

# NOTES

OF

# ADDRESSES AT QUEMERFORD.

JUNE, 1886.

“GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.”

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## TO THE READER.

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THESE Notes will, I trust, give the mind of the speaker, though not as fully as it was delivered.

Each address has been revised by the speaker. May our gracious Lord vouchsafe His blessing to you in reading them.

J. B. S.

# NOTES OF ADDRESSES.

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## THE LAST DAYS.

REVELATION III. 7, 14.

I HAVE read these two scriptures because I think it must affect every heart to think that our Lord presents Himself in a distinct aspect. That is what you get in the epistles to the seven churches. How departed they must have been when it was necessary to come before them in an especial aspect! He tells us the aspect in which He will be up to the close. There is immense grace in it. His aspect ought to be known to each of us. It is properly the history of the soul in its journey homewards. I ought to know Him in a distinct aspect, but I cannot know Him unless I am near Him. Certainly He is always thinking of me, as He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He has gone all the way; He is at the top, and He can say: I have travelled all the road, I know every circumstance, I have

the grace suited for every circumstance ; as you are near Me, you shall know it, you shall find I am that to you. So you are supported in it. He was thus with the disciples in the ship in the storm, and in the special aspect suited for them ; but they were not affected by His aspect : He was asleep, and they were in fear. They awoke Him, and He put them all to sleep—He hushed the storm, and there was a great calm. It is a great thing to have seen the Lord in a distinct aspect.

Independency is acting without Him. Thyatira (Romanism) is independency ; the Head set aside, and the bringing in of a new Vicar : while maintaining the unity of the body, Christ did not get His place. Now I read this verse 7 that we might see two things ; if I look at Philadelphia I see He is the holy and the true, and He has the key of David. That is, character and power. I behold Him in that aspect and I progress. In verse 11 there is another thing : “ Behold I come quickly ; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” There is the terrible power of opposition to deprive us of the very best thing we have. We often forget the relentless nature of the foe. If you look at the history of God’s people it surprises you. Six hundred thousand left Egypt, only two got into the land ! Why ? Because of the unceasing, unremitting opposition of the foe. He never ceases his

opposition to us, as here on earth for Christ; and if we are not true to Him, we cannot maintain the wonderful nature that belongs to us as heavenly men. If you are not good at school, the house of God, you are not good at home, the body of Christ. This is the school room, this is the actual scene of all the trial; here we are prepared; here we are on probation, in a certain way; as it is said in Ephesians, "groweth unto a holy temple."

It is an immense cheer to be looking at the Lord in the aspect He presents Himself to Philadelphia. He is holy, He is true, He has the key of David; then as to the enemy, He says: Take care that no one takes your crown! Why does He say that? Because of the adversary. How many have I seen drop off! A person does not give up what he begins with; it is not the bottom round of the ladder that the enemy seeks to deprive us of, but the top. If you want to dislodge a man from a ladder, you would strike his hands. It is what you have your hands on that the enemy attacks. Therefore the word is, "*Hold* fast that thou hast, that no one take thy crown." What you would like to be now, you shall be by-and-by. What would you like to be? A pillar in the temple. We have to suffer now. The moment you lay hold of a truth, what will be the consequence? The enemy will come; and what will you do? Hold fast what you

have. Let Satan have what he wants to hold you by—something of this world—give it to him, and he will not trouble you. You cannot get into the kingdom of God without much tribulation. “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” If you give up the thing by which Satan can act upon you, you have done with it. I say: Is that what you are going to hold me by? Well, then, have it: I give it up. We are not sensible at times that the possession of fresh truth necessarily awakens a new energy of the enemy. Go from Egypt to Canaan, and see what you have to encounter, and where you are. In Egypt, Pharaoh is against you; in the wilderness, Amalek; outside the wilderness, Balaam; in the land, the seven nations. If you turn back in the wilderness, you go to Egypt; if you turn from God in Canaan, you go to Babylon—not to the world of judgment, but to the world of luxury.

Thank God, I have this aspect of the Lord as He presents Himself to Philadelphia. I am looking at Him who gives me character and power. Why did I read the other aspect? Because it is preservative. “And unto the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” It is more what He is individually, not what He is conferring; He stands as it were like a pillar, “the Amen, the

faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." When I look at Him in that aspect, I say, there are terrible times coming, a terrible energy at work. In this aspect He preserves me.

The last four churches go down to the end. The history is simple enough. In Thyatira they gave up the Head, and put a man in the place of Christ, and consequently the Holy Ghost was denied. In Sardis (Protestantism) they got back to the Saviour, but not to the church. In Philadelphia it is: "Thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name." I am perfectly certain the Laodicean wave is rising around, how am I preserved? By the aspect of that blessed One. My eye rests upon Him, He is "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness," the One who set forth God here; who glorified God here; the heavenly colour came out in every step and movement down here: now He has gone up into glory, that He may demonstrate it further by His members here. Oh, that all the members might come out in that beautiful heavenly colour which He Himself displayed! He can give it if the heart is in company with Himself. What sustains me? I am not looking at the waters around me but at Himself, "the faithful and true Witness." What is the consequence? As the heart is taken up with Him in this aspect, I get the effect of it and am thus preserved from the

invasion, which is such a confidence in man's own resources in Christian things that Christ is outside.

I must digress for a moment. Turn to Psalm lxxiii. I look at this psalm because it is a great thing to see what is the effect of being in His presence. I cannot be there but without spot. I do not say He is not always with me, but I could not be in His presence with a spot. In His presence I am in the holiest. There are two *conditions* of His presence, holiness and glory. Heaven is a *place*, that I find in Ephesians. In Hebrews I find the Holiest; in Corinthians, glory; heaven in Ephesians. The tabernacle was brought down to be the companion of Israel in their travels. What a wonderful thing to have the presence of God as I walk down here! They did not come to the place until they got to Canaan, but they had the presence of God all along the road. In Hebrews we are come to "the Holiest of all." We can never lose our place there, but we are not always enjoying it. What is the effect of being in His presence? I see four distinct effects that flow from His presence in Psalm lxxiii. At first, the Psalmist is occupied with everything in relation to himself; but in the sanctuary he is occupied with everything in relation to God. It is entirely God there. What does he say about himself then? "I was as a beast before thee." You are very

unhappy, then? Not at all. I never am so sure that *I* am an object to God: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand." I never was so happy—"continually with thee." Then verse 25, God is my Object: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and none upon earth I desire beside thee." But this is a digression.

Beloved friends, I just add a few words more as to the effect of His company. The idea in Christendom is that a priest is to come between us and God. The true idea of the Priesthood of Christ is that He has gone up to the top—the priest is there; He is there for us, "He has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." He says, as it were "I know the whole road, and I will support you. I am not looking so much for help, as for the effect of His company. Peter and the other disciples left their ship, their fish, and everything, for His company. What foolish people, might have been said, to leave all for the company of that poor Man! Did you ever find out that company is better than property? Mark the words of that same man, Peter: "Lord, we have left all and followed thee!" Yes, says the Lord, you have done very well by it: "Manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

How often one has longed to know something

more of His company! How one has felt, if I but knew Him as Mary did in another day! Martha gets instruction; we all get that, for He neglects none of us; but she did not get His company—company is what solaces the heart.

I do not dwell more upon that, but I would just call your attention to another aspect in which He presents Himself: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." (Rev. xxii. 16.) That is not at this minute only, but when this book was closed. When John's ministry came to an end, the Lord could come from that hour. He was "the bright and morning star" eighteen hundred years ago. What is the effect of this aspect of Christ upon the bride? She says, "Come!" Who is the bride? It is not an individual evidently; it is characteristic. It is all saints, though all may not be up to it. "The morning star" is spoken of in Thyatira; "bright" is added here. Now the bride is the one who really has a heart for Him. It is not that the coming of the Lord is to settle everything. You ought to be settled for it. Can you bid a person to come if you are not ready for him? No doubt we shall all be carried out of this scene, but we shall receive what we have done in it. You do not desire a person to come if you are not fit for him. It is the Holy Ghost,

who is here to testify for Christ, who says, "Come," and the bride, the one whose heart is set upon Him, whose company is the solace of her life, for her heart is toward Him, she says, "Come." How can this be after all those terrible scenes in chapters ii. and iii.? That is the blessed thing. The Lord will have a company to meet Him, to delight in His presence. It is true of all saints, therefore the energy goes out to awaken all "Let him that heareth say, Come." I am looking for Him to come, and I am looking for others to say, "Come." Like a faithful wife, I say: He is coming home, we must have all in order to-day. The bride casts her eye round to have everything in readiness for His coming. "The bright and morning Star" produces that effect. If I see one not saying, "Come," I say, You say "Come," too. Then I become evangelical, desiring every one to be ready for Him.

The Lord grant that our hearts, in the midst of confusion and dissensions around, may know Himself in a distinct aspect, and may so rest upon Him in the aspect in which His grace presents Himself to us, that we may know the practical effect of it. It is an immense comfort.

J. B. S.



## MATTHEW XXV. 1-13.

IT is upon my heart to say but a few words in connection with what has been already before us. The Lord is, I feel, distinctly calling us back to the first principles of the truth. It is a solemn thing, and the effect of the terrible opposition of the enemy against the truth, that we get occupied with its surroundings, or its results, oftentimes even with details of action connected with it, in such sort that our attention is turned away from the truth itself, and it becomes commonplace, as that which we think we know and have rather left behind on the ground of its being quite elementary. Yet when we come to look at it in the presence of the Lord, it is perhaps the thing we are most feeble in. I do not refer to statements of truth such as you might get in a catechism; the important thing is to have the truth as it is presented in the scriptures.

We have just been reading, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." It is worthy of remark that in the Gospels we read about the "Bridegroom," not about a Bride;\* but in the Epistles,

\* John iii. 29, though apparently an exception, really confirms what is here stated.

when the Lord is gone up to His place in glory, we hear of the "bride" or "wife," but not of the Bridegroom; Christ is presented rather as the Lord of the church. The Spirit of God, especially in the dispensational Gospel, Matthew, attracts the heart to a Person who is presented in the character of "*Bridegroom.*" That supposes a Bride evidently—no doubt the earthly one—but it is not with this that we are occupied. The Spirit sets forth the Bridegroom, and thus forms in the heart divine affections which produce a spiritual state, fit for hearing about the bride when God's time is come to speak of her. Without this divine preparation there can be no true knowledge of the church as "the Lamb's wife," nor the true capacity for receiving the revelation of it. The heart is prepared by feeding on Him in whom all the truth is made known, who is Himself "the Truth."

In the similitude of the kingdom of heaven in chapter xxv., the Lord presents Himself as One already known as "the Bridegroom:" see chapters ix. 15; xxii. 2, 3. It is in reference to what *He is* that the virgins go out. This is essentially Christian; it is different from Jewish hope. The Jews were to await Messiah's coming to them on earth to accomplish the promises. But these leave everything, and go out to meet One who does not propose to give them an earthly portion. He is rejected; they have part with Him in this,

as in all else, and leave everything here to go to meet Him.

Ten go forth. It is not to get something for themselves, nor that they may be brought into some place of favour and blessing, but to meet the Bridegroom. It is no question of His coming to settle things here; they go out to meet Him that they may be partakers of the joy of His heart, and the witnesses of His satisfaction in that which yields its highest expression manward. They are tested as to whether they are able to maintain that attitude during the time that He tarries. Here is a first principle of the deepest importance, it gives us the simplest and most elementary aspect of what waiting for the Lord is.

Alas! we read, "They all slumbered and slept;" but yet God in His goodness does not allow them to be found sleeping. At midnight there is a cry made, "Behold, the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him! Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." A solemn thing is brought out here. The sense of His coming is upon each of their souls now, at any rate. When this immediate prospect of appearing before Him is really brought home to them, there are five of those who went out at the first, who feel and own that they are not in a condition in which they can stand before Him: "Our lamps," say they, "are going out." The others have no fear. Up to that

moment they might well have compared themselves one with another: they were all virgins, they all had lamps burning; there was nothing outwardly that made any sensible difference between them that a human eye could discern. But what a change was wrought in all their feelings by the necessity of standing before Him! It can be no question, then, of what I think or of what anyone else thinks, but of what the Lord thinks. Have you and I in our souls this sense of having to stand before Him who is the Judge of everything? And have we from God the perfect love which casts out fear, gives perfect assurance in view of judgment, and carries the heart on with joy to meet Him who has, at infinite cost, given us in Himself a personal and eternal interest? Have we got that which will keep the lamp burning, not merely through the darkness of this world, so that we may be morally irreproachable in man's eye, but which will enable us to go confidently to meet Him before whom everything is naked and open? Have we His word wrought out in power in our souls by His Holy Spirit?

The truth as it is presented in scripture is what we need to get hold of. One is struck by the delight the Spirit of God takes (especially in Matthew) in keeping the heart occupied with the One who characterises all our position and present portion before God. We are brought into as-

sociation with Himself. It is to Him that the Father testifies, to Him that the Holy Ghost gathers.

The Lord lead our hearts into this, beloved brethren, that we may be more constantly occupied with Him in whom the Father found all His delight.

W J. L.



# THE EDUCATION OF THE SOUL IN THE TRUTH.

LUKE VII. 37, 38, 44-50; JOHN XII. 1-3; XX. 1-17.

I TURN to these familiar scriptures, on which our hearts love so often to dwell, beloved brethren, with but one thought, which, I think, may be traced through them; and that is the blessed way that, in the infinite grace of our God, needs are created in the soul, in order that the truth may come with power to it. And this is surely so in every aspect of the truth. It is possessed and becomes a reality and power in us, only when received as an answer to need, first of all awakened in the soul. In these scenes, reading them in the order in which they are presented to us in the history—alike precious fruit of His grace in drawing out devotedness to Himself in those who were with Him on earth, each with its own distinct character—I think we may see a moral order bringing out the normal education of the soul in the truth, from the soul's first awakening to the knowledge of the Lord, under His blessed leading and teaching.

In the first—the woman that was a sinner, in

Simon's house—we are carried back to the way God had to begin with each of us, the only way He ever became known to us, awakening the soul, by His infinite grace, to the sense of its need of a *Saviour*. And what an awakening that was when first the truth found entrance into our souls! How precious the grace that, however varied the way it took with us, drew us, and drew us irresistibly, into the truth: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." There we found ourselves out in all our sins and ruin, but in *His presence*. The rumour (ver. 17) was true God had visited His people. And she was at His feet, fully exposed to herself in her sins, weeping—no attempt to hide it, all come fully out, but come out in the presence of the infinite grace that brought God down to be a poor despised Man in this world. Sooner or later—if not now in the day of grace, in the day of judgment—all must come out; but God has come, revealed in grace, before the day of judgment, to bring out the sins now, and lay the basis of the soul's everlasting relationship with Him in the full discovered truth of my guilt and utter ruin, and by it of what God is. What mercy it is, what infinite grace! I belong to Him, I am His; but this founded on the discovery, deep down in the conscience, of my sins. There and thus it was He won my heart; and the blessed way love took to do it leaves no cloud upon the relationship it

brings me into: His ways with me, too, but means to this end, as we see it in His words to poor, dark, religiously-blinded Simon: "Which of them will *love* him most?" He had come not merely to meet all our need as sinners, but by that need to make Himself known to us as a Saviour, and thus to draw out the affections of the heart after Himself. Blessed expression of it in this dear woman, who, even before she knew all that grace had come to bring her, was lavishing every little token of a heart thus won upon the Person of the Lord. By such appreciation of the grace that had attracted her, she proved herself to be the one whose "many sins" were forgiven, according to Simon's just interpretation of the parable of the Lord. And now she has His own direct word to rest on for the full effect of His grace: "Thy sins are forgiven." The truth has come to her with all its own divine authority and power. The Discoverer of all her sins is God manifest in the flesh, her Saviour; His word is the warrant for her faith, and He can add "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

So perfectly and divinely has He satisfied the first great need of the soul, divinely awakened that He might satisfy it, and formed the link of immutable relationship between the sinner and the Saviour, in the truth of what both are, fully revealed. Now the heart is set free for the next

lesson in this wonderful school. Infinite as the grace is which has met our need as sinners and revealed to us the Saviour, it would be sad indeed if we stopped there: impossible, indeed, in the measure in which the heart has been really attracted to the Person who met our need. For in doing so He created new capacities in the soul, new needs, that nothing but new and deeper knowledge of Himself can satisfy. This we find so blessedly in the case of Mary of Bethany. From the first, and by the attraction of His grace, she took up her place at His feet; it was not for anything she might get from Him, it was to listen to His word—and that ever expressed what He was—as with a heart that sought Him for His own sake, that had found its need of an *object*, and in Him the only object that could satisfy it. It is thus He leads us on. He had awakened in her heart the need of an object. In John xii. we see her satisfied, her action there the blessed expression of it.

It is deeply instructive, too, to see the effect of a heart that has made Him and found Him its object. Drawn into the current of the thoughts of God, for He was His object, she could anticipate what was passing in the mind of the Lord before He had spoken of it. It was a time of varied testimony being borne to the glory of His Person, as Son of God in the resurrection of Lazarus, as Son of David in His last public entry into

Jerusalem, and as Son of man when the Greeks came up desiring to see Him. But there was that which lay nearer to His heart than taking His place in all this glory—the necessary path to it for the glory of God—it was His death. He speaks of it fully, later on in this chapter.

Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” How blessed it is to see a vessel prepared, as Mary of Bethany, that testimony might not be wanting to this deeper glory of His humiliation in death, more present to the heart of the Lord. The effect of what was passing around is upon her spirit; the scene is closing in for her if He is passing out of it. So she gathers up all that is of any value for her, represented in that pound of ointment “very costly,” and pours it upon His Person. A blessed expression, when words fail, of what her heart had found in Him as her object—divinely satisfied! “Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.” How blessed to be led on to know Him as she knew Him, the One who passing by death out of this scene, has broken every link that bound the heart here—blessed preparation for the new links of association to be formed with the risen Christ in the scene where He is gone. Her heart, formed by Himself for it, has found an object in Him that fills and satisfies it, the

One that by Himself alone will fill and satisfy it for ever.

But this leads us to another necessary step in the soul's progress for which it is now prepared. It depends upon the power of the attraction of the Person of the Lord over the heart, which will alone give it its reality. I refer to the new place that He has taken on the ground of redemption, as Man in resurrection, to associate us with Himself in all the perfect blessedness of it before God and the Father. This gives its character to the last scene of the devotedness of Mary of Magdala in chapter xx. The disciples, having verified the fact of His resurrection, went away to their own homes, so little were their hearts under the power of the object of the heart of God. "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping." There is created in her heart the need of a new *place*. This place—the world that gave Him but a cross and sepulchre—was no longer suited to her. It had no home for her.

But was there, then, another place where she could find one? There was. The Lord had spoken of it fully, from the very first announcement to His disciples that it was only a little while He should be with them, addressing Himself to the trouble of hearts that He counted upon missing Him in the place of His rejection. (Chap. xiii. 33, xiv.) He had presented this to them as the first source of comfort: "In my Father's house

are many mansions." He counted upon it that the cross would change everything for them here; that the world that had crucified Him would be no longer a place to satisfy His own. "I go to prepare a *place* for you." And thus the Father's house was now, for the first time in scripture, thrown open to His people. We find in that chapter four things that enter into and make up the revelation of the place so far, for the comfort of our hearts. As even in natural things, it is the people who make the place, so it is infinitely in the revelation of the Father's house. Philip was right therefore, so far, when he said: "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." But the Father had been perfectly revealed in the Son down here "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," hence the Lord could say, "*Whither* I go ye know." Already the first element of the revelation of the place was before them in His Person. But, secondly, "I go to prepare a place for you." This is Christ taking His place in it as Man in divine righteousness, by virtue and in the power of redemption, that fits it perfectly for us, and us for the place: until, and this is the third thing, He comes to receive us to Himself there, that we may be actually with Him. But meanwhile (fourthly) He sends down the Holy Ghost to bring all the power and blessedness of the place into

our hearts, as a present thing, while we are waiting for Him. (See 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

How beautiful and perfect it is in the ways of the Lord's grace, that the Gospel does not close without one at least whose heart opens to the need, and thus to the intelligence, of this very thing. There she is, with a heart desolated, as to this world, by the death of the Lord, detained by true devotedness to Him in the spot where she received the first full intelligence of the new place of wonderful association with Himself that was to result from Jesus ascending to the Father, and became the honoured vessel of the communication of it to the apostles. How blessedly He who created the need of it in her heart has satisfied her! "He satisfieth the longing soul."

How far do we, beloved brethren, know this divine education each one for himself and herself—needs created in the soul to be satisfied thus? Surely we are the subjects of the same blessed love that would ever be creating longings that the truth might meet them in power, as the answer to them, if never measured by them. We know the place, and are, by the Holy Ghost having come, in the full effect of Jesus having gone to the Father, as He said: "I go to prepare a place for you." He has unfolded it to us in those blessed words in which light first broke to Mary of Magdala: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and

your Father; unto my God and your God." There is now, in an association and identification of place and consequent nearness never known or possible before, what was to take the place of the relations *Mary and the rest had had with Jesus* upon earth. All our associations with Him are now in that new place that He has taken. We know the place—it is His own—the only place He could give us, the only place we could stand in before God—won for us in divine righteousness by so gloriously accomplished redemption. Blessed it has been to our souls to know it; but how feeble is the power of it, how little are our hearts consciously in company with Him! I think it arises often from the soul passing too lightly from the first infinite lesson of His grace that awakened the need and brought us the knowledge of a Saviour and His full forgiveness, into the knowledge of heavenly association with Himself, without the link in the divine education of the soul that we find supplied in *Mary of Bethany*—namely, the heart of the saved one laying hold of the Lord Himself as its object. All real progress further depended upon the measure in which this is the case with us. What was that empty sepulchre to *Mary*—what will give this world the character of it to us—except that the One who has lain there was everything to her soul? It was this that made the break so complete with the place where once she had had

her home; it was this that prepared her for the new association with Christ and consequent relationships that make Christianity.

The Lord give us each one to know Himself, beloved friends. It is Himself from first to last, but not measured by the need that made Him real to us, by the blessed way He met it; but this only as a basis to that deeper knowledge of Himself, in which the heart is divinely satisfied for ever. For "He satisfieth the longing soul." Otherwise, instead of the power of the heavenly associations into which He has brought us with Himself, earthly things will retain their attraction and power. That is what is the ruin of us—these things retain their hold over the heart, because He is so feebly known in His excellency and glory as the heart's object.

And yet what remains but that He who has opened the place so fully to us, and given us the Holy Ghost as the present power of our enjoyment of it, should come to receive us to Himself, "that where I am there ye may be also." With Him as the present object of our hearts there, a link so real with all heaven's blessedness now, what joy to be only watching for Himself. The Lord grant it to us, for His name's sake.

J. A. T.

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## PHILIPPIANS III.

I THINK it is an important thing, in these days, to avoid the natural tendency of the heart, to measure the truth of God by the expression we have of it here on earth; or even to measure the truth by the apprehension we have of it here. We see the truth and know it; we look round at the expression of it, and then the heart fails, when we find how little the expression really answers to the object before it. The truth is presented to us by God Himself; the expression fails, and then the tendency comes in to accept a lower standard, than God has given. The standard remains the same. God does not lower the standard because of our short-comings. It is always the same standard in spite of our failures, and God seeks in His grace to cause that standard to have its effect upon us. The more we are occupied with the standard, the more we shall be conscious of how we fail.

Now one mark of being in the presence of God is consciousness of failure and short-comings; there is no thought in the presence of God of how far I have attained. There is satisfaction in the Object, but with that, the conscious sense

of how far short we come in practice and ways and life here.

Before the soul can really look at the Object, as presented here, it must get the truth, put before it in the beginning of the chapter: "We are the circumcision;" not of it—we represent it, we are it. He is laying the basis upon which the soul can stand, and be occupied with, can gaze in simplicity and uprightness of heart at the Object set before it. The Object is Christ in glory, not Christ upon the cross; "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection." It is not gazing upon Christ on the cross as an offering for sin, but Christ in glory at the right hand of God in heaven. In verse 3 he lays the ground. It is no longer Israel. If we are truly the children of God, and have this Object before us, the sole ground upon which we can stand and gaze upon such an Object, is that given us in this verse. If we think of ourselves, and what we are, we can only go back to this verse, and the truth therein contained: God has set us before Himself as representing the entire cutting off of the old man; not an effort of the old man to turn over a new leaf; not a cultivating of the old man; not a giving of the heart to Christ; but a consenting in the bottom of the heart to this—that we represent the entire cutting off of the old man. What takes the place of the old man? The new Man, the Christ of God, and

that Christ in heavenly glory. That is the only ground upon which we can stand before God, not looking for feelings, or apprehensions, or anything in ourselves at all; not looking even to see how far we appreciate that Object; but gazing on that Object. The consequence being that you are able to witness to that Object, you reflect that Object. It is, too, the only way in which the soul is really honest with God.

Look at Luke x. for instance. There we have a man not really honest with God, a man who comes and asks, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Tell me, the Lord says, how do you read the law? What is your version of it? He tells the Lord Jesus, and he had read it rightly. Do that and live, the Lord says. Here the dishonest heart comes out the man turns to the Lord, and he does not say, Who is my God? He avoids the keen edge of the word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. When the Lord applies the word out of his own lips to him, he does not say, Who is my God? It is a heart not prepared to face the truth, and he says, "Who is my neighbour?" The word applied by the Lord Jesus cuts down to the heart and conscience; he cannot stand it, therefore he seeks to "justify himself." He was surrounded by all the marks of who his God was; and what it was to have to do with God; but he seeks to "justify himself."

Then the Lord goes on with him, and seeks to take him up on that ground. He comes in, in all the wondrous blessedness of divine grace, to the heart that is set to avoid the keen edge of the word. I will tell you who is your neighbour, He says. You have no such neighbour in all the universe of God as God Himself! And He has come down to you where you were, half dead, stripped of everything, robbed of everything. Here He presents Himself as come not merely to give forgiveness of sins; He takes him to the inn and takes care of him. You remember the blessed story, always so fresh to all of us. He places him at His cost for ever. He makes no bargain with the owner of the inn. He says, Whatever you spend I will repay, he is at my cost for ever. On no other ground will He have to say to the man.

Now, before we go back, just look, for a moment, at one who is really fit for the place we have in our chapter. Mary had the divine Object before her soul. The Lord Jesus was in Martha's house—she was occupied "about much serving." There was one there who sat at "Jesus' feet, and heard His word," and the Lord took care that she should not be interrupted. What was it, she heard? Was it anything good about herself? He did not come to flatter, He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." Do you know what He had come to do? That was part

of what she heard. Do you know what He was Himself? That was another part of it. She heard of the goodness of God, of the love of God, we may be sure. It was bringing God Himself before her, in the delight of satisfying His own heart of love, in such a world as this; and He takes care she shall not be interrupted in hearing of it.

Do you say, there is no fruit in that occupation? Beloved friends, we must be empty vessels before we can be full ones. The great difficulty is to be an empty vessel. We think we have something, instead of being empty to be filled with Himself and His love. I do not think it is a question of what we can do for Him; it is the heart so taken up with Him, so kept by Him, that testimony to Himself flows out, because it cannot be kept in. It flows out because the heart is full.

Now read verse 3. That is what we are: "We are the circumcision." And then He speaks of the flesh. It is not sin now, but the religious nature that the flesh could have to boast of; the religious man was taken up, and disposed of, because displaced by another. It is not now a religion of God's establishing, but a Person; it is having to do with a Person; being here in this world, simply and heartily and uprightly gazing upon that Person. The consequence is you reflect that Person.

You remember when the Lord comes to the disciples in the boat, He comes to them walking on the water. They all think they have seen a spirit, and are alarmed by the supernatural manifestation before them. He was doing an impossibility for man—walking on the waves! Peter says, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water." Jesus says, "Come." Peter gets out of the boat and does the same thing, the very same thing that Jesus Himself was doing. The one, who has his eye fixed on Him, does the same thing that He does. The reflection of the Object comes simply from occupation with the Object. He looks neither to the right hand nor to the left, and he walks on the water. There is the reflection of Christ Himself. There is the testimony. There is no testimony when Peter looks at the circumstances around him, and begins to sink. Then he says, "Lord save *me*." It is not bearing witness to what Christ was Himself, but he cries to Him, for the power that shall uphold him.

There we see plainly, I think, the two powers that are always there: the power of the Object that can produce likeness to the Object, and make the one occupied with it answer to the Object Himself. But there is another power, and that power is always ready, that hand is always stretched out—the power to save. But that is not testimony. Peter, sinking, cries, "Lord, save

me," and the hand is stretched out immediately ; He is near enough to stretch out His hand, and save him from sinking. The power is always in the Object, but if we are looking to the right hand, or to the left, the power fails us for the time being ; but the other power is always there—the power to save. It does not do to look at the effect produced, or what the consequences are—we soon then get back to be occupied with ourselves.

I do not know, whether we have apprehended what it is to be occupied simply with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself ; and then, with what corresponds to Him down here. You cannot be rightly occupied with what is dear to Him down here, unless you are occupied with Him first, and what suits Him.

Verses 8, 9, 10. Here is a man with an Object outside himself altogether. I look forward to that Object. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." We know what He has done—we should not be Christians if we did not ; we must know that before our consciences can have rest—but it is *Himself* here : "That I may know him"—a Person before me. The very first step, in my introduction to Himself, is the knowledge of what He has done, and when I know that, I seek to know Himself, the One who has done it, and the very motives, not only that actuated Him to come down to seek and to save

the lost, but that actuated Him in all His life here. I see One who had the glory of God before Him, in everything He did. I cannot get near Him, unless I know the effect of what He has done. It has been to transfer me from the ground, on which I stood as a lost creature, to the ground not only of being forgiven and pardoned, but of being received and established by God Himself, in the very same favour as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Have you ever asked yourself that question How much does God love me? Just as much as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Surely we speak of it with bated breath. We look at ourselves, we think of ourselves, God loves *me* as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ! He has accepted me in Him! Received me into that same favour, loves me as much as He loves Christ! You come back again then to the ground of grace, and drink afresh of that blessed stream. It is the sovereignty of divine love and grace that has set us before Him, in order to delight His own heart in us. Poor, needy things we may be, but He has us before Himself, that He may satisfy His own heart, in bestowing all His love upon us, that He may have, always going up to Him, the praises of those hearts that have found all in Himself. It is the having to do with God Himself.

As to myself, he says, "I count all things but

loss that I may win Christ." And that is the one Object, he says, I have before me now: "That I may know him." Not, that I may go back and study His wonderful, blessed life on earth; wonderful and blessed it is; wonderful in grace and mercy; but that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection; what it is now to have to do with Him who when here upon earth said "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" To have to do with Him who is now unstraitened in all His desires; He has passed through it, and is now the other side of death and judgment; to know what it is to be taken up by Himself, at His cost, at His charge every moment of our time down here, that He may express out of such a thing as I am what can conduce to His glory.

But how soon a kind of cloud comes over that! Something of self comes in. How soon a cloud or mist comes over it, and we turn away from it, and we look at other things, and we think things ought to be so and so, and like this, or like that. And so they ought to be, perhaps. But He knows a great deal more about it than you and I do, and He looks for subjection to His hand. He looks for us to be in His hand, that in the midst of all these things, He may express from us and through us, what is to His honour and glory.

It is true, we are in the school, but it is a blessed school. I think, it was said, if we are not good at school, we are not good at home. Had we not better put it the other way? The one who is good at home, will be good at school; we must begin with home first. Here is the secret of all good conduct. In the school we are tested, the heart is tested, and failure appears, and this is the reason—we are not, in our inmost souls, right with Himself, not walking in simplicity and uprightness, not walking as the Apostle says here of himself, really clear of everything but this one blessed Object before him “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,” and here in this world “the fellowship of his sufferings.” It is not possible for you to enter into the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ here, unless you “know him, and the power of his resurrection.”

Let me ask, What answers to a glorified Christ? A suffering, dependent people down here! And we are content to be a suffering people here in this world. Why? Because it conduces to Christ's glory. It conduces to His glory that His people should be a suffering people in the place where He was crucified—God forbid they should be anything else! It was the ruin of the testimony always, when people began looking for something here, something that the heart could rest upon, and that the eye could see,

instead of just the fellowship of His sufferings: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Not, that I may lay hold of something, but that I may, by the grace of God, understand what He is, in His greatness, in His goodness, in His infinite love. What has He apprehended you for? To save you from hell? That is the poorest thing! It is a blessed mercy, surely, but is that all Christ died for? No! It is to have you for Himself, that He may be glorified thereby. He has laid hold of me for a purpose. We cannot perhaps express what that purpose is. We must know Himself, before we can know it; we must get near enough to Himself to know what that is, for which He has apprehended us; (just as Mary could sit at His feet, and hear His word, and He would take care she should not be interrupted) letting Him pour into our souls what His blessed mind is. About *us*, and our ways down here? No! About *Himself* and His ways. Not about yourself; He has cut you off, and now He has taken you up, and set you before Him, that He may talk to you of Himself and His ways. There is no such blessed occupation as that.

If you look at 1 Thessalonians i. 3, 4, you see the same Spirit producing the same thought, the same desire. They are waiting for His Son from heaven. That is the one Object I have before

me, he says, Christ himself, and that I may know the power of His resurrection. The first effect of the gospel is that you become a waiting people; the effect of occupation with Christ is that you are content to be a suffering people for His sake. Waiting for His Son, and suffering for His sake. Whatever the past history may have been, that is the place we can always take through God's grace, where we can always find ourselves at home. We shall never be disappointed if we are only content to be a waiting and a suffering people with Christ; the Object before us there—Himself, and the power of His resurrection, and waiting for Himself from heaven. If we are just content with that, we shall have no blighted hopes; no short-comings there, no expectations unfulfilled there, nothing to mar nor to soil. Paul was not satisfied with his own sufferings, but with the Object that led him to suffer—satisfied with Himself for whom we wait. That is the ground He sets before us; a narrow path it may be, but a path that goes on changelessly. The difficulty is, people try to make out another pathway, and so sorrow comes in, and trial. People get distrustful and cast-down because they look for something else. God sets before us the consequence of having to do with Christ, and waiting for His coming. If I have Christ in glory before me, I am a suffering person here, and I am content to be it, because

He is glorified by it, and I am in a world which crucified Him, and I am waiting for that blessed One who is coming.

Look at the end of this chapter. It is not isolation. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," &c. That is the great healer of divisions, where there is singleness of heart and eye to Himself; a causer of divisions where there is not. If we are going to walk for Him and His glory, it must be simply as subject, dependent, suffering, waiting people. You say, It is a difficult path? It is more than difficult; it is impossible, unless you go back to verse 3. I must know Him and accept that ground. And if we are going to walk as dependent, subject, suffering, waiting people, that will be the great healer of all strifes and divisions, but it will be a great means of manifesting those who will not walk that way. Only, through grace, let me look straight forward.

You will find one prayer that seems to me to be always a prayer in the sanctuary "Hold thou me up, that my footsteps slip not"—"Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." On that pathway there is no foothold for the flesh; and thus he expresses dependence upon Him who alone can hold up, but who is ever ready to do so, blessed be His name! "We are the circumcision." That is what God, in His wondrous grace, has revealed in these days; His

people represent the cutting off of the flesh, and the setting up and upholding in this world, by the power, and at the cost of Another, of a people to be maintained for His glory. If we are content to be that, there is no disappointment. Disappointment comes in where the heart is looking for, and seeking something, which does not conduce to His glory.

P. A. H.



# “I WILL PUBLISH THE NAME OF THE LORD.”

DEUTERONOMY XXXII. 1-14.

IT is a great comfort to our hearts, beloved brethren, when evil comes out, that all the evil and the sin (and each one that proves what is in his own heart, and finds there what perhaps he never suspected, and that Satan has used it for the casting down of confidence in the soul)—has already been taken into account by God, and while it may surprise us, God, I may say with reverence, is not taken by surprise. When it was needful for the testing of the creature that the question of good and evil should be raised under the law (and we all have practically to learn it in one way or another) yet God is always beforehand. That we get in the beautiful Psalm (cv. 16, 17): “Moreover he called for a famine upon the land;” it was not by chance; *He* called for it; but then, “He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant.” God had provided before the want came.

What is so beautiful here is that when the Lord takes up a people, the first thing He does is to proclaim His name to them. When Moses is sent

to the children of Israel, and gets his commission as the apostle of their profession, he asks the Lord by what name He would make Himself known to them. Beloved brethren, there is a great deal wrapped up in that for us, as for them—the way in which God reveals Himself to us. Immediately God proclaims His name to Moses: “I am that I am.” “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” So before they start upon their journey, before it is a question whether *they* will ever reach Canaan, or of what they are as proved in the journey, God comes in first with what He is, what is in His name for the people He has taken up. Surely there is *our* strength—in what God is.

In the passage I read, Moses summons the heavens and the earth as witnesses on God's side, because on the people's part there could be nothing but breakdown and hence cursing. In the previous chapter this utter breakdown is foreseen; yet in chapter xxx. He speaks of the word of faith “It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven . . . but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it”—that was not

the word of law; under law there was nothing but a curse; that was the word of faith, the apostle so explains it in Romans x. 8—in reality there was a new thing. When they had come into all the judgments which Jehovah had prophesied, and were brought to their wits' end, it would be a question not of law, but of faith: the word in thy mouth and in thy heart. Chapter xxxii., Moses was commanded to write as a prophetic song to be laid up for a testimony. This he begins in verse 2, after summoning heaven and earth to witness. If you remember in Psalm 1, they are summoned as witnesses, too. But that is not what I want to call your attention to. He could not have said up to this point, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew.” In all he had been saying, as putting Israel upon their responsibility in the land, he could not use such words as these: “As the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” But now he can, for he is taking up another point—what God is. He will have to foretell all the breakdown of the people; that will have to come out, they will go through all that is said in the after part of the chapter till they come to their wits' end, then they would find out what God was for them. But before that, here is the doctrine that drops as the rain and distils as the dew.

Oh, beloved brethren, is not that what suits

our hearts? God knows how to come in. Is it not necessary for Him to teach us the lesson of good and evil, referred to this morning? That may be necessary, but the doctrine which drops as the rain is before that. That other passage was referred to likewise: "According to *this* time it shall be said. . . What hath God wrought?" What He is and what He has wrought—not what they are and what they have wrought—is the doctrine which distils as the dew.

What was the great capital sin that Moses speaks of here? It was idolatry, the giving up of God in that name in which He had revealed Himself. If the heart turns to the Lord—when the Lord is really before us—there is always recovery. It is when the heart departs from the Lord (see Heb. iii. 12) that there is no recovery. What then is to recover me? A person may say, I have been doing wrong; I will set to work and do better. There is no recovery in that. "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return *unto me*," that is recovery. The grand sin of Israel was leaving the Lord. Quite true, they fell into all kinds of evil and sin and pride, but here was the great sin; and if the heart departs from the Lord there is no centre to recover to. As another has said, A groan *to God*, however feeble it may be, however little we may have the sense that we are heard, yet if it is to God there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning.

The charge to Israel was, “They have not cried *unto me* with their heart, when they howled upon their beds.” There was no turning of heart to God. Take the prodigal son—the recovery was really when he said, “I will arise and go to my Father”—the turning of heart to the Lord.

Israel’s great sin was idolatry. The sin of Christendom will be consummated really in giving up Christ. Then all is gone. But here Moses says, “I will publish the name of the LORD.” What was treasured up for Israel in that! “Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock; his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Of course, I do not say that the revelation of God here comes up to what we have now. I am only speaking of the principles we get as Moses brings out this simple lesson that he learnt at the bush when the Lord made known His name. Not “I was” or “I will be,” but “I AM:” an ever-present God for ever. That was their strength. God our Strength—“He is the Rock.”

Well, beloved brethren, if we now just turn for a moment and look on our side, it is what we have already had before us to-day—the revelation made in those words, “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God.” Look again at Philippians ii. 6–11: The Lord Jesus Christ empties Himself, comes down and

takes the place of a servant here, obedient to death, even the death of the cross! Now God has "given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Jesus—what a name we have now! The Father and the Son. The Father, the Source of all blessing, revealed, unfolded to us by the Son. The Son unfolding the Father here upon earth, and then taking His place in heaven as having fully unfolded what God was, and walked as a Man upon earth glorifying God. Now a name given Him above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." I would only say, beloved brethren, do we know the power of that name? We sing sometimes

"To sound in God the Father's ears  
No other name but Thine."

What that name is, as known to us by the power of the Holy Ghost, what there is there, what there is in that Rock, I do not pretend to say much on, beloved; but I just quote Philippians ii. rather because there is a reference to Deuteronomy xxxii. 5 in that very chapter. "They have corrupted themselves"—that is what *they* have done—"their spot is not the spot of his children; they are a perverse and crooked generation." Now in Philippians ii. we are exhorted to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus. There is to be simple subjection

of heart to that name of Jesus; that name having all its power upon our souls, that name, not only as Saviour but as Lord, is to sway our hearts.

That is one great point, I think, in that chapter, the name of Jesus having its full power and sway in our hearts. Then we get the result a little lower down. As the apostle to the Gentiles, he is absent, and contemplates his passing away from them; but then there is what God does:

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is *God that worketh in you* both to will and to do of his good pleasure that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke.” Now we get the contrast of this in Deuteronomy xxxii. 5. There was what God was, but Israel never knew the power of that name. Until the last day, when really they see the Lord Jesus and find He is their Jehovah, they will never know it. They did not know the power of that name Jehovah, but in Philippians ii. we do; we know the power of the name of Jesus, not only as salvation, but as commanding our hearts, having its sway in the secret of our souls. Well, then, what is the effect of it? Exactly the contrary of what we get here in Deuteronomy (the very words are referred to in Philippians ii. 15) we are to be sons, blameless and harmless, luminaries, shedding a heavenly light on the scene down here, in the

midst of a crooked and perverse generation—the Lord Jesus having His sway over us. How the Lord pleads with Israel in that passage in Isaiah xlv., which is quoted in Philippians ii.: “I am Jehovah and there is none else.” Again, “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else. I have sworn by myself... that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” Now is brought out the connection of the names of the Father and the Son, for if Jesus is confessed as Lord, it will be to the glory of *God the Father*.

Oh, that there may be a place in our hearts where that name is owned, and that that name may really sway them! Then it would come out—“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.” Moses had to say of Israel: “Their spot is not the spot of his children.” It is a question now of other people seeing the power this name has upon us.

When the name of Jesus sways our hearts, we have before us the salvation spoken of in this Epistle, that is, the final triumph of Jesus over all the power of the enemy. That is referred to in the word salvation. Paul was in prison when he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, and this triumph was in his mind when he said, “I know that this shall turn to my salvation.” In chapter

iii. 21 our bodies of humiliation become the subjects of the Saviour's power. All will be subjected to Him, even things infernal will have to bow to His name. Our hearts have bowed to that name now. If that name is hidden in our hearts, then we shall answer to what is said, “the sons of God without rebuke [it is really what the blessed Lord Himself was] in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.” He was shedding forth heavenly light in the scene down here.

Only one word more. Just this: “the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the LORD alone did lead him and there was no strange god with him.” (Vers. 9–12.) There could be no failure on God's side. If He brought them into the wilderness, well, “His way is perfect,” what was it but to find God there? If Paul speaks of infirmities, he can say, I take pleasure in them, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. God led His people into the wilderness, there He led them and instructed them; but He kept them as the apple of His eye. He brought them out of Egypt to be their God,

and then "there was no strange god with him." "Little children," John says, "keep yourselves from idols." If the blessed Lord Jesus Christ has His name really sovereign in our hearts, if there it is treasured up and has power and sway over our souls, there will be no "strange god"—"the LORD *alone* did lead him."

Then we get all the blessings they received from Him. (Vers. 13, 14.) Then alas! (ver. 15) "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." It was the turning away of heart.

Oh, may the Lord keep us, beloved brethren, in the secret of that doctrine that drops as the rain and distils as the dew what God is to us and for us; our hearts knowing it and entering into it. We know how it is when there is failure, we are legal often and try to alter and put it right ourselves. That is not the doctrine that drops as the rain; that does not make the tender grass grow. What can really be the revival of our souls but this "doctrine that drops as the rain"? this name of the Lord Jesus Christ getting fresh power in our souls, swaying our hearts, so that we not only know Him as Saviour, but as Lord?

T. H. R.



# WE LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM.

## JOSHUA III

JORDAN, we all know, was a type of the death of Christ. There are two great things connected with it: one is that we know we are over, through His death; and the other is, that being over in Him we have power over the enemies against us. You get it beautifully illustrated in Stephen. He was over, and he comes back in the power of Christ and faces the whole array of Satanic power here on earth. It is a wonderful display of what divine power could effect. That was the effect of the death of Christ.

There are four aspects of the death of Christ. They all happened together, but we do not learn them all together. I will just go over them, because it is well to understand a little the history of the soul. Exodus xii. I turn to for the first—verse 13—“The blood shall be to you for a token.” Most of you know the chapter. That, I may say, is the first apprehension the soul has of the death of Christ. The blood is that which really shelters from the judge. The mark and characteristic of a person who has,

learned that, is that he longs to get out of the place of judgment. I call Egypt the place of judgment; not exactly the world. He is longing to get out of it, and therefore he eats the passover in haste, with shoes on his feet and staff in his hand. I do not believe any one has a very deep sense of what the blood of Christ has effected for him, if he does not wish to get out of the place of judgment. He gets out of Egypt, away from Pharaoh. To me it is exactly like a man in the life-boat. The sailors may tell him he is perfectly safe in the life-boat, but he would like to get to land. He wants to get out of the place where he had been exposed to such imminent danger, simply because he knows the tremendous danger he was in. That is the first aspect.

Now I turn to chapter *xiv.* for another aspect. There they are in terrible trouble because of Pharaoh; they are saved from the place of judgment, but not from the Egyptians, who exposed them to the judgment. The command to Moses was Bring them out from the hand of the Egyptians. The Egyptians represent man in enmity against God and therefore under the power of death, and hence what Moses now tells them to comfort them is: "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." The Red Sea sets forth the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He entered into

death "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." You see, beloved friends, when you take that into account, what a wonderful place we are put into! No one before Christ's death could say death was abolished. Look at Hezekiah. Death was not gone for him. Death is not before us now, but life. The apostle says, "Lay hold on eternal life." That could not be till Christ had "abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." It is wonderful the difference between us and them. It is all contrast. Death before them, life before us; sin before them, holiness before us. "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." I believe the bottom of all imperfection is the light sense there is of sin—I do not speak of sins, but sin. You never learn what sin is in God's sight but in the cross. It is not the judgment of hell fire that tells us what sin is, but the cross. If you knew what sin is in the sight of God, you would want to have it put away. You cannot have an idea of His holiness if you can tolerate any movement of sin. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." In verse 27 the Egyptians are gone—seen no more for ever. I connect Exodus xii. with Romans iii. 25: "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood;" and I connect Exodus xv. with the ending of Romans iv. What characterises a person who has learned

that? The morning has appeared—that wonderful morning of resurrection when all is clear, and the eye of God rests upon that blessed One who has done it all. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” What is the result of victory? A song. Do not imagine any one can sing till then! People try to make young converts sing—they must get to shore first; they must have the sense that the morning of redemption has appeared, that they are clear of the place and of the man that exposed them to judgment.

There are three great characteristics connected with the song. First, “The LORD hath triumphed gloriously”—you glory in the Person who has achieved the victory. Second, you must provide Him a place: “I will prepare him an habitation:” you could not be happy here without His having a habitation. Third, you go to His habitation. “Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.” But He places you in the wilderness here. I think very few people know what the wilderness is. It is entire dependence upon God. The richer a man is, the more he feels the wilderness, if he is dependent on God, because he has resources, but cannot turn to his resources. Israel had nothing but a bare wilderness; but we are placed where

we have the power to gratify ourselves, but we deny ourselves—that is Marah.

When we our tastes deny,  
Where we could gratify,  
We suffer bitterly ;  
But sweet is liberty !

What marks the wilderness is entire dependence upon God. The more resources you have, the more you must be as though you had none. I am not to use my resources one bit more than my blessed Lord did who had all resources. Your whole resource must be in God. That marks a certain stage in your Christian history.

I turn now to the third aspect: Numbers xxi. After thirty-nine years, the terrible nature of the people came out: "They spake against God." They were bitten of serpents, the source of all evil, and made sensible of the poison in their nature, suffering under it. Moses was told to put a brazen serpent upon a pole he that looked, lived; he had practically life outside himself. You get the antitype to that in John iii. It is another aspect of the death of Christ. John does not begin with the blood upon the lintel; it is the aspect of the death of Christ Godward; but, for us, the same death. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven." You could not have anything from heaven till

some one came out of heaven. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Who is the antitype of the serpent? The Son of man who was lifted up. The brazen serpent never did the wrong; but it was made in the likeness of what did the wrong. Thus, in Romans viii., "God sending his own Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.*" It is not, He forgave it, but He *condemned* it. He that looks, lives, and not only lives, but there is the river of God in that same chapter—they sang, "Spring up, O well!" They are outside the wilderness now. It is a heavenly life, but a heavenly life consequent upon a Man being "lifted up." The Lord says, as it were, I bore the judgment on your side that you might have the blessedness of My side. There is fulfilled what you get in Romans viii. 2: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." I have the life of the One with whom I died. I affectionately ask you to keep that saying often in your mind: I have the life of the One with whom I died. I am not a bit dead myself. Holiness by faith people say, I am dead. I am not a bit dead, but I have died with Him. Other people talk about death to nature. Another novel notion that has come out is that I must apply the death of Christ to get power over sin. All are wrong.

The truth is, I have *died with Him*, and I am in His life. "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." I repeat it, I have the life of the One with whom I died. "I am crucified with Christ," I have done with the "I"—"nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." I am not looking for a feeling. It "is not the expulsive power of a new sentiment," but the expulsive power of a new Person. What is gain to me I count loss for a Person. A person has all the qualities of his life about him. It is not mere sentiment; it is what Christ is Himself; we have seen Him. "Christ liveth in me." It is not simply that I am gone, that the Egyptian is gone, but I have life and liberty in Him. I am free.

It is wonderful how the soul travels. When you have got to resurrection, the morning has appeared indeed! But what troubles you? The working of sin in yourself. It does work, no doubt. But I have liberty in His life. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." That is not forgiveness. I am free. I am now travelling in a new life. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"—the anti-

type of the well of Numbers xxi. I am really brought now by the Spirit of God into an entirely new kind of life. What kind? A heavenly one—therefore, when John speaks of eternal life, he starts with the brazen serpent; you start in the liberty of life.

I turn now to Colossians ii. 20 for a moment: "Dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world." I remember I said at a reading, Many a person is clear of Romans vii. who is not experimentally over Jordan; an objection was made to it, but it was overcome. But still I do not think now there is a complete deliverance until you are over Jordan. There is the same expression in Romans and in Colossians. In Romans you are dead with Christ to sin; in Colossians you are dead with Christ to the rudiments of the world. Romans only goes so far as to say, Dead to sin. What would you like next? I would like to leave the place where it is. Then I find, "Dead with Christ to the rudiments of the world." (Col. ii. 20.) When I am in eternal life I am in the sphere where Christ is, and I have parted company with the sphere where natural life is. Do you believe, then, in death to nature? No; though I have parted company with the sphere where natural life is, yet the very power that has carried me over and made my heart know that I am in a new sphere, where Christ is, enables me to fulfil here upon

earth all the duties and ordinances of this life in a new power and in an excellency which I never knew before. Thus, for instance, Ephesians is the only Epistle where you get the education of your children: you are told to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The nearer I get to God, the better I can carry out the ordinances of God. In Ephesians I get, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church." In Colossians (where I am only going into possession, not in it, though possession is ours) I find, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

I go back now to our chapter (Joshua iii.) and just look at what it is to be over. I believe a great many people are over Jordan who have never accepted Jordan. Many have enjoyed the scene where Christ is, who have never accepted the place. I am in the sphere where Christ is, tasting the actual nature of eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." I know what a solemn thing it is. The Lord brings the reality oftentimes before us. Would you pass over and leave everything here behind you? That is what I call accepting Jordan. It is all clear, the moment I see that all belongs to me. I am just as much entitled to be over Jordan as I am to be out of Egypt. Thus the Lord says to the thief on the cross, You go

all the way to-day. We can hardly believe in the wonderful magnitude of divine grace to transfer a man from the deepest degradation to the highest place in paradise, in company with the Lord Himself; brought into the enjoyment of it that day, He got rid of the encumbrance. We stay down here to be free of the encumbrance. How? By learning, I have the life of the One who has obtained heaven for me.

A man who has only learned the shelter of the blood is occupied with relief; but the man who knows the place Christ has obtained for him, is occupied with his boundless resource in the blessed God; it is this which fills his heart. "That ye may *abound* in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Salvation is not only saved from, but saved *to*. Let us look at the chapter a moment. There are two things you are over; and I trust many of us can say, I have lost sight of everything, I am so happy with the Lord. But that is not accepting Jordan. I had better give you an illustration, I have seen a person apprehending a great trial, ready for it; the trial never came! It is looking death straight in the face, as another has said, What I say is this, I am so sure that is my place, that the death of Christ has obtained it for me, my heart has so realised the power that has brought me there, that if all close here, I have accepted it; that is my right

place. What is the actual result of that? You come back, or rather, you resume here by the very power that put you up there—you got up there by the power of life out of death; the very same power that put you there, outside of all this sphere, enables you to walk in divine superiority to everything here, as Stephen did. It is the fulfilment of Psalm xxii. "I triumph in thy triumphs, Lord." I know what the power of Christ is. It is the fulfilment of Joshua iii. 10: "Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you." How do you practise it? Not like Samson by knocking down all your enemies, but, on the contrary, overcoming evil with good. What a wonderful position we can trace our history to! The Lord grant our hearts may know what it is! I would have you exercise your hearts about it, that you may enter into the wonderful reality. I do not say, Part company with all here and have to do with it; but I say, when you are in the sphere of eternal life you are in the sphere where Christ is, and you are apart from natural things, but you come back to act practically with divine power in them. I turn to the Lord that our hearts may know this wonderful thing in this poor world. I trust we have all tasted of the unspeakable joy of it for a moment; but may we not only taste it, but know that it is our settled place by the death of Christ, and that we

have as good a right to know it as our abiding place, as we have to be sheltered by the blood in Egypt.

The Lord grant that each may know it, for His name's sake !

J. B. S.



# THE MYSTERY.

COLOSSIANS II. 1-3.

I AM anxious to bring the subject of the mystery before you. It is well to look at what is before us. A meeting of this kind is not for edification only, but I might say for education also. It is looking ahead—looking out at what is before us. The first thing we get in this scripture is the earnestness of the apostle. “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have.” That is a great word to each servant of God. I often ask myself, How much of this earnestness have I? How much real conflict have I? We see more of it in seeking the salvation of souls. I approve that there should be earnestness in that; but “this ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.” I do not see the same earnestness to lead the saints into the knowledge of the mystery. You hardly see anything about the church in any publication now. Why? One is often told, because they are not up to it, but that is no answer. There was great opposition, and the apostle says, “I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you.” Whom is he

fighting with in prison? Not with flesh and blood. His conflict was with the powers of darkness. He speaks of "the mystery" in the last three verses of Romans. He tells them there is something more to learn than the gospel, something that was hid from the beginning of the world, which they had not come to yet. "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." How many could say that? Acknowledgment is a very weak word. It means the real knowledge of the mystery of God, and one would think it would strike any one to read that.

Now, for a moment, I turn to another side. What sort of people were these Colossians? The apostle desired to bring the subject before them because of some impending danger. If I look at chapter i. 4, I see what sort of people they were: "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints." I think I hear some servant of Christ saying: I should be content if I could see the saints up to that. It is not faith in God, but "faith in Christ Jesus;" a very great advance. In Ephesians it is

faith in the "Lord Jesus." I cannot tell you the difference, but there *is* a difference. I tell you truly that the mass of Christians would be satisfied to see the saints up to the gospel, with good conduct, and good works. Do you ask, What is there beyond that? I reply, The mystery. The former puts you in a commendable light before man. Do you think you would have any less of it by knowing the mystery? No; but that is not the mystery. The apostle greatly commends these Colossians, and ceases not to pray for them (it greatly encourages one to pray for a person who is going on well), but they were in danger of being carried away by an intrusion of the flesh, brought out here for the first time. Let me simplify what I mean. I see the flesh working in Corinth in self-indulgence. The corrective of that was the truth of the Lord's table. How can you indulge the flesh for which Christ died? The Galatian intrusion was legality, not self-indulgence. If you put yourself under the law you lose Christ. Now comes the Colossian intrusion. It is of the most specious order. It is not like that of the Corinthians, nor the Galatians. The snare the Colossians were in danger of was to make man a contributor to the Christian; to make the natural man in mind and body contribute to Christianity. The mind and body are for Christ's service, but there is a great difference between being a servant and a con-

tributor. "The borrower is servant to the lender." The body of the saint is to be a servant, not a contributor. Now the Colossians were bringing in both mind and body to contribute to Christianity. It was rationalism and ritualism combined, and this is what really has got in vogue amongst us now, and called a Christian man.

What is a Christian? You get it in chapter ii. 10: "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." Some one has remarked "What do I want with your science or with your genuflexions? I am "complete in him"! Need I go farther? We can say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Nothing would suit Christ but Himself; the church could have nothing else nor less. It is not that we contribute *to* Him, but we derive *from* Him a life and nature that alone can suit Him. We are fit to be His companions before we enjoy union. I do not believe any one enjoys union unless he enjoys companionship with Christ. It is that which makes union the climax of grace. You never get union in Canticles. Till the Holy Ghost is come, you neither know the power of the wave-sheaf, nor the two loaves. (See Lev. xxiii. 11-17.) That was the characteristic of the day of Pentecost; no free-will offering till then. Every believer is enjoying the benefit of the passover, but how many are there, who are in enjoyment of the benefit of Pentecost having "fully come"? When

Pentecost is "fully come" we have the two loaves, "a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," really the church now. Many godly, earnest men do not understand it. What would it have been to George Herbert if he had known it! Now the practical thing for us to maintain is that the day of Pentecost is "fully come." I say, by the way, that you never can be moved from Him if you are a member of His body. It is not only companionship. The word to the thief on the cross—"with me in paradise"—means in company with Me. But when Paul says, in Philippians i., "I long to be *with* Christ," the word he uses expresses co-partnership *with* Him.

I come now to why the mystery is brought in. It is really to protect them from religious flesh. Nothing will ever protect you from this snare but the mystery. People forget that every truth has its own speciality. If you look at the gospel history, I do not remember that the Lord ever cured two diseases in the same way. I only give that as an illustration, to shew that every truth has its own speciality. If the truth of the Lord's supper was brought in to correct the Corinthian intrusion, that of baptism was brought in to correct the Galatian. "As many of you as have been baptised unto Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) The Lord's supper is used to correct bad conduct; baptism to correct bad doctrine; but

nothing can keep you from the Colossian intrusion but the mystery. When does the knowledge of the mystery come? If you turn to the previous chapter you will see there are two ministries: the ministry of the gospel and the ministry of the church. (Vers. 23-25.) I believe they do join, but it would not be easy to say where one stops and the other begins. Still there are two. Do you think a man could be really, effectively in the ministry of the gospel, if he did not know the ministry of the church? I am not speaking of what a man teaches, but of what a man really knows. The ministry of the church is what the apostle desires to bring before them here, in order to preserve them from this intrusion of the flesh which the Colossians were in danger of. It is the good thing that really keeps out the bad. The simple soul will understand chapter ii. 10 "Complete in him"! Thank God! I do not want anything more than Christ. You say, Do you object to studying science? I say, You cannot add to Christianity. I do not object to making a man a better vessel, but I have all I want in Christ, "Christ everything and in all." I condemn sanctimoniousness, but I wish there were more reverence. "Whatsoever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." In Philippians iii. I have this Person. There it is experience, but here it is doctrine.

Now let us look a little at what the mystery is

in itself. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." (Chap. i. 27.) That is not "the hope of glory" as an object, but "Christ in you the hope of glory" as a consequence. The point is *Christ in you*. Chapter ii. 18 is individual; verse 19 you have "the Head," the Source of all. I believe that in all the divisions that have arisen, the great lack has been not understanding the Head. It is the Head from whence all comes. In Ephesians you get the whole body, the Christ—the growing together, "compacted by that which every joint supplies." Here it is the Head that is brought prominently before us.

What I would turn to now is how this came. What really is the mystery that was kept secret from the foundation of the world? I will just present to you two or three scriptures: Matthew xxii. 44, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now the first great step in understanding the mystery is that Christ who is rejected from this scene is exalted to heaven. He is rejected in Matthew xiv., but in chapter xxii. 44 it is still more definite: "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." He has gone away. He has changed His place. The rejection in chapter xiv. leads to His saying in chapter xvi.: I will

build a new structure, "On this rock I will build my church." Now we have a very definite thing. He is gone away, He is rejected. It is not that He has no right to the place He is rejected from; He has a right, but He has now another place. Now it becomes a very serious question, What is to become of His own in this place from which He is rejected and where He has no place? That is the great problem, and you never can solve it till you understand the mystery. The religious person cannot solve it; I believe any one who really searches the scriptures will see that no one is saved for earth now, but saved for heaven. The very hope of the gospel is heaven.

I turn now to Acts vii. 55. Stephen is led by the Spirit of God to see in this new place a new centre. You say, There is nothing about the mystery there. That I grant you. But there is this fact, that the Holy Ghost has come down and leads up the faithful witness, the pattern man to heaven. There is a new thing inaugurated here. All is changed. Jerusalem *was* the centre; the right hand *is* now the centre, everything now comes from above. The heavens are thrown open for the first time upon a man (I do not speak of our Lord, they opened on Him first). Stephen looks up and sees "the glory of God and Jesus." It is not only that He (Jesus) is there, but Stephen knows the great reception in which He is there. Christ's place is made known

by the Holy Ghost to a man on earth. The new centre is now and henceforth "the right hand." Any one who wants enlightenment as to this has only to look at the places where "the right hand" occurs.

Now turn to Acts ix. 4. "Why persecutest thou me?" This is the first time that there ever was the slightest allusion to the mystery. When Christ, in humiliation, was bodily rejected from this earth by Jew and Gentile, and refused, in the person of Stephen, when exalted to God's right hand (the message sent after Him, so to speak, "We will not have this man to reign over us"), then came out this wonderful secret. In the very place where Satan had led man to the climax of iniquity, where is now no cloak for their sin, it is there this secret comes out. I think we do not enough take it to heart, that we are in the scene of Christ's rejection. You that are seeking honour in the world are seeking it from those who have crucified your Lord. The more you look at it, the more anomalous it appears. Now comes out that centre-piece, that wonderful secret, that great purpose before God for ever. The secret is that Christ's body is on the earth! Do you believe it, beloved friends? I believe it, though I may not be able to shew it to you. The one great effort of Satan has been to frustrate the manifestation of Christ's

body on earth. Why is it not more the subject upon our lips and upon our hearts? Do you say, We cannot manifest it, we cannot set it forth, so we give it up! *No!* The more we work for it, the more we have it, and the more God will support us. We shall be in the current of God's thoughts—in the trade winds, as it were, and not in the doldrums. You may have quiet times in the doldrums, but they will be immovable times—no progress. Many a one whom I have seen once vigorous and walking beside me, has now drifted away. What has he given up? The mystery. He would say, It is impossible, impracticable. I know the one prominent thing in the heart of God—it is the body of Christ. It could not be otherwise, because it is Christ in fulness. The apostle might have saved himself from persecution, but he says to Timothy, Do not give in! “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. (2 Tim. i. 8.) Do not give in, on the contrary, “The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” Timothy was timid, but he was not to be intimidated.

To think that there is such a thing upon earth! Do you hear any prayer about it? Where are we drifting to? You may think that you are not able to propound it, but that is no reason

why you should not look for it. What can be more wonderful than to think of angels seeing into the manifold wisdom of God through us? What a signal defeat of Satan! Do you wonder at his exasperation? I wonder he can tolerate one bit of heavenly colour down here. We are members of the exalted Man; we never were members of the Man in humiliation. Our business here is to set forth the features of the exalted Man in the very scene of His rejection, to defy Satan here. We are to set forth our exalted Head here in the very place where Satan worked upon us, as men in the flesh, to give Him no place. We are here in His power to represent Him. Are we to give it up? No; thank God. Read John xvii. You will never understand that chapter if you do not keep this simply before you: that it is all between Christ's heart and the Father's ear. Every word is to be fulfilled here on this very earth. The New Jerusalem will be the display of everything according to Christ. Not a single desire of His heart will be lost. That prayer (John xvii.) gives the full desire of the heart of Christ. How often we have read it and enjoyed it without knowing why. The reason is just this. There is nothing of our defalcations in it. We hear Him pouring out His heart, and our hearts delight in it. It is the pure stream poured into the Father's ear.

I only turn to one verse more. "For no man

ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Christ the church for we are members of his body." (Eph. v. 29, 30.) Everything is of Christ. We have got everything from Him. The great argument in Ephesians i. is to prove we are so exalted by Christ, "accepted in the Beloved," that we are fitted to be brought into union. It is not that union brings us into this wonderful place. Union is the climax of everything. I am established in all that my heart delights in, but I am fitted to be His companion first. He is anointed "with the oil of gladness above his companions." We share with Him in the holiest of all. Where Aaron was, there were his sons in type. (It is remarkable enough they were reduced to two.) We are of His life and nature: "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Some one has said, that goes even beyond union. Royalty must be united to royalty; we are made royal to be made fit for union, before union is disclosed. What a delight to the heart to get hold of the simple practical fact. Talk of good works! Your walk is to be as Christ walked. Learn how Christ walked. You must be very near Him to learn it. As the Lord said to His disciples: "Without me ye can do nothing." That was the most cheering word, perhaps, they ever heard.

The Lord grant that each of our hearts may

know the exceeding blessedness of being a member of the body of Christ, to walk about this world, setting Him forth in His beauty, in the very scene in which He has been rejected.

J. B. S.



## I JOHN I. AND II. I-12.

I READ this passage in connection with a verse in Colossians i. It seems to me that if one seeks for the reason why there is so little occupation of heart with the "mystery," one finds it in the little practical sense there is in our souls of what Christianity is in itself. The apostle refers to it here before noticing the great subject of this Epistle. (Col. i. 12, 13.) In verse 13 there are three points before the apostle: first, the power of darkness which was over us and from which we have been delivered, not merely the existence of the darkness as a fact, but the *power* of it. We are delivered from it, it is true, but he recognises it as exerting this terrible power of which our brother has been speaking. And surely it is an important thing for us to remember, that it is ever exerted against, though not over, the saints. We are delivered from that and brought into the kingdom of the Son of His love the two other things referred to are here; first the kingdom which at once supposes the authority which is exercised and which everyone feels who comes into it, and to which he is subject. There is in consequence a suited discipline of heart which the soul has to learn

practically. I may know but little of it at first, but everything in me must be brought to feel and own it; every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The other point is the remarkable expression which the apostle uses here "The Son of his love."

It is worthy of note, that this needed discipline of the soul is connected in the Epistle to the Hebrews with the present exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God. And this is the very first step in the revelation of the mystery. The "text," if I may so say, of the Epistle to the Hebrews is, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Christ is now crowned with the oil of gladness above His fellows, according to Psalm xlv. "Fellows" or "companions" supposes we are with the Person alluded to; "friends" might be anywhere; consequently if we are said to be "companions" in this connection, it supposes we must be in the place where He is.\* It is God's purpose to bring many sons unto glory. He sanctifies them: "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one"—identified before God with Christ. He is gone up into the glory, and consequently the place in which He is now is their place. He saves unto the uttermost those that come unto

\* And for that purpose He came down to partake of their nature in this world. He took up *men*, not *angels*. (See Heb. ii.)

God by Him ; He appears for them for ever in the presence of God. That is what gives certainty to the soul, based upon His work entirely accomplished once for all.

See now the result of looking up to Him who is gone into that place, after having accomplished the work of redemption. I find surely the divine completeness of the work He did and God's appreciation of it, not merely the depth and horror of the sin that required such a sacrifice ; He is there, and as far as His blessed work is concerned, sin is gone before God. We wait for the full result of it ; there will be new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness will dwell, but the moral foundation of that blessed, perfect, divine scene has already been laid in the cross, and the work is done. The consequence is that the moment we rest in it, we enjoy the result of it in our own souls. "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." But this is not all ; for He who is exalted into that place is the One who came down into this scene, out of which the "many sons" for God were to be taken. He came in the likeness of man, became a partaker of flesh and blood with us, and He is gone up in that character, and is now as man seated at God's right hand, so that when we look up to Him we find in His blessed Person the absolute certainty for ourselves of

coming into that place because He is there before God, the expression too of the class of created beings who are to be there, not angels, but men. In Him the heart can rest; we know that He will care for us the whole way through. He has made us perfect through His work; He has given us the title to be there; we have boldness to enter into "the holiest" where He is, because He is the great High Priest established over the house of God, the one who can sympathise with us and succour us in all our trials and difficulties. He has gone through them perfectly as a Man down here, and, by the ministry of His own Spirit, He can bring us through them in order that we might have in them the same feelings which He had. This sympathy wins the heart; we find He has gone through everything before us, and we get the succour which is worked out practically in two ways first by the active discipline of God we have to learn what obedience is, and then when we walk through this path, learning obedience under God's hand (for "What son is he whom his father chasteneth not?"), He works in our souls the feelings He had in His soul. The soul is educated in this way in order to have the thoughts the Lord Jesus Christ had when He walked down here; we are thus brought into the moral condition needed for entering into that which His heart is occupied with. We shall find practically that we do not really enter into

the truth of the mystery as set forth in Ephesians and Colossians, if we have not laid hold of the truth set forth in Hebrews. We must begin, not with ourselves but with Christ. The ceaseless opposition of the enemy is felt here the moment God sets forth any truth with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing the devil does is to put man in His place. It is what characterises Romanism, as has been referred to: the Head was set aside and a man put in that place. We shall find the same principle at work in our own souls too; it is the great hindrance to spiritual progress—man or anything displacing Christ.

This brings us to the expression of the apostle: The kingdom is that "of the Son of his love." It is all very well to insist on not thinking of our love to God, but of His love to us; but it will not do to stop there: I must think of God's love to Christ. It is "the Son of his love." It is a most wonderful subject, kept secret during the past ages, and never could be manifested until the Lord Jesus Christ came. The more we look at it as set forth in John, the more we shall find it to be the very essence of Christianity.

In John i. 17 we read: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The difference between law and grace is that law takes up man on his responsibility and asks what can man do for God, when placed

in the most favourable circumstances, and the object of God's continual care? What fruit can he produce for God? (See Isa. v. and Ps. lxxx.) Every sort of care and toil on God's part had been expended upon the people; but when He came to look for fruit, what did He find?—"Wild grapes." The principle of grace is the opposite of this—it shews what God can do for man. It finds man in the very worst condition, proved to have failed under every test to which he has been subjected, and shewn to be utterly without strength; it is not merely that he has failed sometimes, but, in his heart, he is at enmity against God, unable to do anything for God. In such circumstances what can God do for man? The cross answers the question: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." God meets man in his ruin, and undertakes the whole work in righteousness, puts away sin, and acts towards man according to His own righteousness. Christ accomplished the work, and the believer is made the righteousness of God in Christ. But that in itself does not give the full measure of Christianity; we must go further. "Of his *fulness* have all we received and grace upon grace. No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." It is not merely what God can do for man, what He has done for man—blessed,

perfect, eternal as the work is—but there is One before Him ever the object of His thoughts and of His heart; and Christianity answers the question, What will the Father do for the Son? John iii. 35 is a sort of key-note to the gospel: “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” Let chapter xvii. be only read in the light of that verse! In that wonderful and blessed prayer, the Lord looks at everything as a gift received from the Father’s hand. Read the first two verses, and think of this divine authority, given to the Son,—and in the exercise of which He “glorifies” the Father,—flowing from the heart of the living God toward poor creatures such as we are; think of the One from whom it all comes, as the Lord expresses it “Thou hast *given* him power over all flesh, that he should *give* eternal life to as many as thou hast *given* him.” Oh, that blessed word “given”! Think who the Speaker is and the One to whom it is addressed! What God is as a “Giver” the woman of Samaria had never heard of. She knew not how to give, and would not when asked. Wicked woman as she was, she thought she could set herself upon a pinnacle higher than the Lord Jesus Christ, and despise Him as a Jew! But He says, If thou knewest what God is as a giving God, “and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” No

matter from whom the request comes, be it from the vilest, blackest creature upon earth, addressed in honesty of heart to Him, He hears and grants it. He would make no condition about it. The point was to bring that besotted and yet proud heart to the point of asking, then He could touch her conscience, and bring her into the suited condition to receive what He had to give. Such was His way with her, and so He does with every one of us, by His grace producing need in the soul. He wrought to produce the need when He alone knew what He had to give in answer to it, and knew, too, how to make the need an opportunity of bringing the soul to accept its being emptied of everything that could hinder His filling it with all He has to fill it with, and that for eternity. The end of the prayer in Ephesians iii. is, "That ye might be filled unto all the fulness of God." How is that possible? But it is God's thought and purpose, and if so, it must be carried out for His glory. God reserves to Himself to explain it to every one of us, when we shall know as we are known in the light and joy of His blessed presence. What a wonderful privilege to know it as the truth now!

It is written, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." It is not simply the statement that He is God's only One,

the only-begotten; but when He so reveals God to us He is in the very place where all the love of God's heart flows out upon Him—"in the bosom of the Father." The revelation of the truth, as to what God is, is inseparable from the manifestation of His nature—light and love; but the love we find is the love of the Father in its manifestation towards the Son. The Lord, in John xvii., prays that this love may be in us, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." That is what keeps the soul. It is true enough that the heart turns rightly from the thought of our love to God to His love to us; He has manifested His love in the gift of His Son; but what He desires to be in us, for the occupation of our hearts and for the formation of our thoughts, is His love to His own Son. That delivers us from self-occupation, and keeps the heart free; there is nothing that the heart need fear here. The moment it is a question of my love, or even of me as loved, a thousand things may come in to hinder the enjoyment of it in my ways, my surroundings, &c. I might question how God can go on in tender forbearance, wondering at the grace which has borne so long with me, as if it could not go on for ever; I am so slow to learn His thoughts and His ways, and turn back so quickly to my own: will He go in patience with me for ever? Many such things come in to cloud, in my soul,

the enjoyment of His love, not to speak of interrupted communion. But when it is a question of the Father's love to the Son, is there, can there be, any hindrance there? Could there be a moment's intermission in its outflow? Could anything intervene to lessen, moderate, or cloud it? The Lord says, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." What has He done for that? "I have declared unto them thy name [the Father's name] and will declare it." Does it not bring us solemnly into His presence, with shame and confusion of face, that we know so little of it, and are so little expecting to grow up into it?

No text perhaps is more commonly quoted in preaching than that in John iii.: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" but who goes on to say what the eternal life is? If we ask the question of one another, What is eternal life, the very hesitation in the answer is an index of where we are as to it. We say, It is Christ. Truly so; but is that a sufficient answer; would it satisfy you? It is surely Christ Himself personally; but what does that carry with it, seeing that Christ is come as the *Son*, revealing *the Father*? That is what the devil is attacking, seeking that the saints should be robbed of it. "This is life eternal that they might know THEE, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." As the apostle shews in Galatians,

to give this up is no light thing, and yet it is the very truth they had relaxed their hold of (the truth that characterises Christianity) in putting themselves back under law. The law is entirely incompatible with eternal life, the two cannot go together. Why do people attach such importance to the ten commandments? Because they have not an idea in their souls of what eternal life is. How does the apostle deal with it in that Epistle? See the opening verses of chapter i. How remarkably he brings in the Father's name when speaking of his apostleship, and of the special revelation which he had received from God, to preach Christ among the heathen! See how he expresses it "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me"—not "to me," but "*in me.*" That is what Christianity is, and that is what the apostle preached; he was the first who preached Jesus as the SON OF GOD. (Acts ix. 20.)

There are two things now in Christianity: not merely the fact that the Lord Jesus is gone up into heaven, the rejected Man whom God has received; but there is also what He is in His own Person, the SON OF GOD. Paul gives us the glory of the place in which He is set, John the glory of His own Person who is set down there, the revelation of the Father here: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But then we must remember, that though here as the revealer of the Father, He is unrevealed in the

mystery of His own Person, as He Himself says in Matthew xi. "No man knoweth the Son save the Father;" He does not add any more when speaking about that, though He does say, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, *and he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." The Son reveals the Father; but in the mystery and glory of His own Person, Son of God, Son of man, He is unrevealed. That sets our hearts in their true place before Him. He comes down into the world in the mystery of what He is Himself, the revealer of the Father, so that the soul that knows Him is brought into the relationship with God, of which He is Himself the expression: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become children of God." Hence the apostle says "When it pleased God to reveal his Son *in* me;" he is himself brought into the relationship in which THE SON is. So you find further on, when he is speaking of what the Lord had done upon the cross: "Ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus;" and again, "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son to redeem, . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons;" and then he adds, "Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." Mark, it is not said, "the Spirit of adoption" here, as in Romans, but "the Spirit of HIS SON." You are brought into the

very relationship in which the Lord Jesus Christ stands as *Son*. That is the wonderful communication He made to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father," &c.

Depend upon it, that is the thing our hearts are so slow to understand. We accept the fact of being "children," and that God is our Father, but it is often dwindled down in the soul to that character of Jehovah which we get in the Old Testament, as in Deuteronomy xxxii. 6: God, the Creator, Maker, Redeemer, and He that establishes His people. All this blessed grace we find in the Old Testament, but the word "Father" there does not go beyond that. Here it is what He is to the Lord Jesus Himself, the only-begotten Son in His bosom, and it is this blessed One who makes God known to us, God in His nature, light and love, and in the relationship of "Father." The Son makes Him known, and the one who receives the testimony has the witness *in himself*. It is inseparable from it. To separate these things is to undermine Christianity in its fundamental principles, for it is God's answer to the cross for His own glory. We find in John the two things constantly brought together, propitiation in its fulness and eternal life. You do not find forgiveness of sins in the Gospel of John; it only comes in once, administratively, at the end; but what we find is the Lamb of God who takes away the "sin" of the world—God's

Lamb, who comes down here to glorify God according to what He is in His own nature, where man had dishonoured Him, and in reference to that in which man had dishonoured Him ; and He is able to say at the end, "I have glorified thee on the earth." And God is satisfied, beloved friends, in His own heart according to all that He is Himself in that blessed Person who has accomplished the work.

An illustration may help us to understand what propitiation is. We find the blood upon the door-post in Egypt sheltering the Israelites from judgment, but they had afterwards to learn another aspect of the truth, God's side of it. (Compare Lev. xvi. with Ex. xii.) It is very interesting to see the difference. In Exodus the blood is upon the houses of the *people* ; in Leviticus xvi. the blood is on the mercy-seat of *God* : God glorifies Himself in the work of Christ, shews what it is to Him, when He takes up man in the fulness of His grace, satisfying His own heart in dealing with man according to His own nature, holiness, righteousness. There is the foundation of all our blessing through the work of Christ. Besides that, the Son has come down here to make the Father known, to bring us into conscious relationship with the Father, that we may walk down here as His beloved children. We are brought into the kingdom of the Son of His love, made the objects of the love

of which He is ever the Object, and of which His death is the highest expression "That the world may know that I love the Father," &c. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

Think of it, beloved friends! Not merely what He was in His own Person, the Object of that love, "the Father loveth the Son," but as to His work, He could present His death as a motive for the Father to love Him. To think that that work which draws out the love of the Father to Him, is the very work upon which our souls are called to rest, and through which He brings us into the very relationship in which He stands Himself "I ascend unto my Father and your Father," &c.

Note again a very beautiful thing. Whom did the Lord select to carry to His disciples such a message, the most wonderful ever proclaimed on earth? Did He choose the first of the apostles? No; He chose a poor woman who had perhaps less faith than any as to the facts which had just taken place there: she could not believe that the Lord had risen. John came to the sepulchre and looked in; he saw and believed. Mary did not. John's having believed did not touch her. She had seen the Lord there once; He was not

there now; she could not rest until she knew where that body was, that she might take it away. It is not faith, nor intelligence, but a heart shut up to the Lord Himself; no other thought nor object had she now in all this earth but Himself. The loss of Him called out her affection. When He finds a heart so separated from everything unto Himself, He can just say one word, which fills her heart with delight—"Mary." He knows her. Then He says, "Touch me not. Go, tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God."

Is it not beautiful? and is it not a comfort for every soul, for the poorest and weakest? One says, these things are beyond me; I do not understand; I am so weak, I seem to enjoy one day and forget the next. Has your heart been so laid hold of by the Lord Jesus Christ, that you can say, The only thing that can satisfy me here is Himself? When He has that from you, what things He can communicate!

What did Mary say? She gave the message as the Lord had given it, and then giving her own impressions, she said she had *seen* HIM. It is just what they all said, as they went out of their first meeting, on that same night; He had told them wonderful things, but they did not speak of these, they all said, "We have *seen* the Lord!" Little did they know of what He had

done, still less did they understand His personal glory. The doors were shut, they never thought of His coming to them, but He came, and then each could say, "We have seen the Lord." What a thing for our hearts too! There is a place where He has put His name, where He can reveal what is most precious and dear to Him. Do our hearts value it for His sake? Do we care to "see" Him? Is He not looking upon us? and does not He expect our hearts to receive it, and that that may characterise our present relationship with God?

How does he put His coming in John xiv. 3? Does He say, I am going to glory? No; but "In my Father's house are many mansions, .. I go to prepare a place for you." It is not *your* Father here; that would do for Luke xii. But in John it is "*MY Father.*" It is as saying, You have a personal interest in this place, I cannot keep secret from you what belongs to My Father's house; I have revealed Him down here; the one thing I expect your interest in is that I am going to prepare a place for you there. Is it not better than heaven and glory and everything connected with it that the place to which He is going is where *His* heart finds its unutterable satisfaction, where He finds delight in the Father and the Father in Him. And that is what it will be to us. So when Thomas says "How can we know the way?" He says, "I am the Way . . . no man

cometh unto the Father but by me." I have been revealing to you this; you have not come to the place yet, but you have the Person, the relationship—the revelation of that "eternal life" here, the life "which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." It is blessed to see in 1 John i. the life communicated, and all its wonderful effects, as God has sent it down into this world. "The life was manifested, and we have seen it," &c. "We have looked upon it" here (not looked up to it in heaven), but looked upon it when He was here upon this earth, and "these things we write unto you that your joy may be full." Joy! What joy? Do you think it is the joy which we have in our hearts the first moment we have come into the blessed sense of deliverance that the Lord has given. No; you must go back to Proverbs viii., if you would know what it means, to the time when there was only Himself with God, before ever the world was, and He could say, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." It is the satisfaction of the heart of God, for His own sake, manifesting Himself down here, so that we may be brought into this wonderful sphere, become part of it, so that the joy that was in Him as He walked down here may be in us: "That my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

May the Lord lead us, beloved friends, into His own presence, for the consideration of

this wonderful truth which characterises our place and relationship, and see how far we are dwelling before God in the power of it, or how far we are allowing the enemy to mix it up with what went before the Lord's coming into the world, so that all that distinguishes it and makes it of special value to the soul is gone. The Lord keep us from letting it go, for His own name's sake.

W. J. L.



# THE SPIRIT AND DISCIPLINE.

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MATTHEW XI. 25-30, AND 1 JOHN II. 18-28.

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My object in reading these passages is to draw our attention to two truths which press very much upon my soul, though it is with a certain amount of diffidence one stands up to speak of it. They are, first the presence of the Spirit, and secondly divine discipline, which is specially important in these times, and I believe virtually the summing up of what the Lord has been presenting to us during these meetings. We remember how they opened with that which the Spirit sets immediately before the soul, the revelation of the Lord Himself, and what He is for His own; and the Spirit and the bride saying, "Come."

There are two great truths which characterise Christianity—three, really, but the third is in a certain way contained in them. We find them in the first chapters of Acts: one is that the Lord has left this earth, has gone up into glory, and is coming the other is that the Holy Ghost has come down, and bears witness to Him. This

testimony of the Holy Ghost has two parts: one refers to His Person, Son of God and Son of man, and the other to His work. The third truth, the revelation of the Father, is really the starting-point of Christianity—God revealing Himself in the Son, making Himself known to us as the Father. The knowledge of the Father in the soul is by the Holy Ghost, who is not merely present upon earth with us, but indwells the believer. This is characteristic of Christianity, so that here, in 1 John ii., where the apostle divides Christians into three classes, fathers, young men, little children, the latter representing the earliest stage of spiritual life, it is stated of the “little child:” “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things;” this supposes the Holy Ghost is there. Again: “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you.” The “little child,” or, as we say, ‘a newly converted soul,’ is described as on true christian ground, that is, as one who has received the truth concerning the Son of God, and in consequence knows the Father; and is represented as having the Holy Ghost.

Whether it is always so in our experience is a very different thing. If we would come to the history of souls, we do find it up to a certain point in the Acts; but in the doctrine of scripture this kind of history is excluded. I believe it to

be of the deepest importance to remember it, because it is through mixing up these two things that the doctrine is clouded. Suppose I read in the Acts of a certain time intervening between a person's conversion and his receiving the Holy Ghost, as for instance of three days in the case of Saul of Tarsus, or again of more in others, this does not affect the doctrine set forth in the Epistles, which states in what Christianity consists. We must remember too that the Book of the Acts relates to a transitional time. When dealing with doctrine, the important thing for us to lay hold of, is the way truths are connected in the scriptures.

The first time the Lord speaks of eternal life, He speaks of the Son of man characteristically as having come down from heaven, as going into heaven, and being there. (John iii.) So further on, we find that the Holy Ghost's coming to this earth was consequent upon the Lord's going away: "If I go not away the Comforter will not come to you;" "The Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." His coming supposes the Lord Jesus to be already glorified; but then we must remember that the coming down of the Holy Ghost is not what makes people "sons." We read, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father." We are made sons first through redemption. The Holy Ghost

is not given to sinners, but to "sons," that is to believers. One becomes a son in believing; he that believeth hath eternal life "To as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God." There is no other relationship with God, now that "adoption" has come in. We cannot go back to the time of the law, when God revealed Himself as Jehovah.

Sonship is the very point in Galatians, and the meaning of the term "adoption, as there used. "Adoption," in chapter iv., is not presented as we habitually use the word: taking up some poor waif and bringing him into the family, thus transforming him into a son; but it is "sonship" in the sense in which we speak of a person coming into his majority. There is a certain time appointed by the father when his child passes from the condition of a servant into that of a son. Now, in God's dispensational dealings with man, that took place at the cross. We have not here an illustrational history of an individual soul, but the grand fact, that God introduced "sonship" at the cross of Christ, so that now there is nothing else, no outside place for a saved soul; consequently, if a soul refuses that, he is deprived of all profit from the Christ. If you are justified by law you are fallen from grace.

It is written: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life;" and that carries with it sonship, the knowledge of the Father

revealed in the Son: the soul is brought into that position. I speak of what is objective, of what Christianity is in itself; but it cannot be confined to mere doctrine; God will make it good in the soul *now*. He is not content with the mere fact, that the believer is a son, but wishes him to know and enjoy it; "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The difference between these two words, I take it, is just this: "Abba" as we find it used in the New Testament, is the expression used by a soul that addresses the Father in the blessed sense of the relationship, conscious that he has access to Him and is speaking directly to Him. The Lord so uses it in Gethsemane; we find it as the cry of the Spirit in us, in Romans; and so here. If I say that such a person is my father, I state a fact in reference to him; but when I go up to him and call him "father," it is the expression of what he is to me, enjoyed in the soul, and of what I am to him. To be able thus to "have access" to God is surely a wonderful thing! And mark, even in natural things, it is not a matter of intelligence, but the first thing a child is taught to say. The moment a child gets a little consciousness of what the relationship means, the preciousness of it is felt; coming thus to the knowledge of himself and of his father, he knows very well where to run, to whom he belongs.

There is an unexpressed consciousness in the child that the father knows it, loves it, cares for it; the little child would think it quite natural if the father were to be occupied with it, participating in its changing pleasures all day long. Intelligence comes afterwards, and is a matter of education and development. A father would not be satisfied with nothing but the infant's artless affection; therefore he educates it. And is not that a wonderfully blessed thing for us, beloved friends, when we think who God is? We too come, by the Holy Ghost, into the enjoyment of the relationship into which we are brought. Think of what that is—a divine Person come down to this earth—in order to be with us and dwell in us, so that our bodies are said to be the “temples of the Holy Ghost”! This divine Person witnesses with our spirit that we are sons of God, and by Him we look up to God and cry, “Abba, Father.” Does it not at one stroke set aside everything of man? In John we read a great deal about knowledge, but it is interesting to notice that all human knowledge is at fault, no matter whose. The true knowledge is what the Lord Jesus Christ presents: “We speak that we do know.” That is the knowledge which is now given to us. As it is said to the “little children,” “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” What a wonderful thing it is to have this divine Person,

the Comforter, come down from the glory where the Lord Jesus Christ is—given of the Father, sent by the Son! Every time the coming of the Holy Ghost is mentioned in John, it is in a different way, bringing out the various aspects of it, shewing that He is come down here in order to bear witness to what the Son is to the Father, and to what the Father is to the Son and to us as having been introduced into the relationship, so that it is ours. That is the portion of the “little child;” it is Christianity; it is not learning things that I am a stranger to, but learning as having been already brought into the relationship, of which the Holy Ghost reveals the blessedness to me more and more.

See now the importance of separating the doctrine from the history. Suppose I found in the scriptures that there must necessarily be a certain interval of time between conversion and sealing, I should have to say after my conversion, Now I must wait days, months or years, until the Holy Ghost comes and gives me the assurance of my salvation, seals me, and brings me into the enjoyment of these things. How long? I should settle down in a state of uncertainty from which I could see no definite issue. But when we come to this First Epistle of John, what do we find? He writes to the “little children,” “Ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things.” If there is a doubt

or fear in my soul, if I am happy one day and trembling the next, that uncertain sound does not come from the Spirit. You confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that He died for your sins, that God raised Him from the dead; can you be yet uncertain about your salvation? Whence is this? If there is something that troubles you and you think you cannot be saved, that is surely not the testimony of the Holy Ghost. The word arrests us; it brings us into the presence of God as to our state, and shews us what is wrong. In dealing with souls, we are never supposed to recognise a person as being on true christian ground unless there is the unhesitating confession of Christ. There may be a certain work of God in the soul, but are they able in the presence of God who searches the heart, and in that quietness and peace the Holy Ghost gives, bearing testimony *in the soul* to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to own Him as their Lord? Can they on their knees look up to God and say, "Abba, Father"? Are they able to confess Jesus Christ as Son of God, not only as a truth, but as having tasted it *in their own souls*?

It is precious indeed, beloved friends, when an exercised soul finds out where the doctrine of scripture sets him. How it deals with the conscience at once, and puts us in the presence of God as to what is true of us now in Christ!

It is very different from having a hope, that it may be so at some future time. Have you got it *now* in the secret of your own soul before God?

And mark another thing. The Lord says in John of the Holy Ghost: "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you;" He does not say "of your things," but "of mine." That is what the Spirit does. Nothing can satisfy the Spirit of God but what satisfies God Himself according to what He is in His own nature. The only place where He finds that, is in His Son. The Spirit takes the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and unfolds His glories, shews us Himself and His work, reveals it to the soul, so that every other prop is broken away, and the soul has nothing to rest on but the Lord Jesus Christ. When the soul is simply resting on the testimony of the Holy Ghost, it finds it is on the eternal Rock. But how difficult it often is to bring us to that! How long it takes! We keep looking for something in ourselves, some experience or feeling of holiness, more distinct joy in God or horror of sin; we should like to find some plain proof in ourselves that we are the children of God. But when we come to the Person of the Lord Jesus, the first thing we find is the contrast of all that is in ourselves; and what then? All our self-satisfaction goes, and with it perhaps, our certainty goes, our rest goes. Why? It is not that we were not resting in a certain sense

upon Christ and His work, but something else was set up beside it, to which we clung, and which formed a ground of assurance. Suppose a bridge consists of two planks, the one strong, the other rotten. It looks the wider, but is it any good to set one foot on the strong and the other on the weak one? You are sure to go down; the bridge is no stronger than the weakest part of it: you may as well put both your feet upon the rotten plank. But if you would cross, you must have both feet on the strong one, on it alone. Everything of "me" must be given up, because God has condemned it on the cross of Christ. It must be given up wholly and entirely. It is the very thing presented by the Lord in John iii. Man is done with. That is a humbling thing to learn, but we have to learn it as a fact. When we accept simply the testimony as to the Lord Jesus Christ, we find there is something stable we have to do with a divine Teacher, and He shews us what it is to abide in Him. "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and ye need not that any man teach you but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." What a wonderful place that is, "to abide in him"!

There is another side to this, of which one feels the deep solemnity. It is the *Holy Ghost*, You have an unction from the *Holy One*." Have we

felt in our souls with whom we have to do? How do we like this *holiness*? You and I like to be taught, I suppose; if there is real simplicity of heart, there is the desire to get on; that soul must be in a negligent state that does not grow but do we like to be taught by the *Holy One*? It is not a question now, beloved friends, of what suits me or what I want to learn, but I am here before Him, He has got me in His hand, teaching me does what He sees in me correspond to His own character as the *Holy One*? I was much struck with what was said yesterday on Psalm lxxiii. Do I like to be in the sanctuary and find there the first true estimate of what I am: "I was as a beast before thee"? It is a very humbling thing to find there is not a thing in me that can stand before Him but what He produces by His own grace and power. All He finds there are things to be condemned; and the greatest hindrance of all is our will, and the most difficult thing to master is the will to do right. That is a strange thing indeed! We can all understand that the will to do wrong is bad, but God cannot accept man's will to do right. It is of man again "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." I have now to be brought to His own school, to learn of Him, and to find out that everything that is of *me*, including even all that which was naturally amiable, desirable,

good, useful, "highly esteemed," is abomination in the sight of God. "No flesh should glory in his presence." This human will exercised in divine things, even in what I may think to be the Lord's work, cannot be tolerated by Him; the Holy One cannot, will not have it; it will not do in the sanctuary. All our thoughts about everything have to be turned round when we get there. When we have come to that, it is precious indeed to find that One has taken us by the right hand and is leading us on to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what the Holy Ghost is doing; we find it here at the end of this passage (1 John ii.): "Now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." His coming! The Spirit is ever thinking of it. We are going on now to meet the Lord Jesus, and so it is in the immediate prospect of His coming that the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." There is the answer of heart to the One who is coming, the announcement of the desire to meet Him. But how can that be unless there is a heart corresponding to His, so that when He does come He will find what answers to His own thoughts? The waiting and watching for Him brings us really to our proper standing and state in His own presence.

We have to do with the Holy One now. It is the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of holiness, that the

Lord Jesus Christ has sent down from heaven, the Spirit whose presence upon earth is a testimony against the world of three things, sin, righteousness, and judgment. We are brought now into company with the One whose presence here is the practical demonstration of these three things, in a scene which is given up to judgment and to the power of the evil one who is doing all he can to turn away the saints from the truth. It is remarkable that it is to the "little children" the apostle speaks of Antichrist; and Antichrist denies the Father and the Son, he puts himself in the place of God, and denies God in the full revelation of Himself. "They went out from us," says the apostle, "but they were not of us." If there had never been the revelation, there never could have been the opposition to it; Satan would not have troubled himself about it, had it not been that God finds His heart's delight in the Son become man, and goes out towards us in the fulness of what He is to the Son of His love, into whose hands He has given everything. "The Father *loveth* the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." There are two words in Greek used for love. In John v. 20, it is not the same word as in chapter iii. 35. There is a beautiful and touching difference. The one in chapter iii. is the essential word, the word used for "God is *love*," the characteristic statement of it; but the word used in John v., where

it says, "The Father *loveth* the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth," expresses the going forth of the affections; it is the evidence of affection, love in its manifestation. Think of what that is!—the Father's love going forth to the Son.

This brings me to the second thing I had on my mind, and that is the discipline of the soul, which is absolutely needful in order that a becoming state of soul may be wrought out in us practically; for we are yet in the world in which Satan works. If there is one thing in this day more prominent than another in the world, it is the principle of independency. In its nature it is rebellion, setting up man's thoughts and will and ways against God; and you will find when you come to the details of it in the presence of God, how frightfully it besets the saints. Instead of quietly submitting to what God sets forth in His own word—that is, the truth in the way He has presented it,—Satan's plan is to take out of it what suits us, knowing that what the heart naturally likes and cleaves to is the portion we so take out and present to ourselves. Such dealing with scripture is an evidence of an undisciplined soul. I use the word discipline as we find it in Hebrews xii., God's chastisement, or formation of the soul through instruction and correction, in order that we may be brought to learn what the "yoke" is; the subjection that the Lord manifested

all through His precious life down here: "I do always those things that please him." That is why I read those few verses in Matthew.

When the Lord Jesus rejoices in spirit and thanks the Father that He had revealed to babes the things hidden from the wise and prudent, He adds, "Come unto me I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me."

If we turn to Lamentations iii., we get instruction as to what the yoke is. (Vers. 24-26.) "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him," &c. It is something like Psalm xvi. "I have set the Lord always before me." How far does that characterise us, beloved friends? We may say it is one of the most simple principles of truth, and yet I suppose one of the very last things our souls come to, and what we have to learn over and over again in our souls' experience down here: we find betimes we have made nothing but a mess of it, but the Lord in patient grace has not given us up. We have to learn it again and again, as if we had never been through it before.

Verses 27-31. This is not the expression of what we like. It is not a pleasant thing for us to give the cheek to the smiter, to be filled full with reproach and sit silent and bear it; but there is hope for the one who knows what the Lord is. If I have said, "the Lord is my portion," I shall find "the Lord will not cast off for ever."

But I must wait for His intervention. How long? Who is to put a term to the time I have to sit silent and wait for Him—because the Lord will not cast off for ever—hoping and quietly waiting for the salvation of the Lord? But will it fail? If there is one thing more than another that prevents the Lord's interference when there are things that trouble us, is it not that we are so anxious to get the things settled by ourselves? He waits till one has tried and another has tried, and they have to own it was not done in the right way; then they have to say, Who can help us now? We are brought to sit silent and wait upon Him till He comes in.

Did not the disciples wait, and wait till the ship was nigh full, before they called upon the Lord to save them? It was not the sense that the Lord's presence would carry them through, that kept them quiet till the last moment. It was because there was little water in the boat. They go to Him the last thing, when it is "now full." If there was real confidence in Him, there would not be the going to Him in that way. A disciplined soul who has tasted something of what it is to bear the yoke, sits silent and quietly waits. Was there ever one who did it as He did it, who knew all God's waves and billows rolling in upon His own soul? not coming in upon His circumstances when He was with the disciples, but upon His own soul, alone, so that there was

no light—the power of darkness there, and He going on to meet it in all its terror—and yet going through it all in His soul with God, having given Himself up into the Father's hand, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Oh, beloved friends, what an example for us! What is it to take His yoke, and as we follow Him through His blessed path down here, learn all the humility, gentleness, forbearance of His nature? Think what it was to live with those disciples He had chosen in the fulness of His grace, and communicate all things to them, as He said, "Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things that ye see, and have not seen them," and yet to know that they never understood one single thing while He was with them. Was that nothing to a heart like His? No possibility of communion about that which was so precious to His own soul! Did it stop Him in making those communications? "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you," He says once, we find; but does He say, I must leave you now and go away? No; but rather, "Bring thy son hither"—it was only the occasion of a fresh manifestation of His enduring love and grace. Oh, how wonderful!

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." This must be wrought out in secret in the soul with God. I affectionately commend it to every heart as to whether there is with us that practical

discipline of the soul which is so lamentably lacking all around. We hear all sorts of theories about truths of scripture. If there were this discipline, if I had the sense in my soul that the *Holy One* is teaching me, how could I care for *my* thoughts?

And remember, this is as much the fault of hearers as of teachers. In the last days, it is said, they "heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." Where there is the working of the Spirit of God and there exists this discipline of the soul, it acts and reacts in the hearers and teachers, and indeed in all the relationships of the saints one with another. It brings us into the secret of the Lord's own presence, it brings us near to Him to find what His path was down here in this world; and we ask ourselves the question, What do I know of it? But, thank God, there is One who does know it, and who cares that the saints should be brought to it practically; and that is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sent Him into this world, and who will never give up His own, but acts towards them in gracious ways of divine discipline as He brings them through this world; making the things we do not like the occasion for Him to teach us these lessons we often find so hard to learn, and that we do not learn when everything goes on well with us.

May the Lord lead us into His own presence

about every part of His truth. He has blessed the saints, and His mind is to bless them still; He has no thought of giving them up: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

W. J. L.



## CONSECRATION AND THE EFFECT.

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LEVITICUS VIII. 18-36; 2 CORINTHIANS III. 18.

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EVERY believer now is a son of Aaron, of the house of Aaron. It is Aaron and his house now. That really typifies the church. The congregation of Israel outside is not a type of the church. It is the heavenly company (Aaron and his house) who belong to the place inside. The blood of the bullock settled their place inside. Taking a place historically upon earth, they had the good of the scape-goat. When you look at the type, Christ and His own are the antitype of Aaron and his house. That is the figure you get in Hebrews. It gives a character to the present dispensation. Noah was also a type, he "prepared an ark for the saving of his house." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." It is all of the same order. Not a nation now, but a house. The house is a sphere of blessing. Consequently a man could not be a bishop if all his children were not faithful (not only some of them); his house must be a sort of sample of the

church. Keep the type before you, Aaron and his house.

What I get here is how do we appear in the presence of God? I do not go into the question of how we get in. I take it for granted that you understand that; but what am I, now that I am in? What is the effect of consecration? What is our actual sense in coming near to God? I turn to Hebrews x. 19-22. That is entrance, "boldness to enter." It does not say what you are inside, but that you have the right to enter. That is the first thing you have to learn: "boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus." It alludes to the sin-offering. The blood of the bullock established a ground for God to receive Aaron and his house, his family is expressed by his presence there; he is there for himself and his house. Hence the carcass of the sin-offering is burnt outside the camp. How do you get in? When Christ died the veil was rent from top to bottom—but I do not dwell on that side now. Christ established a base for God to act on, so the Father can come to meet the prodigal. God has His estimate of the blood—that is our comfort—and He approaches me on that estimate. I have a very poor estimate of it. God comes out consistent with all His holiness and meets the sinner. As in the case of the prodigal, He runs and kisses him. There is a reluctance on the part of the prodigal to go in.

He had not the enjoyment of the nature and the life that would enable him to go in without embarrassment. You come in with the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water. That takes in the two aspects of Christ's death: expiation and purification. As soon as the prodigal gets the new clothes on, he is in—he is "made meet." If you have not the right of entrance, it is no good to talk of how you appear there. You enter the holiest where there is not a spot.

"His presence is our home."

It is not properly heaven here. The tabernacle came down to be a travelling companion with Israel here. You do not go to heaven to reach the presence of God. It is in "the holiest." It is a condition rather than a place—so is glory. If you are not at home in holiness and glory, you will never know what it is to enjoy the heavenly place. You do not get a place till you come to Ephesians. You get condition, suitability for the place, what belongs to the place, as the Holy Ghost; but place is another thing. My heart rejoices that Christ is there and that everything there is according to His pleasure.

How do we come in? A consecrated company. What I want you to understand is what you actually enjoy in His presence. If you have entered into "the holiest of all," you cannot talk

of sin there; you could not give out a hymn connected with sin. There is not a spot there; if you are occupied with sin, you are out of it. You may say you belong to it, as a consecrated company. True, you can never lose your title, but you may lose your enjoyment. I do not think we have sufficient sense of what a wonderful thing it is to be in His presence!

Hebrews x. is not so high as John iv. No worshipping the Father there; it is only the *right to go in*—elementary in that sense. I am going a step beyond it now when I speak of when one IS in, what is really the divine sense one has as being in? I have looked for an anti-type of Leviticus viii., and I find it in that verse in Corinthians which I read. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

But first look at the type in Leviticus viii. You have, in verses 1–17, what gives you right. The heart sprinkled and the body washed according to Hebrews. In the first seventeen verses you have the right established—the sin-offering and the washing; now (ver. 18) you come to the consecration. There are two rams connected with the consecration. It is important to bear in mind these two rams. It was immaterial which ram he took, but each was taken for a different purpose. One ram went up whole to God. The antitype to that is Christ in glory—Christ now, the glorified One, in God's presence; and that is the true ark, the

golden box, the only thing in the holiest of all, and which contained Aaron's rod that budded and the pot of manna. That was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The lid was the mercy-seat, there the blood was sprinkled. The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of it. What meets you in God's presence now? Christ glorified; all the glory converges now in Him. In Him all the glory has found its centre, is established. It is a wonderful thought for the poor heart. In a Man, the glory is established. I say established, because it is not that God had not all the qualities of His nature before; of course He had them all, but He could not express them. How could He express love without righteousness? That He gets in Christ—Christ established righteousness; now God says, I can let out My love. Therefore "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, through the Holy Ghost given unto us." Glory really was never expressed till now. The glory has been established by a Man. God said to Moses, "Thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen." He does not say that to me. Now it is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Not merely that it exists, but it can be revealed "the light of the *knowledge* of the glory of God."

There were two rams; one ram, as we have seen, typifies Christ glorifying God in death

now glorified in "heaven itself," the actual fulfilment of the golden box, the ark of the covenant. It is very interesting to trace the ark of the covenant through scripture; on it all the glory of God rested, the cherubim of glory turned their faces downwards toward the mercy-seat. The antitype of it is the Lord Jesus Christ. The one ram completely goes up to God. Christ is the real burnt-offering; He glorified God in death. You remember what He says in John xiii. 31 "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Glorified in Him, a Man! "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." He was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father."

We are so limited in our apprehension. We are often exclusively occupied with what Christ did for us. The beginning is more before our souls than the finish of His work. It is from the finish that the Holy Ghost came down. That is a most important point. "The Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Until the Holy Ghost came there could be no free-will offering. The descent of the Holy Ghost marked the day of Pentecost. Pious divines never saw the church, because they never saw that the Holy Ghost had come down to the earth. The feast of weeks is fulfilled; the Holy Ghost has come down to the earth.

Hence it is not only the wave-sheaf (see Lev. xxiii. 11, 12)—Christ risen, but the two loaves (ver. 17)—a kind of first-fruits of His creatures, which we are, that is, the church.

Now we are clear, I hope, that in the holiest of all we have the antitype of the ark of the covenant, in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is there the glorified One, He glorified God in death. There He is the first ram. Now comes the other. The two rams are like one another. What it really means is this—one is Christ gone up to God, the other is Christ with us. The second you find is connected with Aaron and his sons. It is not your own works at all it is your hands filled with Christ. What consecrates me? Is it something I get from God, or something I give to Him? It is what Christ is that consecrates me: not what I give, but what I get.

There is no second consecration. You never can lose the value of it nor the right, though you may lose the enjoyment of it. "And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." (Lev. viii. 24.) Nothing can pass in, but through that blood. The blood has removed everything contrary to God. There were two things, the blood and the oil.

The blood removed everything contrary to God, and the oil brings us into communion with all that is of God.

“And he took the fat, and the rump, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder.” (Ver. 25.) The right shoulder and the fat of the ram properly marked the peace-offering. The fat was the internal motive, and all the principles that worked inwardly in our blessed Lord, which we could never eat, because we could never come up to it. Ordinarily the right shoulder belonged to the priest that offered it. That was in the peace-offering, but not here. The right shoulder is the excellency of power. That was burnt on the altar—it went up to God. They ate of the left shoulder. Though we partake of the strength of Christ, we never do things in the supreme, settled way in which He did them. Peter walked on the water, but not in the same dignity as Christ. Christ has the supremacy. Christ had the right shoulder (speaking figuratively) and Peter the left.

“And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder; and he put all upon Aaron’s hands, and upon his sons’ hands, and waved them for a

wave-offering before the LORD." (Vers. 26, 27.) It was all put upon their hands and waved. The meat-offering was what He was in life; the burnt-offering what He was in death—it is gone up to God from death. That was the most wonderful thing. The lowest point became the brightest point. The darkest, blackest, most terrible spot was the very spot where the brightest ray of divine glory shone. An immense comfort to us! When once He took our case upon Him, everything He acquires in it is ours: the glory acquired as Man, He gives to us. Who acquired it? My Saviour! Therefore John says, "As he is, so are we in this world." Not only in heaven—here *in this world*. What your Saviour acquired, He acquired not for Himself, but for you. You have the benefit, a wonderful thing surely, He went down to the lowest place and He not only paid my debt, but He paid it in such a way that He acquired glory for me. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them."

What then is consecration? What is the sense a person has, as consecrated? In one sense everything is ours; but the question is, Do you enjoy it? You never can speak of a thing truly until you enjoy it; you cannot know a thing until you enjoy it, and, as has been said, You never understand anything until you are in it. You must get inside to know what it is. You never

can make another understand what you have not tasted yourself. You cannot go beyond what you know yourself. You may explain a scripture, every word of it as clearly as possible, but there will be no power in it if you have not made it your own. The apostle says to Timothy, "to which thou hast also attained," or, as it should be, "*fully followed up*;" otherwise he would be like a man pressing a thing that he did not know the virtue of.

There are two things here: the fat, all the internal motives of Christ; and the unleavened bread—His life and walk down here. This latter belonged to the priesthood. The filling the hands is what is called consecration. As consecrated your hands are full of Christ, not of what you do yourself, and therefore what was put in their hands was waved—nothing else was consecration. Their hands were filled with the fat, the unleavened bread (the life of Christ on earth), and the right shoulder (the power of Christ); and, after being waved, it was taken and burnt as a sweet-smelling savour to God; Christ already being the first ram gone up to God. It is the same Christ, thank God. We are not up to the first ram. We are not up to the measure of it, but what we have is some of what is gone up to God. I have the very same Christ. I go into the holy place to eat the peace-offering. Thus in Colossians: "Let the peace of Christ

rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful." I am come into the holy place where Christ is; the veil is rent, and there is no division between the holy and most holy.

Now I will try to explain a little. In consecration how do you come into His presence? With all the sense of what He is, and that you have had it in your hands. How do you explain that? I believe that word in John's Epistle explains it: "Which we have looked upon and our hands have handled." I come into His presence, not thinking of what I am, but of what He is—the wonderful nature of what He is to God. Thus I come in, in all His fragrance. I come in to feed on Him, actually to acquire the strength of Christ Himself.

Now if you turn to 2 Corinthians iii. 18, you get a clear idea of the antitype. A person might say, I do not understand the type. Very likely; but here you have a plain statement made; you can easily see whether you have really been in the glory or not. The argument of the chapter is, the law came from glory, but that there is a better thing now. (Vers. 9-11.) It is not a ministration of condemnation; it is the greatest moral revolution ever accomplished. Our blessed Lord went down under the judgment, the perfectly righteous One. He magnified the law, made it honourable, bore the judgment upon us who

never kept it: then He was glorified. He not only discharged everything according to the claim of God, but He glorified God under the judgment. Righteousness is established now—“Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.”

Now what the apostle presents is: “Beholding the Lord’s glory.” Israel could not look at the glory in the face of Moses. It repelled them, they could not look at it, could not meet it. The sight of glory brought God so near, they could not look at it. Now it is all a wonderful contrast. I go in now to the holiest, and gaze at Him in glory; I get now the glory of God. It is all round: nothing wanting now. All the qualities of God’s nature are equipoised by my Saviour; and I look at my Saviour. What a wonderful thing! “Raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.” The glory rests upon Him. I come into God’s presence, the holiest, and what do I find? Is it glory making me shrink? Is it like Isaiah, a man of God, who when he saw the glory, says, “I am undone”? The glory cleared him. Clearance is all we get in Old Testament times. Now in glory I get more than clearance, I get what is of my Saviour. I am fit for the glory—I know nothing more blessed. The greatest sovereign might say to me, You may come into my presence; but could he make me one of the royal family? He could

not. He might be very gracious in his manner so as to make me feel at home with him, but he could not make me sensible that I was by nature fit for the glory of his kingdom. That is a poor illustration of what we have here.

There are two conditions, as I said before ; the condition of the holiest is holiness. There I am without a spot ; I come in through the rent veil, His flesh. No flesh can come in there. If Christ's flesh has been rent to let me in, how can anything of my flesh come in ? I come in, in all the beauty and fragrance of Christ, and find I am in this wonderful place where the glory is, and I behold the Lord's glory. It is not only looking at the Lord ; it is not looking at the glory ; it is looking at "the *Lord's glory*." There is a great deal in that expression. What is the Lord's glory ? It is the expression of the divine satisfaction in that blessed One according to God's nature. Could He find it in all creation ? No ; but He does find it in that blessed One who was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." It is at this One that I am looking. What is the effect ? We have seen in the type that you get all from Christ, so in the antitype. Not a single thing there that I do not get from Christ. What consecrated them was not anything of their own, nothing that they had acquired ; and so now, what I get from Christ is what I derive from His glory.

Let me try and explain this a little more. The Holy Ghost comes down from the glorified Christ, He comes down from the finish of the gospel ; we begin properly with the cross. It meets our sins and the judgment of God ; but what are we placed in now ? “There is no more offering for sin,” but the burnt offering has gone up whole. We have Him in the presence of God. “Beholding the Lord’s glory.” Does it repel you as Isaiah ? No ; on the contrary, it says, Come on, I must make you corresponding. That is what you get in the second ram ; it corresponds to the first ram. You are “changed into the same image.”

You are now altered, entirely changed—it is the strongest word in the language—metamorphosed into the same image by the Spirit. Some of you may think this is quite beyond you. If you say, It is impossible, it is because you have not grasped the burnt-offering. If you do not understand the burnt-offering, you never can understand consecration. I understand by the burnt offering—Christ glorified in heaven. If you have not grasped Him there, you cannot understand consecration, because it is in correspondence to that blessed One you have come in.

I want to explain the effect of beholding the Lord’s glory. In the holiest of all there is not a shade of sin ; thank God, “not a cloud above ;”

but when you get in, what happens? You are wonderfully changed. I often try to test myself about a thing, that I have a judgment about. I go to God about it; not once only, but more than once, until I find out whether it is confirmed there or reversed there. Very often it is reversed there. That is the effect of the glory; you are brought into a correspondence with it, "transformed into the same image."

I give you an illustration in the Old Testament, Psalm lxxiii. There is a man who went into the sanctuary, and was quite changed. What changed him? He was changed by going into the sanctuary. It was not that he modified his views, but they were completely reversed. Now I will give you a plainer illustration in the New Testament, but no illustration will do any good until you try it. Turn to Phil. iv. 6. Philippians is the experience of a heavenly man. What I get in this passage is how a man is freed of care. He goes into the presence of God to state all his cares. It is often quoted, but I have not seen many examples of it. A man goes in with his cares, perhaps about a sick child, or a sick cow; he comes out, but his child is as sick as ever, his cow as sick as ever; what has happened? Is the thing altered? No; just the same as ever, but he has been to God; he is a changed man: he was perturbed, distressed because of the troubles; now he has the peace of God; I cannot explain it

to you, it "passes all understanding." I think I have tasted a little of it, the edge of it. Think of having the peace of God Himself! I come back not untroubled, but unruffled. It is like the difference between a land-bird and a water-bird. A water-bird oils his feathers before he goes into the water; not a feather is disturbed. I come out unruffled. I have been with God, and the most marvellous alteration has taken place in *me*, not in the circumstances, in *me*, thank God! It was a simple verse that first gave me a taste of it. The waters of Marah were bitter. That was what I felt, that everything was bitter in this poor world. I felt it would be a positive relief if I were to die. But I was struck with that verse, I saw there was something put into the bitter waters that made them sweet. A tree was put into it. That was the beginning of a great deal to me. Here is more than the waters sweetened; God does not say, I will change anything for you, but I will change you in the glory of Christ. You will see how things look then. I know the trouble, but instead of getting the trouble altered, I get altered myself. To what extent? To an inconceivable extent. It passes all understanding. What a condition! But it is within the reach of the poorest, most suffering person in this world.

I have no doubt all the wonderful prayer in Ephesians iii. flows out of this. You have come in

consecrated, come in, in the fragrance of Christ. How do you know? What is the effect? You are "changed into the same image." The glory that once refused you can claim you now instead of refusing you, for it changes you into correspondence with itself.

One example more, and then I close. When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, was he merely received? He was received as one of the most intimate friends. It is exquisite! The man who had been the "chief of sinners," when he comes into paradise is received there as one of the most familiar friends. It is a very rare person to whom I would say, Come, I must tell you all my family interests. Here is a man like me, and in the glory he is told secrets which it is not lawful to tell any mortal. Think of walking about the earth with the secrets of God in his heart. But what I want to shew you is the wonderful nature of the reception he got. Many a man is received at court; he walks in at one door and out at another. That is not much of a reception. Here I am "transformed into the same image." Would to God, we all knew something more of it! Do you say, How can I? You must enter first; you must behold the *Lord's glory*. Let me press that again, it is "beholding the *Lord's glory*." The glory is not a blaze of light, it is that everything of God is balanced there,

His righteousness is there; His love is there; every single quality is seen in that blessed Person. It is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Why is a sinner lost now? Because Satan closes his heart to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. I look at Him where He is, in the glory, in the display of all God is; the One who has expressed the nature of God in completeness, the One who has done that, is my Saviour! As I behold that, I am brought into correspondence with it. I have the sense that I am there as one of a consecrated company, and so I am not only at home there, but the glory brings me into correspondence with it; I am made to be actually part of the thing itself.

Of course there is a great deal more I do not touch on, but we get in as the priesthood—the holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices; the royal priesthood, to shew forth the virtues of Him who has called us. You can never be a royal priest unless you are a holy priest. Holy is what you are to God, royal is what you are to man. You must come from God to man; you cannot go to man beyond what you are to God. The lack of this is the cause of the weakness in a great deal of ministry. A man who is growing in ministry begins by praying. He must begin with God. What does he come to man with, if he has not got something

from God? The blessed Lord could say, "I came from God."

Well, beloved friends, I do not feel I have fully unfolded this wonderful subject. Who can? But I trust it may awaken an interest in your hearts. The more you study it, the more you will be repaid, and find the exceeding blessedness of being a consecrated company in His presence.

J. B. S.



## THOUGHTS ON 2 TIMOTHY II.

THIS chapter gives the path of faith in a day of brokenness. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." With this you must connect chapter i. 9, 10. You see the grace we are exhorted to stand fast in. We look back into eternity; it seems far off; so it is, we cannot measure the distance. The grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began is brought down to us in Christ, so we have not to search for it. We have to learn, brethren, and it is the hardest thing to learn, that it is all of grace from beginning to end. We have the words upon our tongues, how about our hearts? Are we learning it? I do not suppose any one on earth has learnt it fully, because there is that in us that is always wanting to have a finger in it. Nature does not like to be shut out entirely. We are very well contented if we can be made somewhat of. God makes nothing of us in that way, but He makes an immense deal of us in Christ. He will have nothing to say to us as to the flesh. I will point out presently how you are to distinguish yourself as a wrestler or an athlete here. It is in a wonderful way we are distinguished.

“Stand fast in the *grace* ;” not in the Lord, a different kind of thing that. There it is you are in front of the devil, and his wiles are surrounding you like so many nets, and you are to stand fast in the Lord and in the power of His might. Stand, not to do anything. The way to gain the victory is to be still. Always still ? Yes, always ; let God fight for you. He will, and will do it all far better than we can. That is another rather difficult lesson we have to learn, but God is teaching us, and He will not finish with us until we have learnt our lessons perfectly. We shall not leave off school-days till we are perfect. How are we to get perfect ? How does a man get perfect with his trade ? By practice. If you want to be a perfect worshipper, practise it. So in common every-day acts of faith, practise faith, and you will become a man of faith. That is the way to go on. You do not get it by theory. We make a good deal of being quite clear—all right it is—but it makes us think more of clearness perhaps than of the thing itself about which we desire to be clear.

We are in a state of things broken to pieces. Where are our hearts resting ? Where do we gather our strength ? Not from things around, certainly, for they weaken and depress, if we only look at them for five minutes. Paul turns back to Timothy, one of his own children in the faith : he can look back two generations there,

and see the unfeigned faith in these women. What an oasis in the desert! But he gets his glass and looks back farther than two generations; you cannot count them. Can you count the ages back through eternity? The apostle looks back, he leaves the little family, the beautiful circle in a world where all the foremost people were going back, the Ephesians, "all that are in Asia;" (just as those people went away from one of David's three mighty men, and left him all by himself. 2 Sam. xxiii. 9, 10.) Paul drinks of the brook by the way here, gets refreshed by it; then he can refresh others.

He is very mindful of Timothy. Timothy is rather timid, he could not go through fire and water like the apostle, a hardy man. He is mindful of his tears. He will wipe them. He is persuaded this unfeigned faith is in him too. Now he goes back to eternity, and sees the grace given to us in Christ Jesus. How could we earn it then? We were not in existence. We are only creatures of yesterday, only got out of the hedgerows the other day, through the grace of God looking for us. That is where He found us. We had no name or nation or anything else. The highways and hedges are the last place in the world where you and I would think of finding anything worth having. (Luke xiv. 23.)

This grace "given us in Christ Jesus before

the world began ;" it is an introduction into that which cannot fail, which had no beginning, and can have no ending. How do we get into it? By the most simple way ; Christ is the solution of everything for us ; we have only to turn to Him. If you want to know your Bibles, study Him ; you will soon be good scholars. You say, I must study the text. Study Christ, you will find Him in the text ; learn Him, know Him better, and you will soon find the scriptures will be very plain and easy. The Bible is intended for a child's book—is it not ? He tells us just after this : " From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures ;" able to make a child wise unto salvation, and to furnish the man of God unto all good works. He reveals Himself to babes, because the wise and prudent will not listen to Him. He gives us a number of pictures in the beginning ; I do not know whether we have learnt our nursery books ; if not, we had better go back and learn them again ; all those beautiful types and figures, very familiar to us. God uses them to communicate a little knowledge of His Son to us. Here is that which is unfailing. Must we take our feet off it ? Never ; or else things around will be too much for us ; *that* is the resting-place. " Be strong in the grace " ; that never changes, never fails. God cannot fail ; it is impossible, and it is impossible for the one resting on this to faint.

We had a beginning, but the grace given to us in Christ never had. And when I am converted as a sinner, I find I am loved with a love that never had a beginning. That is how I get into that which is eternal. A short road, is it not? But a step. It is not thinking of ages on ages, and getting mazed by it; I am loved by the Christ who died for me with a love that never had a beginning. All God's ways are simple and plain. It is we who are not simple. They would suit us better if we were more suited to them. If we were more suited to the place, it would be more suited to us. The heavenlies some of us call rather high ground. It is because we are not suitable to the place. We do not always feel quite at home there, do we (if one may speak for another)? We get into grand company in that place. If we are not personally acquainted with that blessed Christ, we do not feel quite easy in His presence. We are quite easy with Him as our Saviour; how about the personal acquaintance with Him as One with whom we have been called into fellowship? To share every thought He has with us, and to tell us every thought about the Father, all His knowledge of the Father. What wonderful communications would open to us! Surely there would be enough for us to be filled with for all eternity. It will not be too much for us.

We want a little recreation, people say, we

cannot be always with our minds set on heavenly things. That is a poor sort of thing; we cannot have known Him much if we talk like that or think like that; because He so fills us there is no room for anything else, and there is no taste for anything else. Our taste is quite destroyed for anything but Christ, if we have found in Him a full, satisfying portion for our hearts. I cannot go empty. I do not know if any of you can. I must be filled, and I must be more than filled to have anything to give away. The way for the pitcher to be filled is to keep it under the fountain, and it will run over. If the supply is cut off, it will not run over. We must be very near Christ if we have anything to refresh one another with. Get a little distance from Him; well, you may have a little for yourself, but you have nothing to give away. You cannot, unless the vessel runs over.

There is the grace that will not fail us. Be strong in it. You will have grace in Christ even to go alone, if you cannot get another to go with you. You go on; Paul says, We will go on together, even if there are no others. You will find grace for all the varying and new circumstances you may be called to go through. It is all brought to us in Christ; this grace that has its spring in the heart of God could not have a beginning. How could God have a fresh thought? Never! He always had this.

Then the gospel is personified ; he is to suffer afflictions *with* the gospel. Paul had done it ; Timothy was to suffer with the gospel, not *for* it. Wherever you carry it, if you carry Paul's gospel, you will suffer. Will it be enough to sustain you ? " Be strong in the grace." There is enough grace to enable you to bear with a bruised head. He supplies the provision, the grace for the way. You will have to exercise energy of soul, he says ; you cannot go on easily. He has chosen you for a soldier ; if you are even a drummer boy, you must do what you are told. The soldier has to please the One who chose him. What a simple way of pleasing Christ ! That is how He abode in His Father's love. He lets us know the secret of how He abode in His Father's love, that we may abide in His love. (John xv. 10.) We must be near enough to give the hearing of faith. That is how we get the blessedness and fulness of it. We abide in His love by simply keeping the commandments He gives us. When a man is outside the camp, that is what characterises him ; he keeps the commandments, his duty to God and his duty to his neighbour. (Heb. xiii. 13-16.)

If you meet a man of that kind, you may be sure he is outside the camp. It is the only bright place, the only clean place, and the only place where no judgment can come. Judgment is all expended upon the One who suffered there.

Instead of judgment you see the ashes. Right up to the throne of God it is bright; blue sky there, no fog, no mist. If you get inside the camp it is all over with you; you cannot stir a foot, you are challenged at every turn. Outside the camp is the place, now that Christ has suffered there. All you have to bear is a little bit of reproach. You get your honours there. Be near enough to Him to get a little reproach for His sake. Is not that an honour we should all go in for? We should not be content just to go on with the multitude. A soldier is told to go, and he goes; the Roman soldier in the gospel tells us that, we are not harassed and perplexed about a lot of rules; if you turn to the law, you must not do this, you must do that—you do not know what to do—a burden that none could bear, as Peter tells us. (Acts xv. 10.) He is now told to go, and he goes; he knows exactly what to do. He makes no remonstrance; do not put any distance between the command and the doing. So with the wrestler. The way to get a crown and earn distinction as a wrestler, is to extinguish yourself, to put yourself out of the way; that is the way, and the only way too. Have we got to wrestle against wicked spirits in heavenly places? If we overcome ourselves we have overcome the worst thing, and can stand our ground against the wiles of the devil; you will never distinguish yourself if there is a bit of

*you* allowed. That is how to distinguish yourself as a wrestler in these games.

The husbandman (ver. 6) expresses the patience and the endurance—first-rate qualities. If we do endure, we are on the same pathway as Christ—a long way behind, but on the same road. He endured the cross; He went up to that point. We are to take up our cross, but we must deny ourselves first. How do we do that? I will give you a first-rate illustration: Peter, when he denied his Lord. He said, I do not know that man. Apply that to yourself, repudiate yourself, not a little bit here, a little bit there, but I do not know that man at all. All this requires a little energy of faith, but I say the duties are so simple and plain—faith, and love, and endurance.

God's ways are plain, because we are poor, simple things, and we cannot get hold of much. And yet God gives us the capacity to take in what He tells us. I may tell you a thing in a bungling way that you cannot understand, but God does not teach us in that way, He gives us the capacity to take in what He tells us, and that should encourage us to go to God, and not depend so much upon one another.

A man in the gospels saw men as trees walking. There are a good many in Christendom who are in the same state of semi-blindness. A man is nothing very great and exalted, is he? But they see things above their proper proportions, they

see men as trees walking. If any man has his eyes opened, the only One he sees is that blessed Christ, the only One worth looking at ; he has no eyes for any one else. A wonderful little journey that man had. I scarcely know any one who had one like it. (Mark viii. 22-26.)

Then the apostle says, You have got this pathway to follow ; you will have to suffer afflictions, to endure hardness, but there is the grace for it. It is for comfort, is it not ? We look to God for comfort, but perhaps not so much for grace to endure. Any little trial we call a cross. I will bear this cross without flinching or murmuring, we say. But look at your unconverted next-door neighbour, a great deal worse off than you ; poor, afflicted and distressed. Is that the cross for him ? No. Now what is the cross ? A recruit takes the shilling, and goes in for death. The Lord bore His cross, did He not ? He was in for death, every one knew, and that is what they ought to know about you and me : These are the men that are not for this world, they are in for death ; every one could see the cross on Christ. That is bearing the cross daily. Not a cross that a person cannot see, not a little bit of a trial that we keep to ourselves. That was not the cross the Lord bore. We go in for death, and we go through death too, and without a scratch. I do not know whether you have all noticed this, but in the Red Sea there was a wall

of water on both sides, well made, too, firm ; the raging waves on the other side could not break this wall down. Christ slew death by dying ; He bore the force of death by going into it ; He makes His death a wall that keeps back all the power of death behind it. We go safely through—we go near enough to touch it. It is not far off. The only wall that can keep back the power of death is that death of Christ.

We are to consider Him then. What about Him ? “ Remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to my gospel.” Leave out a few little words, because it is the Person who is all this that you are to remember, not what He did, but rather what He is. He is the One who is raised from the dead ; how came He amongst the dead first ? He died that you might have this gospel. Supposing Christ had not died, had not borne the wrath of God, where would have been Paul’s gospel ? He died to make it ; that is why you are to consider Him. You are not to think much about a scratch then, and you will not if you think of Christ. Remember Him raised from the dead. He will fill heaven and earth with blessing presently.

Verses 9, 10. Paul follows Him at a very long distance indeed. I have suffered afflictions, he says ; I am in prison for it ; you are not in chains yet, do not mind a scratch. How he

comforts the man. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." What is the grace? We all know. He was rich, and became poor for our sakes, He went down in this grace into death. Be strong in it; be strong to endure, as well as to keep your head up in the midst of the road. The road is dirty enough and bad enough. Never mind. Death is dried up, there is a wall on both sides, we have gone through it unscathed. Paul was set "for the defence of the gospel." (Phil. i. 7, 17.) It would not have come down to us if God had not raised up men to defend it. It would very soon have been destroyed, entirely corrupted, if it had not been for all these sufferings. Without Christ's sufferings, we should not have had the gospel, and without the sufferings of those who had to carry it about, we should not have had it thus uncorrupted. God preserved it for us. "It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." (Ver. 11.) I suppose that is plain enough—it is through death we get into all the blessing.

Verses 12, 13. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." Now we cannot face these responsibilities, not one of us, unless we are well up in what it is to stand in the grace of His Christ. "Be strong in the grace

that is in Christ Jesus." How can you face responsibility unless your heart is really there—standing there, well rooted and grounded in this grace? Impossible for any one. A man might be a very bold fellow naturally, and yet not be able to face a little bit of slight, or curl of the lip, for Christ's sake. Look at Peter, a bold, resolute man—a girl turns him away. When it is for Christ's sake, that is the test, that is what tries what a man is made of. We have nothing if we are not "strong in the grace that is in Christ."

The ashes in the type precede the purple, so the suffering the reigning. The ashes and the throne close together. What grand companions they are! "And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon." (Num. iv. 13.) Purple the royal covering. "If we suffer, we shall also reign." Suffer *with*, mark—Does that exclude any of us? Now, just think of it. It is not suffering *for* Him, but you will not find a Christian who does not suffer with Him, in a very little measure, perhaps. Can you go down a street and see all the misery without suffering a little? or have you become as hard as a stone? That is suffering with Christ. Do not talk of a saint not reigning. All are crowned. All kings up there; the same grace takes the least saint and sets him there as much as the apostle. Paul

has not a word to say why God should take him to heaven, not a thing to urge on his own behalf. Christ has a great deal to say though, and the same for each one of us ; I died for that man ; his place must be there and the glory requires it too. The glory of God requires it ; demands it. Just as the glory demanded His death, demanded His resurrection, so it demands the blessing of those whose sins Christ has borne. There is no question of the glory ; that is all settled. The glory of God is so satisfied with what Christ has done, that it is delighted to take in all those who have believed in Him.

“ If we deny him, he also will deny us if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful ; he cannot deny himself.” Peter denied Him in the most shocking way. He cannot leave Peter out, so it cannot mean that. Suppose you give up Christ, will not have anything more to do with Him, as the apostates will do presently, will not have God or Christ either. What can God do ? He has no other Christ to offer. There will be many who will give up Christ entirely ; as in Hebrews, it is all apostasy there ; if a man fail in Hebrews, it is all over with him, he has given up Christ, God has no other for him.

In the midst of this and the denial of the resurrection, God’s foundation stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His. Is it foreknowledge ? I do not think it is. He

knows us all *now*. Does not the Father know His children, and the children know their Father? We know Him, do you think He does not know us? Are we not alive to it? I mean, Is it a part of our daily life to know this wondrous truth that the Lord knows us, and we live in the blessed sense of it too? You know how the knowledge of Himself fills our hearts with thankfulness, praise, blessing; and much more, that the Lord knows us. That is a greater thing, far greater. How is it we do not draw more blessing from it than we do?

“Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity;” that is plain enough. You see this pathway marked out for us, the word of God shining down in its fulness upon it, so that we cannot make a mistake unless we are so determined. If we do leave the pathway, the will is at work some way or other. If it is, we had better find out how it is.

“Flee also youthful lusts.” Do not be tampering with them. “Depart from iniquity.” How did Lot’s wife come out of Sodom? She departed as an exile, was always thinking about the mother-country, and the home where she had left some of her things. If we depart as an exile, as from things we love, and our hearts are still in, we are like her, and surely we shall not get very far. These steps are plain enough. Thanks be to God, He has made them plain. (Our dulness and

stupidity, our slowness, come out more every day ; it all arises from our learning too fast ; we have had all prepared for us, and we take things in, in our brains.) How do we learn the glories of Christ ? Not by reading a list of them, but by being in company with Him.

Then there is the separating from the vessels to dishonour. If we get an Unitarian for instance, to take a plain case, that is not a vessel meet for the service of the Master. Some people say, Who are these vessels to dishonour ? I say, Do not be thinking about the bad things and the bad people. Get hold of the good people and stick to them, without a thought of the vessels to dishonour. People want to get it in their minds so that they can argue about it. Go along with the vessels to honour, and then you will be right. By separation you are fitted for the service. By His grace you are furnished in the next chapter, and you do not go a warfare at your own charges, you are well fitted for it.

Then you are to "follow after [or pursue] righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." That is congregational, the pure heart. It is not that you are to look into every person's heart and say, Have you got Christ as your object ? Look at the congregation (that is the thing) who are "calling on the name of the Lord out of a pure

heart." You will find the pure heart is this: you have purified your hearts by faith. Faith always turns to one object, has no eyes for any other object. If we walk by faith, we cannot look at another but Christ. He purifies the heart by displacing what makes it so wretchedly impure. Well, if you have a right object you must have a pure heart, purified from all these selfish objects that fill us so, that make us so low and restless, and give us many a wakeful night, thinking how we can bring as many of them about as possible to our own advantage. Have CHRIST; and HE gets rid of the whole crew.

These are simple things to follow: Righteousness, faith, charity, peace. The fighting man is the most peaceful man you can find, if he is a right one. Look at what his shoes are made of, for instance, a grand preparation "the gospel of peace." That is the way to fight, too, the way to resist Satan. It is a part of the armour. There is nothing Satan likes so much as a disturbance; it is just what he glories in. If we are walking in peace, there will be no gain to him.

What a wonderfully plain path! No need to go and learn a lot of doctrines to know the simple ways of truth and love and peace, to see how to go along with those fit for the Master's service. It is all simple and plain for us, and if the darkness and confusion be great, the light is

greater. He has given us more light. Shall I tell you why this scripture did not bear so much light in earlier times? It was not called for. Now it sheds its full light on our pathway; the whole Bible does—we are in the night, therefore we must have the full concentrated light of the word of God bearing down upon us. I am sure we have the full daylight as to the truth. And for us to be in the dark, and not know this little thing, not know what is simply righteous is a terrible thing! People, Christians for thirty years, and do not know right from wrong! You have read about them oftentimes; you will find them if you look in Hebrews v., they had got back to a barren, shadowy ordinance when Christ had come; that is not knowing right from wrong certainly. They had been there ever since the day of Pentecost, some of them, and I am not surprised now at Christians of thirty years' standing not knowing right from wrong, if these Pentecost people did not.

Well, brethren, the great thing God has given us specially to know is this grace that is in Christ Jesus, giving us eternal glory; there is nothing He will not give us, but this grace will sustain us, keep our heads above all present things, and keep our hearts happy too, and it is well worth giving our hearts up to it. We so close our hearts to it because we know God so little, and are in company with Him so little. We think it is too

free for us, too much for us. You can understand the feeling natural to us. Nice feelings are all very well naturally, right enough in their place, but the place we are brought into is not the right place for them at all. They are a tremendous hindrance, and they rather find fault with God for giving us so much. I have as much as ever I can hold, people say. But our hearts should be free to accept all that God has made ours in Christ, whether for the end presently or for the way now; and how well we should travel if we did. We should not be talking about being weary; that is a terrible thing for people such as we. You know what made the people weary in the wilderness? They took their kneading troughs and clothes (Ex. xii. 34); they had encumbrances and cares enough to make any one weary. Throw it all down; go on in light marching order, staves in your hands, shoes on your feet. Even with the Jews, those who knew the Lord, should mount up with wings as eagles, run, and not be weary, walk, and not faint. We ought to fly higher than that. How is it we are not good runners then, and good walkers? Because we will carry the things. They never wanted their dough troughs or their clothes either; and do we want those things that we burden our spirits with day after day? Leave it all with God, He will manage the things better than we should. Let things change hands now;

you look after God's things and let Him look after yours. See if He will not manage all better than you. It is a grand thing to walk in this way—free, unfettered, save by being in subjection to Christ.

W. T.



## OUR TITLE ENJOYED.

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2 KINGS II. 9-12; MATT. XIV. 25-29; EPH. I. 19, 20.

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THE first thing we have to learn is what grace has done for us—that you get in Ephesians: “That ye may know . . . the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe . . . which he wrought in Christ.” That is our title; but a great many do not know it is theirs. The first thing is to know that it is yours, the next, what it is to enjoy it.

I read the other scriptures in order to shew the state of the heart before it enjoys the grace. What I have in Ephesians is, it is actually given to me—it is mine. A person says, I never enjoyed it. But by divine grace one aspect of the death of Christ is Jordan. We are all over death. You may not know it. It is not when you are over, Christ dies to get you over. He died eighteen hundred years ago. The first thing you have to learn is that it is so. Why do I not know it? That is the great question.

Neither Elisha nor Peter knew it, but they would like to have known it. Neither of them

had what you and I have. The power is ours, but we may not enjoy it; they had it not, but they desired to have it. That is the difference between them and us.

Read Ephesians i. 19. It is that I may know the power that wrought in Christ. It is for us. The same power that brought Christ up to heaven is the power that brings us up. We were all brought up to heaven together a long time ago. It is not that we add anything to Christ—we come from Christ, all raised up together. We take a long time before we know it, but it is great gain when we do know it.

“ . . . The Spirit's power  
Has oped the heavenly door,  
Has brought me to that favour'd hour  
When toil shall all be o'er.”

There it is !

The first thing in dealing with souls (and that is the difficulty) is to make them alive to the fact that the power is theirs, though they do not use it and may never have enjoyed it. The same death that brought me out of Egypt brought me into Canaan. The same death that saved me from eternal judgment has entitled me to eternal glory. Christ not only bore the judgment, but everything He acquired in suffering for man He acquired for us. That is the wonderful character of the grace; not only complete dis-

charge from all that lay upon us, but all the glory, all the distinction, He acquired in paying our debt—it is ours! I am not only out of debt, I have a fortune. The One who paid my debt paid it in such a manner that He has entitled me to glory: “The glory thou hast given me I have given them.” Of course that is not the essential glory.

You must have right to a thing first before you can know what the good of it is. You must be over Jordan before you can talk of possessing heaven. In Colossians a man is over, but not possessing. He is going on to possession. You are entitled to be over, but are you over? It is no use yet to talk of anything else. Until you are over Jordan you cannot enjoy the place. You cannot understand the prayer in Ephesians iii. till you are on heavenly ground. Why do I not enjoy it? I will shew you two reasons why you do not know it.

The apostle says to the Ephesians: Since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, I cease not to pray for you. The counsel of God is one part of the prayer, the other is verse 19, that you may know the power that put you over. Until you know that, you cannot know what the power does. It must first act upon yourself. It puts you into a new position. You must know you have the power before you can use it. A person reads Ephesians i.

and says, It is very clear the power is mine. But have you it? Do you know you have that power? Can you honestly sing:

“ . . . . The Spirit's power  
Has oped the heavenly door,  
Has brought *me* to that favour'd hour  
When toil shall all be o'er”?

Not *will* bring, but *has* brought.

I turn to Elisha, to see the first thing that must spring up in your hearts. Elijah is going away: he says to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for thee.” A very solemn question to put to yourself. If the Lord says, I am going away, What would you like best? Some would say, the conversion of my children; others, some other thing. What did Elisha say? “Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.” I can face this world in your absence if I have your spirit. That is what will make up to me for your absence; I can bear it if I have your spirit. People say, Have not I received the Spirit of Christ? Quite so, I admit it; but the question is, do you value it? Elisha valued it as that which would make up to him for the blank caused by his absent lord. Does the Holy Ghost make up to you now for absence of Christ from the earth? Is that the one thing that satisfies your heart in the scene where He is not?

Our blessed Lord does not ask His disciples what He should do for them; He tells them

what He will do: You shall have another Comforter. I do not put you on the ground on which Elijah put Elisha. I tell you what I will do, I will pray the Father and He will give you another Comforter, who will abide with you for ever. That is the Holy Ghost. Elisha had not the Holy Ghost, but have you the same value for the Holy Ghost that Elisha had for the spirit of Elijah? Have you the same interest in the presence of the Holy Ghost? I will test you in a minute about it.

Elijah told Elisha he should have it, on a certain condition. Mark the condition: "Thou hast asked me a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee." He was to see him taken. You say, We have the Spirit, we are better off than Elisha; but have you the same heart, and do you really fulfil the condition that Elisha had to fulfil? Is your heart set upon Christ taken? Not an object here for me now that He is taken.

That is the way the apostle puts it in Colossians: "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." That is what Stephen found. "Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus." The Comforter is come down, but have you the heart of Elisha? His eye was upon the taken one. Is yours? It was so with the apostles at first, their hearts

went with Him. It was said to them, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" He was to come back again. The very thing not allowed in Acts i. is what marks the action of the Holy Ghost in Acts vii. "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven. It is a very simple thing to put it to your own hearts. The Spirit of God always turns you that way, never turns you downwards, always upwards. It has been said that man is the only animal that looks up, and a Christian certainly is the only person who *can* look up. It is a great thing to look up. Everything turns in a sense upon a look: "Life in a look," the hymn says; I admit it, but everything depends upon a look. "Beholding the Lord's glory" now. It all shews where your heart is. The object of my heart is gone up there. Therefore that was the condition: "If you see me taken." Do you not think he kept his eye upon him?

I trust you will understand that it is not only that you have the Spirit, but that nothing can make up to you in this world for the absence of Christ except the Holy Ghost. All the riches, all the honours (I do not mean worldly honours), all the favours that may come from the hand of God, nothing but the Holy Ghost can make up for the absence of Christ. So now, if you want to know His action and power, you must keep your eye on the taken One.

In Elisha you get what alone can compensate you for His absence. I put it to my own heart, can I say honestly, Nothing can compensate me for Christ's absence but the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost is the source of everything to me. The apostles were told to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high.

I turn to Matthew xiv. You get here another trait which I believe is of all importance; affection in Peter that wants to be with Him. It is not merely grace and the power to go to heaven. The first question with the soul is heaven or hell, as another has said; the second is, heaven or earth. I have seen a great many who would happily give up what they had on earth for the Lord, but I have not seen many who would give up the earth altogether to be with Him. Like Rebekah or Ruth "Where thou goest I will go." You are out of everything. You would not be one bit less capable in the things down here, but the Lord would be with you in them, because your heart is with Him. Your heart is so with the Lord you must be according to His pleasure here. In Matthew xiv. the Lord is seen in a new position. Peter in the ship sees Him walking on the water. It seems a very unaccountable place—superhuman. Of course it is. It is as hard to walk on smooth water as on rough. Peter had not the power. You have the power to walk on the water. The believer has the power to set his

mind on things above. We are better off than Peter, better off than Elisha. I do not say we have the same heart. In Elisha we get the heart that says, I can stay in the place of your absence if I have your spirit. In Peter I get, Nothing would please me but to be in the place where You are. Every one knows a ship was made for water. I get out of the ship to go to Him, to walk in the most unaccountable way. "You have not gone this road heretofore." A new road it is surely, but Jesus has gone the road; that is enough for me, and He has opened the way. "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." The Lord says, "Come." There is a reality about it—do you believe it?

I was once alluding to this passage when a nice intelligent man was present—spiritually intelligent, I mean. He told me Two years after it flashed across my mind what it meant, the reality to overcome everything here to go to the Lord. He only looked at the figure while I was speaking. Do not be discouraged. It takes time to work things out, like some corn that is so many months before it will sprout.

How did Peter come to get that power? In Elisha I get, Nothing can console me for your absence but your spirit; in Peter I get, Nothing would satisfy me but to be where You are. And the Lord said, "Come." Why did He say Come? Simply because Peter had affection

enough to wish to go to Him. These are the two things really: you do not value the Spirit of God enough as the only One to make up to you for the blank of your Lord's absence, and the other is, you have not affection enough for Him, like Peter. You do not say to Him, "Bid me come." Peter had not the power. He got it for a minute, it was delegated to him, so to speak, but we have it. If you understand Ephesians i. 19, we have it in Christ; we may never have used it—why? Because you were never like Elisha nor like Peter yet. We do not want title, we have it; but we want heart to make use of what we have. If we had heart for the Lord, as the hymn says,

"No place would fully please us  
Where Thou, O Lord, art not."

One illustration I give you. It brings out the actual knowledge of the power. The parent bird, when the young birds are fledged, goes up two or three feet above them. The young birds will not fly. Like Christians now, you have the power, you have the wings, why do you not use them? You would never forget it if you had. The parent bird knows very well that the young birds will try to get to it; it counts upon their affection. They have the affection, but do not know that they have the power to satisfy their affection. What now? The young bird begins to move, and, to its surprise, finds it can fly.

Have we got the affection? We have the power; all we want is the affection. We find, when we have the affection, we have the power to satisfy and gratify it.

I need hardly refer you again to Ephesians i. I trust it is plain to you we are superior, as to grace and standing, to Elisha and to Peter. We have it; what we want is that real heart for Christ, that, like Elisha, we can say, No other thing can suit me but the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, during Your absence. I shew I value it by keeping my eye on You as the taken One, and, like Peter, no matter what my circumstances are, no matter what the difficulties, my heart is so set upon You where You are, that I am not thinking of difficulties. No doubt he began afterwards to look at the winds and the waves, but first "he walked on the water to go to Jesus." He lent Peter His power, as it were. It is not lent to me, but *given*. A gift is not a loan. Thank God, I have a gift. The only question is, have I used my gift? Like the young birds, have you used your wings? They had their wings before they used them. That is all I want to insist upon.

Turn to another scripture for a minute which marks the thing in a very definite way: Joshua v. 9. The reproach of Egypt is rolled away. You have the power, and you have got over Jordan. Two things mark the enjoyment of

power, and are necessarily connected with it: a double action, in a certain sense concurrent. We never should be happy otherwise. When they knew the power, they got rid of what was unsuited to possession. I have parted with what would unfit me for this new position before I enjoy it. The old thing goes, in order that I may entirely enjoy the new thing. The new possession has it all to itself—no rivalry. One is gone, broken, silenced. It may rise up again? Quite true, but it is silenced. Hence there was Gilgal, rolling off the reproach before they ate of the corn of the land. I part with what would spoil my enjoyment before I enter upon my enjoyment. I am clear of it.

Take the prodigal son. Do not you think he took off the old clothes before he put on the new?

Put off” you get in Colossians iii. where it is a man over Jordan, but not yet in possession of the land. It is a most serious thing to think you could get into a fine place in unsuited clothes—never such a thing! I used to think when I saw the Lord I should become like Him; but I shall be like Him to see Him it would not be happy to see Him if I were not like Him. The bride will be brought to the king “in raiment of needle-work,” everything done with a stitch; “all glorious within,” all fitting. That is the beautiful history of Rebekah. She gets off the camel, in true godliness, shewing her deference to her lord,

and casts a veil over herself. There is Isaac, she is ready for him.

I am in possession, a person says; but he has kept up the old thing. I do not believe it. You have to part with the old thing, and you would like to feel you had broken with it. Hence Gilgal comes before possession, as Colossians iii. I have the right of entrance? Yes, and more the power to enter, but the very power enables me to separate from the thing that would not suit. You would not bring it into heaven, would you? Your nature, your self-gratification, your vanity, your natural, worldly desires? You know in your heart you could not bring them in. Therefore Gilgal was before possession. There is renunciation always before possession. You are thus qualified for possession. The more the renunciation, the more thoroughly you are in possession. Paul in Philippians iii. had done with everything. Far better leave it all—not one bit or another bit, but *all*.

A person years ago was helped by a simple statement: A bird cannot fly unless he leaves the earth. He must leave it. The leaving came first. "Cease to do evil," before "learn to do well." It could not be otherwise. Nothing can be plainer in its principle. I take them in the order in which I read them. Now look at Elisha, what was the first mark of power in him? "He took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in

two pieces." He has done with them now ; that is the first mark. Then he took up the mantle of Elijah and put it on him. He comes out now in a new dress. That is the mantle with which he went over Jordan. The more I look at it, the more I see that you must break from the man who is at enmity to Christ. That is the terrible character of the flesh. Not only, as in Romans vii., it is incompetent to keep the law, but as in Galatians iv., it persecutes Him that is born of the Spirit. I have found out that you oppose Christ, and I have done with you. I like to be free of the flesh. When a person is getting on, how does the Lord help him ? "We who live are always delivered unto death." I say, I shrink from this entanglement, and the Lord lets death in to help me. I tremble sometimes at what the process may be—wonderful examples one has seen. I cannot let my heart go that way any longer. Then the Lord takes you at your word. He rolls in death.

The Romanist says, Through my death I get life ; I say, I get life through Christ's death ; that is right, but practically death works in us. Through life I get death. The moment you *desire* to be free, the Lord says, I will free you. That is where the power comes in. You do not renounce to get the power ; that is legalism. I illustrate it in this way, A dog tied up is trying to get loose, but when he is free, and

you try to tie him up again, he avoids you. He knows what liberty is, he does not want to be tied up again. "We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." The Lord never presses any one to devotedness, but He likes it.

What am I going to possess the other side? Heaven itself; "in spirit there already."

Do you want to bring the flesh in? Not I. I have done with it! It is not simply I have put it by for a time—because it is Sunday perhaps—but I have done with it; I will not be molested by it.

Peter in the same way left the ship. You may call it the Jewish ship, or what you like, but he did leave it, "he walked on the water to go to Jesus." There was renunciation before possession, he left the ship. The first mark of power is renunciation, not enjoyment. Enjoyment is the second mark. I renounce that which would interfere with my enjoyment, and now I have my enjoyment without any interference. Every one knows that if you want to enjoy yourself over the fire with a book you shut the door first. Renunciation before enjoyment—you will find it so in every case. I know very well why we do not enjoy heaven.

What is it really? You are over Jordan, but you are not in possession of Canaan. You do not get that in Ephesians, because there it is all

the power of God; but in Colossians it is: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above." "Put off"—let it all go. Mortify your members. It is not Marah. Marah is I drink death as the thing arises, but Gilgal is circumcision; the old thing is over, all things are made new. Mortify all round the indigenous plants. Some weeds it seems you can never get rid of, and there are others that I may call annuals. You must mortify the indigenous plants; put off the habits, the annuals. Proper education would perhaps help one to put off lying, evil speaking, ill temper, and so on. The things you are told to mortify are all ingrained; you can only mortify them.

Circumcision is the first thing when you are over Jordan; it could not take place in the wilderness; you had not the power there, you were but struggling through the wilderness. Now it is the knife: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus."

One little illustration I give, to shew how the Christian is qualified for possession. There is the actual stripping of all that which would unfit you for the enjoyment of possession. We do not fight for possession, as they did, it is ours, but do we enjoy it? This is the way to enjoy it. I illustrate it by a recruit. A young man is enlisted and brought to the barracks. What does he learn? He has to leave all the civilian, his

old dress, his old gait outside. He did what he liked before. He is to be remodelled, he is to be made a soldier of; he is divested of everything that does not suit a soldier, and invested with everything that suits a soldier; he has to get the ways, the movements, the evolutions of a soldier; it is a new course of education, but what does he start with? With his being stripped and divesting himself of the old things. That is the principle of scripture. "Put off the old man and put on the new." I believe there is no conscientious person who would not say, I am delighted to hear it—the old thing goes first, and I am a free man to enjoy the new thing that I am brought into.

That is the first action of the power—freed from what embarrasses you. I do not doubt there is a practical severance as you grow in it. I am getting greater enjoyment in that scene, and I am glad to say, I am more detached here; not suffering by detachment, but pleased to be detached. Paul was not mourning that he had to go when he said, I long to depart and be with Christ; all my links are formed up there, so I am very glad to go; all the links loosened here.

The Lord lead our hearts practically to enter into it! What a thing to find we have this power according to Ephesians i., the power to bring us up to that spot. You have the power, you have the wings. I tell you why you do not

use them. "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest!" You never had the heart to go. You may tell me your prayers are three hours long, that you read the Bible and notes incessantly, but you have not the heart to go! If you had you would know that you possessed the power, and that nothing could console you in the absence of the Lord but the Holy Ghost, who leads you to where He is. He knew Himself nothing could make up for His absence but the Holy Ghost, and, blessed be His name, He gave the Holy Spirit without our asking for Him.

You must be like Peter. It is not enough to see Him in that new position above everything; you must want to go to Him there.

Then I say, what is the practical consequence? Two things come out. You renounce the thing that would hinder your possession up there, the other is that you enjoy it. Believe me, you will find it so. Renunciation is always before enjoyment. I assert it, I know it, that if you do not renounce you would be actually spoilt and hindered in your enjoyment. It would be a trial to you. It is the principle of what Paul says: "To God I am beside myself." He was in an ecstasy, like the queen of Sheba, "No more spirit in her." You say, Do you want me to leave the earth? No. You will go back to your duties on the earth with a heart

and a half, because it is His pleasure for you to remain here for Him. A river runs within its banks. These are the channels you are to flow in, to testify in. Thank God, I know where I am to run, and I know where His grace will run with me and support me. I am not dead to nature, but I have to act in divine power in all my natural ties and duties.

The Lord grant that we may know where His grace has placed us, and that we may have the heart to use what His grace has given us, for His name's sake.

J. B. S.



## THOUGHTS ON LUKE IX. 28-36, 51.

THERE were two roads to the glory; the Lord took the road through which He could have us with Him; the other way He must have remained alone. He talks about making His exodus from Jerusalem, not from the mount of transfiguration. In the mount of transfiguration God acknowledged His claim to the glory as man. How blessedly He does it! "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered." Who altered the fashion of His countenance? He did not do it Himself. He was praying, dependent, He did not move a finger; it was God owning His title to it, and in a very wonderful way, *He* clothes Him with glory; owns His title to glory as a man. We had no title; we had come short of the glory of God; He had not come short. His title was owned, but He would not go up from that mount, because He could not take us with Him. Then comes the wonderful announcement: they "spake of his decease (exodus) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

What must Moses have thought of this wonderful scene? He had been in the mount with God before, but not in a glory like this at all. God was there, and he had spent forty days

in it. God had told Him to come up about the law. Seven chapters, from Exodus xxiv.—xxxii., take in the first forty days of Moses' being in the mount. All that time there was nothing about the law until he had just got one foot out of the glory coming back; then God hands him the tables. The law did not fill God's mind at all. He is talking to him about Christ all those forty days, in rather a dim sort of way. Moses was with Him now. The next forty days He causes His glory to pass before him. People who are occupied with themselves always think a great deal about the law, whether they have been up to the mark in keeping it. The law came in by the bye. It was not what God took him up there for. It was to make the furniture of the new house He was going to build Himself to live in. He does not dwell in any place until He has this new house built. He does not go into the tabernacle which Moses pitched outside the camp. The glory stands outside the door, but will not enter. Why not? For the same reason that an unfurnished house would not suit you, would it? It did not suit Him. There was no seat, He wanted to rest amongst these people in a way suited to Himself. If He had not a mercy-seat He would have to kill them all. Directly the house is furnished He does not let a moment pass, He takes His seat at once. How can any one get into the house? He did not

build it to stay there alone. The house is as wide as His own heart. It will hold every one His heart embraces. We judge of the heart of God as very wide. "Yet there is room," He says. When the upper story is almost filled, still there is room, and when the upper story is quite filled, He will begin to fill the lower one. That will not take so long to fill. People will come in faster—a nation born in a day. Now He gathers us here and there and everywhere.

How are the skirts of the glory to be folded up a little for the sons of men to come in? The Book of Leviticus is what makes room. You could not enter in; a sinner, you would not suit it; the glory could not let you come in contact with it. The ministry of the priesthood comes in to make room. The glory is satisfied. Moses can go in, and every believing sinner now on the same principle. Leviticus is what makes room in the house. God is outside in Exodus, inside in Numbers. We understand how He got in, though we are not told. We do not need the first, second, third, fourth and fifth standards in the school; we do not need to have every little thing explained to us. As we learn God, we understand how the Book of Leviticus is the door through which He got into the camp again. If I come in, you must put the lepers out. I can stay on account of the sacrifice and the priesthood. He could not before. If that calf is there I must

kill you all; I will not do that, I will go out myself. When the house is furnished, the sacrifice is spread out before Him. These first seven chapters of Leviticus are a grand altar. He is so satisfied with it, He can get a lot of people in there now, and to His glory. They are no blot on it now. More, the glory demands their presence. It shut them out before, now it demands, requires their presence.

In Exodus xxi. the servant will not go out without his wife and family. These three chapters, xxi., xxii., xxiii., go together. God has joined them together, answering in some little way to the three chapters of the sermon on the mount—all about things they had to do when they got into the land; just after the law was given, and they said, We will do it all. It would be better if the last verse of chapter xx. were joined to the first verse of chapter xxi.

You get the sacrifice, the altar, the servant come to carry out the will of God. He is going to make a sacrifice for Himself, but it is all prepared before the breakdown comes, before the golden calf is set up. He knows they will break down, the very first step they take. That is the moral link between these chapters. It seems as if it began a fresh stage; so it does, but there is a link between, in a way.

That is the first judgment you get, I think. The word is divided into judgments, statutes,

testimonies, and so on, and so blended we cannot draw a straight line between them. You get an inkling of what judgment means from this first one. (Take the statute in Lev. xxiv.—you find it exceedingly bright.) You are all familiar with the history of the Hebrew servant. The servant served six years, then the time comes for him to go out free. Is not that the mount of transfiguration? He has served his time, He might go out free, but that Servant in Luke ix. will not go out free. He will not go free that way, He will go through death. That is the way He will go to heaven, not using His own Personal title and right which God had just owned by glorifying Him. Two others appeared in glory—rather a strange thing! Had they any right and title? Not an atom, if Christ had not gone down to Jerusalem to die; no personal title. If these men are there, if we had eyes to see, we should see the whole thing purposed and planned must come out. The very men appearing in glory must be on the ground of Christ's death. They must get a title that He earns, not merely a title that He has a right to. It is the earned title of Christ that you and I get a part in. He alone has a Personal title; He alone was the perfect Man. No one like Him, nor ever will be. We are new creation, we are like Him in that; but, like Him as a man down here on earth? Never could be! We are corrupt in nature. Here is a man in such

perfect nature that He could do whatever God says He should do; He was up to it. We are not up to one thing of it.

This Man will not go out free because of His wife and family; it does not say anything about the Master's wife and family. He had one, they are mentioned in Deuteronomy xv. It will not do to bring in the servant of Deuteronomy xv. here, for there is nothing about the slave's family in Deuteronomy xv. Is it not a bright, beautiful judgment? All in our favour, too, nothing against us. It is a grand thing when we find it all on our side. It is not the same thing as "mercy rejoicing against judgment." That is a very different kind of judgment from this. This judgment was one God had ordained, that the slave might be set free, but if the servant plainly said, I love my master, my wife, my children, I will not go out free, he should be a servant for ever. He must *plainly* say it. Has the Lord Jesus Christ in an enigmatical way said so? No; He plainly said so, much more plainly than words could say it, by His dying on the cross. That is plain enough for any one. Is it plain to God? Most plain, and most plain to us, too. He will not go out free. He plainly said, I love my wife. He gave Himself for the church. What could He do more? That is the grace of Christ, not the grace of the Father. There is a wondrous difference in all these rays of light and

love and grace. We should not muddle them all together as if we could not tell the difference. The Lord lays down His life. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." That is not the grace of the Father, you can easily see. The Father takes care of you as His children. The children run with all their little wants and ailments to the Father. The Father gives the Son, but the grace of the Son specially is He lays down His life for us. If you see one great difference, you soon see another. That is the blessedness of being taught of God, and having our eyes a little opened. God intends us to know the things that He has freely given to us. That is why He has sent the Holy Ghost down; therefore we should expect much, and we should get it too.

He says He will serve Him for ever: His ear is bored. I want you to see He will not go out (exodus); He will not go out free by Himself. He is going to make His exodus at Jerusalem. That is because He loves His Master, His wife and His children. Love cannot do without its object. It is a poor kind of love if it can. Then He talks about His exodus which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. He does not hesitate a moment. God the Father must own His personal title. "As he prayed." You do not find that in the transfiguration scene in the other gospels. He

was dependent, He was asking God about this very thing. How do we know that? By God's answer, of course! We do not need to be told what He prayed for.

God owns this Personal title. A most wonderful, beautiful scene. How it sheds light on that first judgment we get in scripture! Brought out in all its fulness and blessedness in this living Christ. Moses is with Christ here. What a difference for him from when he was on the mount before; here was the effulgence of glory, the brightness of glory. There is power in the glory; they "appeared in glory." The power of the moment furnished the whole vision. We shall come within the circle of the glory's power, and be all transformed by it at once. When we see Him, we shall be like Him. When He appears, we shall appear with Him.

Verse 51. He starts on the journey directly. It is a continuous road from Luke ix. 51 to Acts i.: "Until the day in which he was taken up." "When the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." He sends before Him two sets of messengers. (Ver. 52; chap. x. 1.) He makes a royal tour through the place. The people, the Samaritans, would not receive Him on the way. How does He act then? He becomes one Himself in the next chapter. How terribly James and John are altered since they came down from the

glory, we should hardly know them. It is the most wonderful change, except perhaps Psalm lxxvii., the new photograph of the elder son (Luke xv.); we get there perhaps a more striking example. Instead of being so terribly disturbed and at enmity with the thought of the Gentile being blessed, in Psalm lxxvii. he wants God to bless him, that all the nations may be blessed through him. His heart is set upon all being blessed, and he would not have one blessed before. Here James and John are altered for the worse. They wanted to call down fire from heaven. They got it from Elijah's history—they had just been up with him there. The glory has quite upset them; they are always thinking of the right and left hand. So now-a-days, people will sing hymns about the glory, people who have no ballast whatever. God gives them a little ballast here. He gives them the first lesson on the cross just before. It does not seem to be enough. At the supper they strive who should be the greatest (Luke xxii. 21-38); Judas is there, Peter, James and John, the best and the worst all put together. That is why, I think, they are introduced in Luke; Luke is the great photographer, as it were. They are put in a group to contrast them with the Lord Jesus Christ. What a contrast to Him, the best of them! The glory had put the thought of being the greatest into their minds; it was too much for them. If you

and I think much of the glory, we must have a great deal of ballast with us. That is, that the cross sets you and me aside, lest we glory in a natural way. If we have all-sail set, we must take care the ship is well ballasted. That is why He speaks of the cross just before the glory in our chapter. John and James and Peter are never cured until after the Lord is gone.

Verse 51. The time came that He should be "received up," the same word as in Acts i. 11 the beginning and ending of the journey. It is not from the cradle to the cross at all. From the cradle to the Mount, then from the Mount down to the cross; that is the way the Lord went. He is going to start for heaven from Jerusalem, and then He can take us with Him. We should have been irretrievably shut out any other way. All hung on Him entirely. He might have gone out quite free. He did not owe us anything.

We talk of owing Him something sometimes. "Oh, what a debt we owe!" We had better look to getting more in debt to Him. The Lord likes us to be in His debt. Get more in debt to Him. He loves for us to know Him so well that we get into His debt to any amount. Do you find you are uncomfortable with the thought you owe much? It a little disturbs, especially if people know but little of grace. If we know the grace of God pretty well, it is not so disturbing. People who are under law feel disturbed

by it, it is not altogether a comforting thought to them.

In this scene, Peter, James, and John find a fright in everything. If you compare the three Gospels you will find in each a different thing that frightens them. They are like scared birds, nothing stirs or moves but frightens them. They were not up to it. Peter did not know what he said. He puts the Lord first on the list, but that will not do at all. If you put Him with any one else it is to take away His place altogether. God resents it at once; that is why He teaches them the lesson, "Jesus only," "My Son"—He stands alone; you cannot compare Him with any one else: He is not of the same line of things. In the very same chapter in Matthew that gives the transfiguration scene, Christ can put Peter with Himself, but that is quite another thing; God resents Peter's speaking of three tabernacles, but how gracious of the Lord to put him next to Himself directly after this rebuke. He does not put a man in the glory near Him. He resents that; these three did not appear in glory, but He puts Peter next to Himself directly after. That is just how grace meets us: "Me and thee," close together; no separation now, not one tabernacle for Me and one for thee. "Me" first, of course—"for me and thee." He could not have any other place.

It is Christ, dear brethren, we do so need to

learn. Study Christ, and in doing so you study your Bibles; but have Christ for the study, not the book apart, and then the book will be plain. In every verse, if you have Him, you know the One about whom the verse speaks. That will not fill you with high thoughts about yourself. Knowledge may make you proud, but you will never get proud about knowing Christ; because, while the knowledge is so blessed, it is so humbling to us.

He comes down to Jerusalem, and dies there, and is a servant for ever now. You know how Christ serves. We have not been in the glory; we cannot quite tell how He will serve then, because He will have His own way with us there. We shall not put Him at arm's length as Peter did in John xiii. Christ will have His own way, "He will come forth and serve them," according to Luke xii. There will be no hindrance to His carrying out all His love in this wondrous service. We do not like to have our feet washed always. How do we put Christ at arm's length? By shutting our ears to the words that convict the conscience. We do not face it, we put it away from us. We may say Peter was wrong, but we do it constantly because we do not let the word in. We get defiled by hundreds and thousands of things, and yet we go into things as if we were made of brass to throw off every defilement. Could a person have communion unless his feet

are washed? Christ cannot let out His full joy in us if there is a speck on us. He must remove it first. He wanted to carry out His full delight in us and make us acquainted with it. We should not prize it if He did not remove the defilement first. He will have us all round Him in Luke xii., and will come forth and serve us for ever. We shall be waited on for all eternity. The most blessed Servant, and for eternity! He will never give that up. His ears are bored, a servant for ever. We know what the "ever" of that house is—eternal.

He meets the need just now. He goes through His training for it. He had His ear opened morning by morning, He had to listen to it. Isaiah l. comes before Exodus xxi.; but Psalm xl. comes first: "Mine ears hast thou opened;" "A body hast thou prepared me." He opens His ears in Psalm xl.; instructs them in Isaiah l.; and now, in Exodus xxi., His ears are bored—a servant for ever. Have we followed Him in that school? He learned God's will morning by morning; listened to it. You say, He knew it. Yes, but He received it from God, and now He is enabled to speak a word in season to any one that is weary. It is grand to be waited on by such a servant as that! He is the servant still, and He serves us out of love, not for wages. It is a slave here, a hired servant would not do.

The slaves are the only ones in the house who know where the "best robe" is kept. (Luke xv.) Could a hired servant, a law man, know it? He is working for a righteousness of his own. The slaves, who are bought, know it. It is only the one who has it on who knows how to speak of it to another. We get it by faith in this blessed Son of God.

He took upon Himself the form of a bond-servant. (Phil. ii.) We cannot afford to part with Him in that character. People say, Christ was never under the yoke. He was under the yoke to God, never to any one else; but He obeyed God, and He was a bond-servant—was absolutely His. A bond-servant cannot serve two masters. A hired servant can serve as many as he likes; he does certain things for certain wages. It is the bond-servant who cannot serve more than one, because if he raises his finger for another he robs his owner; I have bought you, you are entirely mine. You must not even speak a word for another, you rob me if you do. If you part with Exodus xxi. and the beginning of Philippians ii., you will find a great gap which you cannot fill up.

He washes our feet now that we may share His joys, not that He may share our tears. We do not want the feet washed for that. We need Christ's sympathy down here with the weakness, misery, faint-heartedness; but where is the faith

that rises up and shares Christ's joys? He likes to have us up on His platform, not always to be down here putting our tears into His bottle, but to give us a taste of His wine up there. Do not think only of the rain that comes down—it is coming down, this blessed sympathy of Christ—but we are taken up there, He raises us up to His level, has raised us. Lay hold of the thing firmly. He has set us in Him, there where He is, of course. Now look from the place where you are. You have not to look from this place upwards; but look from that place all around. You will find you are in the very midst of the glory. Abraham had to look from the place where he was in the land, all around. You say, we are down here; yes, but for how long? It may be true for a minute or two, but that will be true for eternity: our being here will be past directly, but that will endure.

The end of Ephesians iii. answers in a way to Genesis xiii. Only Abraham has the lower platform; we have the higher one. There were boundaries down here to his: north, south, east, west. In Ephesians iii. we get: breadth, length, depth, height—no bounds to the glory in the midst of which we are set. We have Him in our hearts by faith, and that makes us at home up there, or else we should be terribly strange.

We shall have the Servant for ever, but He will not have the kind of service He has now.

In Psalm lvi. He puts our tears in His bottle ; in Psalm cxvi. we have them all done away. We have put a great many in His bottle, and God says, I keep them. He will sympathise in your every sorrow, but He wants us to come and share His side of things now. Do not ask Him to be always sharing your cares and sorrows—He will not refuse to share our griefs and cares ; but what would delight Him is that we should share His joys a little bit. It is a simple energy of faith that lays hold of the word that tells us of His sympathy ; how firmly we believe that ! Why should we not as firmly believe we are in Christ where He is ? We have the same warrant for our faith. You may say, I cannot feel I am up there. I feel so happy in the other, I feel He is so near to comfort me. It is all feeling down here ; that is why people get hold of it and like it so. Let us get hold of the other ; let us get on a little more in the ways of faith ; we shall not be content then to be so full of feelings, we shall want to know what He is thinking about now ; to share His thoughts of the Father, and the Father's thoughts of the Son. We should find out that the Father thinks the same of us as of His Son.

Christ is the attraction to it all, and we share it all with Him, all the favour that shines down on Him. Is not that worth as much as the sympathy ? If we get hold a little of it, we shall

find out it is worth more. His sympathies we shall not do without, the Lord will take care that we do not, the sympathy so enduring, so constant, and the love so great.

Well, I trust we may be able a little more to enter into the glory. He gives us that lesson about denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Him to where He is. Some look at following Christ, as doing as He did down here. That is part of the following. Do not suppose it is merely doing good to your neighbour; that is a little measure, but not all the thing. We want to deny ourselves and take up our cross more for following Him to where He is, than we do for simply following Him where He was. Do not let us shut out the other. We curtail things so, and then our supplies seem to fail; if we draw upon them by faith, we get a full flow directly.

May the Lord give us to learn a little how to serve for Him by learning how we are served. We can do nothing apart from that. We must get the motive power before we can come down to serve. Do not think about service before the realisation and the learning of how we are served. Of course we have to serve in the same way. I cannot enter on that, unless I know how I am served. I must learn that and learn it well, too. He tells us in Revelation how He makes a good servant: "He loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." That is what He tells us first.

Next, He sets the man as a dead man at His feet. Then He says, Fear not, get up and write, and he does write well. He sets him to serve at once, and he wrote those twenty-two chapters well; but He must annihilate the man first, he must learn the riches of the love and the grace, and then get rid of himself. Then "Write," He says. The directions are so simple if you listen in faith.

W. T.

