

TRUTH *for the* LAST DAYS

NO. 3.

Notes of Addresses and Readings on John xiv. and Philippians

... BY ...

J. N. DARBY.

LONDON:
THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT,
5, Rose Street, Paternoster Square, E.C. 4.

PRICE EIGHTPENCE

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I.

The Father's House.

John xiv.

THIS chapter presents an object before our souls so as to give us our portion in Christ—a portion in the Father's house ; and secondly how we get into this place. It wonderfully brings before us our place now that He is absent from us (though in one sense He is never absent), what the comfort of the Christian is, and the place into which God has brought him. This is no fresh truth, but showing where the heart of the Christian is when he really has Christ before him and the Holy Ghost working in him.

Christ was going away and it was natural that they should be troubled. At the end of the chapter He says to them in a touching way, "If you thought of me you would be glad that I am going back to my Father, and out of this scene of sin and sorrow." Still, it seemed to them that they were going to lose Him, and it was natural they should grieve ; and so He gives them what is to be their comfort when He is gone.

Besides this, there is His coming again brought in. "I cannot stay with you here," He says, "but I will take you where I am going." The whole state of the world was unfit for Him to remain on the earth. He could not rest here. He could stay for a time and serve, but could not rest. Even long before, in the Old Testament, it is

said "This is not your rest, for it is polluted"; but this only led to the blessed truth that He was going to give us a rest where He could rest, with the Father, and that His work was so perfect and so effectual that He could give us a place there. We have got a portion where He has all His glory, all His rest, the fruit of the travail of His soul.

"In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you." Mark this, it was in His Father's house, the place that He had as Son, where He was at home, there He was going to prepare my place. That is unspeakable blessing! It was a comfort, a joy to have Christ with them in the world, but that was by the way. He was going to prepare a place where He was at home. Think what the home of such a heart as His must be! Where all His divine affections would flow out, the divine Son, and yet a Man, and to think that this is the place where He is going to take us. What a wonderful thing! What a home must that be!

"I will come again and receive you unto myself." Not call you up, that would not do: not send for you, that would not do: but "I will come." How touching! Though gone into glory and sitting on His Father's throne, He would leave it to come and fetch us into His Father's house. His affections are so set on us that He is not satisfied without coming Himself for us; He would not send. It is not only the blessedness to us of His coming Himself for us, but it is the expression of Christ's heart. He wants it, wants to have us. It is His own interest in us, His love to us. When we know that, then the heart is drawn out to Himself. No doubt it is an unspeakable blessing to us, but it is the revelation of Christ Himself. The one only blessed hope of the Church is that He would come

again and fetch us. Confidence is sure that when we are unclothed we shall be with the Lord, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." Yet that is not the hope; the hope is that He will come and fetch us. It is on His heart and should be on ours. They went out to meet the bridegroom; that was the condition of the Church at the first. Converted to wait for His Son from heaven, they all went to sleep, wise as well as foolish, and had to be waked by the midnight cry. It was "My Lord delayeth His coming," that brought deadness into the Church, that led to the eating and drinking and drunkenness, beating the men-servants and maid-servants.

This is no truth that may or may not be held. It is essential to the daily life of the Christian. If I am daily expecting Christ I shall not like to be in any place where I would not like Him to find me, and whatever would not please Him I should put off, whatever it is. We are looking for One who loves us. His heart wants us, and He is going to satisfy His heart. It is not prophecy; prophecy has to do with God's government of this world, and it is very interesting in its place, but it has nothing to do with our hope.

Now comes in another thing. If I am sending my son, or orphan, if you please—though in one sense we are not left orphans—to a strange place, the grand point would be for him to know what sort of person it was that I was going to send him to live with. Heaven is a very vague place if I have not got a Person in it. If there were no one there—if we were to dwell in a holy place by ourselves—it would not do. We should have no object there before our souls. There would be an immense gap. Of course, it is not possible that it should be so. And so He tells us that we have known the Father if we have known

Him, that it is the Father's house He is going to, and going to take us to. So the grand point for us is how we can know the Father and perfect satisfaction. It is not like this poor empty world, which, our hearts being made for God, is too small ever to fill them. This object is too big for our hearts. I press this, how close the Father has been brought to us. They had seen Him and so had seen the Father; and when they ask the way, He says, "I am the way."

"Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father." They had got the full blessedness, but their poor hearts did not know it. Could He say to us, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" Or can we say that our souls have so seen the Father in the Person of the Son, that we can say, "I have found it all, I have got it." It is that that forms the heart as to its affections. If we have followed Christ in His path down here—followed Him in the Gospels—have we learnt the Father's ways in the Son? He passed all on that He enjoys of the Father to the disciples that they might enjoy it with Him. How much have we learnt of this favour and blessedness which He reveals? I cannot learn anything of it that is not mine, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." All things are mine.

The Lord presses this upon them, that "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 a wrong thought that He left the Father's bosom. He never did; He left the Father's house. You get in Christ the full revelation of what the Father is. The only begotten Son, all the Father's delight centres in Him, in the bosom of the Father, that is in the full enjoyment of it, He

declares the Father. I see He is infinite, and I adore Him, but I see He is the revelation of the Father's love to me, as I go over His life down here.

It is not merely saying, I am a lost sinner and have been saved, but it is the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, occupying me with Christ, having fellowship with the Father and the Son, that is my portion. When I say I have fellowship with any one down here, I mean I have the same thoughts, the same joys, the same ways. Is that true of us with the Father and the Son? It gives holiness of thoughts of course, and it gives piety of thoughts; that is you get affections according to the relationship you are in, suitable to that which is before your soul.

Supposing my soul is dwelling on the blessed obedience of Christ—His obedience unto death—and I am adoringly sitting and contemplating Christ so, does not the Father contemplate it too? Do not I know the Father's delight in it too? "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life," and that is why I love Him because He has laid down His Life, in my poor feeble measure, of course, but it is having the same object.

Do not rest satisfied if you do not know what it is to enjoy the Father's favour in the Son, and to know the Father revealed in all the ways of Christ, that the Son of God is come into the world to reveal the Father. How much have your hearts learnt what He came down to let you know, the love of the Father and the Son?

Now He goes on to the other Comforter. The world ought to have recognised Christ, for He did among them the works that none other man did, but the world has nothing to do with the Holy Ghost. When the Holy

Ghost comes there is no personal manifestation of Him to the world. "Whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not neither knoweth Him." They ought to see His fruits in the disciples of course, but they cannot see Him. "But ye know Him for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." Christ could not abide. It was necessary that He should put Man in heaven and send the Holy Ghost down. It is now not merely the revelation of the Father and the Son, but it is the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Christ dwelt *with*, but not *in* His disciples, the Holy Ghost dwells in us.

Now I get another thing, that being sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ and perfectly clean the Holy Ghost can take up His abode in us. It was not simply that a man was born again—being born again is not righteousness before God. There is a mixture, my poor flesh is there. I may hate the evil, hate myself for it, but it does not cleanse the conscience, but when I get the work of Christ outside myself, then it is according to the value God has of the blood of Christ that I am clean in His sight. In virtue of Christ being at the right hand of God my righteousness, the Spirit of God can come and take up his abode in me. Now He abides, now we get the power in us. Our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost. What a thought! Who that thought of it could use his body for sin, who that thought of it could deck it out with vanities? We forget it or we never could, this wonderful thought that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost! If we just think of that what servants of Christ we should be in everything. We should be so careful not to grieve the Spirit. God dwelling in us as a Guest, what a thought! See the effect of that when I receive the Holy Ghost. "In that day ye shall know

that I am in the Father." He does not add here, "and the Father in Me." The world was the place where they needed to know that. When they wanted to know about the Father, then it was, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." But now it was to know that this Man—this "carpenter's son," whose visage was marred more than any man's, who was treated as a malefactor, who underwent the outrages of man—that He is in the Father, and one with the Father. It brings God to us, and us to God.

And now mark what follows "Ye in Me," "Ye shall *know* this." I do not want this simply as a truth, but do you *know*, are you living in the consciousness that you are in Christ and Christ in you? Are you living day by day in that consciousness? Is that your life? It is our whole place now; we are in Christ, and in the presence of God. It is not only that He is in the presence of God between God and us to intercede for us, but we are in Him there, and the favour that rests on Him rests on us. I am in Christ Himself before God, and, moreover, Christ is in me. Now I get the standard of walk. He is before God for me and I in Him, and I am before the world for Him and He in Me. This gives us the measure of our walk down here. If it is true that you are in Christ, Christ is in you, and now let me see Him. I look to see nothing in your walk, or ways, or manner, or anything about you that is not Christ. Do you manifest Christ in everything? In your walk, and ways, and dress and everything?

The heart sees Him now. All that made God delight in Him we are called to esteem and to apprehend by the Holy Ghost, "because I live ye shall live also." If Christ is my life, He must die before I can die. If I look

up to God, divine favour rests upon me. I am in Christ. If I want to know how to walk, Christ is in me and I am to show Him.

Then He closes this chapter in a way that is wondrously touching. I am to be concerned about His happiness. The place He has set us in is His own, as sons with the Father, the righteousness of God in Him. He is our life, and then, having put us in His own place, He leaves us His path. I ask you where your heart's time is spent? Is it spent in Christ or in tittle-tattle or what not? What springs up when we meet one another, is it Christ or what is in Christ? Or is it the tittle-tattle of the world? I am not talking of evil, I am supposing you know Him and are not going on in sin. But when the pressure of what you have to do is taken off, does Christ come forth?

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The way that Christ gives is to bring us into the enjoyment of all that He enjoys Himself. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." He leaves us His own path.

There is such a wonderful expression here of how He identifies Himself with us and expects us to identify ourselves with Him: expects our affections to be occupied with Him. I know no such expression, showing how near he has come to us, how near He has brought us to Himself, as this. "If you are thinking of yourselves," He says, "you will be sorry that I am going to leave you. If you are thinking of Me you will be glad that I am going back to my Father's house."

The Lord give us to have our eye resting on Him, on the fulness of grace in Him, so that knowing what He is going to take us into, we may know Him in us now; in Christ and Christ in me; and know His strength to go on, showing Him forth.

II.

John xiv.

IT is remarkable the pains the Lord takes to give us the sense of the way He has associated Himself with us and us with Himself; and how His heart goes out that our hearts may believe in His love, that He is interested in us and in our being with Him. In His rejection His heart would not rest and be satisfied unless He felt they had the consciousness of being associated with Himself.

The history of the Gospels is the history of His Person passing through this world, that would not have Him if He was that Person. Then He labours to persuade His own that He cares perfectly and completely for them—that He labours for them, and cannot be satisfied without having them with Himself.

When they came to Peter and said, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" as a good Jew, Peter says "Yes." Jesus says, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?" Peter says, "Of strangers." Jesus replies, "Then are the children free notwithstanding lest we should offend them . . . take and give unto them, *for Me and thee.*" We get the Lord showing Divine knowledge and Divine power, yet putting Peter along with Him. His own Person is always guarded but they were both children (Matt. xvii. 24-27).

So at John's baptism; in the first step of the remnant, the Lord takes it with them, and man's place is shewn in

the one Man, upon whom consequent upon what He was in Himself, heaven must open. It is the first time you get the whole Trinity brought out, the moment He has taken His place man amongst men.

Then man has to overcome Satan and He says, "I must go there too." (Matt iv. 1-10).

Then you get man's place shown out in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses and Elias are in the glory talking familiarly together. There again His Person is guarded—they disappear. "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." You get Him being this Divine Person whether in the lowliest place, or in the heavenly glory, but always bringing His disciples into the same.

So in John xx., Who was it that was told the highest position that can be thought of? Who was the vessel of the revelation to minister it? Not the Apostles, but Mary Magdalene. Attached to Christ's grave she cannot leave it. If she had not Him she had nothing. She gets the revelation and communicates it to the Apostles. You will find always through Scripture, that where there are those who cling to His Person, there divinely given knowledge is found. If you want to *know* keep close to Christ. It was not in order to know that John was so close to Him (John xiii.): he was there before.

Divine affections are connected with the work of the Lord, who had been thus drawing out their hearts to cling to Himself, and was now going away. They were troubled. The thing that He takes up still, is their having to part with Him. He was going to the Father. "Very well, I cannot give you up—I must make you fit to be with Me." "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet." "If I cannot be with you, you must be with Me, and I cannot have a spot in heaven." They were clean "through the word I have spoken unto you." But He cannot have them picking up dirt on the road, He must wash them. He became a Servant when He became a Man. Having loved His own which were in the world He loved them unto the end, that is out and out—right through. He will gird Himself and make them sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them even in glory. He makes Himself Minister of the blessing. His heart is not colder there than here, and this makes it doubly blessed to us. If my mother gives me a trifle I would not part with it for the world. There is not a joy we shall have in heavenly things that Christ will not give. He never ceases to be a Man nor to have Divine love in His heart.

In the first three Gospels Christ is presented to the world to be received, but this is not so with John. In chapter i. the world knew Him not—His own received Him not. Therefore you find electing grace in John. Chapter viii. is the rejection of His word; chapter ix. of His work: chapter x. "I will have my sheep in spite of all." Having been finally rejected in word and work you get Him owned in all the characters He was entitled to. Chapter xi., as Son of God in the resurrection of Lazarus: chapter xii., riding on an ass into Jerusalem as a testimony that He was Son of David. God took care that He should have that. Then Greeks come up desiring to see Him, and He says, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." But if He takes this larger, fuller place He must die. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

In chapter xiv., it is what He tells them for their comfort while He is away. First, He is coming back again. Ye believe in God as an object of faith, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come to receive you to Myself. I cannot stay with you, but I am not going to be alone up there; there are many mansions, I will come to receive you.

In consequence of that you get two quite distinct things. First the object before the disciples—what they ought to have known then: second what they could not know until later. He does not leave us ignorant of the blessedness He is going to bring us into. "I am going to the Father." They say "whither goest Thou, we do not know the way." "Why I am going to the Father, and you have seen the Father in Me!" If I am sending my child anywhere, the great point is what the person is there. So the Father was where He was going.

"Show us the Father." "You have seen the Father in Me and you have got it all." They knew where He was going because they had seen the Father in Him. They knew the way because they had found the Father through Him.

We know Christ shall see of the fruit and travail of His soul; that is an immense joy. What does He desire for the saint now? To be as like Him as possible. Then there will not be a thing in us to jar with Christ's heart. Still the essence of the blessedness is that it is the Father's house and we know Who is there. They had seen the Father revealed in Him that they might know where He was going. It shows the immense importance of the Person of the Lord Jesus. When the Christian sees Him he knows the blessedness of where He is going quite well.

Thus we get the object already before them, and if they really loved Him they would prove it by keeping His commandments.

He then goes to the second part of the christian blessedness. (verse 16). As I have got the object in the revelation of the Father and the Son, I now get the Comforter from the Father to give me this association with Christ, "at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." It is not merely the Father and the Son as in the first part, but now they learn another thing, that He who is gone to Heaven is in the Father, and that the Father has sent the Comforter to make them know that they are in Him and He in them. Thus I get the Christian's state consequent on the coming of the Holy Ghost. Thus I get sure blessedness—divinely given certainty of our place in Christ. I know that I am in Christ who is there, and I know Christ is in me here. It is not a question of hope, but the Holy Ghost is dwelling in us.

There is no thought of the world receiving the Holy Ghost. The world ought to have received Christ. The world did see Christ and ought to have known Him. The Holy Ghost is not in the world to be received as Christ was. The world cannot receive Him; it never says they cannot receive Christ. The Holy Ghost comes and is the seal of believers called out of the world to be a peculiar people. He belongs to and is known of believers only. He is not like the first Comforter. Christ was there and could not be in them. He was with them but had to go away. The Holy Ghost is in us, and stays with us. Christ was amongst them here, but not in them. He was absolutely alone in that sense—most accessible, affable, but alone. This other

Comforter stays here, abides with us and in us. It is a thing that is only known by having it; but the effect of having it is that I know I am in Christ. He gives the consciousness of being in Christ. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. On the other side we know Christ is in us. Thus we get our full complete blessedness before God on one side, and the measure of our practical responsibility down here on the other. I am accepted in the Beloved; I have got a new place—not in the flesh at all. Responsibility as a child of Adam is completely and entirely over—not as a Christian, but as a man. There is none righteous no not one. I do not want the day of judgment to tell me what I am. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is *lost*. It is not a state of probation. Man has plenty of debts and not a farthing. You come and tell me how to conduct myself, but I have nothing to live on. My standing and responsibility is that of a child of God, in Christ not in the flesh. Christ has answered for my sins not in the first man but in the second; the debts are all cleared. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. There is the blessed place I am in. The sealing of the Holy Ghost comes at the recognition of the grace of the forgiveness of sins. There we are white as snow. The Holy Ghost says "I will dwell in that man." God cannot seal an unbeliever, He seals a believer. It is a blessed place, high above angels. When once I believe that the Son of God became a Man and died for me, glory is only a natural consequence. Nothing is too good for us; all the rest is easy to believe.

The other side of that is where Christian responsibility begins. Saved, in Christ, sealed with the Holy Ghost, there is no responsibility; I could not get into a better

place in heaven. But if that is true another thing is true: if I am in Christ, Christ is in me down here, and I say, now let Him be seen. Conflict is consequent upon that. The Lord does not enter into conflict with Satan for us, till He takes His place. My place is settled in Christ and my duties are settled by Christ being in me. It is not a question of what I am doing, but of Christ being in me. I am to manifest the life of Jesus and nothing else: it requires watchfulness and diligence. I ought to walk as He walked. We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. What is the obedience of Christ? He never had a will of His own. The Father's will was the source of all He did. In Matthew iii. Satan said, "If thou be the Son of God *command*." "Nay I came to *obey* and serve—not to *command*—I have no word out of God's mouth." The obedience of Christ was having God's will as the origin and motive of all He did, not only the *rule*. "If I am a Son I do not depart from the place of a servant." That is the way Satan was perfectly silenced. There is no harm in eating when hungry. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He can do nothing without that word, and Satan can do nothing.

It is Christ who is our life dwelling in us, that life living "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If I had a direction telling me all I ought to do, it would not do. I want to know His will to test my state. If God has not a will I am to do nothing. But it needs spirituality to discern His will—"filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." When I am uncertain, there is something that hinders, and I detect it. If the eye is single the whole body is full of light. As I get then the full

blessedness of being in Christ, so I get Christ in me. That brings on the present dealing and government of God with us in this path. "If ye love me keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me . . . and I will love him and manifest myself to him." We get the positive enjoyment of the place; and that does depend upon the conduct—the place does not. "Grieve not the Spirit of God." If I grieve Him He grieves me, and the effect of the Spirit's presence in me is to make me unhappy—conscious of having grieved Him if in disobedience. Some people are afraid of commandments; I am not. If I did everything right, and it was not obedience, I should have done nothing right. Commandment brings in authority and therefore I like it. He adds "If a man love me He will keep my words." There must be obedience. He leads me in the path.

All responsibility comes from the place I am in. The relationship that exists is the ground and measure of the duty. Every responsibility in conduct flows from the place a man is in. Am I child for ever; does that take away my duty? On the contrary it makes it for ever.

Two things remain in the chapter. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." See the manner of Christ's giving. "My"—that gives it its character. It is not the way the world gives. It sometimes gives generously, but it gives away. Christ brings us into the same place with Himself. What He gives He does not give away, but with Himself. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you." He brings us into all blessedness in Himself.

There is one other thing—the most wonderful thing in the Scripture, because it shows how He looks for the heart to cling to Him. “If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father.” It is as though He said, “You will be thinking of my happiness.” What a place to put us into! What a thing to be expecting from us! Have your hearts that thought of Christ, so bringing us into enjoyment of all He has Himself, and expecting us to be interested in His happiness? Do you believe this?

What I feel is that if you get the consciousness of the blessed privilege of being in Christ before God, that cannot be true without His being in you.



III.

The Epistle to the Philippians.

IN Philippians we get the experience of the Christian, but no allusion to sin. All the out-goings of the heart—Christ. There is no “if” as to being in Christ, but plenty of “ifs” the moment we get Christ in us. Caleb and Joshua were sustained as examples of the power of faith in the wilderness; that is Philippians, God sustaining in grace where there was only weakness. The wilderness is the production of Christ’s life in the circumstances of this life. Canaan is the power of Christ introducing us into spiritual conflict with the power of Satan. Holiness is as needed for one as the other, for the words said to Moses at the bush are repeated to Joshua in the Land (*cf* Exd. iii. 5, and Josh. v. 15).

The epistle to the Philippians is a pattern of christian experience as it ought to be: the power of the Spirit of God leading in the path of God amid the manifold trials of the path—heavy trials of Christians getting on badly—all seeking their own. But faith cannot be hindered by circumstances in its link with God, nor, therefore, in thoughtful service for men, suited though it might be to the need around. The character of Christ, giving up self, is just what is needed for this.

Chapter iii., presents the energy of divine life connected with a Christ gone up as Man on high. Chapter ii., presents what forms our character down here—Christ came down. The two together give us the display of

divine life in us. In one, Paul is on the way to glory and all else is dross and dung—there is no difficulty in giving that up. I may have a very good cloak in a race, but if I want to run I throw it off. What I get in the other gives me Christ as the object, imparting the mind of Christ, giving up self. If not given up—judged and got rid of—it impedes. The grace without the energy would be human sentiment; the energy without the grace would be stoicism.

The terms of the exhortation in chapter ii. 14-16, tell us that what Christ was, we are to be. It is the power in the midst of the reign of evil. It is not the reign of good now. The failure of man was always uniform and immediate, but no failure can break the link of faith with the power of God. The darkest circumstances brighten the light; a candle is nothing in the day, it is seen for miles in the night. Dark times become *the* times for the *manifestation* of faith.

It is a great thing to have the right thing, but it is blessed and needed to have the mind of God to carry out the right. Now, if self is at work, this is hindered. See the Apostle's grace in chapter ii. 1 and 2, the mind of Christ is the perfect model of this. Does our energy take the form of a servant? It may be of faith, and with a true heart, but does it take the place of service?

The blessedness in glory is not simply blessedness, but Christ ministering to it. By abiding in Him we get His mind—self nowhere. The man that is walking in Christ is occupied with Him, and sees Christ in his brother, and all the ugliness of self in himself, so he finds it easy to esteem each better than himself. Just because of love the parent sees all the good qualities of

his child. The power of good in the midst of evil is learnt in the coming down of Christ from the glory to the cross.

Mark another character of the life—obedience (ii. 8). There is nothing so humble and unselfish as obedience, because self does not work at all. The Word forms this: we live by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. There is no truth in the world, but in the Word of God. Christian obedience is not being stopped in a will of our own, but in having no will—God in His Word guiding the new nature.

Chapter ii. 12. The contrast is between Paul's work and God's work in the Christian. No deprivation of Apostolic power will stop obedience by God's working in us—only then there is called for more earnestness and seriousness, for Paul was a mighty warrior.

Salvation is the result in glory. Salvation is never looked at as simple redemption, but as the result in glory and blessing. We are subjects of the conflict between God and Satan. What a serious position! Which would you like, Christ's place, *i.e.*, no place; or honour and position in the world?

Verses 15 and 16 describe exactly what Christ was—that is the Christian.

IV.

The Epistle to the Philippians.

CHAPTER I.

IN the Epistle to the Philippians there is not much doctrine, but Christian experience as it ought to be—in the power of the Spirit of God—as it was in fact in Paul's case. You never get the working of the flesh or the word sin in the Epistle, but the operation of the Spirit of God leading the saint to walk in the Spirit. All through it is the working of the Spirit in varied aspects of Christian life.

Chapter i. The general character of Christian life in the presence of life and death.

Chapter ii. The likeness to Christ in graciousness of walk.

Chapter iii. The energy of Christian life that carries Paul through circumstances.

Chapter iv. The entire superiority to all circumstances. Paul had a thorn in the flesh at the very time; so it was not absence of flesh, but walking in the power of the Spirit.

Verse 1. Office was local, not so gift. Order is gone and it is a mercy it is, in one sense, because else I should have to recognize the clergy and all the corruption. Man always spoils at the outset what God sets up. All will be set up in Christ, the second Man, that failed in the first, in all its various forms and shapes.

Verse 6. Personal dependence on the Lord to carry on the work.

Verses 9-11. Paul was not content merely that the Philippians should do no wrong, but that they should have spiritual discernment as to the *best* thing to do, namely to glorify Christ. The fruit of righteousness is the expression of the life of Christ, not merely the natural consequences of the life but its manifestation. The day of Christ brings Christ more personally before us than the day of the Lord.

Verse 18. You find things that are done in the spirit of evil that you can rejoice in, though you cannot go with them (*cf* Luke ix, 49).

Verse 19. Nothing is looked at as accomplished in the Epistle. All our blessings in Christ are looked at as at the end. Paul looks at the Christian as running the race, therefore it is not doctrine. I have eternal life, but it is looked at as the end. Satan seems to have got the victory as to the Apostle, but he says "this shall turn to my salvation." I have got righteousness but it is not displayed except in glory. The consequence of Israel being delivered from Egypt was that it brought them into the wilderness. There I am dependent but have the comfort of God's faithfulness. I am held in infallible safety, but have to be held—kept by the power of God, but need to be kept, and would not come to a good end if I were not. I need grace every minute, though not more safe when in heaven. For the race you find the "ifs." He will perfect, but He needs to perfect and I to be perfected—a constant action on the part of God. So Israel in Deuteronomy viii. God was not uncertain what He was about, but putting them into and through all the exercises, and when they came to the end they

found that God had been thinking of everything for them. They had not been thinking of it by the way, but it was all "to do thee good at thy latter end."

Verse 28. Satan in the darkness and opposition to the truth. We are apt to be cowed by the power of evil. Where there is boldness it is the ruin of the adversaries; they have got in collision with the power of God, not of poor man. It is a question between God and Satan. The instruments of Satan are cowed (*cf* Josh. ii. 9-24). The man four years in prison, chained to a soldier, encourages those who were not in prison. It is not when the trial is there that we suffer the most, where there is faith; but when we are expecting and looking at it: when in it we look out of it at God. If we do not lean on God the enemy can have his own way and run after us.

CHAPTER II.

Chapters ii. and iii., present the two sides of Christian life. The graciousness that makes me thoughtful of others, and the energy that enables me to run on through the world without caring for it. In one Christ is presented as coming down and you are to come down like Him, in the other Christ is gone up and I am to go up after Him.

Verse 3. This is not possible if I took at the bare hard fact, but quite possible in Christ. I see the flesh in myself and Christ in my brother. Compare 1 Corinthians i. 4-9 with the rest of the Epistle. He begins to blame them for everything, but he sees all the good first, and rests in the good, and then blames them, without vexation, in love. It is a great test of nearness to Christ. It needs to live with Him and learn oneself

there. The flesh mixes itself up with so much of our judgment of evil, and we get vexed with it. Self jostles against another man's self. Now if I think of what Christ thinks of that person all this is put down. Near Christ there is lowliness of heart and we see our own wretchedness and good-for-nothingness. "Things of others" are things which God has given.

Verses 6-9. The last Adam is presented in contrast with the first. Adam set up by robbery to be as God. He who was in the form of God humbled Himself down to death below the creature. Adam exalted himself and is abased. Christ humbled Himself and is exalted. Satan's temptation was, "If thou be the Son of God *command*." "No," he says, "I will not keep out of the place of service, I came to *obey*." He left the glory as to state not as to nature.

Verse 12, 13. "Your own salvation" is often quoted as if it was in contrast with God's, but it is in contrast with Paul. Paul worked *for* you, God works *in* you. The path of obedience is that in which salvation is wrought. God works in them the willing and the doing.

Verses 14-16. The effect is the life of Christ completely expressed. Every member of the sentence is just what Christ was in the world.

Verse 17. Paul looks at himself as the libation. They were the main thing, he only poured out on them—his death the accompaniment of the sacrifice. (*cf.* for the sacrifice Rom. xv. 16). The great thing was that Christ should have His people; if Paul suffered for it, it was all right.

There is no hardness in the Christian or in Christ. When it is the service of God and faithfulness we must not regard father or mother. The Lord sent His mother

away whenever she came to Him in His service. It is not the destruction of natural affection, but superiority of Christ—God coming in or else it is idolatry. If I get honey when I am fighting the Philistines it lightens the eyes. I get refreshment by the way, but I cannot put honey in the sacrifice. The moment it becomes an object it is not allowed.

Verse 29. "Receive him . . . in the Lord." It brings in Christ, into the kindly relationships. You do not get this in the Old Testament—divine life brought into the circumstances of human life.

CHAPTER III.

What is called holiness is generally righteousness. For acceptance righteousness is wanted, not holiness. Righteousness looks at meeting every claim of the relationships in which we are. Holiness is the activity of the nature in its own delights, or the abhorrence of evil. There is the new nature in us, but no nature can exist without an object. Our own righteousness and law go together, the righteousness of God and faith. The two parts of righteousness are, first Christ died to clear away my sins (Rom. iii.-v.); second, that in which God has His glory (Rom. viii). The position is never fully brought out until the first man is cleared away; then I find myself in the Second before God. In Corinthians the aspect of righteousness is higher than in Romans because more connected with the counsels of God. What Paul looks for, as an object, is what forms him now. If we were risen what would trouble be? He is looking for a condition in which he will have done with the whole thing. Instead of suffering being a terror to him, it was only making him more like Christ. You could not kill

a dead man (2 Cor. i. 9). He would be nearer being raised from the dead when he was dead than when alive. Christ's resurrection had set aside the power of death. Verse 10 presents power along the road; verse 11, future resurrection. The power is not the object. It is present attainment by future resurrection—a thing already accomplished in Christ. It is resurrection *from among* the dead: there is no attainment at all in the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection from among the dead is the resurrection of those in whom God has the same delight as He has in Christ—it is the expression of it. That they without us should not be made perfect proves that the Old Testament saints are included in it (Heb. xi. 40).

Two things Paul was running after, to be with Christ, and to be like Christ.

There are three classes in the chapter. First the perfect Christian who is not stopping short of being raised like Christ in glory. Second, real Christians but in the imperfect state of not having got hold of this. They rest in the work of Christ, they love Him, but have not got the power of the calling on high. Third, those who bear the name of Christ but are not His at all.

CHAPTER IV.

The last chapter presents superiority to circumstances and the Lord proved sufficient.

Verse 6. The request might be foolish. The answer is not promised, but the peace that God is in to keep our hearts. Nothing disturbs the throne of God. Thus free my heart can be occupied with what suits God--the bright and blessed things of His own presence.

V.

Philippians II.

WE get here how the Lord humbled Himself, and associated us with Himself according to the counsels of God.

The Deity of the Lord Jesus is the basis of everything for our souls. Without it God could not be known to us. Who could leave His place but a Divine Person? I say that because I desire this evening to speak of His humanity, that brings Him specially near to our souls, and enables Him to associate us with Himself. It is His human place I speak of. It inspires our hearts with confidence. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*"—that is the reality of humanity. "Though he were a son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. v. 8). He understands it all as having gone through it. He never gives up the place in which He has associated us with Himself. He has set Himself apart in the glory that all that is divine may be presented to us in a Man—in Christ—and thus win the affections. He never gives it up nor will give it up.

There are several other passages to which I desire to refer, to show the reality of His having become a Man. But first I refer to verses 12 and 13, because they present a difficulty to some. "Work out your own salvation" is often taken as contrasting our work with God's. It is a simple blunder. They had lost the Apostle, now they must do for themselves. If they had lost Paul, had they

lost God? No: that is just what they had not. It is our part in contrast with Paul's, not in contrast with God. The effect is to produce in Christians exactly the character of Christ. Verses 14 to 16 are word for word a description of what Christ was in this world. We are set to be practically what Christ was in it.

Now I turn to speak of the humiliation. Just by meditating on what He is we become like Him. The great starting point of all this wonderful truth is Proverbs viii., where Christ is spoken of as the wisdom and power of God before the world was. Before ever the world existed it was man, not angels, that was His delight and the object of the testimony of His grace in redemption. The delight—predilection of God (speaking reverently)—was in man.

All that God is morally has been brought out in redemption—holiness, majesty, love. "It became God . . . to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." Now that was first expressed in incarnation. The redemption work was necessary to bring us into the enjoyment of it. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Perfect love was there in the presence of perfect evil—that which is not in heaven. There is no evil to bring out patience there. We can therefore follow Him step by step and learn God: thus only angels can see Him. There is spiritual power by grace to contemplate and feed upon it. God prepares the body for Him, and He says, in free love, "Lo I come to do Thy will O God."

Now I turn to Luke ii. It is sweet to see the perfect unjealous glorifying of God in these angelic and holy beings. All Christian doctrines are facts, so that the

simplest can understand better than the wisest because he does not reason about it. "Glory to God in the highest, peace upon earth, good pleasure in man." Heaven itself is celebrating this wonderful thing that is proved by Christ becoming a Man. If you go to an inn it is a kind of epitome of the world: they look at you, scan you, and assign you your place. There was no place for Christ. He began in the manger and finished on the Cross, and had nowhere to lay His head all the way along. The moment He takes that place, man can deal with God so to speak, and refuse Him any place. In the end of the chapter the Lord was in perfect submission—Son of God—but entirely subject. He does nothing at all until called out—what a lesson for us (verse 51).

In Matthew iii. we see Him take this public place. He was that "Holy thing" born of the virgin Mary, called the Son of God. God was changing everything, bringing God and man face to face. It was not a law to see how man could stand before Him at a future day of judgment, but God come to man as he is. God comes as a present thing in the heart and conscience. God and man are thus face to face whenever a soul is converted. Just as I am God meets me—perfect light showing me what I am—and then all perfectly settled. And it is perfect grace.

It is no question of the law here—they were condemned already. The kingdom was going to be set up, and the people go to be baptized of John in Jordan confessing their sins. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him." He needed no repentance. I trust I need not say that here, yet He does go there doing His Father's will. "Suffer it to be so now,

for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He enters by the door taking His place among those in whose hearts God's Spirit and Word had wrought. At the first step He says, I must go with them. Then man is put into his proper place. I am speaking of Christ now. Redemption was needed to put us into it. The way it was shown that His delight was with the sons of men, was by His Son going there. The Lord came thus among these godly ones, and heaven is opened. Four times we find heaven opened. Here He comes among these poor things, who, when God came claiming good, had only the confession of none. The Father owns Him as Son, and the Holy Ghost seals and anoints Him. It is a wonderful passage bringing out the whole Trinity. The Son is there. The Holy Ghost descends upon Him in the form of a dove. The Father's voice is heard; and all brought out in connection with the Son become a Man, taking man's place according to the thoughts of God's delight. Redemption was needed to put us into it. By it He can say, I have brought you into my own place.

I get the sweet and blessed truth there of His coming there as Man, taking man's place according to God. What is the next step? We have first His place, ours with the Father and God. Is there no other place? In the world I mean? Yes: with the devil. Perfect obedience has brought Him where sin brought us (Matt. iv. 1). We have to do with Satan, Christ makes our place: as to all the difficulties of our path, He puts Himself into them and passes through them "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He meets Satan as we have to meet him, only Satan is overcome now. The first two temptations are the wiles of

Satan, the third is open iniquity. Let me say a few words on the details. There is no harm in taking food when hungry: but Satan comes to tempt Him to command. He says I came to obey. That is the obedience we are sanctified to. Did He have His own will and God stop Him in it? Never! Here when everything depended on it—when He was in all the sorrows of the wilderness—for the Son of God a single word was sufficient, and for the devil too. The power and authority of the Word of God was shewn when everything depended upon it. There is another thing, confidence in *order* to obey. That was where Eve failed. “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Tempting is distrusting Him; people say it is when you are trusting Him too much! There is entire confidence to enable me to do His will. The last thing was the world (verse 3). The devil shews Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Alas, a little thing often turns off our hearts. He makes our place with the Father, and gives us next the power of our path with Satan, and in the world, serving us as love delights to serve (selfishness wants to be served). You might say that is all over now that He is in glory. John xiii. shews us the contrary. He had been with them in gracious love and condescension, He is going back, as the unsullied One, to the Father getting all things into His hands, but do not think He has given up serving you. With all His glory in sight, just going out to the Father He says, “I cannot stay down here with you in the world, I will not give you up, but I must make you fit to have a part with Me where I am going. You are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you, but you will be picking up dirt by the way; that will not do for heaven.” When it comes to communion I cannot

have an idle thought in my heart that does not hinder it. He washes our feet. That is His present service for us in glory. It was not because Peter repented that Christ interceded, but because Christ interceded that Peter repented. There is no excuse for defiled feet. There is not one of us that does not fail here, and the type of the Red Heifer figures it. Your failure gave Christ the Cross. That is what makes sin so horrid. There was only one place where He was alone when He had become a Man—the Cross.



VI.

Philippians III.

This epistle gives us two practical characteristics of Christian life in which we find the true practical power of the life—the principle on which it passes through the world according to the mind of God. The Epistle is not doctrinal but, in it, we get the Christian path—Christian experience in the power of the Spirit of God. There is not a word about sin in it from beginning to end: but it sets out the Christian path in a person walking in the power of the Spirit.

The first characteristic is lowliness as in chapter ii: the second, the energy that leads a soul on, with Christ in glory as its object. This is the whole power. The basis of the whole thing is, that Christ is in the glory as man. It is a wondrous truth, that man—that is, the Lord Jesus Christ—is gone into heaven on the accomplishment of that work on the ground of which man could go in, hence as our Forerunner; and that the place that man has thus got in Christ is what the Holy Ghost always sets before our minds as our object.

All the great truths of God are found centred in the cross. Seeing a man in heaven sets man aside on the earth. We have got to pass through the world till Christ comes, and the question is how we walk down here till then. Of some the Apostle tells us weeping. We are looking for Christ to change our vile bodies. Till then we are not in the full result. That is what is set before our minds; but Christ is presented as already

set down at the right hand of God, the distinct testimony of our accomplished salvation, and the blessing into which it brings.

Our calling is heavenly. Nothing is more important than our distinct apprehension that our calling is to be with Christ and like Christ where He is now. There is a full definite revelation of it all now. It is not merely that we are cleared of sin, but that God has a purpose about us which forms the object of the running here. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." The Cross was the turning point between that which tested man's responsibility down here and God's purpose concerning us. Before the world was, God had this purpose about believers, to have us there like His Son (Prov. viii.). God, according to this purpose, would have us in this glory with His Son—the personal dignity of the Lord being always kept safe. You never find the saints said to be brought into this glory, without the guarding of His perfect excellency. The heart delights in preserving it.

Let me refer to one or two instances. In Matthew iii. Christ took His part with the remnant—going with His people in their first right step. Never till then was the heaven opened. At this moment the heaven was opened unto Him, and the Spirit of God came down, and the voice of the Father declared, This Man is My beloved Son. Now heaven was just as much open to Stephen: but mark the difference. When the heaven is opened over Christ, does He look up and see an object that changes Him into the same image? Not at all; heaven looks down upon Him. But this is just what Stephen

does. Thus His person is kept safe, while Stephen gets as like Christ as the creature can.

So on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elias appear in just the same glory as Christ; but the moment Peter would put them all together on the same level, they go away. He remains—the voice again declaring, “This is my beloved Son, hear him.”

But to return to these thoughts of God about us, in Matthew iii. Having put man into his proper place there is for the first time the revelation of the Trinity. There, where the fact of God's Son taking His place as Man sets man into his proper place before God, all three Persons are revealed in connection with it. The more we enter into the thoughts God had about us, the more we see what poor worms we are. How could we ever have thought of being brought into this same glory as the fruit of His redemption? It shows how it is all grace, “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.”

He brings these things before our souls now that our affections may be formed by them in living association with Him where He is. We want to walk through this world with our affections flowing from our connection, as new men, with the second Man, that is Heir of all, in heaven. He connects us with the Man that is there—Christ in heaven—the only accepted Man according to the counsels of God—by the Holy Ghost. God did not begin with the Man of His counsels; He gave promise of it in Eden, and it becomes clearer and clearer afterwards. He began with the responsible Adam. All that probationary system is closed, in the setting aside of the old things altogether in the Cross. It closed the

connection between God and the flesh, in spite of all that man—infidel and religious—can do to make something of it. That makes all the difference in our position. Now I have a fallen man—each of us adding our own sins to the heap—and a glorified Man. Am I walking on the principle of the fallen man, or the heavenly Man? I cannot do both. To walk as the heavenly Man is full blessed liberty of soul. The Cross made Christ say, "Now is the judgment of this world," but Christ then said, "Now is the prince of this world cast out." God did that work on the Cross; while men slew Him, it was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." It was the triumph of Divine love, that through Christ's work the counsels of God might be accomplished that put us into the same glory as Christ. The counsels were never brought out while that probationary system was going on, because the foundation for them was not laid. But the counsel "is now made manifest" (2 Tim. i. 10: Tit. i. 3). Hence we read, in 1 Corinthians ii. 7, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery . . . ordained before the world unto our glory," but it did not come out. Again "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." People stop there, saying it is so wonderful and blessed we cannot know it. It is just the opposite, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit . . . that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." Then we have three steps as to the revelation of these things. First revelation: second, the inspired communication of them: third the spiritual reception; and this founded on a perfectly complete work. A Man has entered into the glory as our Fore-runner, that He might be the firstborn among many

brethren. There is a difference between having our debts paid, and having all this glory before us. We might have our debts cleared and be without a farthing, but God gives us besides an inheritance of glory.

In John xiii. Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him, if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself." He does not wait for the royal manifested glory. The Holy Ghost comes down and puts us into connection with Christ in the glory of God, and the things that are around Him. That is the Christian position.

What becomes then of man's righteousness, if you are made the righteousness of God in Christ? The Cross puts an end to it altogether. It was just the attempt to maintain the legal righteousness that led Paul once to persecute the saints, and afterwards became his whole toil and burthen to oppose. The continual effort is to build up the first man again—in bold infidelity—but even in the Christian too. Whatever there is of it is a hindrance to the enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Cross has judged it all, broken down the whole thing, "He takes away the first that He may establish the second." We get it here, "We are the circumcision which . . . rejoice in Christ Jesus and *have no confidence in the flesh.*"

What is confidence in the flesh? A very easy but a very foolish thing. It is the religion of the flesh. In verses 5 and 6 you get all that man was under the law. Who established it? God. Why then speak of it in this way? Because under that system they had crucified His Son. "If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin . . . now have they both seen and hated both Me and

My Father." The Jews had promises and Christ was the fulfiller of them: He had come and they would not have Him, and the Jews were shut up in unbelief that they might come in under pure mercy just as the Gentiles.

Religion of the flesh is still man's confidence, because we do not know that we have no power, and we try to make out righteousness for God, instead of seeing God has made it out for us in a new way in a Man in glory. The Cross was the end of the trial of religion with man, to see if there was any good in him. But people say, "Ought I not to walk in this way?" You ought to have done it, but you are guilty under that system.

Here we have the religiousness of the flesh (not sin) which he calls concision—a name of utter contempt. That was the grosser thing, that was first set aside. But now he comes to "all things" and counts them loss for Christ. "That which was gain to *me*," that was the secret of it. If he was learned, who had the credit of it? Righteous—to whose credit was this? Paul's; but he says, I will not have "*me*." There is a totally new thing that God has set up—a Man in the glory of God as my righteousness, and the Spirit of God makes Him the object of my affections. "I am crucified with Christ . . . and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people." What my heart wants is to have the Christ that has done it, in glory. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." He says, "There is God's intention

about me, now, in the settled certainty of that, I want Him in the glory as my object." Here he is speaking of what carries the heart on. The object of a man is what characterises him: if money, then he is covetous; if pleasure, then he is a man of pleasure; if power, then he is ambitious: he who follows after Christ is a Christian. Christ is the power and principle of his life here. Paul was walking down here but he had no other object in the world than to win Christ. Christ had laid hold of him to have him in the glory, and he wants to lay hold of that. What governs the Christian in his path is the Cross written on all down here, and Christ up there as the object.

"Not having mine own righteousness which is of the law." He does not say "Not having his sins," but his righteousness. Christ has obtained the glory. The law would have been his righteousness down here; but doing what I ought to do would never give a title to be in the same glory as the Son of God. Why should it? But he will not have his own righteousness, "but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (verse 10). It is not that we are to seek suffering, but the cross was before him and he says "I will only be more like Christ; I have a life in Christ that is beyond death." As he says in 2 Corinthians v. "We are always confident, knowing, that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." His place is all a settled thing: if killed he will only be with Christ. But he has not got it: it is his object.

He sets aside all that man is. The flesh, take it in all its best shew and colours, is all legal righteousness—fleshly righteousness. All is set aside.

Another thing has come in—not making the first man righteous, but—substituting the second Man for him.

His first object was to get Christ Himself; afterwards his own part in the blessing. Christ takes up the active open enemy against God. Not content to stop at home, like the chief priests, Paul goes to strange cities persecuting the saints, and then God stops him in sovereign grace, with a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, If it is a question of labouring for Christ, there will be different results; but if of glory, it is true of all saints as of Paul, predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. If you believe in Him, He has obtained it for you.

Then he looks at that glory. If it costs him his life, that is what he wants—"having a desire to depart and to be with Christ." There is no uncertainty. Cost what it will going through this hostile world—if it cost him his life—he says, "Well I will be more like Christ," and he will have the conformity of His sufferings.

He was a man of one thought, one object, one purpose—"This one thing I do." All gain to him is loss, "I have suffered the loss of all things," but "I do count them but dung." Not "I did count," but "I do count." It had not lost its present power. Do we count everything but loss for Christ? In Matthew xxv. there is time left between the cry "Behold the Bridegroom" and the coming, to test the heart to see if Christ is everything. If we look around how often people talk of losing first love. It is that Christ has lost His first power over the heart. The world comes in in such a

subtle way—and the things of it—and deadens the heart. The consequence is we begin at last to judge after the atmosphere we are living in. When Christ fills the heart the temptations are not there. It is the power of this new Object.

I turn now to what is connected with that, what Paul calls the perfect Christian. The thing set out before us is to be like Christ in glory. We are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, according to the eternal counsels of God. We are not that yet. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." That supposes that the heart has understood this—not merely that my sins are put away, forgiven, but my place in Christ. Romans v. and viii. give the contrast; "if any man be in Christ" is the new place I have got into. Not my sins blotted out—that is the first thing—but, "he is a new creation," belonging to this new world. This is what the Apostle earnestly insists on. I am not a debtor to the flesh—there speaking of its sinfulness. The point of that is "crucified *with* Christ," not Christ crucified for my sins merely, but I am a dead man. He takes this truth of our being crucified to put our hearts, and consequently our lives, where we are not in body yet—in complete association with the Man that is in heaven. The old man has been condemned. If I know my place then I put off the old man and put on the new. Where do I get the measure of it? "Which *after* God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Besides sins put away the cross of Christ has separated us from our existence in the flesh, sin, the world, and law; and risen with Christ, I have my place in life, and heart, and spirit, along with Christ, who has redeemed me to Himself in glory. "Our conversation is in heaven."

I add another thing; the same Spirit that dwells in Christ, dwells in us. People talk of being united by faith, Scripture never does. We get the Spirit and then we know that we are in Him and He in us. The soul gets hold of this by grace, and my part, my portion, and my place is with the Son of God, the second Man and not the first. The Cross closed the whole system of righteousness by law. I died and now belong, as having Christ as my life, to the place where He is; and the Spirit is given that I may know it. "Our conversation is in heaven." What am I waiting for? For Christ to come and put me there, every day seeking to be more like Him here.

You find a Christian first converted knows his sins forgiven. But if you want to be a Christian as God contemplates it, you are in the world but not of it as He is not, you are in Christ. That is the reason why God puts us constantly through trials and difficulties, that God may make all this real to our souls. "Always bearing about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body."

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ : . . . who mind earthly things." The Cross has put entire contempt upon them. If I look for the glory of God, where do I find divine dealing with sin, infinite divine love? In the Cross. That is what has put an end on God's part to everything connected with man—pretension to righteousness, recoverableness, everything, save the body left to be the vessel of the manifestation of the life of Christ.

"Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." We are

left here like the man with the legion of devils, sent to his friends that they might know what great things the Lord had done for him. We look for the Lord Jesus Christ *as Saviour*, to do the one thing that remains to be done, to change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Then all will be complete. He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied then.

Christ has come and given Himself for us that He might purify us to Himself. The Cross was the test of infinite love. And what we have to look for is that love of Christ to come and take us to Himself. If a Christian understands that he is done with the old man, he has learn to grow up to the stature of Christ. There is no other full growth of the Christian but that. As to mind and faith he gets into the full grown state. The thing is to be attained in glory, we cannot say we have attained, but can we say "This one thing I do." If a man has only seen forgiveness yesterday he has got to walk according to the same rule. To be forgiven and know it, is blessed of course; but can you say you are doing one thing?

People talk a deal about perfection, but they have lost the sense that perfection is to be as Christ in glory.

Can you say that your citizenship is in heaven, your righteousness in Christ, the associations of your heart with Christ, everything there? Infidelity is stalking abroad, ritualism is in high places. Can you say I have no confidence in the flesh? Divine righteousness is in heaven, but the Cross has written death upon all below upon earth, and all association with it. We find our imperfection every day, but is the ruling object of our souls Christ? Are you looking for Christ? You cannot

say when He will come. It is carefully not revealed, to keep you watching. But whenever the Lord speaks of it, He never puts it beyond the life of the people that were then living. He never presents another thing to their thoughts. In the parable of the virgins, those that awoke at the midnight cry were the same that fell asleep while He tarried. He wakes them up and then He comes, but stays sufficient time to test hearts as to how far He is everything. If He were to come to-night, would your hearts be saying, Oh that is what I am looking for? Do you love His appearing? Would it be the joy of your heart to say, "Oh there He is, and I am to spend eternity in the glory with Him"? You cannot expect joy unless you are looking for the Lord to come. The Cross put an end to all fleshly religion, and earthly things, and Christ becomes the bright blessed Object: while the love of Christ lays hold of, sustains, and comforts the heart, and gives us the consciousness that nothing can separate us from it.



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