, and He goes. As He crosses the threshold He

notices that there is no water given Him to wash His feet, there is no kiss of welcome for Him, no oil for the anointing of His head. He feels it, though He says nothing. He is not at home there. But there is a woman away out in the dark slums; she is a sinner; she knows she is a sinner; she is a convicted sinner. Are you? Have you a storm raging in your breast? Are you weary, worn, and sad? Do you sigh and weep in secret, covering it up from your fellows, but unable to restrain it when alone? Then will you not keep company with this woman? Will you come with her to the feet of the Saviour? There was this about it: she knew Jesus was in the Pharisee's house, she knew the Saviour was there. The Father drew her and she came. Will you come in all your deep need?

I think I see her as she enters that quarter of the town—a very respectable quarter, no doubt. She comes to the door of the Pharisee's house, she looks in, she sees Jesus there. She heeds not the scornful crowd as she passes in. She says, There is one spot for me—at His feet. She stands behind Him weeping. My blessed Master is lonely no longer, for He came down from heaven for such as she. She stands and weeps. He counts her tears. They could not put her sins away, but inasmuch as they speak of a broken heart He will not despise them. “God was in Christ.”

The Pharisee begins to reason; he has no room for grace. “She is a sinner,” he says. When we are in the presence of God we turn it this way. “I am a sinner.” That Holy One could read his heart, and so He says, “Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.” Are you one of these “say on” folks? Some of you have been attending the preaching for years. Say on, say on, is your language, and you are not converted yet. You have gone away telling people, Oh, it is very nice; I like it much. Do you know that you are in the devil's cradle? He is whispering in your ear that God will be merciful to you at the last.

"There was a certain creditor"—God—and He had two debtors, thee and thee. God give you to feel your debt. There is a difference in the amount of the debts, but one thing is common to both: "they had nothing to pay," and the creditor "frankly forgave them both." "Tell me," the Lord asks Simon, "which of them will love him most?" And Simon answers, "I *suppose* that he to whom he forgave most." Simon is outside it all.

Do you say, I feel my prospects are dark and black. If I take my place by the side of that poor woman, what will He say to me? He will say to you what He said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." Calvary's cross has made it possible. He is speaking to you through His word. It is as true for you as for her. These words are for thee. He died to make it possible; the righteous basis of this ministry of reconciliation is laid in His death.

The other instance I will give you is in John viii. In the last verse of chapter vii. we read, "And every man went unto his own house." Chapter viii. 1: "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." Most expressive: they all had homes to go to; He went to the mountain. But early in the morning He is found in the temple, and, while teaching, the Scribes and the Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery, and set her right down before Him. They think they have cornered Him now. They as good as say, Here she is. Moses says she ought to be stoned; "but what sayest thou?" He stoops down and with His finger writes on the ground. Do you know what that meant? He says, as it were, Do you not know that I wrote the law? and I am greater than the law I wrote. They were quoting the law to the One that wrote it. "When they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The full light is turned on. He says, I know you, and again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Did they not



know that He had to write the law a second time? They made a golden calf and worshipped it, and the first writing of the law never came into the camp. Moses broke the tables at the foot of the mount. The second tables were placed in the ark, and that was typical of Christ. These scribes and Pharisees go out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last. They went out to their religion, to their prayers, their alms and their fasting, but they went out into the dark; and, mark you, religious darkness is the worst darkness. The Lord turns to the woman, "Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

We get the *basis* of this ministry in verse 21. This is how this ministry is made possible. God is holy, God is love; how can His love reach out to sinners? "For he hath made him to be sin for us." Where did He make Him sin? On the cross; there that blessed, holy, spotless One was made sin for us. Come to the cross and you will see how this ministry could be possible. An almighty barrier existed between you and God—*sin*. That barrier must come down. The devil's gospel is, "God is love; He is merciful; He will overlook sin." Do not listen to that. God is infinitely holy. His love cannot reach you unless the question of sin is righteously settled. Come to the cross, and you will see there how it could be. What is Jesus saying? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If God forsook you, you would be damned for ever. He forsook His Son that you might not be forsaken. And why did God forsake His Son? Because He was made sin. He was made what I am, and He bore my sins. God could not look on Him then. He was treated as though He had done it all, and that is the reason this message can come to you. God can

show mercy, He can forgive sins, because the whole question has been divinely met. That is the *basis* of the ministry.

His love brought Him there and my sins brought Him there. There is nothing you can discover in yourself but that God has an answer to it in the cross. There is God's judgment of it. I am gone in His death. "He hath made him to be sin for us, . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." On the cross He was made what I am, and in the glory I am made what He is. Did you ever meditate on that? Sin is gone, everything is met in His death and He is gone up in glory. By faith we look to the cross and see Him made sin, and then to the glory and see Him there.

He went up with uplifted hands. Do you think His hands have ever gone down? Never; they are uplifted still. What were they doing in heaven as He went up? Methinks I see the angels looking down upon Him as He goes up out of His people's sight. He goes up, up. See those principalities and powers, those ministers of His making way for Him as He goes higher and higher till He sits down on the throne of God. He sits there having answered to all the claims of that throne when out yonder in all the desolation of the cross.

You and I, believer, are made the righteousness of God in Him. God's eye rests upon Christ. He looks on the face of His Anointed. Why do you not look there? There is not a beauty you can discover in Christ that you will not be invested with. Think of that! It reminds me of what Paul said to Philemon: "Receive him [Onesimus] as myself." I am received as Christ is. You may say, I find so much in me that is contrary. Ah! but God only sees Christ, and when He comes we shall bear His image. What a beautiful ministry this is! God grant that you may profit by it.

## LAW AND GRACE.

LUKE X. 25-42.

THE Apostle Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says, "By grace are ye saved." If it is by grace we are saved, then it is most important to understand what grace is. Naturally we do not like grace, because it makes everything of God and nothing of us. We do not want to be made nothing of. But before we understand the grace of God, we have to come to this, to be made nothing of. Grace, I repeat, makes everything of God. If we are saved at all, God must get the glory of it ; we shall never be able to credit ourselves with it.

I have read this beautiful passage in order to show you what grace really is. We get a picture of it in the story of the good Samaritan. But I want to show you first what leads to its coming out. A lawyer starts up with the question, "What shall *I do* to inherit eternal life ?" He merely stood up to tempt the Lord ; he had no sense of need in his heart. Mark the words of his question, "What shall *I do* ?" I dare say you have heard the story of the lady and her physician. The physician was a very religious man, though unconverted. You know, people may be religious without being saved. There are different sorts of sinners : there are drunken sinners and sober sinners, and there are religious sinners and irreligious sinners, and so on ; but still they are sinners ; they are unsaved. Well, the lady said to her physician as they were conversing one day, "There is just this difference between your religion and mine, doctor : yours is a religion of two letters—*d, o* ; mine is a religion of four letters—*d, o, n, e*." "Do" and "done," just the opposite. The first represents works—doing something to gain salvation ; the other speaks of what is already accomplished ; the one

is law, the other grace. I pray God it may be discovered to you that all is done, you are not asked to do anything. All His claims have been met and you have simply to rest in what *has been accomplished*.

The lawyer says "What shall I do?" The Lord refers him to Exodus, chapter xix. "What is written in the law?" I think people forget how the law was introduced. Listen, "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: . . . and the whole mount quaked greatly." That is how the law was introduced—that law which the lawyer summed up so well. "How readest thou?" the Lord asked. Well, he was a good reader; you could not have found a better.

The Lord was asked this question when on His way to Jerusalem to suffer. He was going there to die. He was going there to do a work by which alone you and I can be saved. If ever you get to heaven it will be by what Jesus did, and by that alone. On His way up He was asked all sorts of questions by all sorts of people who crossed His path. This lawyer is one of them. In replying to him the Lord, as it were, says, If it is *doing* with you, you must turn to the law. What is written there? And the lawyer answers well; he was a good reader, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." He knew the law. If he wanted to know about the doing, there it was, "This do, and thou shalt live." Yes, but where is the man that has done it? Can you point out one who has loved God with *all his heart*, and his neighbour as himself?

The Lord does not say, This do and you shall go to heaven or have eternal life, but "live"—that is, live here on earth. Why do people die? *You* will have to die some day, but why? It is not natural to die, it is natural to sleep; you don't go upstairs to die in the same way that you would go

upstairs to sleep. You have stood by your dying friends, perhaps, and you have seen that it is not natural to die. Death comes through sin. "The wages of sin is death." The reason people die is because they are *not fit to live here*. You know not but that you may die to-night. Perhaps you hope to go to heaven when you die. I am not speaking of Christians now; as a matter of fact some Christians will not die at all. I am speaking of those who are unconverted. You hope to go to heaven. Mark it, you die because you are not fit for earth, and yet you hope to go to heaven! What a strange thing! How can you think of going to heaven to live with God, when you are not fit for life on earth? I am not shutting the door of heaven to you, but I want you to understand that that is not the way you can enter in. It is a solemn subject. God may stop the beating of your heart this moment. If you leave this world as not fit to live here, do you think you are going to live with God? Certainly not.

People do go to heaven, but on what ground? You must look that question in the face. Some of you are playing fast and loose with your souls. You are like the man who was bringing home to England a very valuable stone. He used to bring it on deck to show his fellow-passengers. How they envied him! He used to throw it up and catch it as you might a ball. How beautiful it was! How it sparkled in the sunshine! But he was playing with it. One of the passengers said, "Man, you will throw that up once too often and lose it." "Oh, no, I shall not," he replied; "I am too good a catch." However, one day, as he was doing this, the ship gave a lurch and he lost his balance, and overboard went the precious gem. You say, What a fool! So he was; but what are you doing, and that with your precious soul? Your soul is not saved, and if you died to-night you would be damned. That is plain talking. Do not play fast and loose with your soul.

I well remember once going through a village in Kent giving away books ; I was on my way to catch the train to go to another place to preach, but did not know my way to the station, and the time was nearly up. I saw a stately-looking gentleman coming along, and stepping up to him I enquired my way. "Come with me and I will show you," he answered. We walked along together, chatting about the weather, the crops, and so on, but I had something in my heart I wanted to speak about of more importance than crops—the welfare of his soul. At last he said, "I will show you a place where five roads meet ; you will not see such a thing as that every day." This, of course, was interesting in its way, but I turned the conversation by saying, "I would like to ask you one question : What is your way to heaven ?" He stopped, drew himself up, and said, "My way to heaven is *to do your duty*." He was on the "do" line. I looked at him and answered, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Have you done that ? That is your duty." He bowed his head as he replied, "I cannot say that I have done that." "No," I rejoined, "you have broken down there, but look away up to heaven ; there is the Lord Jesus, who, when here, loved God with all His heart and His neighbour *better* than Himself, and *such* neighbours, too ! He is your only hope." Just think of it. There was an intelligent man going to meet God on the ground of having done his duty. At the first statement of his duty he has to own that he has failed in it. And you, my readers, have not loved God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself. You know you have not. It is no use going on that line. You love yourself better than your neighbour ; I can prove it to you in five minutes. I will suppose you have got a neighbour next door to you, and you live very neighbourly. She gets a letter from a lawyer telling her that a rich uncle has died and left her £500, and that if she goes to C—— on a certain day she

is to receive it. Now, when she comes and tells you that, would you be *just as pleased* as if the letter had come for you? I think you will say, No. Then that shows that you love yourself that much better than your neighbour. The fact is, we love ourselves, and we neither love God with all our heart, nor our neighbour as ourselves. You will never get to heaven by doing your duty.

There is only one thing that can open the door of heaven—the blood of the Lamb. It is the work of Christ and not your law-keeping that can take you there. If you could keep the law, it would only entitle you to life here. But you know you have sinned, and sooner or later are going to die. You have now notice to quit, and you may go at any moment. You cannot deny that fact.

As men we would like to live here, but you are not fit to live here, and yet you expect to go to heaven! You do not want to go to hell, and as you cannot stay here you think you would rather go to heaven; but if you could, of the three, you would rather remain on earth. This will not do.

I want to show you the necessity of the atonement. I want to show you that your works will never take you to heaven; if they were good enough for that, you would not be taken from the earth. It is only through the atoning work of Christ that you can enter heaven.

The lawyer says, "Who is my neighbour?" as much as to say, Show him to me, and I will love him as myself. He should have owned, I can never do that, but instead of this, "he, *willing to justify himself*," asks this question, and the Lord in reply gives him the story of the good Samaritan. He draws a picture, so simple that a child can understand it. I believe it is really a picture of Himself.

He begins with, "A certain man." Now I want you to see that *this* man is a picture of yourself. He "went down." It is very simple, but very terrible; it is what has happened to you since the day you came into the world. Your story

is told in one word : "*Down*" is the word ; it is a downward path. If there is an unconverted person here, I do not stop to ask whether you are religious or respectable ; in any case these words describe your path. "He went *down*." You know your path has been a downward one. When you were a little child, for instance, your conscience was tender ; since then it has been getting harder and harder.

He went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, from the city of *peace* and *blessing* to the city of the *curse*. Unsaved soul, yours is a downward path ; you are going down to the pit, your back is turned upon God, your face is hellward, and yet you are saying, I hope to get to heaven when I die ! How can you, if you are going the downward course, and have not been arrested ? The further you go, the faster you go, like a stone rolling down a hill.

He fell among thieves. The devil is the thief ; he has robbed man. God made man upright, but oh, what a wreck he is ! Look at him now, oftentimes worse than a beast. He has indeed fallen among thieves and has been left "half dead." They wounded him and threw him in the gutter, as many a poor sinner has been thrown down in the mud. 'Tis then the Saviour seeks him. Wondrous grace ! If there is one here saying, I am that man ; I have tried to be better, but here I am, a poor wounded creature, half dead, I must give it all up, the Saviour draws near to you ; He seeks such.

"By chance there came down a certain priest that way." I think the priest represents the law ; the priest did nothing for him. If he had spoken, he would perhaps have told the man to keep the law. Then the Levite comes and looks on him. What would he have said if he had spoken ? In modern language, Be baptized ; take the sacrament, etc. Quite right in their place, but they will not save you. How can a poor man who has lived in sin be saved by being baptized and taking a piece of bread from a minister's hand ? The Levite represents ritualism, but ritualism cannot save you.



"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was." Jesus, the Son of God, came down. When you speak of a journey, there is a purpose in it. The blessed Lord gives us the purpose of His journey in one verse: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Here is a Saviour! From whence did He journey? From the heights of glory down into this world of sin and sorrow. Blessed be His name! Linger over it; it will bring joy to your heart. I see myself in this picture, and you may see yourself, and rejoice in it. This blessed Man has drawn near to me, and I want you to realize it, poor hopeless soul! Is there one here saying, I have tried to turn over a new leaf. I have tried to be good and serve God, and it has all ended in failure? Are you saying that? Let me tell you the Saviour looks upon you; there is love and compassion in His eyes. He drew near to him; he came where he was, he looked upon him, he pitied him. He does not say, You do your part and I will do mine. No, he draws near and puts his hand upon him. Will you let the Lord put His hand upon you? You who are trying to be good and fail in it—what will He do for you? The moment the Samaritan put his hand on that poor man he said, I will do all for you. He made himself responsible for him ever afterwards. This is what the Lord does: He makes Himself responsible until He gets us home to heaven.

Why does it say "*a certain Samaritan*"? I think it means the man had no claim upon him. We read, "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." He could not say, I am a Jew; come and help me. Ah! dear friend, we have no claim upon the Son of God. He came unsought; not a voice was heard. Never had a cry gone up from this earth to God, Send Thy Son to save us! No, it came out of the heart of God that He should come. He took, as it were, that Treasure and gave Him up that He might save us!

He "*came where he was.*" I like that. The Lord give us

the joy of it ! He saw him, looked on him, had compassion on him, drew near to him. He draws near to you, my friend. I think I hear Him say, I will do all for thee from now until I get thee home to heaven. Will you let Him do everything for you ? That is *grace*.

He does three things for him : he binds up the wounds, he pours in the oil, and he pours in the wine. " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That is a beautiful bandage.

What is the oil ? The efficacy of the work of Christ applied to the conscience by the Spirit. There could have been no healing apart from that work. Jesus suffered on the cross in order that He might pour the oil into your wounds. Is there a troubled soul here ? Let Him pour in the oil. Do you know what they do at sea ? I have seen many a storm. When the sea is very rough, and there is danger of its breaking over the ship and swamping her, they have a method of putting an oil-barrel in a certain position and allowing the oil to run out slowly on to the water, and this to a great extent smooths its surface. Is your soul troubled like the troubled sea ? Let the Lord as the Good Samaritan pour the oil in, and there shall be a *great calm*.

There was a poor woman in Luke vii. who came to the Saviour ; the tears were rolling down her cheeks on to His feet. Oh, my sins ! oh, my sins ! There she was in trouble, and the Saviour pours in the oil. " Thy sins are forgiven." " Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace." That is the " oil." Thank God, I know what the oil is !

Listen, here is another scripture : " Their sins and their iniquities will I remember *no more*." NO MORE, NO MORE. Precious drops of oil ! God will remember them no more. He says so.

I remember preaching the gospel in a village in Essex : there was no church or chapel in the place. Right opposite

to me in the meeting sat a woman. I saw she was troubled. I said to her after the preaching was over, "Well, mother, how is it with you?" "Oh," she replied, "I have not got peace." I spoke a few words, but could not stay long with her, for I had to go to another village for the night. Next morning, as I was sitting reading my Bible, the Lord said to me, "Go over to that other village and visit." I closed my book and started off. When I reached the village I knocked at the first door I came to. A young woman opened it, saying, as she did so, "Have you heard what has happened? This morning, as mother was sitting at breakfast, she was taken with paralysis. We took her upstairs, and she has been crying out ever since, 'O Lord, send the preacher to me with words.'" I went upstairs, and as I stepped inside the bedroom she turned her face towards the door and said, "Have you words for me?" I replied, "Yes, thank God, I have; the Lord Jesus says this to you, 'Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'" She was with my Master in spirit, and turning her eyes away from me, she said, "Lord, I do thank Thee for beautiful words." She looked away from me; I was only the sign-post to point her to the Saviour. She was looking up into His face and praising Him for the oil He had poured in. Will *you* let Him pour in the oil? "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." I do pray God that that may be sounding in your chamber yonder to-night. "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." *No more.* What does that mean? That they were remembered when God laid them on Him. He cried with a bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He died that we might have the oil.

Now, what is the wine? That is the best of it. The wine is the love of the Son of God; the joy of His love is wine. Wine in scripture always means joy. You will never get any true joy till you know that Jesus loves you. It is like

the good Samaritan saying to the poor Jew, I love you. That is the wine. "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Loved *me*, a wretch like me! Does He love me? Yes, He does.

Three blessed sunbeams, gilding all I see;  
Three tender chords, each full of melody;  
Three healing leaves, balm for my agony.

#### WHO.

He loved me—the Father's only Son;  
He gave Himself, the precious, spotless One;  
He shed His blood, and thus the work was done.

#### LOVED.

He loved, not merely pitied. Here I rest:  
Sorrow may come; I to His heart am pressed,  
What should I fear while sheltered on His breast?

#### ME.

Wonder of wonders! Jesus loved me—  
A wretch, lost, ruined, sunk in misery!  
He sought me, found me, raised me, set me free.

My soul, the order of the words approve—  
Christ first, me last; nothing between but love.  
Lord, keep me always down—Thyself above!

"Nothing between but love." That is the wine. I tell you what, dear people: we know what earthly love is, God has implanted that in our breast; but natural love brings sorrow, divine love brings joy. You remember, mother, when you lost that child, how you sorrowed and sorrowed, how you followed it to the grave, you stood beside that grave, then you went home and looked at the chair in which it used to sit. The father forgot his sorrow after a while, but you could not forget; and when you had put the other children to bed you would go and open the drawer and look at the little shoes and the clothes it used to wear, and the tears

would steal down your cheeks. Why did you sorrow so? Ah! there is nothing like a mother's love. All that sorrow was because of human love. It is of God, you know. But I would like you at such a moment to pillow your head on the Saviour's breast. No rude hand of death can interfere with the love of Jesus. I don't know how you get on in sorrow without Him. I pity you! To whom do you turn in your sorrow? It is a sweet thing to know His love and to know that nothing can take Him from you. Your heart can never be bereft of that love.

Then let me say to you, dear believers, hold things here *lightly*; don't grasp them tightly, or it will cause you sorrow. "*Lay hold on eternal life.*" Let your heart go to heaven before you get there yourself. Let your heart be entwined around that blessed Person with whom you are soon going to be for ever.

The Good Samaritan desires to draw near to you, dear troubled soul, and to put His hand on you and to say, I love you. He would pour in the oil and the wine. The wine is the joy of His love.

And what does he do next? He first *cured* him. Did he then say, I have done all this for you, and now you must get on the best way you can? Oh, no; he puts him on his own beast. It is not as some people tell us. That the Saviour does His part, and we have to do ours. Our part? What is our part? Our part is to *let Him do all for us.*

Does he say, I have cured you, now go back to Jerusalem and behave yourself? That is not grace, it is not the fulness of grace. He does not stop with curing him, he sets him on his own beast. The same power, he says, that carried me shall carry you. For us it is the power of the Spirit; that is the power in which the Lord went through the world. If He has cured you He will carry you.

I knew a woman who said, "I have such a bad temper, I know it would not do for me to confess Christ: I should

be sure to break down if I did." That is just what the devil tells people. Much he cares about the honour of Christ ! He likes to keep souls from confessing Him. I took out my pencil and tried to stand it on end. "There," I said, "I am as helpless as that pencil. I am as powerless to-night apart from Christ as I was the first day I was converted." What we want is power, and that Christ gives.

Well, she confessed Christ, and when I went to see her again she had a beaming face. She said, "Oh, I have been getting on wonderfully ; it seems as though the children were different and everything else." She had been looking to the Lord and He had given her power.

He "set him on his own beast." Will you let the Saviour carry you ? He first cures, then carries you.

Then he takes him to an inn. The moment a man is converted this world is turned into an inn to him. We have an *inn* here, a *home* there. If I were staying at an inn in this place, you might ask me how I was getting on. How do you like your quarters ? Oh, I should say, it is a very good stopping-place, but I am hoping to be at home soon. We are going to be off directly. "He brought him to an inn." He made a stranger of him.

Do you know who the host is ? The Holy Ghost. The Lord said just as He was going away, speaking of the Father, "He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Every Christian is committed to the care of the Holy Ghost.

And what next ? "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when *I come again* I will repay thee." I am coming back to fetch him. The man was cured, carried, cared for, and called for. Thank God for the last ! The precious Saviour, the Son of God, is coming to fetch us. Christ shall do it all. I am not looking to die. I may fall asleep, but I am not looking for that, but for the One who has cured me, carried me, cared for me, and will call for me. How many of you

would like Him to come to-night? Would you like to hear His voice? Every Christian on the earth will be caught up. "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them"—a glorious company—"to meet the Lord in the air."

Where will you be when He comes? He will shut the door then. On which side of the door will you be? There are only two sides, inside and outside, the saved side and the lost side, heaven's side and hell's side. "They that were ready went in with him: . . . and the door was shut." When He comes the door will be *shut*. That will settle it for ever. "Lord, Lord, open to us!"—piercing cry!—only gets the answer, "I know you not." If you do not accept the precious grace of the Lord Jesus Christ now, He will shut that door upon you then and say, "I know you not," and you must spend that awful eternity of woe in the lake of fire.

Oh, God grant that you may accept His grace now and let Him cure you, carry you, care for you, and then at His coming He will call for you. What does this story say? It is the Lord saying, I will do all for you.

Now let us go on to the other verses. "A certain woman named Martha received him into her house." She loved the Lord and she received Him. "And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." Look at these two women. Martha says, I will care for Him. Mary says, He shall care for me. Mary understands the good Samaritan. Martha lives not very far from the lawyer. I do not say she is the same as the lawyer, because she loved the Lord and he did not. All the trouble we get into as Christians is through not letting the Lord do everything for us.

I put a question to you: Have you the sense in your soul that God—your Father—will do the very best thing for you? Just let that question come home: Have you the sense in your soul that the Lord Jesus, your precious Saviour, will do the very best thing for you?

I said to a little girl in a house where I was staying, "When you were getting up this morning did you wonder where your breakfast was to come from, or whether you would have any at all?" She looked at me, and smiled at the idea of such a thing. Of course she did not. That was because she had confidence in her parents' care and love. What would you think if your children fretted about such things? It is a splendid luxury to trust God. There is not a single good thing that He will withhold from you, not a single thing that is good.

Martha says, I will care for Him; then she breaks down. A legal person is always fault-finding. May the Lord give us a deeper sense of His grace! "Dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" He says, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." What is the good part? She sat at His feet and heard His word.

This helps us to understand Romans vii. There we get the two husbands, the Law and Christ; the first husband demands, the second husband supports. There is a great difference between demand and support. It is through the death of Christ we are delivered from the first husband. We are become dead to the law. What for? That we should be married to another. Martha was not separated from the first husband. She says, *I will do*; that is law, and with the additional demand of the love of Christ. His love makes the obligation the more terrible. Mary says, I am married to another. *He shall undertake for me.*

Are you going through the day like this: Lord, do Thou support me; I am afraid of myself, I cling to Thee? Do you not think He will support you? *He will.* There is not a bit of fruit to God unless He does. "Thou also hast wrought all our works in us." When the test comes Mary can do the right thing at the right time. The Lord bless His word to you.



## RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE.

ROMANS V. 1-5.

IN the passage I have read you will find four or five distinct blessings which I desire to bring before you. My thought is to speak to the youngest here ; and what will suit the youngest, if clothed with the power of the Spirit, will be a blessing to the oldest.

The first thing I desire to speak of is what is found in the first verse, an expression very often used but little understood, "*Peace with God,*" the first great positive blessing you receive as Christians. It is not a thing you ripen into ; it is not a thing you attain to after a certain amount of experience ; but it is what you get at the start, and if not established in that you will make no progress at all in christian life.

The second verse sets before us two points : our *Place* with God, " By whom also we have access by faith into this favour wherein we stand." That is our present place with God. The last clause of the verse sets before us our future *Prospect*.

Then in verse 3 we have our *Path* and all that we find in the *Path* ; and in verse 5 our present and future *Portion*, the love of God.

Now let us come to the first point, *Peace with God*. I do not think this is understood by a great many. I do not take it for granted that because you are in a certain position, because you have made a profession, or because you partake of the Lord's supper, that you have got hold of this, or that you are established in it. Do not think to yourself, Oh ! that is a thing I know. A number of Christians confound two things, "*peace with God*" and "*the peace of God,*" but they are very distinct. I need peace with God as a

guilty sinner; I need the peace of God as a tried saint. Peace with God depends upon Another; the enjoyment of the peace of God depends upon myself. "The peace of God" is spoken of in Philippians iv. 6, 7, a very beautiful passage, well known to many of us, but little known experimentally. You see at once, as you read the passage, that the possession of this wonderful blessing depends on ourselves—that is, that you and I as Christians are exhorted to bring all our cares to God and to cast them all on Him; and then, as another has said, "If we roll our cares on God, He will roll His peace into our hearts." Think of God's repose! What a proposal for us! That is the way to meet our cares and difficulties. You get the idea in Psalm iii.: "Many there be which say of my soul, There is no hope for him in God. Selah. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. . . . I laid me down and slept; I awaked: for the Lord sustained me." If they say, "There is no hope for him in God," he says, "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me." That is what Stephen had in his heart, the unruffled peace of the place where Christ is. "I laid me down and slept." Not a poor storm-tossed creature. May we know the peace of God keeping our hearts.

But when we speak of peace with God, we are on a quite different line. As a guilty sinner I need peace with God. There are two things that are linked together in scripture: righteousness and peace. I have often told the story of the dear old soul who, when visited by a clergyman and asked in what she was trusting, replied, "I am trusting in the righteousness of God." At which the clergyman said, "You must be making a mistake: you mean you are trusting in the mercy of God." "No," said she, "I am trusting in the righteousness of God." I think that old lady knew what peace with God was. Perhaps she could not have explained it, but she knew the nature of the blessing.

The apostle tells us, in the first chapter of Romans, what

the gospel of God is. It is very interesting to me to notice that in the last few verses of Acts we get the preacher preaching the gospel, and in the beginning of Romans the gospel he preached; you go from the preacher to the subject of his preaching. The gospel of God, he tells us, is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and he is careful to link it up with what had gone before. I beg you to note that. "Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures," as he says in writing to the Corinthians, "How that Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures.*" It is concerning His Son Jesus Christ. His eye is at once fixed on this blessed Person.

Then in verse 17 he says, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed." I think if you had written it you would have said, "Therein the *love* of God is revealed": but it does not say so, but that the righteousness of God is revealed. People do not see this, and that is the reason they have not peace. There is no mention of love till you get to chapter v. The love of God is the known and enjoyed portion of the children of God.

Let us look at it carefully and simply. What does it mean? The righteousness of God—what does that convey to your mind? Let me explain it to you. The righteousness of God is God's consistency with Himself; it is God being true to Himself. In the gospel God tells us that He will be true to what He is. He will not give that up. He will not move from what He is. If He be God and if He act, it must be according to what He is. "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed."

Then immediately the apostle breaks off and goes back to the testimony God had rendered to man in times past. It is very important, because all these things are being called in question. I am afraid we have been damaged by not beginning with chapters i., ii., iii. of Romans. You must begin at the beginning. The apostle takes us back and shows

us how God had spoken to man in days that are past. People are constantly asking, "What about the heathen?" I say, God has spoken to them; He has given them a testimony. Psalm xix. tells you creation is God's witness to man: "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." God has spoken through creation. And what did men do when they knew God? "Glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." They turned to their own imaginations. They "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Mark that! They began with man, and went down to serpents. Think of it, man come down to worship a serpent! And why? Because he gave up God. Why does the Spirit of God tell us all this? The Spirit of God proves how we needed the righteousness of God.

God had taken up the Jew, had given him the law. What happened? "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles" through him. If God gives a testimony, it is that He may be glorified. He gave the Gentile a testimony in creation. What is man's answer to it? They glorified Him not as God. He gave the Jews a testimony in the law. What is the result? God's name blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. What is the Spirit of God proving? The utter unrighteousness of man and his need of the righteousness of God.

This is something like John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord. He came in the way of righteousness. He came preaching repentance. If we are to get blessing, we must see that we *need* righteousness; we have none of our own. In the middle of chapter iii. the apostle brings in all men guilty, and then resumes the subject of the righteousness of God.

Having said this, in order to bring my subject before you in a practical way, I take you back to two men in the Old

Testament. You will remember David, and how his son Absalom slew his brother and had to fly from his father, and how David yearned over Absalom. There was affection in his heart ; but then he was the king, and he had to maintain the righteousness of the throne. How could he bring these two things together ? If he gratifies the affection of his heart, he shatters his throne. The commonest criminal in Israel would be able to reproach him with it. He would be able to say, You have put me in prison for my crime, but your son you have taken back to yourself to gratify your affection, and at the expense of the righteousness of your throne. Well, you know that is what David did ; he sacrificed righteousness for love.

Take another illustration, Darius the king. His princes hate Daniel, and they get the king to make a decree by which they intended to entrap and ruin him. Daniel opens his window and prays to God three times a day just as before. He prays in the presence of God, and not in the presence of men. Here is a man who is with God in the secret of his heart. Well, the princes go to the king and tell him that Daniel has broken the law, and so must suffer. I think I can see the king pacing his palace, with his hand on his head, as he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. He says to himself, I am king, I want to maintain my place as king, and I want to gratify my heart. But he could not solve that problem, and Daniel had to be cast into the den of lions.

What man cannot do, God can. He can maintain what is due to Himself, and also gratify the love of His heart. Where the righteousness of God came out in all its fulness was on the cross. Christ was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." There are two statements here : He "was delivered for our offences." That is one ; it is easy enough to read it, it is another thing to see what it involves. Paul says to Philemon, speaking of

Onesimus, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." He "was delivered for our offences"; they were laid upon Him there in that awful hour that never can be fathomed. Who can fathom those depths? None but God. And what did Christ say—that One who had said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" What did he say? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why did God forsake Him? Because He would be true to Himself. Look at the righteousness of God. He would not spare that blessed One, although loved by Him beyond compare, because He was the sin-bearer. Who can fathom it? Jesus the sin-bearer, and God so true to Himself that He forsook Him.

But it is not at the foot of the cross that your burden rolls away; you do not get peace there. On the cross the Lord said, "It is finished!" But how do I know that that is true? I have it from God. My eternal destiny hangs on the verity of His word. Now mark the other statement: "Was raised again for our justification." God raised Him up out of death.

We are responsible creatures—responsible to God. I can never know peace until I know that righteousness has been met; I *must* know it if I am to have peace. But people can never know peace unless they have known trouble—soul trouble. They do not know their need of it until they have a sense of guilt. There is a moral work in the soul in keeping with all this of which I am speaking. It is not by an effort of the mind, but by God making the soul to feel its need, and then showing it how that need is met.

As I go about and meet Christians, I say, How do you know you are saved? And their minds revert to something that happened twenty years ago. I do not deny that something did happen twenty years ago, but that is no ground to stand upon. I asked a woman one day, "When did you get peace?" and she said, "If you would come with me to the chapel, I could show you the very brick on which I stood when I

got it." You say, Do you deny that something happened there? I do not. But if you ask me if I have peace with God, the question is not what happened twenty years ago, but am I in the faith of God's testimony now? I do not deny the fact of the start, or that you may be conscious of the start. Many are troubled because they cannot look back at a start. Do not be troubled about that. You have been brought up in a christian household perhaps, and your heart has been gradually opened to the things of the Lord, like Lydia of old, of whom it was said, "whose heart the Lord opened." But you would have a jailer-like conversion. Do not wish for it. Thank God, He gives us specimen conversions. I do not think all of us come in on the jailer's lines. Do not be troubled. The point is, Are you in the faith of God's testimony now?

You say, I am a needy soul; I feel my responsibility to God. How can it be met? Now, God renders a testimony and you believe it. It is an old-fashioned way of getting blessing; it is as old as Abraham. Abraham believed God. Against hope he believed in hope. He had not a single experience. Why did he believe? Because God had spoken. God had said, "So shall thy seed be," and Abraham believed Him.

Besides the story of the old lady who trusted in the righteousness of God, I will give you a companion story of an old man who was sitting at his cottage door with his Bible on his knees and his finger on the page he was reading, who was heard to say as he read, "I think Thy thoughts after Thee, O God." There is a moral grandeur about that. It glorifies God. Faith glorifies God apart from one single experience. "Who against hope believed in hope." Not a hope as far as he was concerned. Like Paul in the storm (Acts xxvii.), "when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, . . . all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." Then comes out the man of faith in moral

grandeur ; it is very simple, but very grand. "Be of good cheer : for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." What ! get to shore ! Can you not hear the billows roar and see the waves ? Yes. "Who against hope believed in hope." "*I believe God.*" It is not what I feel.

Now I come to the point, What does God say to you ? Where does He point us ? To ourselves ? To the work of the Spirit of God in me ? No ; the gospel of God is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. God points you to Him and tells you two things about Him. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." What answer do you give to His testimony ? Abraham believed God. Do you ? If you do, what happens ? The righteousness that forsook Jesus is the righteousness that clears you. It is only one righteousness. God is true to Himself. Do you think it is too great a thing for me to say, I am a person against whom God cannot bring a charge ? I do not say, Will not, but Cannot. Why ? Because He would not be righteous if He did. Are you there ? Do you answer, I *was* there twenty years ago ? Are you there *now* ? God is perfectly satisfied with what Christ has done. God grant that this may be better known and enjoyed.

Now I come to the second blessing—*Access*. Mark you, it is, "By whom." The eye is still fixed on Jesus Christ our Lord. By Him we have access into this grace wherein we stand. We stand in the favour of God. One is charmed with the thought, the favour of God. How do you measure the favour of God ? If you had asked a Jew, Where do you see the favour of God ? he would have said : Come out here. Do you see those fields of corn, this beautiful fruit, and those herds and flocks ? These are the marks of God's favour. Beloved Christians, *you* must not look *that* way. I do not mean that we are not to be grateful for mercies here ; do not misunderstand me : but that is not the mark of God's favour. Where do *we* look ? At Christ. I measure God's favour by



Christ. I am in it now, and never out of it. May we know thus how to measure His favour.

Now what is the *prospect*? The expression is very familiar to us. We "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Here we get hope, and it is connected with the glory of God. If you turn to Romans viii., you find the passage, "We are saved by hope." But this is a deeper thing. I am so put with God through redemption, so on God's side, that I can rejoice as I think of His glory; not my new body, but God's glory; the scene where everything will be suitable to Him, where God can say, Everything My eye rests upon suits Me. And it suits *you* because you have been brought to be with Him. It is not that you will be relieved of all your troubles, have a new body, and so on; all quite true, but you rejoice in hope of God's glory.

Another thing: The eye of Christ will rest upon it, and He will be able to say, I sorrowed and suffered to bring it all about. Do you like to think of the joy of Christ in that day? His joy is that God is glorified, and that everything is suitable to the nature and character of God. We belong to that scene. What I mourn over is my insensibility to it. If I lived more in that scene, I should be more sensitive to the character of things here. I think of the blessed Lord down here. Who can tell what He suffered to live down here and see the things that we see? We get hardened. If we lived with God more, we should feel it more. We cannot see the glory of God here. I see man, a vessel marred by sin; and is it not terrible that when out of the presence of God we can laugh at sin! If I were with God I could not do that, but should mourn over it, over all that is inconsistent with His glory. Thank God we belong to the scene that is suitable to Him.

Now I come to the *path*. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." What comes upon us in the path is tribulation. Look at the sharp turn the scripture takes. When with God we can even glory in tribulation. We can

view it in this light—it works out good for us. The path of a Christian is not a path of prosperity. No ; the blessed Lord said, “ In the world ye shall have tribulation.” It is well for us to face it : but before we embrace the path we are set in God’s favour. Tribulation does not mean what we so often talk about—the trouble that is common to man. “ Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward,” but it is not that. It is the consequence of being brought to God. We are brought home to God, blessed in His favour, and because we are, this world is turned into a wilderness ; it is redemption that has done it. And now we glory in tribulation. Why ? Because it breaks your will, and the effect of that is patience, and then patience works experience. There is a certain school always occupied with experience. Perhaps we go to the other extreme. I would go a long way to hear a person speak of how he went through a strait with God. Some people can tell you much about the theory, but they have no experience of what God has been to them in a strait. We learn God, not a mere truth. We learn Christ. If you have Christ, you have the truth, but you may have the truth in a certain way without having Christ. What we need is the practical experience of what God is.

“ And experience, hope.” Now we are turned back to hope. We began with hope. The hope is enlarged because we are with the God of hope, and the love of God, which is the spring of all, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Now we have reached the love of God. There is nothing about the love of God in the previous chapters. The love of God is the enjoyed portion of the one who has the Spirit.

May the Lord bless these few remarks to you, and may that first great blessing, “ *Peace* with God,” be yours, and then may you know your *Place* with God, and your *Prospect*, that you may be braced up for your *Path* ; and may you know that blessed *Portion*, the love of God, ours now, ours for eternity ; and to be more fully realized when with Christ.

## THE LOVE OF GOD.

ROMANS v. 5-8.

ON a previous occasion we were considering the blessings set forth in the first four verses of this chapter. I propose now to dwell upon the following verses which give us our portion. "The love of God." I could show you from the writings of both Paul and John that this love is the spring of all. You cannot get beyond it: that love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit is given to me to make that love good in me. I do not wait to go to heaven to enjoy it; it is perfected in us *now*. Love is realized. I have now touched upon an important point, and perhaps some of you are saying, That is the very point; I should like to realize love. I met a man once who said he should like to have blessing from God, but he was waiting to have the love of God shed abroad in his heart. But in this scripture, directly after the realization of the love is spoken of, you are turned away to consider the great expression of the love of God. "Well proved in what it's done." The Spirit of God takes our eyes from love realized to love expressed. You are turned to what produces the realization. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This takes us to the when and the how it was manifested. You cannot start from your own heart. How much have you realized the love of God? In the measure in which you know the love expressed. Love must be manifested before it can be realized. People are looking for the love in their own hearts. You must get to the fountain first—the heart of God. He has given us His Spirit, and the Spirit produces in our hearts the realization of His love by pointing out to us the manifestation of His love.

Here for the first time in this epistle we reach love. Before

I go on I should like to say : The love of God never could give us peace ; it must be the righteousness of God for that ; the question of our sins must be settled righteously, or there is no peace. The love of God is the source of all blessing. Our sin was great, but love provided what righteousness demanded. I am anxious as to this point, because we cannot go on until it is settled. God has put these two things together, righteousness and peace, and we must not separate them. If you put them together in your soul, then you can go on to enjoy the spring and source of all—the love of God. The first time the indwelling Spirit is spoken of in this epistle it is in connection with shedding abroad the love of God ; the Spirit is given that you may enjoy the love. That is what I call realizing. Our hearts are made sensible of God's love. You cannot get beyond that. That is our portion. We have reached the ocean now. We can never be better loved than we are now, but we may enjoy it more, and shall by-and-by. What a thought ! I am loved as much now as ever I shall be. My enjoyment of it is another thing ; but God loves you and me, dear saint, as much now as ever He will.

I want to speak to you of the love of God in five different ways : firstly, the Manifestation of love ; secondly, the Commendation of love ; thirdly, the Perfection of love ; fourthly, the Manner of love ; and fifthly, the Measure of love.

And now you will expect that, if I am going to dwell upon the love of God, I shall turn to John iii. 16 ; for that is the first statement we get of it in scripture. Let us turn to it. Here we get the *manifestation* of love. If I asked any one of you to quote the verse, I will answer for it that you would not quote it correctly. "God so loved the world." Have I quoted it correctly ? I have not. We must be careful how we quote scripture. What is it then ? "*For* God so loved the world." You may think that that is a very small difference, but it all hangs on that. You cannot understand

scripture unless you read it in its connection. Go back to verse 14. No one can understand verse 16 unless he understand the brazen serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The serpent of brass was a type of Christ on the cross, giving the aspect of His death that I trust God will make known to every reader. You understand, perhaps, that Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; but here we have a serpent of brass as a type of the Lord. What does it mean? The serpent of brass does not set forth the Lord Jesus as the bearer of sins. It is not in that connection He is seen here, but with the judgment of *sin*.

Let me recall to you that incident in Numbers to which the Lord refers. Look at that people; they are nearing the end of their journey; they say to Moses, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." What a terrible thing to say! God's eye rested on them; He heard what they said, and sent fiery serpents which bit the people so that they died. They were poisoned; their lives were poisoned. They were dead and dying with the poison of the serpent in their veins. Their natural lives were poisoned. God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole, so that every one that was bitten might look at it and live. It was to be made of brass: brass always means judgment; and when they looked at the serpent of brass they lived.

Let us go further back to the story of the fall of man. Man disobeyed God and fell. We are witnesses of that fall. I need not go to the Old Testament to see that man is a fallen being. When man disobeyed God he received the sting of the serpent. Who was the serpent? The devil. What was the sting of the serpent? The sting of the serpent was *hate*. When man disobeyed God, he hated the God he had disobeyed. Satan hated God, and we receive the sting of the serpent morally, as they received it physically. What is God going to do with the flesh that hates Him? Will He

forgive it? No. God never forgives the flesh. He forgives sins, but He condemns *sin* in the flesh. Behold in that uplifted Son of man, made sin for us, the condemnation of sin in the flesh. That is gospel. He was made what we are. It is not only that He bore our sins, but that which put God's Son upon the cross has been condemned in His death.

I will prove to you that man hates God. You know the parable, "Last of all he sent unto them his son." What was the outcome of that? They said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." That is the flesh—hate. On the cross He was made what we are. When you come to the history of it, you see Him there on the cross dead, on either side a *dying* man, but the centre man *dead*. The soldier takes a spear and pierces His side. John, who had laid his head on that bosom, watched the soldier. What was the answer to the soldier's spear? Blood and water. I want you to think of the two ends of that spear. My hatred at one end, His love at the other. John bears record, and his record is true. From that bosom came forth blood and water—blood to expiate guilt, and water to cleanse from the defilement of the flesh; both by death. Behold the moral beauty of the gospel! There might have been written across that spear-pierced side two scriptures, "God is light" and "God is love." "God is light"; nothing but the blood can satisfy His claims. "God is love"; God so loved where I so hated. Where my hatred was proved, God's love was proved too. There at that cross rose higher and higher the hate of man, but above it all rose the mighty love of God. Where man so hated, God so loved. My degradation and ruin is the dark background for the love of God. He says, I take advantage of your hate and ruin to show out My love. Have you ever stood by the seashore and looked at the cliffs to see how high the tide rises? You can see the mark of it and can say, I know the water has reached as high as that. At the cross the love of God rises up far above and beyond all the hate of

man. Now you can see why "For" comes in in John iii. 16.

Now I will take you to another passage. Remember the manifestation of the love is my point just now. John's Epistle, chapter iv. 7: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God." In this passage Christians are exhorted to love one another. God never needed to be told to love, but we do; we are exhorted, not to look for love, but to show it. Some people are always looking for love. You are not told to look for love, but to exhibit it; and if you do this, you will find it. You have sometimes to pour water into a pump in order to get water out.

Another thing I would like to say: It is God's love, not human love. God loves with a holy love that will never tolerate a stain on its object. God says, I love you with a love that will not allow a spot on you; I will not tolerate it.

Let me just repeat a passage where you get the exhibition of love. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul says (2 Cor. xii. 15), "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved." What! Go on loving, though the more I love the less I am loved! Where is such a man living? In the love of God, or he could not speak like that.

Now come to verse 9 (1 John iv.), "In this was manifested the love of God toward us." Here you have it *toward* you. How? "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." The manifestation of the love of God is connected with the sending of His Son that we may live, and also to be a propitiation for our sins. How can you talk about the love of God apart from atonement? This doctrine is all about the contrary: it has the hiss of the serpent in it. Turn from it. What does our scripture say? He sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins—on the one hand that we may have life, and on the

other as a propitiation for our sins. Behold the manifestation of the love of God. If you want to see love, herein is love.

You see the Spirit of God began in verse 7 by exhorting us to love one another, and in order to produce love, He shows how love has acted towards us. Love manifested towards you begets love realized in you—"the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts"—and love realized in you results in love exhibited toward others. But you must start at the top with love manifested toward you; then follows love realized in you. Whose love? God's love. I will tell you how much you love God. In the measure in which you have realized His love toward you. Your heart responds to love in the measure in which you have taken it in. It cannot flow out if it does not flow in. The love of God is shed abroad in your heart, and then it flows out. The moment you take in love, the natural result is—you love.

Now come back with me to Romans v. We get the *Commendation* of love here. A man once told me he had been waiting thirteen years for the love of God to be shed abroad in his heart. I said to him, "Did you ever read verses 6, 7, and 8 of Romans v.?" Look at the structure of the scripture. The moment the Spirit of God speaks of love realized in your heart He calls your attention to when, where, and how the love was expressed. If the man had believed the next verse, he would soon have realized the love of God shed abroad in his heart. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: . . . but God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That is the commendation of the love. I am not called to look into my heart to see whether God loves me; that is miserable self-occupation; you must look outside yourself. You must see the love there, in the cross, before you can realize it in your heart. It is the outside look gives inside enjoyment.



Now I come to point three : the *Perfection* of love. If you have Bibles with marginal references, you will see that it should read thus : "Herein is love *with us* made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as he is, so are we in this world." Some have even said to me when I have read the passage, "Certainly you have a different Bible from ours ; that is not in ours" ; and they have gone to look. My dear friends, here it is in the word, and it is here for your joy and blessing. "Because as he is, so are we in this world." It is this latter clause that people say is not in their Bibles. It is God's love that is made perfect with us, and it is with a view to giving us boldness in the day of judgment. Think of the proposal. The day of judgment is a very solemn thing. It is the day when God will take cognisance of evil and will judge it. He is the centre of the moral universe, and He must judge evil. How can I have boldness in that day ? Because as He is, so are we in this world. Who is *He* ? Christ. It does not say here we shall be like Him. There *is* a passage which says, "We shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is," but here it is : "As he is, so *are* we in this world." That is the answer to the serpent of brass. The serpent of brass is Christ made what I am ; here it is, I am made what He is. As He is in all His grace and moral worth, as He is to God's satisfaction, so am I in this world. That is the perfection of His love. Who could have imagined it ! But the Holy Ghost has written it.

This is the spring of holiness. Is Christ clear of sin ? So am I. Is He clear of judgment ? So am I. Is He loved ? So am I. I pray God His people may know the perfection of His love as set forth here. Here is a heritage, and saints are being cheated out of it, and that partly because they do not read the scriptures in faith. "As he is, so are we in this world." What does it mean ? I will tell you. "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." As much as to say,

I will make you suitable to my presence. I will so put you before Me that I may let My love out to you as I do to My Son. The Christian is made meet and suitable for God Himself.

Now the next verse : " There is no fear in love." If there is a bit of fear in your heart, it is because you do not know you are as Christ is. " Fear hath torment." Suppose I am going home, I send a wire to say, I will be home by the four o'clock train. I go to the door of my house. I go in. There is great silence. I say to my wife, Where are the children ? She replies, From the time we received the telegram the children's hearts have been filled with fear, and they are gone upstairs to hide themselves. Filled with fear ! What would that be to my heart ? A cruel cut indeed ; any one can understand that. But how would it really be ? As I come up the roadway, what do I see ? Three little faces against the window-pane, and the moment the door is open they rush to welcome me. " Perfect love casteth out fear." I have heard God's people sing :—

" 'Tis a point I long to know ;  
Oft it causes anxious thought :  
Do I love the Lord or no ?  
Am I His, or am I not ? "

That thought is not here. It is a doleful ditty ; I used to sing it. " Perfect love casteth out fear." Anxious thought ! Yes, it may cost you anxious thought if it is *your* love you are thinking about ; but think of *His* love.

I can only indicate the other points very briefly. The *Manner* of the love is in chapter iii. of this epistle. " Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." That is the manner of the love. We are children of God. He is our Father. It is the manner of the love the *Father* has bestowed upon us. What is the consequence ? The world does not know us : I say to myself, No one knows me here, and I am

content to be unknown, for I am well know up there. Are you content to be well known there and unknown here? The Lord Jesus was well known there, but nobody knew Him here. He was only the carpenter's son in the eyes of men. Dear Christians, the Father knows us. Are you content with this, or are you hankering after the world? It is the love of the Father makes us unworldly. Do you want to be noticed? Are you going to publish what you are doing? That will not do; the blessed Lord did not do that; He was content to have His Father's approval. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." Who is the "Him" here? The Lord Jesus. Be content to be nothing and have His company. There is always plenty of room at the bottom of the ladder. All the scrambling is at the top. The bottom is a very blessed place. You get the company of Jesus there. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

I will take you now briefly to the *Measure* of the love. It is in John xvii. 23. "And hast loved them as thou hast loved me." That is the measure of His love. If you can measure the love of the Father to the Son, then you can measure the love of the Father to you.

The Lord bless this word to you, and give you understanding hearts

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## THREE DAYS.

JOHN i. 7-9, 29, 35-42.

IT is very interesting to notice the difference between the testimony of John the Baptist in John's Gospel, and his testimony in the other Gospels. The testimony is quite

distinct, and is of a different character. In Matthew iii. we have his testimony as regards Jesus: he indicates Him to be the King. John was the greatest of all the prophets, because he pointed out the Person of whom the other prophets had spoken. While it was a wonderful thing to speak of Him as Isaiah, David, and others had done, it was still more wonderful to point Him out as the Person of whom they had spoken. But in the Gospel of John he is on other ground: he comes to bear witness of the Light, that all men might believe: to bear witness of the One who coming after him yet was before him—the Son of God.

My intention is to speak of three ways in which John the Baptist bears witness to the Lord: and in these three testimonies I think I see three distinct periods in the history of every soul that gets blessing from God. I shall call these three periods three days, because in verse 29 we have “the next day,” and again in verse 35. I do not at all refer to the third day of chapter ii. 1, for I am not taking up the scripture in the way of interpretation, but only in order to give it an application to our souls.

Now the first day for the soul is in verse 7: “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.” Light is for every man, rich or poor. Alas! men love the darkness because their deeds are evil. You may escape the light now, but the day is coming when you will not be able to do so. The first day when God begins to work in a soul is when light comes in. There is a certain analogy between the work of God in the new creation and that in the old creation. “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” God commenced to work, and on the first day God says, “Let there be light; and there was light.” And that is the first action of God with a soul—to bring light in. The first effect of light is to expose. You cannot get blessing from God without exposure, though there may be different

measures of it. Light makes manifest. If you are an unconverted person, I will tell you what God must do before you are saved : He must search you.

All through John's Gospel we see two things going hand in hand, *exposure and disclosure*—man exposed and God made known. When people came to Jesus, the first thing they found out was that *He* was *light*, and then that they were sinners. You hear people say that God is love. Quite true, but God is also light. You can only learn the love in the light. The light that exposes you discloses what God is ; thank God for that ! And let me say this to you Christians : You can only realize divine love in the light. We have our natural thoughts of love, but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. These things cannot be divorced ; it is in the light you learn the love.

Take chapter iii. There was a man named Nicodemus : he came to Jesus by night. His religion made him ashamed to come by day. He came to the Son of God—the Light, and the first thing the Lord says to him is, “ Ye must be born again.” That is exposure. If the Lord had said, You have done things you ought not, he would have admitted it, I dare say. But the statement goes deeper than that, as John's Gospel always does. I think that is why men hate it as they do. If any section of scripture is hated, it is this Gospel, and the reason is because you get the deepest exposure.

“ Ye must be born again ” ; a sentence often on our lips, but how little do we understand its deep meaning ! It is not reformation that will meet the case, but being born anew. That is exposure. Nicodemus did not understand it ; and the Lord gives him that beautiful figure of the brazen serpent, “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” What for ? “ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” He then goes on to say, “ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”

That is disclosure. The exposure is : "Ye must be born again."

Take chapter iv. It is not here a religious sinner, but a poor immoral woman. She comes to the well to draw water, and finds Jesus sitting there, and He is so gracious to her. He who is over all, God blessed for ever, sits there a weary man. He stoops to ask a drink of her ! What grace ! He will turn on the light directly, but first He will weave a web around her to make her stay in the light. "Give me to drink." Think of the Son of God asking a drink of such a woman as this ! "If thou knewest the gift of God," etc., verses 10-14. What is that ? Disclosure. Does she see it ? Not a bit, and why ? She has not been exposed yet. She must learn the beauty of those words in the light which exposes her. You cannot understand anything till you have been in the light. "Go, call thy husband." Now He is about to put the light on. She says, "I have no husband." "Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband." He pours the light in, but she does not run away. If He had said this at the first, she would have been driven away. He has won her heart by His grace ; but she learns what grace is in the light. There is disclosure, but there is also exposure. She comes into the light, and then she gets the blessing, and when He is discovered to her as the Christ, she goes her way into the city and says to the men, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did ; is not this the Christ ?" If you will come to Him, He will tell you all things that ever you did. All things that ever *you* did ! *You*, a wretched sinner ! Yes, I have been exposed, but He has discovered Himself to me. Exposure and disclosure, they go hand in hand together.

Would you like Christ to tell *you* all that ever *you* did ? You would not like the dearest friend on earth to know all you have been doing ; but Jesus knows it. It is a real moment in your history when you are exposed. The first

action of light is to distress. Have you ever been distressed? Did you hear of the naval manœuvres off the Irish coast a few years ago? If so, you will have heard about the electric searchlight. You can imagine one of those huge ironclads brought up alongside the coast. It is so dark you can scarcely see the length of the ship. Orders are given to turn on the searchlight, and in a moment not the smallest thing on that vessel but is seen under its blaze. Ah, dear friends, it is a great moment in the soul when God puts on His searchlight. He is going to put it on full blaze one day. The day is coming when He will expose everything, but it is a great thing to be exposed *now*.

I now come to John viii. The last verse of chapter vii. says: "Every man went unto his own house." Chapter viii. 1: "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." They all had their homes to go to: the people went home to sleep; Jesus went to the mount of Olives to pray, and early in the morning was found in the temple. And they brought a woman to Him, a terribly bad woman, and set her in His presence; they say: Here she is. Moses says she ought to be stoned; what sayest Thou? "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground." He was Jehovah who wrote the law. They are quoting the law to the One who wrote it. "When they continued asking him, he lifted up himself"; and now He puts on the searchlight: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." John Bradford saw a poor man going to execution, and exclaimed, "There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God." That showed that he had been under the searchlight. Now look at those Pharisees. They went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last. They went out to their prayers, they went out to their religion, but they went out in the dark. Religious darkness is the worst of all. Then He says to the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

I now come to the second day in the soul's history. 'The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' What does that mean? That the One who is the Light has come down to put away all that the light exposes. The One who is the Light is also the Lamb. He takes away the sin of the world—not sins, but sin; it is a deeper thing. It is sin as God sees it, as God knows it. The Lamb has come to remove it from before God, to settle for ever that great sin question. Do you remember Genesis xxii.? "Take thou thy son, thine only son Isaac : . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering." "And they went both of them together." Precious words! twice repeated in the chapter. I should like to write over the Gospel of John : "They went both of them together." Isaac said to Abraham, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham replied, "God will provide himself a lamb." And when he was about to take the life of his son, God arrested his hand, and he looked behind him and saw a ram caught in a thicket. "Behind." I like that word. The provision was made before sin came into the world. As that little hymn says :—

"My soul looks back to see  
The burden Thou didst bear."

The One foreordained before the foundation of the world is pointed out by John as *come* to take away the sin of the world. It is not dispensational here. Light is for everybody; the Lamb is for every one. Light is universal: the aspect is towards all. It is not the Jewish lamb: it is God's Lamb.

It is very remarkable that John the Baptist should so witness. He indicates Him here as the One come to remove what the light exposes. The One who came to expose our sin has died on Calvary's cross to put it away. Have you



the sense in your soul that that blessed Person has for ever settled the question of your sin and your sins? If not, look away to Him and you will know it is settled. God will not raise the question of sin with His people. He *has* raised it and settled it, and on the ground of what we have here, God will bring in the new heavens and the new earth. He will erect on the solid basis of this verse that glorious superstructure which nothing can shake. And I, a little atom in it—I rest there. There is not a thing about me, not a discovery I can make, that His cross has not met. We look back and see the Lamb in eternity, saying, “Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God,” and we look on and see that Lamb in the midst of the throne. He could, as it were, put His hand on the volume of the book and say, *I have done it.*

On the cross He met all the claims of the throne of God, and God has found satisfaction in the blood of the Lamb, and He is there now in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain. The throne that was against our sins is for us now; it is a throne of grace. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” It is peace to see Him there, in the midst of the throne, “a Lamb as it had been slain.” Peace is this, that everything about you unsuitable to God has been met in the death of Christ. The Light-bearer is the Sin-bearer. With what holy delight do we contemplate it! “And the Lamb is the light thereof.” You could not bear the light if the Lamb were not the light thereof.

There are two things in the second day—sin put away and the Holy Ghost given. Verse 33: “The same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” That would make a subject in itself. The moment you rest your soul on the work of Christ the Holy Ghost is given to dwell in you. Just as in the case of the leper the oil was put on the right ear, the right thumb, and the right toe; but the blood was first put

there. What was the oil a type of ? The Holy Ghost. We have been anointed with the Holy Ghost in order that we may enter into all these things.

There are two things, then, in connection with this day—the putting away of sin, and the baptizing with the Holy Ghost. I can look up and thank God that Christ has borne everything for me ; everything unsuitable to God is removed in His death ; in other words, I am trusting in His blood, and if this be so, I have the Holy Ghost. “ Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” “ God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” There are many blessed truths that come out in connection with the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now we come to the third day : “ The next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples ; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God ! ” He does not say anything about what He is going to do, or what He is going to give ; he is looking on Him, beholding Him. I think, if I understand this scripture aright, John the Baptist is gazing upon Jesus, his heart filled with delight, and those two men are near enough to hear his breathings as he says, “ Behold the Lamb of God ! ” He presents Him as an object for their hearts. In the second day you get salvation and the Spirit ; in the third day you get satisfaction. The One who has saved you can satisfy you. That is what God proposes to do for us, to make our hearts deeply satisfied with Him who is the Fountain of Life. Do you not think that the One who is going to fill your heart with satisfaction and joy for ever is competent to satisfy your heart now ? It is not what He does, it is not what He gives, but what He is. Have you ever had a taste of it ? God would have us to know more deeply “ what soon shall be our part.” God desires it should be our part now. If I knew it better I should be able to speak of it better.

The second day's testimony had no practical effect so far

as we can see; there was no attaching and detaching connected with that; but the moment you get the third day's testimony they leave John and follow Jesus. True ministry does two things: it brings the conscience into the presence of God, and it entwines the heart around the Person of Christ. You can always judge true ministry thus. It is not that the mind is interested, that you have some new thoughts, but that your conscience is brought into the presence of God, and your heart is attached to Christ.

They left John and followed Jesus. They have a new object and a new centre. What a wonderful thing that we can have the same object before us now that we shall have in heaven! The Lord turns and sees them following. What is so sweet here is that we learn that He will encourage the least desire to know Him better.

You may say, I am a poor thing; often my heart has wandered; but it is moved by this scripture, and I want to know Him better. The Spirit of God will be with you in that desire. He is as true to Christ as the needle to the pole, and you have power too, the capacity to enter into the third day, because you have the Holy Ghost in you. And now, as they follow Jesus, He turns and says, "What seek ye?" They immediately say, "Master, where dwellest thou?"

If that be your question to-night, Where dwellest Thou? much that hinders will be discovered to you of which you are not conscious now. In Canticles the bridegroom says, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." Immediately the bride says, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." She is made conscious of these the moment he draws her into communion. A little thing hinders communion. "Take us the foxes"; not that we can find them, but the Lord will put His finger upon them and show us what hinders.

Another thing is, If you take up this question, "Where dwellest thou?" you must learn His cross. He says,

"Come and see." You will have to leave earth to find heaven. Is that difficult to you? You say, I understand I shall have to leave earth to have heaven when I die. That is not it; but in spirit you leave earth to have heaven *now*. I believe that is what the Lord indicates to us here.

"They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour." They abode with Him the whole day, "and they came and saw." This is the key to the whole gospel. "Where dwellest thou?" "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He dwells in the bosom of the Father. "Come and see," He says. Do you know what it is to dwell there? There is a reality about that. He never left the bosom of the Father, the Father's affections. It is a condition, not a position.

John says (John i. 14), "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." They beheld Him as the object of the Father's heart. Then in his first epistle John says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." And again, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." What is a full cup for the Christian? To abide in the love of the Son and of the Father. Very often we get trials, and we may say, like the little hymn, "Blest be the sorrow, kind the storm, that drives us nearer home." No storm did that for Jesus. He was always in the Father's love, and He is saying to you, "Come and see."

We see in verses 41, 42 that the *dwellers* are the *finders*, and the *satisfied* ones are the *servers*. The Lord grant that we may be there, coming out in our little way and saying, "Come and see." The woman of chapter iv. could say, "Come and see." The Lord grant that we may know this third day better, this abiding with the Father and the Son, that our joy may be full.

THE PRESENT TRIUMPH OF  
THE GOSPEL.

MARK xiv. 9.

I HAVE read this verse to introduce my subject. No doubt you are familiar with the circumstances that led to this remark of the Lord. It is His comment on the act of this woman. It is recorded three times—in Matthew, Mark, and John. The Lord says, “Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.” Why should the act of this woman be thus recorded? For many years I could not have given you a reason, but I think I can now. The reason why this should be told is because it presents to us the *present triumph* of the gospel. We limit the thought of the gospel too much. Christians need the gospel. I do not say they need a gospel to take them to heaven, but they need a gospel to deliver them while here. You think, perhaps, that the triumph of the gospel is to snatch a brand from the burning, and to place that one in glory with Christ. All that is quite true, but it is not the present triumph of the gospel, and it is not the point of this passage.

I am taking it for granted that every Christian here has the assurance the gospel gives as to the future—that if you departed hence this moment it would be well with you. That is a good thing. Many have not reached it. But that is not the *present triumph* of the gospel? What is the present triumph of the gospel? I beg you to weigh it. It is to make you *forget yourself and think of Another*. That is the proposal of the gospel. It gives me an object outside myself. The action of this woman sets it forth. She takes

that which might have given her distinction in the eyes of others. She had gathered her pence together; she takes the ointment she had purchased, and, led by the instincts of affection, lavishes it on this blessed One. I think this sets forth the present triumph of the gospel, and therefore the Lord commends it in this way.

The assurance that you will go to heaven when you die will not make you happy for the present; we need another aspect of the gospel that will set us free from ourselves and occupy us with Another. The gospel will produce this: it will place you in the company of this woman.

What I desire to set before you is, first, the *necessity* of deliverance, then the *way* of deliverance, and finally the *effect* of deliverance. I trust it will be made clear to you by the Spirit.

I will now read a passage in chapter xi. of this gospel, verses 1-9. I have chosen this scripture to illustrate my subject. I suppose you are familiar with Exodus xiii., where God puts the firstling of an *ass* and the firstborn of *man* together. When we come to scripture we do not find ourselves flattered by the company we are put into; we are humiliated, and it leads to blessing if we accept it.

The firstling of an ass had to be redeemed with a lamb, or else its neck had to be broken; it *could only live on the ground that the lamb had died.*

I now turn to a passage in Mark xi. 2-5. We see the colt tied. Here I see a picture of myself. I look at that colt and say, Why is that colt alive? Because the lamb had died for it, otherwise God had said its neck was to be broken, but there it is. I believe as to the strict interpretation of this passage that it has reference to Israel, but the same thing applies in principle to us. The colt was allowed to live because the lamb had died. That is, the judgment of God rested upon us, but the Son of God took it in our stead. He died and we live. That is the first thing

you are sensible of : *the Lamb has died for you*, and you live ; because He has gone through the judgment, you will never have to bear it.

What is the next thing ? The Lamb who died for you is the *Lord to guide you*. If the *lamb* died for the colt, the *Lord* must sit on it ; it is to be for the Lord's pleasure. That is what you are set free for. "The Lord hath need of him." I ask you, Do you acknowledge His claim ? He claims you because He died for you. Do you answer, Yes, the *Lamb* that *redeemed* me is the *Lord to control* me henceforth ?

There is no such thing as salvation apart from the acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ. It is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I feel how necessary it is to press the claims of the Lord, for it is as we recognise His claims and desire to answer to them, that we feel the need of deliverance. The reason people do not get deliverance is because they do not feel their need of it, and the reason they do not feel their need of it is because they do not own the Lord's claims ; they are not conscientious ; it is the laxity of the age ; the gospel is preached so much as relief. There is relief, I admit, but connected with it is the lordship of Christ. The scripture reads : "If we believe on him that raised up Jesus *our Lord* from the dead." It is not believing a text. I do not think any person has ever been saved through merely believing a *text*. You have to believe God, the One of whom the text speaks. There is a very great difference. "To whom it shall be imputed"—righteousness shall be imputed—"believing" (it should be) "on him that raised up Jesus *our Lord*." You are introduced to *God*, and the testimony of God points you to Jesus *our Lord*. You may think this is a very simple thing to bring before you, but it is most important.

Let me quote another passage : "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the *Lord Jesus*" (or "Jesus as Lord," as it should read), "and believe in thine heart that God hath

raised him from the dead, *thou* shalt be saved." There you get the two things—the confession of the lordship of Christ, and salvation. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness : Jesus is confessed as *your* Lord.

Let me give you a case in scripture, because I am anxious about this point. You remember how Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus with a high hand, and with authority to persecute those who called on the name of the Lord ; how he was arrested by the light from heaven that struck him to the ground, and how he heard the voice of Jesus saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" Now I want you to notice what he says when he learns who it is that speaks to him : "*Lord*, what wilt thou have me to do ?" He owns Jesus as Lord. He has not peace yet, but he has come under the sway of the Lord.

Perhaps you say, What has this to do with deliverance ? It lies at the very root of the matter. If there was a sense of the lordship of Christ, the need of deliverance would be felt, and it would then be sought. Just come back to Saul : he goes into Damascus and spends three days and three nights without food and without sight. Is he happy ? No ; he goes down in overwhelming distress. What is the matter ? He has owned Jesus as Lord, but he has discovered within him a principle that *will not go that way*. The man who has led a blameless life has discovered that. Now you are on the road to deliverance. You *must* learn *that* lesson, and you will never be happy or do a single thing for Christ's glory till you have learnt it. It is the recognition of the Lord's claims that needs to be pressed.

The next point is, you want to please the Lord. To put it in a simple way, you say, I own His love and desire to do His will, but have not an atom of power. What shall I do ? That is terrible anguish for a soul ! Not to have power to please the one you love, that is agony. Have you ever



passed through that? There was anguish in the thought of possibly going to hell, but that is all settled now; it is not that you cannot go to heaven, but oh, the anguish of learning this lesson of one's own powerlessness for good—that there is in one a principle that will not go God's way!

The first four chapters of Romans would have been sufficient for one who had gone to heaven the day he was converted, but if he lives he needs a gospel to teach him how to live. We think we only want a gospel that will take us to heaven; we really need a gospel to teach us how we should live on earth, to make us happy while we are here. This is the great need; it is not a question of people going to heaven, that is not the trouble, but they are not happy because they are not clear of this evil principle that will not go the Lord's way.

It is not knowing the doctrine; you may know the doctrine as clear as noonday, but you must *take the journey*. It is possible for a man to get up and lecture on deliverance, and not be in the good of it himself. We must experimentally take the journey, and there is a very blessed end to the journey.

You say, perhaps: You have described my case exactly. Will you now tell me what will set me clear of myself? Come then to the twelfth verse of this beautiful chapter (xi.). The verse before this is very touching. The Lord had entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple, and had looked round upon all things, and when evening came had gone out to Bethany. The temple was the religious sphere of the Jew—of man in the flesh. He would not stay in the temple; He would not even sleep in the city where the temple was. The next day, coming from Bethany, he saw a fig tree. He was hungry, and seeing a fig tree He came to it, if haply He might find anything thereon; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves. And then He says, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." "And

in the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up *from the roots.*" When Peter calls attention to it, the Lord answers, "Have faith in God." If I can only convey to you what is in this passage, I shall be glad, for it is a most interesting and helpful scripture. The Lord came seeking fruit for God. "He was hungry"—really it means He was hungering for something for God. But He did not find it. That tree sets forth man under culture—Israel, if you like, but our history is in it, for in the history of Israel you get the history of man after the flesh. What is to be done? God has looked for fruit from man in the flesh, and found none. My friends, have you got hold of that? If so, the next thing is to know God's judgment of it; you have to learn first what that man is, and the character of that man who will not go God's way, and then the judgment of God that is on him. God will prove to you the *necessity* of the cross. In that cross God has pronounced His judgment on that which troubles you. "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." "They saw the fig tree dried up *from the roots.*' *Withered*, WITHERED—God has withered it. It was God's act. The man after the flesh has been blasted by the judgment of God.

Peter called his Master's attention to it, but the Lord, in effect, says: I will never look that way again. *You* may look that way and get your disappointments, but God will never look that way. He has done with it. If that is not good news to you, I do not know what will be. If you have learnt in anguish of soul what that fig tree is, if you have had a sickening of yourself, what a relief it is to know that God has done it! It is an immense help to accept God's judgment of it.

How then did God judge it, and where did He judge it? Look at the third verse of Romans viii.: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak *through the flesh*, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,

condemned sin in the flesh." Look at that verse, and do not think as you do so that you know all about it. Do you know the relief of that verse? The law could not produce anything for God from the flesh. It was "holy, just, and good"; but it was weak to produce anything for God "through the flesh." Here comes in the gospel—God sent His *own Son*! Look at the cost of it. He sends His *own Son*. What to do? First of all to be in the likeness of sinful flesh—wondrous grace!—and then as a sacrifice for sin to *condemn sin* in the *flesh*. When God made *Him* to be *sin*—when God made His sinless Son to be sin for us—He condemned sin in the flesh. That is how and where God withered it up. Do you know what it is to have the relief of that? Do you think any one can know that who has not really felt what the flesh is?

In Romans vii. 22 we see one who loved the law of God after the inward man, but was powerless to fulfil it. Let me say there are three ways of learning our badness. First by the *practice of evil*. This is the most superficial way; that is to say, a man has been into all the mud and filth of this world, and because of this he knows what his badness is; but it is a mistake to think that he knows more about it than the person who has been outwardly moral. The second way we learn our badness is by the *effort* to be good; that is Romans vii.—the effort to be good, without object or power. The third and most effectual way is in the *presence of perfect goodness*, and this is without a bit of anguish. You learn it in the presence of that blessed One who is *before God's face for ever*. The more we learn His perfections, the more we learn the true character of the flesh by way of contrast, and we get distanced from the man here.

But let me come back to my point. The tree is withered *from the root right up*. Well indeed for us that it is so. It is a gospel fact that God has condemned sin in the flesh, and it cannot be altered. This gives me a title to turn from

myself to Christ. How could we turn from ourselves if God had not done so? It would be ignoring the question, not settling it. Peter could say, "Master, behold the fig tree!" but the Lord says, as it were, No, I will never look that way again; I have done with it. Have faith in God. You will need to have faith in God to be off the ground of the responsible man. What I mean is, that on the cross God pronounced His unalterable judgment of that tree; and the condemnation is absolute. If you know the badness of that tree, what a blessed thing it is for you to know that God has judged it, and you are entitled to have done with it.

On what ground does the Spirit of God dwell in us? "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." We have the Holy Ghost dwelling in us if we are Christians, if we have believed the truth of the gospel. The Spirit of God will never leave you; and yet you have in you—not that you are *in it*, but you have in you—a principle as opposed to the Spirit of God as hell is to heaven! That is not a bit too strong. On what ground then can the Spirit of God dwell in you? God has condemned the flesh in the cross, and we are not in it, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us: we are in a new state.

I want to show you the wonderful work effected for you. I need not look the way of that tree any more. God is not looking that way; He never will; He will not regard it for a moment.

I will now turn to some other passages to show you the effects of deliverance, and first to Psalm xli. 12. Mark the simple words that begin the passage. "As for me." That is contrast. It is in contrast with the fig tree. "As for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and *settest me before thy face for ever.*" One's heart thrills with pleasure at the thought of it. There is a Man who is, for God's satisfaction, set before His face for ever, and He will never turn from Him. I read that passage hundreds of times, but one day the Spirit

of God showed me that "As for me" was in contrast with "the children of men."

The great lesson of the First Book of Psalms is that God has found His ideal man. He has found Him morally and in resurrection. That righteous Man traces His way through this sad world where we have our histories, and at the end is found in death. I do not go into the way He is found there—Psalm ~~xl~~ gives it to us; it was for the establishment of the counsels of God. But now He is set before God's face for ever. I will give you a New Testament passage for it. "In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he *liveth* unto God." He lives to God in resurrection. Resurrection is brought out in the First Book of Psalms. He traces His way through this world. All that a man should be for God was found in Him, without a flaw. His righteousness was to seek the glory of the Father who sent Him. That is righteousness. We have *our* thoughts about it, but we have such poor moral sensibilities, we must get near to Jesus to know what sin is, and what righteousness is. Our thought is that it is to pay twenty shillings in the pound. That only touches the fringe. Christian morality, if we may use such an expression, goes far beyond that. "He that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no *unrighteousness* is in him." The moment you have your own glory before you, you are positively unrighteous to Christ. That blessed One pursued His way through this world to God's pleasure. He lived here for His satisfaction and joy, and He went to Calvary's cross and died for us. "In that he died, he died unto sin once." He who lived a perfectly holy life here died to sin. Why? Because He took our place. That righteous One died to sin once. "But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Can you afford to forget yourself, and think of another, and find pleasure in the fact that God has found a Man to satisfy Him? My point is not what *we* have found, but that *God* has found a Man for His eternal satisfaction.

You say, I should like to be a better Christian. Yes, you would like to be satisfied with yourself. I ask you this, and your answer will prove whether you know anything of deliverance: Does it not delight your heart that God has found a Man to His satisfaction, a Man to suit Him? He has turned His face to *that* Man, and He will never look away from Him.

Now look at the next Psalm. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" You say, Ah! that is where I come in. When are you cast down and disquieted? When you look to that tree. Self-occupation is the bane of your life. The eye is turned away from Christ. You are cast down and disquieted when you look in upon yourself. May God enable you to turn from it! "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him"—gleams of hope. Is that Christianity, little gleams of sunshine streaming in? No! Christianity is to bask in the sunshine.

Now look at Psalm xliii. 3, another remarkable verse: "Send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me." Where can light and truth come from? Light and truth are found in the One who is set before God's face for ever. A remark made here by another a few months ago, helped me as to this scripture. He was speaking of some one in danger of falling over a precipice through having lost his way in a dark night. A light streaming from a mansion crosses his path, and he sees the precipice and is saved. You say, What a grand thing that light was! it saved him from destruction; but that light shines on his pathway in order that he may reach the place whence the light comes. That light shining on your path is conversion. But where does it lead to? You say, Thank God, I am saved from judgment! That is good, but wait a bit. "Send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy *tabernacles*." The fulness of the gospel is that you have reached the place from which the

light and truth came ; it will lead you to His tabernacles. And what do you find there ? The Man who lives to God's pleasure set before His face for ever, and we are accepted in Him. Do you wonder at the bride saying, in Canticles, "Look not upon me, because I am black" ? That is what we are in Adam. But in chapter ii. she says, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley." And He answers, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." He says, as it were, It will be my joy to take you out of the thorns and put you in my bosom for ever. It is a blessed thing to reach that point, to see that Christ lives to God's pleasure, set before His face for ever, and to know that you are in His beauty before God. You can be at home with Him ; you know that you are suitable to Him. You lose yourself ; *you* are gone ; and Christ fills your soul, You are invested with the beauty of that blessed One in whom the light and truth are.

If every saint knew that he was invested with the beauty of Christ, he would be set free from himself. What meetings we should have if every saint had reached that point ! "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one !" You are in His beauty in order that you may enjoy the perfect revelation of God in Him. You cannot get beyond that. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." How can God be your exceeding joy until you are suitable to Him ? Have you reached that spot where all speaks of God ? "Send out thy light and thy truth . . . let them bring me . . . to *thy tabernacles.*" *What Christ is as man to God, we are made ; and all that God is to us, He is in that blessed Person, for He is God.* "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him." Let the light shine brighter and brighter ; it will only discover the beauty of Christ. Now you have reached the region of satisfied desire. I am not conscious of a single

want when Christ fills the vision, and I have no need to look at or think of myself.

Now see Psalm xlv. Here we have the language of a delivered soul. "My heart is inditing a good matter : I speak of the things which I have made *touching the king*." The effect of deliverance is that Christ is our theme. Our hearts must be inditing something. Oftentimes our hearts are inditing, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?" but our proper theme is, "My heart is inditing a good matter : I will speak of the things which I have made touching the king." Many times I have said, Lord, let me preach like that. Getting up sermons, or points, will not do. Get near to Christ and the tongue will go. "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." The moment the heart is filled with Christ, the tongue will speak. And what will it say ? Not, "Why art thou cast down ?" but "Thou art fairer than the children of men."

Now we have reached the woman of Mark xiv. Her action says, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." She has found an object and lost herself. You can see the difference between ministering truths and ministering *Christ*. We must be under the full control of the Spirit to minister Christ.

Let me quote a passage very much misunderstood : "Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now mark : "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Receiving *soul* salvation. You say, That means that my soul is saved from hell. No, not that. Your soul needs saving from *present things*. Who can give it ? Only Christ. "*Whom* having not seen, ye love ; in *whom*, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory : receiving," etc. We received the saving of our souls, in a way, the moment we believed on Christ but this scripture



goes beyond that. You want salvation in the sense of being saved from the power of present things ; and this is what is proposed as the present triumph of the gospel.

The effect of deliverance is beautifully set forth in 2 Samuel, chapter xxiii. “ These be the last words of David.” “ Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure : for this is all my *salvation*, and all my *desire*.” His eye is now fixed on Christ. Some people reach this point when dying, and then there is what is called a “bright death-bed.” I want a bright and happy *course* ; it is not a question of the *end*, it is *now*. On a death-bed people give up everything that has been hindering them, and then they reach it. It ought to have been reached years before. No doubt it is often so because of the poor way the gospel is preached. Why not give up the things that hinder *now*, and have a bright and happy life ?

Learning what you are produces brokenness of spirit in you. That is what we want. It is a great thing to be broken.

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## “TO,” “BY,” AND “IN.”

ROMANS vi., vii., viii.

**T**HERE is one aspect of the gospel that shows us how we can be in heaven at the end, and another that teaches us how to live here. Because we do not go to heaven the moment we believe, we need these chapters to teach us how we can be here for God. There are two sides to the gospel. After you are converted you may live here for twenty, thirty, or forty years, and you want the aspect of the gospel which bears upon that. You cannot live on the

happiness of going to heaven. If we went to heaven directly we believe, we should not need that side of the gospel which is set forth in Romans vi., vii., and viii. This teaches us how to live, and if we do not pay attention to it we shall not be happy. The reason people are not happy is because they do not know the gospel that teaches them how to live here. The road to present happiness is to live to God. If you do not live to God you will not be happy.

If you want to see this coming out in practice, you will find it in the second chapter of Philippians. You are to work out your own salvation because it is God that works in you, both to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure. It is the *willing* and the *doing* of His good pleasure that is your happiness.

I think we may connect three prepositions with these three chapters (Rom. vi., vii., and viii.): chapter vi. is "To," "to God"; chapter vii. is "By," "by Christ"; chapter viii. is "In," "in the Spirit."

After you believe you receive the Spirit, then you are *in* the Spirit. The power lies in the Spirit, but you must have all three; if you live to God, it is by the Spirit's power, but then you must have the support of Christ. "From me is thy fruit found." You are not *occupied* with the Spirit.

The first six verses of chapter vii. give us the "by." In chapter vii. you have the Spirit; you are so identified with the Spirit that you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. This is your *power to live*.

Cornelius and his friends listened and believed, and received the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit. It is a great thing to be established in the gospel. It is God who speaks in the gospel. Have you believed on Him, that is, God, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? There is then not a single charge; you are as clear of every charge of sin as Christ is. Then you come to this: you have the Spirit. On what ground could the Spirit dwell in me, when there is

in me a principle as opposite to the Spirit as hell is to heaven ? Only on the ground of the death of Christ—which is the answer to everything in yourself that is evil. The Spirit dwelling in me does not depend upon my conduct, but on the work of Christ. If it depended on me, I should lose it many times a day.

Having the Spirit, you know how bad you are. He does not occupy you with it, but He gives you the sense that it is of such a character that you cannot trust it ; but you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. There is complete identification with the Spirit ; there *ought* to be practical identification : that will come out of it.

I am endeavouring to show you the consequence of having the Spirit. The Spirit is never put before me as an *object*. The Spirit is in me, and I am in the Spirit. I know how it is with some of you ; you begin to think of your practice—how much you realize it, and so on. But you must know your income before you can spend it. See that you *have* it first. Let your eye rest on verse 3 of chapter viii. of Romans ; that is the gospel for *you* ; it is the condemnation of sin in the flesh—God sending His *own* Son. You get that twice in Romans. The law addresses itself to man in the flesh ; it sought to produce fruit to God, but no fruit ever came. What will God do ? Condemn sin in the flesh. With what result ? That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The Spirit dwells in me to make that good in me practically. The only way of being happy now is to live to God.

What I see is, people like to know that when they die they will go to heaven, but they want to do their own will in the meantime. To do your own will is to be wretched. There is no difference then, practically, between you and an unconverted man. If you are doing your own will, you are not walking in the Spirit. You come to the Lord's supper, and

you make the Lord's supper a gospel-meeting to assure you that all will be right when you die. You use it to assure yourself that you have a precious Saviour who died for you, and that on that ground you will go to heaven when you die. The Lord's supper is not for that.

We have been working on the preposition "in." That is the subjective side. Now let us come to the "by." This teaches us where our support is. You are freed from the law that you might be to Another in order to bring forth fruit to God. This is the objective side. You must put all three chapters together to know how to live. It is in the Spirit, but it is by Christ. A young man said the other day, "In my conflicts I am always getting floored." He was learning his weakness. I will tell you what has been a comfort to me; you may think it a curious scripture: "Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome *at the last*." Hold on; do not give up. "He shall overcome *at the last*." The reason you are floored is because you cannot do without the support of Christ. You cannot bring forth fruit unto God unless you are dependent upon Him. It is "by Christ." You are supported by another in the measure in which you are dependent on Him, and you are only in dependence on Him as you distrust yourself.

If you are occupied with yourself, it shows you have not learnt your own weakness fully. You are not looking to Christ.

You are overcome to teach you where your strength lies; but do not be discouraged. "He shall overcome at the last." "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong." That is, the young men are in the good of deliverance. Why does he say, "Ye are strong"? Because they know where strength is—that is, in Christ. "And the word of God abideth in you." That is, God's will rules you instead of your own. You have the word of God abiding in you, and you know where strength is; you are dependent. The

wicked one cannot touch you. I know in days past I would have given my right hand for any one to help me as to that. By being overcome you fear to trust yourself, and a very good thing too.

Now look at chapter vii. 4. There is your support. Chapter vii. is a remarkable chapter, because its structure is very much like the structure of the Psalms. The first two or three verses give you the conclusion arrived at, and the remainder shows you what led to the conclusion. Take Psalm lxxiii. for example: "Truly God is good to Israel. . . . But as for me, my feet were almost gone"; and then the Psalmist records the experience he went through to reach "Truly God is good to Israel." So in Romans vii., from the seventh verse to the end is the journey the soul takes to reach what is in the first six verses. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Do you see the journey the soul takes to reach that point? "A troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last." He says, I love the good, but I cannot do it; what shall I do? He is learning there what we all *must* learn: that there is no good thing in the flesh. And he learns to disown himself, to treat the flesh as a foreign thing, and what to do with it he does not know. Christ alone can deliver you. What characterised the law was demand. But the law produced no fruit for God. It was weak through the flesh. Every bit of fruit from you for God comes by Christ. "From me is thy fruit found." So if I see a bit of fruit in you, I say it came from Christ; I do not credit you with it, and the sooner you learn that the better. "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." The Spirit of God identifies you with His *dying* in order that you may be identified with Him in His *living*. But we want to see how this works out practically. I know something of it doctrinally, but I want to know the practical power of it, otherwise I have nothing.

I have endeavoured to show you that "in" is the Spirit and "by" is Christ. The Spirit shows you what you *are* in Christ before you are exhorted to *do* anything. I must know *what* I am in order to *be* it. I am "alive to God in Christ Jesus." You must not, in one sense you cannot, divorce yourself from Christ. The Lord says: "Apart from me ye can do nothing."

A sailor, if he is a good steersman, will always seek some object *outside* the ship by which to steer her, when once he has got her head right by the compass. The compass is generally sluggish, and the ship moves somewhat from her proper course before it is affected, and the result of seeking to steer exclusively by it is that you make a zig-zag path. When I was a sailor, I met with men sometimes who tried to steer in this way, and I would say to them, "What is the matter? You are not steering straight." "It is the compass, sir," would be the reply, and I would tell them it was no use trying to steer straight in that way, by the compass only. They must watch some object outside the ship, a star, for instance, if by night, and by that means detect the smallest movement of the ship long before the compass was affected. So with us: it is Christ before us that makes us sensitive. I have to go on through this world, and for this I must have my eye on an object outside myself.

One evidence that you know you are corrupt is that you do not talk about yourself. But we do not fully know our badness. The nearer we are to God the better we understand that self is a corrupt thing.

I knew a very interesting person who said: "I believe every bit of sin will be extracted from me, and I will not rest until it is." I replied, "You will get into dreadful error on that line." And so she did. I shall not need to watch and pray in heaven, I shall not have sin in the flesh there. Would you not like Christ to triumph *now* in you and by you? What is His present triumph? That you, in the power of

the Spirit, keep in the silence of death that which He died to. You hold yourself to have died to sin and to be alive to God. That is by Christ. It is His present triumph; His future triumph will be to take us clean out of it.

You have Christ before you now instead of yourself; you are realizing life, and in the realization of life the body is held as dead. Life is in Christ; you must first know you are in Him before you can live by Him. This is the way of happiness. "He shall overcome at the last."

People are often disappointed and distressed at the little progress they make, but we are not to be occupied with fruit, but with the Person by whom it is produced. We are too much occupied with ourselves—we want to be nice Christians, and so on. That is self; we want to be pleased with ourselves. What you need is to enjoy Christ, and then you will be a nice Christian; but you will not be thinking about that. When we are so occupied it is in order that *we* may have the credit of it; there is no fruit to God. If we are looking to Christ, enjoying Him, dependent upon Him, the fruit will come. Love is the spring of holiness. You will not be conscious of the fruit, but of that link of affection that exists between you and Christ.

Read the second of Philipians and see how this comes out in practice. You see deliverance in Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus; they have lost sight of themselves and are thinking of Christ and of His interests. Chapter ii. is greater than chapter iii., because it is the life of Jesus lived out here. It begins with the Lord: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"; He was here for the will of God. Then the apostle says: "God . . . worketh *in* you both the willing and the doing of his good pleasure," and it is really wonderful how the Spirit of God can produce in men of like passions with ourselves what was seen perfectly in Christ. It is the result of deliverance. If you want to be happy, it must be in this way.

## DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

1 SAMUEL xviii. 1-5 ; 2 SAMUEL i. 25-27.

I DESIRE to bring before you, as the Lord shall help me, the subject of devotedness to Christ, as set forth in the history of Jonathan. I shall briefly refer to some of the salient points from chapter xvii. and onwards.

It is a very important subject. Devotedness is what the Lord is looking for, and has ever looked for, from His people. He cares for their affections. He is very jealous over the state of their hearts. May He give us to realize it !

Turn first to Revelation ii. The Lord in this scripture is presented, as you well know, as one walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He is viewed here in a judicial aspect, and it is very necessary for us to understand it. While we are quite sure of His love, it is important that we take in the way He is looked at here : " His eyes were as a flame of fire." Nothing can escape His scrutiny. " All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him *with whom we have to do.*" He has eyes as a flame of fire, and His voice is as a trumpet. " He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

We have here what suits Him and what does not suit Him. We need not be afraid of His scrutiny ; for, although it is a very solemn thing, whatever He may discover does not alter His love. In the first church He addresses, there was much that He could approve of ; but one thing was lacking : " Nevertheless, I have [not 'somewhat'] against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

They had left their first love. The Lord could look through all their works, and see that there was something lacking. You will remember that this was the church to which the Apostle Paul unfolded such wondrous truth. The Lord seems to be saying to them here, You have forgotten



that you had a letter sent to you, and you have forgotten the prayer in that letter : " For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; . . . and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." The Lord is saying, as it were, You have neglected that prayer ; you have left your first love ; I am not dwelling in your hearts. We may be going on in a routine and the heart cold towards Christ. The Ephesians were getting away from the Lord ; the centre was wrong, and therefore the circumference must be wrong too. Their works were not connected with love to Christ.

This is not merely a history ; it is a picture. God puts His word together with moral intention, and gives us pictures. Just as in speaking to a child a picture of an animal would give it a better idea of the creature than a full description, so God stoops to present His truth to us in pictures.

We shall look at Jonathan in two ways : first he shall be to us as an example, and, secondly, he shall be a warning. I want to say this especially to you young Christians. I take it that you all wish to be devoted to Christ. The measure of your devotedness will be according to the measure in which you apprehend His devotedness to you. You cannot be devoted by *effort*. The moment you *try* to love Him you are off Christian ground. It is all summed up in one verse in John's first epistle : " We love him, because he first loved us." The law says, " Thou *shalt* love." It *demand*s love, but it never produces love. Grace brings love to me and produces love in me. The measure of your love to Christ is according to the measure in which you apprehend His love to you.

You remember John xi., when sickness and sorrow had entered that house at Bethany, how the Lord went to them and brought back to those sisters the brother they mourned

for. In that chapter He makes Martha and Mary His object. He does something for them. That bereavement and sorrow is the way the Son of God displays what He is. Mary, the one who sat at His feet in Luke x., has revealed to her that He, the Son of God, is superior to death. Then in chapter xii. they make Him their object. They make Him a feast because they have learnt how He has made them His object.

In 1 Samuel xvii. Jonathan is David's object. It answers to John xi. It is a picture of Jesus in His devoted love going down into the dark valley of death, and there meeting that terrible foe—Satan. "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil." There are two hosts in this chapter, the host of Israel and the host of the Philistines; and out of the latter comes a man who, for forty days, defies the people of Israel. He sets forth Satan. There is not one in the host of Israel that can meet him. Their hearts are filled with fear. What is to be done?

We are then taken to Bethlehem, and see David and his father Jesse. Jesse says, "Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren." It is a picture of God sending His Son into this world. David comes to the camp to see how his brethren fare. He is rejected by his brethren, even as Jesus was; but he goes on. It is a picture of Jesus in His devoted love to you. You must look at this first. David goes forth to meet Goliath. He has been winning secret victories with God in the desert before this. Now he comes out to win his public victory. You cannot win public victories if you do not win private victories alone with God. He had delivered his sheep out of the paw of the lion and the bear. It was through dependence on the Lord alone that he had done it. He was a man of faith.

He refuses Saul's armour—natural resource. He goes down to the brook, and takes five smooth stones. Then he

goes forth to meet Goliath. He takes one stone and slings it. Goliath lies stretched upon the ground. Then David ran and stood upon the Philistine and drew his own sword and cut off the giant's head with it. That is—"that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." He won a great victory. There is not a thing the Lord Jesus has not met down in that dark valley. He has spoiled principalities and powers.

Now David comes up with the head of Goliath in his hand and the people shout a great shout. Their fear is gone. Is there an unsettled soul here? I pray you look down into the valley of death and see how the Lord has met every question. You must be established in that before you can know anything of devotedness to Christ. You must know what relief from the pressure of death is.

Next we come to the question, Who is the person who has won the victory? Saul says to Abner, "Whose son is this youth?" "Enquire thou whose son the stripling is." "Whose son art thou?" Mark how chapter xviii. begins, "When he had made an end of speaking, . . . the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David." Not when he had made an end of Goliath, but when he had made an end of speaking. It is a great thing to know the *One* who has won the victory and to know Him where He is, not merely to know that the victory has been won.

We are now in the life of the One who settled all in that dark valley. "In that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves . . . alive unto God in [or, through] Christ Jesus." There is only one life for God and only one object. What happened to Jonathan? He lost himself and got a better self. "Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

Next you have the effect of this. Jonathan strips himself for this object. He who by natural right is heir to the throne strips himself, makes a fool of himself as people would say,

strips himself of all, "even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle"; all that would give him importance in the eyes of men, all comes off for David.

It is the same sort of stripping, in principle, that you get in Philippians iii. It is not the bad things, but the things that would give distinction. Paul is our New Testament Jonathan, only he did not break down as Jonathan did. He is our example to the end of the chapter. In Philippians iii. he is set forth as one devoted to his object.

May I say that king Saul was physically what Saul of Tarsus was morally—head and shoulders above the rest? "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." It is first the natural then the spiritual; king Saul was just the man men would choose, and so was Saul of Tarsus in his unconverted days. Paul enumerates his privileges and acquirements, "circumcised the eighth day; . . . touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He says: I was all that, and the things that were *gain* to me, "those I counted loss for Christ." Would you not like to have your heart won like that? Our New Testament Jonathan says: "I am crucified with Christ! nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Christ in him for life, and the Son of God before him as his object. "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." That was the secret of all that outward life of his, of all that he went through. He "loved him as his own soul"; the Son of God had captured his heart. Has He captured yours? Can you say, The Son of God is the One I love, and I yield myself without reserve to Him?

We will now look at some of the other points in the history. Turn to chapter xix. 1: "And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David." How Saul's heart must have been filled with hatred to David!

Saul was a religionist, remember. The mere religionist always hates Christ. The Saul party is a large one in the present day. You see them in the Gospels. It was the Saul party who would not go into the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled, but they did not mind hating and crucifying their Messiah. The Saul party hate Christ. They are the bulls of Bashan (Psalm xxii.). If you speak to a cold religionist about Christ, he will treat you with scorn.

The more David is hated by Saul, the more he is loved by Jonathan. "But Jonathan . . . delighted much in David." It reminds me of the woman in Matthew xxvi. The Saul party are banded together to kill Jesus; in contrast to this the Holy Ghost gives us the account of this woman. In the house of Simon sat Jesus. In the high priest's palace they are taking counsel to kill Him; and Mary says, The more they hate Him, the more I love Him. She has saved her pence; she might have spent them on herself, but no, she will spend them on *Him*. She gets that box of precious ointment and pours it upon Him. He is hated in the hall, but He is loved in this house. She is a true Jonathan. The disciples called it "waste," but the Lord valued it. Do we find our delight in Him? "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." How much do you know of this? How much have you delighted in Him to-day? I do not ask if you have read your Bible, if you have said your prayers, but have you been in His company to-day? How much happier we should be if we spent our spare moments in His company!

The next thing is, "Jonathan spake good of David." This follows, because he delighted in him. When the heart is full of Christ, how easy it is to speak of Him! How hard it is to do so when we get away from the Lord! even if we do, how cold and dry the words are! Jonathan spake well of David. If we confess the Lord here, He will confess us there. A young girl, living near the seaside, was converted,

and after a while had to leave home and take a situation. She went to London as scullery-maid in the family of a nobleman. It was a humble place she had to fill, but she loved the Lord and desired to please Him. The nobleman went away with his family for a time on the Continent, leaving orders with his servants as to what he wished done in his absence. When he returned, he was so pleased with the way they had carried out his wishes, that he said he would give them each a ticket for the opera. They were called up one by one to receive the tickets, and at last it came to little Mary's turn. But when offered her ticket, she quietly said, "No, thank you, sir; I do not wish to go." "Not wish to go, Mary! What do you mean?" he exclaimed. She answered, "I do not wish to go, sir, because the One I love will not be there." The nobleman at first misunderstood her, but she explained: "I mean, sir, the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved me, and gave Himself for me, will not be there, and I do not wish to be there either." In that great day that is coming little Mary will be singled out and confessed by the Lord Jesus as one who confessed Him before men. Why was she able thus to confess Him? Because she delighted much in Him.

I come now to another point—chapter xx. 4: "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." That is obedience. If you take that as a motto, you will have to be much in His company to learn what His soul desires. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Love is proved by obedience. And love is proved by having His commandments. I know very well that many of you young Christians rejoice in that word "Whosoever." "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." You know the grace and comfort of that verse. Now put the two together, "*whosoever*" and "*whatsoever*." Thank God for the whosoever! If you rejoice in the grace of the "whosoever," will you not take up the

responsibility of the "whatsoever"? It would make you read your Bibles more. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word. Martha was busy serving. There is plenty of that now. People are made Marthas directly they are converted. If I have a friend who is devoted to me, how can he please me if he does not know my mind, and how can we please the Lord if we do not know His mind? Martha chides the Lord, but He says, "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part." What is the good part? To sit at His feet and hear His word. It is a great thing to know how and when to serve the Lord. It is a great thing for you to be able to say, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee."

We will pass on to chapter xx. 32, 33. I want to say a word about the javelin. What is it? The javelin is the cross. You will remember that Saul threw the javelin at David (chapter xviii. 11), and it went into the wall, for David avoided it. With the Lord Jesus, they threw the javelin at Him, and He did not avoid it. The javelin is the cross; and it means for you, that if you are going to *obey*, you must be prepared to suffer. You will have to suffer, but it will be for Christ's sake. When the Lord was here He talked to His disciples of that javelin, but they understood not, and feared to ask Him. When He went up into glory He sent the Holy Ghost down, and then they had power to suffer for Him here. It is a Saviour in glory that gives power to suffer here. When the sons of Zebedee came and said, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory," He answers, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of? and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" The baptism is what you get outside, the cup is what you taste inside. This shall be your privilege, to suffer with Him *now*, and by-and-by you shall reign with Him. If we suffer, we shall reign.

We come now to the turning-point in this history, the point where Jonathan becomes a warning, chapter xxiii. 16-19. He says, "Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee." "And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house." That is where he fell; he put his own interests first, and when David was hunted like a partridge on the mountains, he was not with him. The men of faith came out and linked themselves with him, recognising him as the future king! but Jonathan was not among them, though he knew this well and proposed a good place for himself: "I shall be next unto thee." What do we read next of him? That he has fallen on Mount Gilboa, and his body is nailed to the walls of Bethshan. "O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

I am not speaking now of getting to heaven, but of the wreck and ruin of discipleship. Our place in the kingdom will be according to our faithfulness to Christ here. Who will be next to Jesus there? The one who has been next to Him here in suffering and loss. I ask you solemnly to consider this. Are you in some high place? Are you in some association where you cannot have the company of Christ? "Jonathan went to his house." "Thou wast slain in thine high places." Many a man has been ruined there; his own house has come first. Not so David; he says, "I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, . . . I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord." Jonathan went to his own house instead of going with David to the hold, and thus he fell. There is the circle of Christ's interests, and if we give that a secondary place, and our own circle, our own house, our family, the first place, we shall fall there. Not that I should neglect my family. We have to move in the circle



God has placed us in, but we have to serve Christ in it. The interests of Christ should be dearer to me than my own interests. Do I make my family circle the first thing? Then I shall fall there.

In 2 Chronicles xii. you get God's side of things, and there you find those poor people who went to David to the cave of Adullam, who had nothing in this world, distressed, in debt, and discontented, but recognising in that hunted man the future king. Of them God says, Your names shall be on the glory roll. You read down that roll until you come to Jonathan, but it is not the Jonathan of whom I have been speaking. He who said to David, "I shall be next unto thee," is out of it; he was slain in his high places. Again I ask you, earnestly and solemnly, Are you in any high place? If so, I pray you to come down, that you may not fall as Jonathan did.

Let this man be an example to you in his devotedness on the one hand, and on the other a warning to you in his fall. "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" The moment your eye is off Christ no amount of intelligence will preserve you. God grant that you may be exercised about this.

## SEEING, AND SEEING CLEARLY.

MARK viii. 22-38.

**I**T would be very helpful to us if we had the fact distinctly before our souls that there is only one Man for God. Perhaps what I am going to say will be difficult to some, but the Spirit of God can make it clear.

We get the expressions "first man" and "second man"

in 1 Corinthians xv. : "The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven." If you are a Christian, ponder what I say, and ask the Lord to make it clear to you.

The death of our Lord Jesus Christ has for ever severed our link with the old man. "Our old man has been crucified with him." You may not be in the apprehension of it, but that is how *God* looks at it. We begin a new history in connection with the second Man.

There is another thing, and that is that the state of the first man is developed in the Gospels. I do not want to look round to see what the first man is. All that he is has come out by the presence of the second Man. The second Man brought out the character of the first. We begin as children with the Gospels, and as full-grown men we end with them. In the Gospels you get man's *state*. He has been brought out in his true character, and a very sorry character it is. Thank God, the link with him has been severed.

In the previous part of the chapter before us you will find the Lord is warning His disciples as to two leavens. There are three leavens altogether in scripture which bring out what man is—the leaven of the Pharisees, the leaven of the Sadducees, and the leaven of Herod. In Matthew the Lord is warning His disciples of the first two, but here it is the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of the Herodians that come before us. The leaven of the Pharisees is man's pretension to be righteous ; it is connected with religiousness. The leaven of the Sadducees is connected with man's reasoning powers. To put it in modern language—the first is ritualism, the second is rationalism, while the leaven of Herod is political. You see what man is. One is connected with a spurious righteousness, another with reason, and the third with government and politics. The leaven of the Herodians is : We are here to do the best we can to make the world better, to leave it better than we found it.

I now come to what is more before me. I have read to you the narrative of the blind man, and a most instructive narrative it is. This blind man sets before us two conditions in which a believer may be found. He is brought to the Lord, and is severed from his home. The Lord took him by the hand and led him out of the town. When a man is converted, everything in this world is lost sight of. It is no question of things here. You have the sense of the true value of things. The Lord closes this chapter with, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" It is a question of the value of the soul. When you face this matter you are outside your own affairs; you are facing eternity; you are facing the future with God; your wife, children, farm, everything is lost sight of. This man is brought out of the town by Christ. He has contact with Christ. Have you ever had personal contact with Him?

When He had spit on his eyes and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught: and he said, "I see men as trees, walking." That is the first thing. He does not see clearly; but he sees. It is a great thing to have your eyes opened. This blind man represents the state of the disciples who companied with the Lord before His death, and before the Spirit was given. They were blessed men. They said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yet before redemption was accomplished they did not see clearly. The language of a man who does not see clearly is, "Be it far from thee, Lord." Peter had confessed Jesus as the Christ just before. He had come as a Jew and owned that Jesus was the Personage of whom the Old Testament had spoken. That was a great thing, but the Lord charges them not to tell any man. They had been looking for the Lord to set up the kingdom and reign. They had a right to do so, for it was set forth in the scriptures. But the Lord says, I am going to *suffer*. He speaks to them plainly about it. He was going to suffer, to die, and to be

raised again the third day. They do not understand it, and therefore Peter rebukes Him; he could not bear it. Why? Because the flesh in him was cut to the quick; he shrank from suffering. And the Lord turned and looked upon His disciples. He saw what the effect of such a remark would be on those He loved. He looked upon them as much as to say to Peter, Do you not know that your words will be highly injurious to others? "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter did not see things clearly, and when we do not see things clearly we affect others, and that is a very serious thing. If I allow the flesh in myself, it will come out in my family; and the meeting, too, will be affected by it, and it will be a serious matter.

So the Lord says: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Paul says, in the Epistle to the Galatians, speaking of those who had gone to them with the leaven of the Pharisees, that he could wish them *accursed*. His heart was filled with indignation against those Judaising teachers. People say we must love each other. We must stand for the truth. We must come to scripture to understand what love is. It was true love working in the heart of the apostle when he said, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be *accursed*." So in his Master here. How does He put it? "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Would that we had a deepened sense of this! There is a gréat breach between man and God. How often we savour of the things that be of men! Peter was thinking of the kingdom glory: his Master was thinking of suffering.

Satan is seeking to dishonour Christ through His people. It was Satan handling the flesh in Peter, who was in the condition of the blind man who had been touched by Christ, but, as yet, did not see clearly. What the blind man says is, "I see men as trees, walking"; *man* had an undue place;

he saw *men*. I admit that virtue had gone out of Christ, which was for him everlasting blessing. When Christ touches you, all the blessing is yours, but it is the object of the Spirit of God to lead you into it.

The blind man with his eyes open, but only seeing men as trees walking, presents a picture of every carnal Christian. 1 Corinthians ii. and iii. will show it. The apostle, speaking there to the Corinthian saints, who were so highly gifted and yet in such a low state, says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*," etc. That is, the Corinthians were in such a carnal state through allowing the flesh, that, although they had the Spirit, Paul was obliged to say to them, I cannot unfold the hidden wisdom of God to you; you are carnal, and walk as men; you pride yourselves in your knowledge, and that hinders you; there is wisdom and blessing I cannot put before you, because you cannot see clearly.

So it was with Peter in Galatians ii. He went to Antioch, and at first ate with those who believed among the Gentiles, but when some had come down from Jerusalem, he was afraid and drew back. He was living before the eyes of his fellow-men; he was not free of men. Is it not often so with us? Would you not like to be thought a devoted Christian or a devoted servant of the Lord? How much we live before the eyes of others! May God deliver us from it.

I come now to the next touch, "After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly." It sets forth the Christian that has apprehended the purpose of God; he sees that he belongs to heaven.

As a natural man, I do not want to go to heaven; all my links are here. I am suited to this earth, and on this earth I should like to stay.

But, as a Christian, I am going to heaven because I belong there. I am a man of a new order. "As is the earthy, such

are they also that are earthy ; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second Man is out of heaven. So the man who sees the purpose of God apprehends that he belongs to heaven.

You see it exemplified in Stephen ; who when full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw all things clearly ; he saw the glory of God and Jesus. When they were battering his face with stones, he did not refuse the suffering ; he saw all things clearly ; he saw the glory of God and Jesus ; he knew his link with heaven, and on earth was like his Master ; he had his eye upon Christ, and was like Him in consequence. " He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge "—like his Master, who said, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Whence did Stephen get this power ? From Christ in glory. He says, I belong to heaven ; the place that claimed Jesus claims me.

Christianity gives us an object. There are two proposals in it. God says, I will make you happy with Me at home in My presence, and it is through the redemption work of Christ He does so ; then He gives me an object to sustain me all the way here. You look up there to that Object, who satisfies God's heart. He has given us the same object that we may be satisfied too. The reason we are not satisfied is because we do not see things clearly.

I will read a passage that brings it before you—Philippians iii. Let me say the Apostle Paul pre-eminently sets before us the blind man when he had the second touch and saw all things clearly ; he represents what Christianity really is. The man who brought out the doctrine of Christianity is the man who *lived* it ; it is Paul, who saw all things clearly, who writes this Epistle to the Philippians. " Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect* "—that is, those who see all things clearly—" be thus minded : and if in anything ye be

otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." That is great encouragement.

He knew *why* he was apprehended. Christ Jesus had apprehended him for a distinct purpose—to have him like Himself in glory for ever. It is not the thought of the Saviour having compassion on you and washing you from your sins in His blood—all quite true—and that you might go to heaven when you die—that is the general idea—but that Christ has apprehended you to be *like Him* and *with Him for ever*. The apostle was a man of one idea. I turn not, he says, to the right hand, or to the left; I press forward toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.

There seems to be a contradiction between verses 12 and 15. Verse 15 is the language of a man who sees all things clearly; verse 12 shows that he has not yet attained to perfection, but he has apprehended it in his soul; it is his object. What is your object? Is it money-making, or earthly comforts? What governs you day by day? It is like Levi—that man sitting at the receipt of custom; he is sitting at the money-table, hearing the clink of money from morning till night, because he knows nothing better. But by-and-by the Son of God draws near to him. He says to Levi, "Follow me." Now mark what it says of him in Luke's gospel: "He left all, rose up, and followed him"; he left all first.

Now the apostle says: "Let . . . as many as be perfect be thus minded." I will give you an illustration to bring it out. It is said that an Italian artist one day took his pupils into his picture-gallery, bidding them each select a picture to copy. One of the pupils, after wandering up and down, seated himself before a perfect masterpiece, saying with a sigh, "If I copy any, it shall be this one." Presently the artist came to see how his pupils were getting on. When he came to this one he ejaculated, "Oh, is not that splendid!

Look at that, not at my daub ! ” The master replied, “ You are the man for me ; you have an eye for perfection.” The eye for perfection is verse 15, “ As many as be perfect.” The man with an eye for perfection sees all things clearly ; he sees that Christ and Christ alone will do for God, and he sees that God has called him to be like that Man and with Him for ever. Verse 12 is my “ daub ”—“ not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” Not perfect as to attainment, but perfect as to object. The Lord by His Spirit draw us from the man that is *here*, and fix our hearts on the Man that is *there*.

I trust the Lord will use these remarks to quicken your footsteps after Christ, till travelling days are done, for His name's sake.