

# **The Glories of Christ as Son.**

ALSO,

## **Readings on the Epistle to the Galatians.**

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LONDON :  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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# THE GREATNESS OF THE SON.

(HEBREWS I.)

THE gospel of Matthew and the epistle to the Hebrews were written to help Christians who had been Jews. In both of these books THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF THE PERSON OF THE SON is specially presented. Then on account of *His* greatness His *work* is great; the system He forms is great, and indeed all that is connected with His glorious Person must necessarily be great. It is *who* and *what* He is that gave value to His death, which is the foundation on which everything for God is built. The majesty of the Person gave character to the sacrifice upon which the glory of God rests for time and eternity, and is the basis on which the vast scheme of blessing is laid.

The object of the epistle to the Hebrews is that the people of God may have their hands filled (like the priests in Lev. viii.) with their appreciation of Christ. No one can be in God's presence without having

something to *offer*, and he must have that which *can* be presented, and be acceptable to God.

The Person of the Son is brought before us, and through the work of the Spirit we are brought to *appreciate* His preciousness and His work. The measure of this appreciation is the measure of that which we have to offer to God. We can only offer to God that which has been wrought in our souls by the Holy Spirit: therefore our poverty is often exposed by the meagreness of our offering when we draw near to God in our priestly character!

The epistle to the Hebrews commences with the greatness of His Person as Son. Chapter i. gives five most beautiful, distinct, and instructive settings of His glory. We have thus a five-fold clear presentation of the divine glory of the One whom we have been brought to know and to love, that are most helpful to our souls to trace and meditate upon!

God has now spoken in the Person of the Son. He, in the past, spoke through prophets, who were only men privileged to express the will of God, but now God has spoken "in Son." He, the Son, the Speaker, is God. A prophet was chosen to be God's mouthpiece, but now God has spoken, not

as Father, but as Son. The One in whom God speaks is God—THE SON, become man. What marvellous grace! What an astounding fact! One who is, in His own Person, "God over all," yet a real Man in whom God has spoken to men. God has spoken as Son.

In Old Testament times God spoke in different ways, and partly made known His mind, and gradually unfolded His thoughts. He did not make known the whole of His mind, but communicated it in part through many servants. Now the whole mind of God is revealed. A divine Person having become man could not express less than *the whole* will of God. If God has spoken as Son, no one can speak after Him. Elijah was an honoured servant, and John, the Baptist the greatest ever born of a woman, but now the Son has come, and no one can add to that which has been expressed by and in Him. The mind of God has been completely declared, and henceforth it could only be the unfolding and developing of that which shone perfectly in Him.

The first setting in this marvellous exhibition of glory presents His Person *apart* in thought from the condition which He entered into by becoming man. It is His *divine* glory that is presented—the glory of a divine

Person, His Godhead glory, which must ever be His own!

We have thus a most marvellous presentation of His glory, which we may liken to a chain of six links. The Son is established "heir of all things." In eternal purpose this was decreed, and now He is placed over all (Heb. ii.), and soon all things will be *manifestly* under His sway. He will inherit the whole universe of God, not as an inferior, or as one who *receives* a portion through descent; for it is all His own! The purpose of God was that the Son, who became a man, should inherit everything.

He is the Creator of the worlds, therefore He will inherit all things. He formed all, and therefore He inherits the works of His own hands. It is all His own by creative right, and *through redemption* He will possess His own inheritance according to eternal purpose.

The material creation was formed—the heavens and the earth—in view of the accomplishment of God's purpose. The creation thus serves as a platform for the display of the ways of God, His power, His wisdom, His love; yea, the manifestation of *Himself* in Christ: and soon the vast system which will be formed to satisfy His heart

will be *displayed*; therefore creation is ascribed to Him as God, the Son, and the Word!

The Son being the One who will complete the whole scheme of purpose was necessarily the Creator of that on which He would place a universe, characterised by the knowledge of the Father revealed in the Son.

Christ as "the Word" is the revelation of the mind of God concerning man. "The Word," as the thought or mind of God, is eternal, for it is God Himself (Heb. iv. 12, 13), and Christ incarnate was the expression of it to man.

This globe on which we dwell the Word created in view of the thoughts of God regarding man, and His purpose will eventually be fully effectuated to His own glory! Hence we can see the spiritual reason *why* creation is ascribed to the Son, and to Him as "the Word," for He was to be the One to reveal the Father, and to set forth in His own Person as man all that God is, and the whole thought of God in regard to man!

So God has spoken *as Son*, and God has appointed the Son "heir of all things," and by the Son the worlds were made.

What a privilege is ours to contemplate His glory! How sad would it be that any one should seek to tarnish it! The holy

scriptures specially and consistently guard the glory of the Person of the *Son* because He was the One divine Person who became man to effect the purpose of God. He *veiled* His glory by coming in the likeness of men, and hence the special need of the marvellous unfolding of His glory in the holy scriptures. The Son—the One who will inherit all things, the Creator of the worlds, is “the brightness of God’s glory”—the effulgence, the shining forth in harmony of all the traits of God’s nature and being. God, as God, in His own essential being dwells in light inaccessible, but He has been revealed, “declared,” in the Son. (John i. 18.) It is our privilege to know Him thus revealed, to know Him as fully as it is possible for the Infinite to be known by those who are finite.

Only One who was God could reveal God, hence we read, “Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the expression of his substance.” He is the express image of, He exactly displays in His own Person, all that God is in His own essential being. Therefore when He became man He was the Son of God, because He set forth in His own Person all that God is. By Him becoming man God fully shone forth in the Person of the Son, in this scene of darkness.

We have another glory mentioned in this



marvellous unfolding. He who is thus "the effulgence of his glory," &c., "*upholds* all things by the word of his power." We see the *power* of the utterance of the Son. The *maintenance* of what He created depends upon Him. This exercise of divine power is by Him who planned in perfect wisdom, and then created by His word, the worlds that are now dependent upon Him!

There is still another glory in this connection. When He had "by himself made the purification [or purgation] of sins, *set himself down* on the right hand of the greatness on high." Mark, this is not the place *given* to Him as man, but that which is His own! It is His as a divine Person, hence He set Himself down in highest glory. He *took* the seat which was His own; it belonged to Him because of who He is; but *before* He took it He acquired a glory—He achieved the purgation of sins! This He did after He became man. Still, only a divine Person could do it. All men had sinned, and no mere man could purify the world from these sins. The glory of wiping sins out of the universe belongs to Him. He has done it, and the glory must ever be His. He has, by going into death, accomplished eternally the perfect and complete purifying of sins from the universe of God by the sacrifice of

Himself. This divine fact has now been accomplished, and the public result will be *manifested* at His appearing, but the glory of having achieved it will ever be His. Having obtained this glory, "He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high." He had finished this great work Himself, and then He took the place which was His by right. He could set Himself down. What dignity! What moral greatness is expressed in this act! He entered the condition of manhood, and through this obtained the renown—the glory, of having by sacrifice made purgation of sins, and then He occupied the seat which belonged to Him because of who He is.

Thus these varied glories are linked together. He is the heir of all things, and the One who made the worlds. Then in His Person He is the effulgence of God's glory, the expression of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power; having accomplished the purification of sins, set Himself down at the right hand of the greatness on high.

We have now another chain of glories. In setting Himself down He takes a place "much better than angels, for he inherits a more excellent name than they." He, as man, inherits according to eternal purpose a glory far beyond angels. We are not now

speaking of the distinctive glory of His Person as Son, apart in thought, from manhood, but of that into which He has entered by becoming man, for as man He must have a unique place, which is not only higher than angels but which is in marked contrast to the highest beings in the universe. There are three links in this chain of glory which are connected with the Son in the condition of manhood. Angels are called "sons of God" (Job xxxviii. 7), but God never addressed an angel as "My son." No angel ever was, or could be, addressed as "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." This position was unique. It is *His* alone. He inherited it because of WHO and *what* He is, and on account of His glorious position in the purpose of God.

He, as man, has a place that no one else could share. He alone could say, "I will declare the decree: the Lord has said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." When here in manhood He was ever in the full consciousness of the glorious relationship which was His. He said, when about twelve years of age, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke ii. 49). Satan knew He was the Son of God, and therefore suggested that He should "*command* this stone that it

be made bread." (Luke iv. 3.) As Son He had the right to "command," but having entered manhood He was the dependent man and would not use His power without a word from His God. Then, at the close of His sojourn here, He could say, "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." What a stupendous fact! A real Man in the perfect enjoyment of the Father's love, and in the full consciousness of the relationship expressed in the words, "My Son"!

Then, on the other hand, what a victory for God to have One on earth in this relationship in all the *perfection of manhood*! What a triumph, after all the ruin Satan had brought in, to have *such* a Man whom He could call "My Son"! He, indeed, had been born of a woman by the power of the Holy Ghost, but in Him there was every moral and spiritual trait that the heart of God desired. There was divine, heavenly perfection in that lowly Man Jesus, and God's eye could rest with perfect pleasure and satisfaction on Him.

He was ever the eternal Son in the bosom of the Father, but the relationship of Son in *time* into which He entered by becoming man He will ever retain. His bodily *condition* is now altered, for He is now glorified

—a glorified Man in heaven—but the *relationship* is not changed. Hence Hebrews i. speaks of Him when He has *taken* a place at the right hand of the majesty on high, according to purpose, and the Spirit applies the verse from Psalm ii. to Him when seated there. Then there is also added, “I will be to him for Father, and he shall be to me for Son.”

These words were spoken to David of Solomon, but, in the mind of the Spirit, it was of Christ. Thus this first setting of glory presents the glory of His Person, apart in thought from the bodily condition He entered into; but in the second we have His unique position when He had become man. What food for meditation! How these thoughts are calculated to draw forth the homage of our hearts. How could we refrain from worshipping Him? We are bound to prostrate our souls before Him as the glory of His Person fills the vision of our souls. Then what could hinder us rejoicing as we think of this incomparable position He has in manhood, as expressed in these three clauses: “Thou art my Son,” “I will be to him for Father,” “He shall be to me for Son.” How marvellous God’s triumph is seen in having Man in such nearness of relationship, and in this exalted

position. From this alone can we learn what "sonship" is for those who form the church. We have now a third presentation of His glory: "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him"!

The bringing of the first-begotten into the world is primarily future, not exclusively the past. When? At any time. If He appears, He must be worshipped. The One who is the "first"—the highest One—must be *an object* for worship. When He is brought into the world, through becoming man, lest any should overlook the glory of His Person, it says, "Worship him, all ye gods" (Psa. xcvi. 7), namely, those who represent God in His universe, are called to worship this One! He has a more excellent name than the most exalted angel, according to eternal purpose. He is the One "who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5), and therefore, though He has *become* man, yet He is an object for worship to the highest beings in the universe of God. They may be called to prostrate themselves before Him, but those who are redeemed, and brought into association with Him, *with great delight* bow before Him in adoration. They express the worship of their innermost being in intelligent praise to Him!

We have now a fourth aspect of His glory. He says, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Angels assume any form that God wills in order to carry out His service. They were *made*, but the Son was One who made all things. He is addressed by God thus: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom"!

The One who has become man is thus addressed as God. He has therefore, as God, an eternal throne, an unchangeable one. He is also the true King, the One of whom Solomon was a type, and a sceptre of righteousness characterises His kingdom. The latter throne He will *give up* when the last enemy has been destroyed.

The Son veiled His glory and was rejected, and therefore throughout "the world to come" He will be specially exalted. Then, all having been brought into subjection, He will give up the position of being the One prominent Ruler, and God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—will be all in all! He will never cease to be Man, nor give up His place as Head, but the position in rule He will no longer retain. The kingdom will have served its purpose, and all the redeemed will ever find their joy in God, and

will live in the full, unclouded enjoyment of what God is in His own nature. Thus the moral elements of the kingdom will remain, though God will be all in all !

Surely we can only say, as we look upon the wonderful ways of God, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For *of* him, and *through* him, and *to* him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever" ! (Rom. xi. 33-36.)

What a privilege for us to contemplate His glory who has an unchangeable throne ; and we can rejoice that He is, as He must ever be, pre-eminent everywhere !

When here, He "loved righteousness and hated iniquity," and now He has been "anointed with the oil of gladness above his companions" ! Through sovereign mercy others are associated with Him, but He must ever surpass all others in love, joy and everything else !

We have now a fifth glory presented : He is the One who has passed through untold sorrows—yea, was pre-eminent—in this too ! He has experienced isolation and loneliness in the midst of enemies. His "strength was weakened in the way" ; and He was "cut off in the midst of his days," yet He



was the One who "hast founded the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thy hands." He was the Maker of all, and all will serve His purpose.

Thus the One who was "cut off" in the midst of His days is greeted as the Maker of the earth and the heavens. They will perish, but He is "the same"—the One who ever remains !

There could not be either decay or change in Him. Years rolling by never affect His Person. He is the One who "inhabiteth eternity." (Isa. lvii. 15.)

The works of His hands will serve His purpose, and then He will "fold them up," as a person does with the garments he has finished using. Let us note how the dignity, the majesty, the glory of His Person shines in all this !

First He is the Creator of all things inhabiting eternity ; then, when the vast creation—of which only a small portion comes within the compass of *our* ken—has served its purpose, He will fold it up. (Psa. cii. 25-27 ; Isa. li. 6.) The material universe serves for a platform upon which the will of God is accomplished ; then, when His marvellous *handiwork has accomplished its end*, He will fold it up, and He changes it as a man changes his garments.

The earth and the heavens perish, but He continues still. They grow old like a covering which we use, and then He will "roll them up," and "they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (Heb. i. 12; Psa. cii. 25-27.)

This immense creation was formed by His word (Psa. xxxiii. 9; lxxv. 6; John i. 3; Eph. iii. 9), and when the moment arrives He will change its whole condition. It is only as a vesture in His hands, which accomplishes His purpose, and then He will change it, and it will be changed according to the will of the unchangeable One! (Rev. xxi. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 10-13.)

In the meantime the Son who became man is thus addressed: "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool."

He still sits there (out of natural sight) and angels serve those who are, through divine mercy, connected with Him. (Heb. i. 14.)

We have thus the divine glory of His Person as Son brought before us in these five different connections for our adoring contemplation. The glory of His Person as SON (vers. 2, 3), the unique place which is His when become man (ver. 5). Then He is the object of worship for the most exalted beings in the universe of God. Then, again,

the Son *is* GOD (John i. 1 ; Phil. ii. 6), and is so addressed. (Ver. 8.) Then, lastly, He is the CREATOR (John i. 3 ; Col. i. 14-17), and when what He has created shall have served His purpose He will change it, but He Himself is ever the same.

May we, through contemplating His glory, be brought to know Himself better, and thus our heart's affections, be more absorbed by Him. May His beauty, His moral excellences and glories, so fill the visions of our souls that we may bow before Him in adoring gratitude and praise, not only for picking us up but in associating us with Himself—now in the day of His rejection, and by-and-by with Him in His glory. May we be so under the power of the grace of His Person that we may be pleasing *to* Him, and be more distinctly *for* Him in this—the scene of His humiliation, sorrows, and rejection—till He comes. Amen.



# THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST AS MAN.

(PSA. XVI.)

THE *five* (5) books of the Psalms (divided as follows : first, i.-xli. ; second, xlii.-lxxii. ; third, lxxiii.-lxxxix. ; fourth, xc.-cvi. ; fifth, cvii.-cl.) form a very important part of the holy scriptures, and if read prayerfully, they have a very stimulating and healthy effect on those who fear God. The *order* in which the psalms are placed is of great importance, for though each one is perfect and complete in itself, yet to understand its proper bearing we must see its *connection* with those that precede and those that follow.

The psalms bring before us, in an orderly manner, the characteristics of the work of God in the souls of His people.

There is no other book in the Bible that so fully gives the distinct marks of the work of God in souls. God gradually leads His people onward, and the spiritual traits are seen in each as he grows in the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ.

The special privileges which belong to *the church* are not found in the psalms, but there are great divine principles that characterise

the faithful in every period. The light, liberty and relationship *now* revealed in Christ is not there unfolded, for it is a people with an earthly hope that are generally contemplated. Still, the special features of the work of God in the soul are clearly and richly presented.

In the first book (Psa. i.—xli.) the Person of Christ—prophetically, and the purpose of God, are more prominently brought before us than in the other books. It looks at the godly remnant of the Jews in relationship with Jehovah, with the privileges attached to going to His temple. It gives their position and experiences in the last days under the wilful king before he declares himself as the Antichrist. This, in principle, was their position when Christ was on earth; hence He Himself is more personally presented in the first book, *e.g.*, in Psalms xvi., xxii., xl., &c.

The other evening we were looking at “the greatness of the Son.” “The Son” is His name as God—“unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” (Heb. i. 8.) We were then contemplating His divine glories, and this psalm (xvi.) presents the same Person, but as Man. It is the Man Christ Jesus! The One we would have known if we had been on earth

during the time of His sojourn here. But we must ever remember that He is "God over all," yet a real man. These two thoughts we cannot take in at the same moment; we being only finite, have to think of Him as God, and then as Man. The scriptures thus present Him to us, for Hebrews i. presents His divine glory, and chapter ii. the reality of His manhood. We read, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." We also read, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared," or "because of his piety." (Heb. v. 7.) How plainly these scriptures shew that the One who is "God over all, blessed for evermore," entered into the real condition of manhood, and that He is now the glorified Man on high.

Psalm xvi. presents Him as Man, the dependent Man on earth. It is well, however, to notice that when our Lord is thus spoken of in scripture there are always passages alongside which shew His Godhead glory, and thus the truth of His Person is carefully guarded.

We will first look at the connection of this

with the preceding psalms. In Psalm xiv., "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any who did understand, and seek God." The solemn verdict was, "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

In Psalm xv., seeing there are none on earth of whom God can approve, the important question is raised, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The Lord had chosen His holy hill, and He had a tabernacle, but it was not His purpose for the tabernacle to be empty, for the hill must be inhabited. The Lord's purpose was to surround Himself with men, but where were they to come from, when not so much as one man on earth would do? Psalm xv. gives *the character* required, but where are the persons? This question is now answered, for in Psalm xvi. we have the Man—the One in whom God delighted. (Matt. xii. 18.) God, as it were, says, Here is the One! He alone is the Man, the only kind of man, who could fully answer to the thought of God.

Thus in Psalm xiv. there is not one man who will suit God. In Psalm xv. the question is raised, Who will be on God's chosen hill? In Psalm xvi. we have *the* Man, the

only one who answers to the mind of God! It presents Christ personally as Man. No other could be compared with Him. He is unique, and His greatness is seen by connecting this psalm with those that follow.

Psalm xvii. presents Christ identified with His people. His "goodness" was *towards* them (Psa. xvi. 3), and now it is *upon* them. He links Himself with them—putting words in their lips, for He only could say, "Hear the right." No mere man could use these words but this unique One only, whose judgment was absolutely according to God. (Isa. xlix. 4.) In this psalm it is those saints who have a heavenly hope. They have *not* "their portion in this life" (ver. 14); they look forward to "behold his face in righteousness," and to be satisfied when in His likeness. They derive their character from Christ, for He is great enough to impart moral traits to all heavenly saints, both in this present period and to all who *will* be in God's universe.

In Psalm xviii. Christ identifies Himself also with those of His saints who have an earthly hope. The Lord is here viewed as king over Israel; and then He is made "head of the heathen," and a people He, as Man, had not known serve Him.

Thus we have Christ personally in Psalm



xvi., then He identifies Himself with, and gives character and spiritual beauty to, His own who have a *heavenly* hope (Psa. xvii.), and also to His own who have an earthly prospect. (Psa. xviii.)

How this brings before our souls the greatness of the Man Christ Jesus! There will be millions of saints blessed in heaven and also on earth, but *He* will give character to each individual of the many families (Eph. iii. 15) thus blessed!

God has given the earth to the children of men, and therefore they must possess it. When this is brought to pass the whole universe of God will display the *greatness* of the Man Christ Jesus, who was once despised but is now glorified, and who will give character to the whole "universe of God."

When in humiliation He could say, "Learn from me" (Matt. xi. 29), but in that day all His people will have been formed by Him, so that what *He* is morally will be displayed in *them*. Thus Christ will shine characteristically and universally under the eye of God, to His praise and satisfaction.

We will now briefly look at this beautiful Psalm (xvi.), which views our Lord as Man. There are three leading features in it; these are the marks of *a perfect Man*.

The first is, absolute confidence in God,

for He says, "Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust."

Adam, though surrounded with mercies that should have spoken to him of the goodness of his Creator, had *not* this confidence in God. God Himself had prepared that garden, and everything that a wise and beneficent Creator could devise and supply was placed in it. Adam, though thus blessed and provided for, turned to an inferior creature, over which he had been placed as head, and to which he had but recently given the name "serpent." It was the most subtle thing in creation, and Adam had given it a suitable name. Satan uses this creature, and Adam listens to one whom he should have known was an *enemy* of his Lord, for he suggested that he would gain by disobeying the One whose goodness was manifested everywhere around him. He listens and trusts this one who thus assails him because he lacked perfect confidence in the One who had displayed such thoughtfulness and kindness towards him.

In this perfect Man of Psalm xvi. there was supreme confidence in His God. He had not entered into an earthly paradise, as was Eden, but into a sinful world, where everything was in disorder. In Eden everything spoke of the goodness of God, but the scene

into which Christ entered had all been marred. The true character of His God had been misrepresented; yet there was, in this blessed Man, such confidence in God that He would not use His inherent power to change His circumstances without a word from God. He may be in a wilderness, tempted of Satan, without food for forty days, yet He will not put forth His power to turn stones into bread. He was the Son of God, and as such had the right to "command," but He would not move without a word from God. He was *a perfect Man*, who knew the heart of God, and therefore what God ordered was the very best. *Perfect confidence produced perfect obedience and dependence*, and therefore the perfection of Manhood was seen in Him!

How much *we* lack through not really knowing God Himself. How often our paths are crooked and we endeavour to change our circumstances through lack of confidence in HIM who is perfect in wisdom, love and power.

Here is One who though "uncheered by earthly smiles" throughout His whole pathway (though He *could* have commanded) walked entirely and perfectly, placing *His whole trust* in His God. There was no self-confidence, no self-seeking, but a perfect life

of fullest confidence in God, though His path was one of sorrow, suffering and rejection.

This heavenly Stranger had *taken* a place of subjection. He said to Jehovah, "Thou art my Lord." Jehovah was the One to control Him. He was not influenced by any person or anything around Him. He thought not of consequences, results, or what would affect Him personally, but simply and entirely of God and His will. He *came* to *do* "the will of God," and in every detail of life He did it perfectly. He absolutely never moved without a word from God (Isa. l. 4), and everything He did was entirely according to God.

What a victory for God to have *such* a Man upon earth! "The first man" had fallen before Satan and under the power of sin, but this Man was impregnable against sin and Satan, and *His* delight was "to do the will of him" who had sent Him. In the innermost part of His being there was perfect subjection and delight in the will of God. It was not merely an obedience rendered, like a man bowing to his superior, but the obedience of One who never desired anything but that which the will of God directed. All His desires, tastes, yea, every spring of His moral being was absolutely according to God.

This blessed, unique, and perfect Man says to Jehovah, "My *goodness* extendeth not to thee." "Goodness" is a quality in *God alone*. (Luke xviii. 19; Psa. xvi. 3.) The Lord replied to the ruler who came to Him, but who only regarded Him as a good man—a teacher in whom he had some confidence, "Why callest thou me *good*? none is good, save one, that is, God."

God is absolutely good, and "doeth good," but man, as such, is fallen. The springs of his moral being are all corrupted.

The Lord Jesus being a divine Person brought into manhood moral traits and characteristics which could not have been produced by mere creature power.

Here was One who is God, yet a real Man. He did not become a man in order to *obtain* a place with Jehovah, for He *was* Jehovah. His "goodness" was not toward Jehovah, but toward the saints. He came to put the moral and spiritual traits that characterised Him *as Man* upon the saints of Jehovah. Thus the saints in the heavens and those on earth are to take character from Him, so that all may be to the delight of the heart of God.

He had come to redeem and to save, and to present the saints before God in His own beauty, according to eternal purpose.

It is no wonder that the heavens opened, and that the Father's voice was heard, declaring, "This is my beloved Son, in whom is all my delight." (Luke iii. 22.) Then the Son of God looks at the saints and says of them, "In whom is all *my* delight." His delight was all centred in the saints of Jehovah, *because* they were *His*. There was nothing in them, naturally, which attracted the Lord to them, but on account of God's workmanship seen in them, and because they were Jehovah's, they were the "excellent on the earth," and all His delight was in *them*. The Father found His delight in the Son, and the Son found His delight in the saints, because of who they belonged to, and He would present them to the Father, shining in His own spiritual beauty.

From the New Testament we know that it was not the clever, the intellectual, or the religious leaders of that day who went out to be baptised of John. (Matt. xxi. 32.) God in His sovereignty always has a *few* amongst the rich of this world (1 Cor. i. 26, 27), and there were some in that day, but generally speaking it was the publicans, tax-gatherers, sinners, and the despised who received the testimony of God, while the Pharisees and scribes rejected it. (Matt. xxi. 31, 32.)

Are there any in this room who in

position and wealth are above others? If so, remember that the Lord looked on those despised but repentant ones, who were the saints of Jehovah, and said, "In whom is all my delight." His affections were set on those who responded to Jehovah's call, and His delight was in them.

This psalm presents Christ personally, but in proportion as He lives in us the same traits (in measure) will be seen. (Gal. ii. 20) If we are in subjection to the Lord, our affections and our delights will be in the saints too, because they belong to Him.

The Lord would not recognise *any* departure from God. For God not to have *His* place in our hearts is in principle to allow a false God. If God does not possess our affections, then Satan will use some one or something else to usurp *His* place in our hearts; and this is idolatry. We are, in ourselves, weakness itself, but there is priestly grace to maintain us in living touch with God Himself, and with His heavenly, perfect and eternal system to which we now belong. This priestly grace is not for those who draw back, but for those who go forward with God.

The second leading feature of this psalm is perfect satisfaction. He desired nothing but the portion given to Him by His God.

This psalm presents the Man Christ Jesus during the three and a half years of His active ministry. It commences with His identification with the saints, which took place at His baptism—"it become *us* to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15), and it *closes* with Him reaching the right hand of God by the pathway of life. What a suffering three and a half years was His! How He felt the unbelief and sin of man! Their wilful rejection of Him and His death was ever before Him, and even His disciples were dull and "faithless"; yet this perfect Man could nevertheless say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." He desired nothing outside the portion given Him. He did not ask for one thing to be altered. If there was perfect and absolute confidence in God, there was also perfect satisfaction, and not even a desire for one thing to be changed.

The Lord was the true Levite. Jehovah was His portion, His inheritance, His cup, and He maintained His lot. (Psa. xvi. 5.) He found His *all* in God. He said, "All my springs are in thee." (Psa. lxxxvii. 7.) How often we find our hearts elsewhere, and are thus cheated out of our true portion and what is "really life." (1 Tim. vi. 19, New Trans.) How often, through indulgence



in even *lawful* things, we miss the enjoyment of "our own things." (Luke xvi. 12.) May we henceforth each know more of what the perfect One knew 'as He passed along among men.

The Lord was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts, and at every step He met that which oppressed His heart and mind, yet He could speak of "pleasant places" and of a "goodly heritage."

How little one knows what real Christianity is! How little we have drunk in of the Spirit of Christ. How often we are anxious to change our circumstances. There was nothing of this in this perfect, heavenly Stranger.

Paul followed closely in His steps, for he could say, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. iv. 11.)

Let us ever remember that real blessing lies in subjection to the Lord, and *thus* we can fill the little niche where He places us. To change our circumstances is most dangerous, and may result in present and eternal loss. Do we find them irksome and unpleasant? To run away may be to miss the greatest blessing. Perhaps it is the very school needed to teach some deep and important spiritual lesson which could be learnt in no

other way. The things we do not like are those used in discipline to help us heavenward.

King Hezekiah had complained, but afterwards he said, "He hath spoken, and himself hath done it." (Isa. xxxviii. 15-18.) When he fully realised that the Lord had brought him low for his spiritual gain he broke forth, exclaiming, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." The things we naturally like often bring death and barrenness to us spiritually; while those disliked often produce exercises, and so, through them, we live—Godward.

The One who loves us perfectly knows best where to place us; what to permit and order or restrain; and our wisdom is in happy subjection to His will, to accept all from His hand, and thus reap the gain He has decreed. The Lord Himself in one of His most trying moments said, "Even so, Father: for it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. xi. 26.) How one longs for such a spirit!

The Lord was a true traveller. We often wander, and so get defiled by what is morally set forth by "bones," "graves," and by going into tents where there is death. (Num. xix. 13-16.) The Lord received counsel from Jehovah. His inward thoughts also in-

structed Him "in the night seasons." He was no "open vessel," and could not be contaminated by the evil around.

He "set Jehovah always before him." He was conscious that Jehovah was "at his right hand," and therefore He said, "I shall not be moved." There was purpose of heart with Him. His face was *set* in the right direction, for He "set the Lord always before him." How good to have God before one, and therefore at the "right hand."

We, too, are called to walk with God, and it is *our* privilege to be ever conscious that He is at our right hand. There is no failure on His side, and if we do His will, He is always at hand. (Phil. iv. 5.) The apostle could say, "Nevertheless the Lord stood by me," and it was indeed a trying moment when Paul experienced this.

We now come to the last three verses, where the third leading mark is found, namely, "fulness of joy." This could for Him be found only in the presence of God! To reach this He would pass through death. Death is the judgment of God on account of sin (Gen. ii. 17), and therefore it was a dreadful thing in the sight of the Lord. It was a great mercy for God to end the condition man brought in through sin; but death in itself is an awful thing; it snaps all

natural ties, breaks all links with this scene, and through it man has to pass into eternity. It is, we repeat, a very great mercy, but nevertheless it is the solemn judgment of God because of sin.

Our Lord being the embodiment of all perfection, He felt all that God would have a man to feel regarding death. (John xi. 33.) He was holy, a man of a different kind from Adam—One who had Jehovah at His right hand, and who could say; "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope"!

The blessed One who walked in perfect confidence in Jehovah has unshaken confidence in view of death, which He must pass through to reach the "right hand," if He would inaugurate the path of life for us. His heart—the seat of affection—was "glad" and (what distinguished Him from all others) "rejoiced." His flesh—that which was connected with His condition as *man*—"rested in hope" in view of resurrection. His soul would not be left in, or to, Sheol—the place of departed spirits. Hell (or Sheol) here, in this psalm, is not the place of torment, but simply the *unseen*.

In Old Testament times if a person died he went into the unseen—the great beyond. Now that Christ has *passed through death*

a saint of God who dies goes into the unseen, but it is to "be *with* Christ"! (Phil. i. 23.)

Our Lord's soul would not, could not, be held by the unseen world, neither could the Holy One "see corruption"! This latter clause, of course, is connected with His body. But because of what He *was*—the "Holy One," if He went into death He *must* come out, for resurrection was inherent in Him. (John xi. 25; ii. 19.) A perfect, heavenly, holy Man could not be held by it. Death had no *claim upon* Him, or germ *in* Him!

If a sinner, in his sins, goes into death, it is to be raised for judgment (John v. 29); but for the "Holy One" to go there must be to break its power and triumph over it!

His humanity was holy (Luke i. 35), but the thought here appears to be that His soul would not be left to Hades, nor the Holy One to see corruption, because of what He *was*, morally and spiritually, as Man. He was an entirely new kind of Man, whose person was impregnable against evil, a heavenly Man wholly according to God in the deep inner recesses of His moral being, and therefore could not be holden by death.

Wicked men may "appoint" to bury His body along with the bodies of the two crimi-

nals crucified with Him (Matt. xxvii. 38), but God would not allow this insult. "Joseph of Arimathæa" (Luke xxiii. 50, 51) comes forward and reverently lays it in his own new tomb excavated in rock, for He was to be "with the rich in his death." (Isa. liii. 9.) The adversaries may seal the "great stone" rolled at the mouth of the opening, and to make it more sure "set a watch," but it only demonstrated more clearly the reality that there was *one* Man that *could not* be holden by death! How blessed and wonderful are the ways and triumphs of God! He, again we repeat, *because* of what He was morally and spiritually, would be shewn "the path of life." Resurrection replaces man upon the earth, but "the path of life" leads to where "there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore." He inaugurates that path. *He* must tread it *first* if others were to follow; and now, through mercy and grace, they can follow. (Psa. xvi. 11.)

What a Person for our hearts to feast upon! Even His enemies had to say, "Never man spake like this man"! He was the unique One, the incomparable, excellent One, who was perfection exemplified in faithfulness and grace—the One who in the grace of His Person is unchangeable, and whose company *we* are privileged to enjoy!

If we were in company with Him we should be formed in moral likeness to Him, and others would observe the great transforming effect. (Acts iv. 13.)

*We* are now where *He* has been rejected, but the Holy Spirit is here that we may get the gain of all that has been expressed in Him, and that now shines in His adorable Person on the Father's throne—the earth-rejected, but the heaven-accepted, glorified One! Surely with delight we bow reverently and adoringly before Him, saying, “Thou art worthy.”

May the Lord, in His great mercy, grant that our faces may be set in the right direction, that we may walk more *with* Him, so that we may take character more *from* Him (for we are bound to be coloured by the object engrossing our hearts and minds), and that we may in our daily lives express increasingly the grace of His Person where He is still rejected, for His name's sake. Amen.

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# THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

(SCRIPTURES READ : ROM. IV. 23-25.; VIII. 10 ; JOHN XVI. 12-14 ; REV. XXII. 20, 21.)

THE scriptures very plainly shew the characteristics of this present world. One mark is lawlessness ; another, misery ; and thirdly, there is no escape from this dreadful condition.

There is no hope for this present world. It has refused God manifested in love and grace, and it must fall under the judgment of God. The individuals who form this present world have no power even to take a path Godward, and therefore this world, until it is set aside in judgment, will remain lawless, filled with unhappiness, and without any real prospect before it.

God's people stand in marked contrast to those of this world. They, as seen in holy scripture, are characterised by righteousness and happiness, and have an unclouded prospect before them. It is sad to have to own that many, perhaps even most, who belong to the Lord are not thus distinguished. The reason is clear, namely, they are not in the enjoyment of that which God, in His grace, has given to them. It is therefore well to



raise the question in our own minds, *Why* is it that the real enjoyment of divine things is so little known? When in the presence of God we find the answer; may we, through grace, individually be led by the Spirit, so that our path may be one of spiritual prosperity.

The present hour is one of ruin, and we cannot change persons, or things, generally, but we should each be exercised as to our own conduct. The apostle says to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16.)

It will, I think, be helpful to look at these thoughts in connection with the scriptures we have read this evening.

We all once belonged to this world. We had therefore to be won from lawlessness, and brought into subjection to the Lord. This was accomplished by the presentation of THE ONE MAN. I do not mean that necessarily this name was mentioned, but that Person was preached. The result was that God wrought in our souls, and to some extent we came under His influence. This involves the truth of the One Man, though He may have been spoken of as the Saviour, Jesus, Lord, or some other name. (Acts xiii.

38, 39.) Still, the first presentation of Christ that is made effectual in our souls is connected with Him as *the One Man*, though it is through walking in subjection to Him as Lord that we are prepared to understand intelligently the great thought bound up in the expression "the One Man"!

Very often young Christians are very bright and happy, not on account of their intelligence, but because they have been attracted to a PERSON—the One Man. They have been caught by the grace of His Person, and are, for a time, saved from much that is contrary to God; but, alas! how often this brightness wanes, and departure is manifest. Now, if this joy, which flows from being brought to know the Lord Jesus, is to continue—and it certainly should not only go on but increase day by day—there is but one road which has to be travelled. To progress spiritually we *must* walk in *subjection to the Lord*; and, apart from this, there is *no* going forward *according to God*. Hence the truth of *the Lordship of Christ* is of the greatest importance, and a subject we do well to remind one another of continually.

Romans iv. 24 speaks of believing on God who "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." "He is LORD of *all*," but there are

some on earth who have confessed Him *as* LORD. They recognise and delight to own Him in this position or character; and while they take His counsel, and are subject to Him, they advance in "the true knowledge of God." (Col. i. 10, New Trans.)

He is, we repeat, "*Lord of* all," but He is Lord *to* those who have called upon Him. They know Him thus, they love to own Him and they bow down to Him, and can say, He is "*our* Lord"!

We are not now speaking of the Lord Jesus as the Lord or Master to whom all belong by creation-right, and now by purchase. (2 Pet. ii. 1; Matt. xiii. 44.) Neither are we speaking of Him as Jehovah, though this thought is found in many places in the New Testament. John the Baptist came to prepare the way before Jehovah. We glory in Him as Jehovah (1 Cor. i. 31), and we can boldly say, "The Lord [Jehovah] is my helper." (Heb. xiii. 6.) We are now speaking of Christ as Lord according to Peter's testimony, "That God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ." (Acts ii. 36.) This is a position given to Him in connection with the vast system of blessing which God is forming, and which is present *now* in the power of the Spirit, and seen by faith.

We must not have the idea that *Lord* is merely cold authority. It is a wonderful thing to be under the Lordship of Christ, to be subjected to the One who is the great Administrator of all the blessing God has for man. He is the true Joseph; all the wealth and power of God is in His hand. It is *all* administered by Him and no one can have any blessing from God, save through Him! The title Lord carries the thought of authority with it, but it is to control us, that we may have the present gain and enjoyment of that which the heart of God has prepared for man. Hence, if we are to make spiritual progress, if our joy is to be maintained, if we are to be here for God, then we must be kept under the control of the *Lord*.

The Lord leads us by a definite way (Exo. xiii. 17, 18), and this spiritual pathway is indicated in the first eleven verses of Romans v. They unfold His administration, and if we are controlled by Him He will conduct us along the road of soul-prosperity; He will guide us gradually towards the full light of the day, and as we travel onwards our joy will deepen, and heavenly things will shine more brightly before the gaze of our souls.

We, by faith, know how God regards us.

We see Christ risen, and *from Him* we learn how God looks upon us. He, who died, has been raised for our justification, and thus in a living Person we see God's mind concerning us. Then we have "peace towards God;" we stand in God's favour in all that God is for man, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. These things are entered into by faith and enjoyed now through the Spirit.

The Lord *administers* these blessings, for it is "peace with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ." We believe on God "who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," and we come under the protection, control, and nourishment which the Lord gives. (Gen. i. 21.) And, though the Lord continually leads onward, yet we never leave behind the first things we enjoyed, but have increased appreciation and enlarged enjoyment of them as we are kept under the Lord's sway.

If a person entered the kingdom of Great Britain from a country where there were inferior conditions he would learn and increasingly enjoy the advantages, but he would not lose those he first appreciated because of being brought into greater ones. Thus is it in God's things; on the gift side the blessings are all our own, but on the experimental side there is enlargement and

continually increasing appreciation of that which is given of God, if divine progress is made. At first we generally make much of what is *given*, but as we move forward we make more and more of the *Giver*.

The one who is thus brought to stand in grace, where man had fallen, now finds the current of this world is adverse to him. He cannot any longer go with it, and so he experiences tribulation. The apostle gloried in this, for it is the road of spiritual prosperity. The Lord turns all to profit, and great gain accrues to the soul through that which nature dislikes. There is a great deal of chaff with us all which has to be winnowed out, for the Lord *will* have the pure grain. The trials are used to get rid of the chaff and develop endurance, to give an experimental knowledge of God, and to bring us to confide only in God. Thus the Lord uses what appears adverse to produce exercise, that there may be spiritual gain.

So although things may appear adverse to those who are in subjection to the Lord they never get ashamed. The Lord directs their hearts into the love of God, and therefore they look at it all in the light of infinite love. The circumstances are unchanged perhaps, but they know the One who controls all. They know that the same love that led Him

to give His Son for them permits and orders the most minute detail of the pathway. They first saw that all their offences were removed by the death of Christ, but *now* they learn from the Lord through the Spirit how that same death commends the love of God to them, and they can bask in the sunshine and warmth of it.

Thus the Lord leads on, until the soul finds its joy in God Himself. The one so led is thus brought to the One who is the very embodiment of all moral perfection, and he "glories in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation." The saints are privileged, through the Lord's guidance in the power of the Spirit, to reach now the great end of His administration. The Lord will soon establish His kingdom publicly in eternity, and then in order to reach God's end purpose "God" will be "all in all."

If preserved under the Lord's control we shall be able not only to sing the words, but we shall know in the experience of our own souls that "Eternity's begun."

Therefore, if we are under the Lord's guidance, we shall be saved from lawlessness and we shall walk in righteousness. We shall be saved, too, from unhappiness, and know something of being "filled with joy and

peace in believing." Then, thirdly, we shall be saved from discouragement and disappointment, through being encouraged in the Lord, and glorying in God Himself—the source of all blessing.

Jesus has been "made Lord" to control and administer what God, in His love, has for man—to those who confess Him. Now it must be clear to all that we need *power* to do His will. The Lord directs, and the Spirit is the power, that His will may be accomplished in liberty and freedom. The man "in the flesh" can *not* do the will of God. The power is lacking. We learn that we are powerless, then we know God as a Deliverer "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then, in dependence on the Lord, we find that we have power in the Spirit to do all that He directs.

The Lord has not formed tastes and desires in His people and left them in the power (or weakness) of the flesh, for then they would never have been able to do what they desire—to please Him. They would have been always unhappy, and would always be doing what they hate. God has, in His great goodness, set His people up here in the Spirit. They have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, and are not, therefore, captives to the flesh, nor to the one who knows how



to entice them to act in the flesh for his will. The Spirit of Christ is in them, and therefore Christ is in them. Then on account of King Sin, who reigns in the world, and is a master over man, the body is to be held as dead. The body is not for the service of sin, but for the Lord, and the Spirit is life—a new vitality and a power for movement according to God, so that all obligations can be fulfilled in liberty. The Spirit forms motives and desires according to God, and He is the power of life, so that they can be accomplished. Thus in the scriptures we find a people under the Lordship of Christ, the Lord having become the One Man to them; and they have the Spirit as life, so that they can live and thrive under the influence of the One Man in subjection to the Lord.

The Spirit is very sensitive. He is here to maintain the interests of Christ and to glorify the Lord. If I do not walk in self-judgment He will not support me, for He cannot help me along on the wrong road. He will only enable ~~me~~ me to do the will of the Lord. If I walk ~~in~~ the Spirit I shall be in subjection to the ~~the~~ Lord, and if I am in subjection to the ~~Lord~~ Lord I shall be walking in the Spirit, for these two thoughts are co-extensive.

When people begin to drift they often tell others how happy they are, but this shews that they feel it *needful* to make it known. If I *am* happy through enjoying the Lord I speak of *Him*, and the fact is apparent without my telling any one of it. In the path of subjection there will be difficulties encountered, through going against the current, but these all help onward really. We may miss the path, like Jonah, and find everything apparently arranged and just suitable, but recovery for Jonah was only through his being thrown into the sea and the experience passed through in the belly of the great fish.

Paul warned the sailors, but "the south wind blew softly" and they supposed they had gained their object. How disastrous were the results! Let us beware of the nice south winds that entice us to disregard apostolic injunctions; the north wind may be unpleasant to nature, but it is safer, for it casts us more on God.

It is indeed a wonderful fact that all the power of the Lord is on our side. It is *present*, to enable us by the Spirit to move rightly according to God under the Lord's guidance. We are thus set up here independent of man and of the flesh, but in absolute dependence on the Lord.

The Spirit is not only the power of life.

He has come for a distinct service. He is the power within so that we should not do the things which are natural to us as fallen creatures. Still, His great service—though we may know little of it—is to glorify Christ and to lead us “into all truth.” He is our capacity for its enjoyment, and is here distinctly to guide us into the “whole truth.”

If we are in subjection to the Lord in the power of the Spirit, there is continual advance in the knowledge of God, and an increased apprehension of the vast circle of revealed truth. We are thus always discovering more the greatness of that order of things of which Christ is the Centre, and we are more and more conscious of how little we really know through their immensity being more before the view of our souls!

It is a most abnormal thing for a Christian not to *grow*. In the Spirit he has a good constitution, and under the influence of the One Man there is a healthy atmosphere. Then in subjection to the Lord he will find good food, and the result will be continual progress in the knowledge of God and of the truth.

There are many dangers, it is true. How easy to move with the flesh! How easy to grieve the Spirit through carelessness and

levity, or by reading light or worldly literature! If we walk with God there will be *sobriety*, but if anything contrary to God is *allowed knowingly*, we cannot have the support of the Spirit until there is *self-judgment*. Hence how important for us to be exercised as to being maintained under the Lord's authority, in the sphere of the Spirit's movements here.

If thus kept, we shall be *waiting* the coming of our Lord! We shall be *looking for Him*. The more we enjoy heavenly things, the more we advance in the knowledge of Him, the more we shall be *watching* for the great consummation of all—His *return*!

Is this so with *us*? Are we truly awaiting His return? If the grace of His Person has indeed ravished our hearts, and if we taste the blessedness of His presence, then we *must* long, and more earnestly look, for our Lord from heaven, that we may fully and perfectly enjoy His presence free from all hindrances!

"Surely I come quickly" comes as a great cheer at the present moment. Thrice the Lord has said, "Behold, I come quickly." Will He delay when once the church is completed? No one who loves and knows Him well thinks so. Has *His* love waxed

cold because of *our* unfaithfulness? Nay, the moment the work of grace is finished He will call us hence. He *will* "come quickly." His LOVE will not allow Him to delay! He has loved us enough to die for us, and to serve us while up on high. His love cannot be exhausted, and it will lead Him to catch His own away (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17) the first moment it is possible for Him to do it. Wherefore, beloved brethren, let us encourage one another with this hope.

Are our hearts really responsive? *Do* we say in very truth, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? Would we like Him to have the joy of having His own with Himself? Is it our real desire—apart from what the gain to ourselves would be—that *He* may have *the object of His love* in His presence *for His own satisfaction*? Are we labouring, each in his own little measure, to have His household according to His will at His coming?

What joy that moment will bring to Him! He will see the church shining in His own beauty! He will behold it fashioned by His own handiwork, and responsive to His own love, but *His* joy will be the greatest, for He loves us with a love that surpasses all others!

May we, through grace, know more of subjection to the Lord, living in the Spirit,

under His sway, and be more responsive to His love, saying—from our hearts—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus"!

May our gaze be kept heavenward, daily expecting Him; and in the meantime, in quietness and confidence, seeking to do His will!

May these—His last words, be written on our hearts by the Spirit, and at that moment of all moments (now so near at hand), may we each be found responsive to His perfect love, with expectant hearts, ready to be ushered into the joy of His presence!

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.



## SEPARATION, A DIVINE PRINCIPLE; WITH ITS COMPENSATIONS.

(LEV. XIX. 1, 2, 19; 2 COR. VI. 11-18, VII. 1.)

THE question has been asked two or three times during our meetings (and we often hear it): "Why is it that we do not make more progress in divine things?" This, surely, is a subject of great importance, and must interest all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. One thing is clear to start with, namely—a certain road has to be travelled, and there can be no going forward in God's things unless that way is taken.

The same principle is seen in things of this life. If a young man desires to attain a certain position, he must take the course that leads to that end, and avoid what would hinder him from reaching it. He may waste his time, allow himself to be hampered, and thus miss what he professed to desire. Now, God has a distinct road for His people to travel, and it is impossible to make progress in the holy things of God on any other line. The scriptures we have read clearly define the course, and though we may *appear*

to move forward spiritually without travelling in that direction, yet eventually it will be demonstrated that there is no real progress on any other line than that indicated.

Separation from this world, and from all that is not of God, is the only road on which there can be real soul-prosperity. This "narrow" way has to be taken at the commencement of our course, and we must *ever* move forward on the same line if we are to advance spiritually.

We have in 2 Corinthians vi. 11, vii. 1, three thoughts. (1) God's present victory; (2) the separate path, with its compensations; and (3) what we will call the Christian's dress. The same principles are taught in Leviticus xix. and xx. Israel had been redeemed out of Egypt, separated from the nations, and these chapters describe the holy character, or spiritual dress they were to wear. The Lord their God was holy, and therefore *they* were to be holy.

God has taken *us* up, in His great mercy, given us the Holy Spirit, and made us partakers of the divine nature. The divine nature, which is love, is characterised by holiness. Thus, as we grow spiritually, *we* are characterised by traits of *holy* love. And this I venture to call a holy *dress*. This dress for Israel is described in those two



chapters in Leviticus, and they shew how *distinct* God's people should be from the world; and one prominent feature which distinguishes them is holiness.

God always seeks to impress upon His people the importance of being *separate* from that which surrounds them. To touch what is not of God is defiling, and thus there is failure in responding suitably to the grace of God.

Israel was not allowed the mingling of different species. (Lev. xix. 19.) Thus God would keep before them, by material things, the *separation* suitable for those who had His holy name placed upon them. They were not to marry among the nations around, or to associate themselves with them, for they were Jehovah's chosen nation. To link themselves with those from whom Jehovah had separated them was to forget His goodness in "calling" them, and to sin against Jehovah. They were to be *a separate people*, distinct in conduct; a light to those around, and a shelter to the oppressed, and to all who came to them.

Further, they were not to sow a field with different kinds of seeds. They had been called for Jehovah's pleasure, and therefore, like a clean, beautiful field of grain, should only exhibit the effect of the blessing of

God. The pure word of God which had come to them should go out from them free from adulteration. (1 Cor. xiv. 36.)

What important principles these are for *us* in these last days of unfaithfulness and departure! Surely each one of us now present should be greatly exercised that the manifestations of the Word are not polluted by us. How important that the leaven of the human mind, and the effort to commend the spiritual by the natural, should alike be refused. If our lives and work are to stand the test of "that day," *death*, and what it signifies morally, must be applied to every particle of the man whom God has ended in judgment. We may retain him (that is, the man under judgment) with the best of intentions; but when trained for fourteen years in the house—as was Ishmael (Gen. xxi.)—his true character will manifest itself; therefore he must be "cast out." (Gal. iv. 30.)

Then, again, a garment of linen and woollen must not be worn. The linen was manufactured and speaks of righteousness, but the wool was the natural product of the sheep. The mere natural characteristics and activities of man are not acceptable to God, and they must be judged unsparingly by us if we are to please God. He has given us the Spirit of life as a power for

movement, in order that there may be righteousness consistent with the revelation He has made of Himself (Rom. viii. 10), and nothing short of this will He recognise.

The divine idea in linen may easily be seen if we remember that the priest wore *linen* garments when he went in to make atonement (Lev. xvi. 4); and "the bride," when she appears with Christ, will be clothed in "fine linen," pure and bright. (Rev. xix. 7, 8.) And we read—"the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints," *i.e.*, their practical righteousness in this life, which is the result of the Spirit's activity in them. Having then passed before "the judgment-seat of Christ," the righteousness of the saints will correspond with divine righteousness, for everything not of God will then have disappeared.

Nature has its place as ordained of God, but it has been polluted, and therefore what is merely natural will not do for God. We are called to rise above nature in the power of the Spirit, but not to *violate* the principles of nature. Hence we read three times in scripture, "Thou shalt not see the a kid in its mother's milk." (Exo. xxiii. 19; xxxiv. 26; Deut. xiv. 21.)

The "*disciple*" of Christ is called to "hate" (or repel) his own wife, &c., for Christ's sake.

(Luke xiv. 26), but that could not lead him to love or to care for her less, for that would be to violate a principle of nature. Therefore the man who hates his wife in the *divine* sense will love and care for her the most truly.

What the Lord would impress upon His people is that they must be separate through their hearts being set upon *Him*, that they may be a distinct people, displaying only the results of His blessing; and that their character, or moral dress, should be entirely the result of walking in the enjoyment of His holy love which led Him to redeem them to Himself. These lessons were taught even to Israel, through their cattle, fields, dress, &c., and thus their surroundings were calculated to impress upon them the will of God for them.

In the passage we read in the New Testament we have, as stated previously, God's *present* victory, which will be *displayed* in the future. It is not simply that God *will* be victorious by-and-by, for He *is* so *now*. It is not yet *manifested*, it is true, but it is a divine fact! It cannot yet be seen by the man of the world, but *we* can be maintained here in the consciousness of it.

God's victory consists principally in having Christ at His own right hand, but also in His

having now on earth that which involves the overthrow of the whole of man's system, as we shall see further on; and therefore God is victorious *now* though that is only seen by *faith*.

The apostle, in these verses, speaks of *enlargement*. We all need to be enlarged, or expanded, for we are not ignorant of the fact that we are too straitened, or cramped. If we were enlarged, we should be able to apprehend better "the breadth, length, depth and height" of the vast scene of glory that *will be* displayed, and to "know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge." (Eph. iii. 18, 19.)

The eyes of our heart need to be enlightened that our affections may be drawn out to Christ as the Centre of all God's purposes, and thus we should be formed to take in and more fully to express, in this dark scene, "the love of Christ."

The apostle had not been able to speak to the Corinthians freely, but now his mouth is opened, and through all the exercise he had passed through on their behalf his heart had been expanded. They were not straitened in the apostle, but in their own vision, and in their expression of divine affections. Now he desired recompense by *their* enlargement, but for this they must not be

yoked with "unbelievers." God's people are heavenly, they do not belong to this world. (John xvii. 16.) They have no standing, status, position or portion connected with it (Col. iii. 3), and therefore to be yoked or *associated* with unbelievers is, in principle, a denial of true Christianity. This applies in the smallest as well as in the greatest things, for to be linked in any way with those who do not know God is great unfaithfulness, and, in principle, it is departure from the living God.

God is victorious now because He has on earth that which *cannot* be mingled with this world-system. It is morally impossible, as it says elsewhere, "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of demons." (1 Cor. x. 21.) Mark the words of holy scripture, "Ye cannot." Hence though we have to work with and continually meet in the business of life the men of the world, yet if faithful to the Lord we cannot be yoked with them. There can be no partnership, taking shares or joining ourselves with that from which the Lord has separated us. To pull in the same yoke with them is to compromise, and to prove unfaithful to our Lord.

Oil and water will not mix though put in the same glass. Gunpowder and fire cannot go together, though it has been tried—with

disastrous consequences. Thus what God has on earth to-day is *distinct* in nature from everything around, and in spite of Satan's effort to obscure, and man's desire to mix that which is distinct, it will be seen that it is impossible. The flesh and the Spirit are antagonistic, and there never can be peace between two distinct opposing principles.

We will now look at the five things in 2 Cor. vi. 14-16. To do this we must lose sight for the moment of the failure and ruin which is so much in evidence, and look upon that *which exists under the eye of God*.

Man, in his sinful condition, is characterised by unrighteousness, for he cannot move rightly. God has brought in the one Man (Christ Jesus), and those attached to *Him* are constituted righteous. (Rom. v. 19.) There is, therefore, through some having been brought under the influences of this one Man, righteousness here, and the righteousness and the unrighteousness are so *distinct* that they cannot go together.

Then there is "light and darkness." *Light* appears to be *God revealed* as the embodiment of every moral perfection; while *darkness* is the state of man morally through having departed from God. There can be, therefore, nothing in common between these. The darkness did not discern Christ when

here as "the true light," and so it remains to this day. (John i. 3.)

Then, next, there is "Christ and Belial." The church is "*the Christ*" characteristically (1 Cor. xii. 12), and therefore displays *His* character. Satan has also his counterfeit—"the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. ii. 9)—displaying the character of the adversary. There can be nothing whatever in common between these.

Then there is the one who believes in contrast to the "unbeliever." God has upon earth those who walk before Him, governed by what *He* is and that vast system connected with Christ. How could these have a share with unbelievers?

Then, lastly, there is "the temple," the shrine where God dwells; and what agreement could there be with it and the system around it? They are absolutely antagonistic. In His temple "every whit of it uttereth his glory. (Psa. xxix. 9, margin.) In idolatry man is led on by Satan through the gratification of his own lusts or desires. (1 Cor. x. 7; Col. iii. 5.)

It is interesting to notice that a different and stronger word is used in each of these connections. The first is participation, or temporary partnership; the second, *joint* participation—communion, or permanent part-



nership; the third, concord, consent, acquiescence, or power to think alike; the fourth is part or share; the last, agreement, acting in harmony, or in accordance with. Now if God has brought us under the influence of Christ as the one Man, how can we have even a temporary partnership with those who, through not knowing God, can only be unrighteous? If brought into the light, how can we seek to have a joint participation with those in darkness? If belonging to the body of Christ, how can we acquiesce with those who are totally unlike Him? If, again, walking in faith, in the light of those eternal realities, how can we have a share with unbelievers? Or if belonging to the temple of God, how can we have agreement with the idolatrous world around?

If we fail to maintain the rigid separation that spiritually exists between these opposing principles, then God in His governmental dealings has to deal with us in discipline in order that we may "be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. xii. 6-10.) If we walk in the flesh, or knowingly *recognise* the system He has set aside in judgment (John xii. 31), He will chasten us, for what He has done at the cross must be maintained by us in the power of the Spirit. God, again I say, has that on earth which will not mix

with the present course of things ; and soon the world-system — of which Satan is the god and prince—will be completely overthrown in order that that which cannot commingle with it may be displayed. These five things which I have sought to draw attention to *cannot* mix or truthfully fraternise ; these are righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, the one who believes and the unbeliever, and the temple of God and idols.

In concluding, I would say again that God has on earth that which is quite distinct from all things around us. This it becomes every Christian to recognise, and in it His present victory is secured. His word to us is therefore, “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.” I must not be in the same yoke with them, and if I am, it will hinder enlargement and real progress, for I shall be bringing together that which *cannot* be amalgamated. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean.” These words are too clear to need comment. It is not only wrong to be yoked, but even to “touch the unclean.” Stronger words could hardly be used, and this is the road I must travel if I am to make spiritual progress. This *may* involve present loss, but look at the com-

pensation! First, God says, "I will receive you." The world may cast me out, but the Lord will receive me. The Christian can lose nothing that is of eternal value, and he gets the gain of the shelter, protection and comfort involved in the words, "I will receive you." This is followed by, "I will be a Father unto you." Not simply be his Father, but *be* a Father unto you, or do a Father's part. There are three ways in which God is a Father unto us. If we take the path of separation, we enable God *to be* a *Father* to us. He *knows* what is needed, and cares for us in the things of this life, that we may be free to think of what concerns the Lord's glory. (Luke xii. 30, 31.) Then, as a Father He uses our circumstances for discipline to us, that we may be "partakers of his holiness." (Heb. xii. 9, 10.) And He produces the exercise which is necessary for our growth and enlargement. Then the Father is free to share His secrets with us, that we may enjoy His thoughts in the happiness of the home circle and the blessedness of His presence, while in the pathway here we come in for all the care we need as His "sons and daughters," and get the gain of His names of Father, Jehovah and Almighty. The name Father is characteristic of Christianity. It speaks

of the precious relationship connected with the full revelation of God, which is ours in association with the Son. Jehovah was the name taken with Israel (Exo. vi. 3), and speaks of abiding or eternal relationship with man. This was fulfilled in Christ becoming a Man—an entirely new kind of man—who was called “Jesus”—Jehovah the Saviour.

The name Almighty was taken with the patriarchs who were sojourners, who received no inheritance at that time, but they knew One who was Almighty, and so He was able to fulfil His promises when apparently it seemed impossible. These received the encouragement which God gives to those taking His way, being sustained by Him. In view of this rich compensation, we are exhorted to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.” A mere outward separation will not do, for that would be simply pharisaical. The outward movements must be the result of the purifying of the innermost part of our being—the “spirit.” All that we are here in connection with the condition in which God has placed man on earth, and our inner being connected with God as Creator, must be kept alike clear, through walking *in self-judgment*, of any stain. Our thoughts, desires, tastes should all be un-

sparingly judged according to the light of *His* holiness, and thus our *dress* of *practical* holiness will be perfected, as this scripture puts it—"Perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

May we all have a deepened sense of God's present victory in having here what cannot be mixed with this present world—God's own workmanship—so that we may refuse in every way any yoke with unbelievers, refusing even to touch the unclean. Then we shall enjoy, fully, the present compensations—going forward, purifying ourselves from any stain of flesh and spirit, and thus gradually perfecting our *dress*, or that which should characterise us as here for God's glory.



## THE INSPIRATION AND VALUE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE TO US.

(SCRIPTURE READ : 2 TIM. III. 10-17.)

ALL who are present here this evening will feel what an immense mercy and favour God has conferred upon us in giving and preserving to us the holy scriptures. It is indeed a very great mercy ; for, in a day like the present, we should, without them, be like a mariner on a troubled sea without a chart. In the midst of the babel of voices around everything would be in uncertainty if we had not the written testimony of God to appeal to (Isa. viii. 20), and we could not be certain as to the mind of God on any subject. The immense value, therefore, to us of the scriptures in this day of corruption cannot be over-estimated, and all who love our Lord Jesus Christ must greatly value them.

We are bound to thank God for them, and we should all seek to learn the reason for which they have been given to us, that, through exercise of soul, His purpose may be accomplished in us.

It is a wonderful thing to have a book in our hands which is of, and from, God. What a privilege, amidst all the strife of tongues, to have that which we can absolutely confide in. We can always turn to it, and if we are in subjection to the Lord, one statement from this inspired record is sufficient to settle any question. There is no other book or authority to which we can appeal to decide any point at issue. The Word of God is *the* book which He has given for the *permanent* instruction and guidance of His people throughout all time.

All in this company know that the scriptures were not originally written in the English language; therefore they had to be translated into our tongue. No doubt there are slight errors in translation; some passages may be more clearly rendered than in the Authorised Version and other translations, but those slight errors have been largely corrected in the New Translation and similar works; and we believe that God specially watched over the translation known as our Authorised English Bible in the sixteenth century A.D.

The scriptures were not given to God's people until departure from the truth had already set in. It was when the living testimony had broken down that the written

record came into prominence. This is true, in principle, of both the Old and the New Testaments, though it is more distinctly seen in connection with the New Testament writings. The first five books of the Old Testament were written by Moses after Israel had been redeemed out of Egypt, and not having appreciated His grace had proved unfaithful. The world had already assumed its true character when man built the tower of Babel. Man was going to make himself a *name*, and was not satisfied with quietly replenishing the earth and giving God *His* place as the Centre. (Gen. xi. 1-4.)

There may have been many things recorded previously, but if so, the records were not needed for God's people *in the future*, and therefore have not been preserved. This is true of Old Testament times, and also in the days of the apostles. It is only the books needed for the permanent instruction of God's people in all ages that have been divinely preserved.

The scripture we have read this evening shews the same principle. The first epistle to Timothy gives the order of the house of God, and disorder is not contemplated in that book, save prophetically. The second epistle is in view of *departure* having taken



place. All in Asia had "turned away" from Paul, and "evil men would wax worse and worse." Then the importance of the holy scriptures is brought before Timothy. In the first epistle the character of the Saviour God was to be *livingly seen* in His house, and those knowing Him were to pray for, and seek the good of, "all men." Now, though God's house still remains perfect in His mind and purpose, all has been obscured through the unfaithfulness of man and the work of Satan. In view of the general unfaithfulness, and the departure of the apostles from this scene, the scriptures are given as a divinely inspired and invaluable deposit in the house of God. They were not given to the world, for the world could not appreciate them, but to God's people, when the mass had proved unfaithful, and when those who could say "He that is of God heareth us" were gradually passing away "to be with Christ." Henceforth everything must be tested by the holy scriptures, and all teaching contrary to them is exposed as error. Thus those who form the house of God have this divinely inspired record, and to it we all can appeal. How the goodness of God is seen in thus thinking of and caring for His people. What a mercy to have a

book to which we can turn and receive as—  
“Thus saith the Lord.” How valuable to have His writings when corruption has become so general! (Isa. viii. 19.) How important to read and consider daily that which is *absolutely from and of God!* It imparts courage; it gives certainty; and the one who loves the Lord delights to turn to it—“The law and to the testimony,” knowing if any “speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. viii. 20.)

This wondrous deposit is, to use an illustration, like a legal document, completed and sealed. When a solicitor draws up a “deed,” and the person has affixed his seal to it, no one else can add to it, for it has been duly completed. The scriptures are God’s written document, which has been completed for all time, and to which nothing can be added. Paul “*completed the word of God*” (Col. i. 25, New Trans:), and John finished the *written record*. We read, therefore: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away

his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) These words are stated actually in connection with the Book of Revelation, but in principle it applies to the whole written testimony given us from God. (See Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32; Prov. xxx. 6; Isa. viii. 20.) •

The book is now complete. It stands morally entwined together. Those who read it prayerfully, carefully and intelligently must be struck by its marvellous perfection. For to omit one book would be to make it incomplete; and to add one would be superfluous. What a proof this is that it is of God. All that is needed for the saints until the end of time is found therein, and inspiration is completed. It is indeed the Book of books, and no other can be compared with it.

Men, very different in character, position, habit of thought and belonging to different ages in the world's history, have been inspired of God to write it, yet each book is distinct and perfect in itself, though each forms part and occupies its own place in the inspired writings. The Bible forms one whole, and nothing can be added thereto. How plainly and clearly the marks of the divine handiwork are seen in it. The writers

so different, the peculiar style of the various penmen preserved, yet the divine hand is seen guiding all, so that there is perfect unity and harmony. This internal evidence is one proof of its divine authorship, and commends itself to all those who have been taught of God.

The scriptures being now completed, and inspiration having closed, nothing more *can* be added; and all that is needed by the people of God for their instruction and comfort until the coming of Christ is found therein. God, in His great mercy, has thus placed in our hands His book, the revelation of Himself, complete and perfect. May we value it more and more. Those who form the church, and also the saints who will be on the earth after the church is translated, have their whole need provided for in the holy scriptures. It is quite probable that there were other ancient writings even by the Apostle Paul; but, if so, they were not needed for the abiding instruction of God's people, and having served their purpose, they have not been preserved.

The scriptures appeal to the *heart* and to the *conscience* of those who know God, but it is only by the Spirit of God that they can be understood and received as God's voice to the soul, and therefore, if the reader's

soul is not under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and thus morally with God, the scriptures will not profit him, for "the letter killeth"; and the purpose for which God has given them will not be accomplished with regard to that individual.

The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 14), and therefore it is a most dangerous thing for the human mind—even for the most cultivated—to be active in divine things. It is only as we are kept in subjection to the Lord, and under the control of the Holy Spirit, that we are capable of having any true understanding of the things of God.

The apostle reminds Timothy of his "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity (that is, love), patience, persecutions, afflictions"; and he states, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution." The godly man will always suffer persecution, and if we escape, it is because we are not "godly." This should cause exercise.

Man, unrenewed, hates God, even when He has revealed Himself in perfect grace (John xv. 19), and therefore he persecutes those in whom what is of God is seen. We may not be cast into lions' dens or put into fiery furnaces; but the quiet, persistent,

petty annoyances which the godly receive is perhaps even more testing. Many who would face the furnace of fire because of its short, though bitter duration, fall under the quiet, persistent effort of seduction. A fierce onslaught of the enemy is not so difficult to stand as the continual effort to turn aside.

Then, again, men do not object to deeds of kindness or the checking of gross evils, or seeking to improve the present state of society; but to "live godly in Christ Jesus" will arouse animosity. Men do not object to a moral life, but to bring God—as now revealed—into every detail of life will arouse their ire. To "live godly in Christ Jesus"; to walk according to the law of the new creation (Gal. vi. 16); to be guided in daily life by the new order of things connected with the anointed Man in heaven, will always awaken opposition, because it is the behaviour and character of *another world* (Heb. xi. 7), and therefore it condemns the ways of *this world* and the *present* order of things. The christian life should be a condemnation of the world which has been fully exposed in and by the cross of Christ, and so the man of the earth resents it, for it sets aside all his vain hopes and desires.

Alas! "evil men and seducers shall wax

worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Men do not always know what they are doing; many do much harm and are not aware of it; but Satan deceives and leads them on. We must ever remember he is a wily foe, and if we are not watchful, and dependent on the Lord, and under His control, the enemy will deceive *us*. We are only kept when walking in dependence and with confidence in the Lord. Self-confidence and the absence of self-judgment render us liable to fall into the snares of the devil; and then, perhaps unconsciously, to deceive others.

How often we see great earnestness in a wrong cause. In fact, those who circulate error are often, apparently, more earnest than those who circulate the truth, though they are really seducers, deceiving others. Those who know God move on in faith, but evil workers are pushed *forward*, being urged onward by the adversary, and thus souls are misled. This existed even in the apostle's day, and has been increasing ever since, and it will develop more and more as we draw nearer the break of day.

Paul's word to Timothy in view of all this was to *continue* in the things he had learned. Though evil would increase, there was safety in *continuing* in what he had divinely

learned, knowing of whom he had learned and of which he had been fully assured. The truth which Paul taught was made known to him by *revelation*. He had communicated it direct to Timothy, and the latter was now told to remember from whom he had received it, and *this* would help to impart spiritual courage to stand for God in the midst of increasing evil. Then, from a child he had known the holy scriptures. He had had not only the great privilege of godly training, but also of learning the truth, brought out subsequently in Paul's epistles, from Paul himself. It was clearly the Old Testament that Timothy had been instructed in by his godly mother and grandmother, for the New Testament had not then been written.

This shews the importance of being acquainted with the Old Testament, and the great value which the Apostle Paul attached to the knowledge of the sacred writings; also the great gain of having been instructed in them "from a child." Where there are godly parents to instruct, the scriptures are presented to their children as *holy* writings, *of* and *from* God, and therefore according to what *He* is. They partake of His character and express what is according to Him.



There is great danger in these last days of not valuing what God gives, and treating it lightly. To use *holy* things as common is to forget they are of God, and thus to fall into the snare of profanity.

It is a great mercy that Bibles are to be had so cheaply, but the enemy uses even this to lead men to think little of them.

In these days of departure from God the holy writings are specially helpful to produce and promote exercise of soul, that, through the work of the Spirit, we may grow in holiness, and thus be more apart from all that is *not* of God ; and we do well to watch against, and avoid, any trifling, or profane use of the scriptures, for they are from God Himself. It is the great provision that He has given us in these last days of corruption and departure from God and the truth.

The scriptures were able to make such a man as Timothy "wise unto salvation." This clearly was not merely to teach him how he was to have the forgiveness of sins and to escape the judgment of God, but to instruct him in the knowledge of God's mind, as made known in scripture, which would enable him to discern what *is*, or is *not*, of God ; and what is of the world or of the enemy. Thus, the evil being exposed to

him, he would be saved from it, and therefore would not fall under its power.

The Old Testament may be divided into three parts—the law, the psalms, and the prophets; and we need to read the *whole* Bible, that we may not be one-sided, but may be *formed* by the whole Word of God.

All is given to produce exercise in us Godward, that there may, by the Spirit, be a divinely-formed state in us. We may perhaps have little intelligence as to some of the books, but because they form part of the holy scriptures, they, if read in dependence on God, *help* to form us according to God.

The law is needed to give us due sense in our souls of the importance of *obedience* and the seriousness of any departure from the will of God. The psalms give the characteristics of the work of God in souls in all ages, with the exercises and confidence of the godly; and they have a most healthy effect upon us. The prophets were to arouse and recall the people to God when there had been general departure. They foretold future blessing to stimulate and encourage the godly onward; and judgment, to warn against the seriousness of not listening to God's voice. Thus the Old Testament, as well as the New, is fitted to give light and to produce exercise, that *we* may become "wise

unto salvation," delivered from the world-system and its many snares.

God's principles expose the wrong, and make known His way in the midst of a "perverse generation." The scriptures are fitted to keep the mind of God before us, that we may be obedient, healthfully exercised, encouraged, warned, and walking in freedom and liberty before God, as now revealed in Christ as is recorded in the New Testament.

But for this result to be obtained there has to be, through the work of the Spirit, *the state*, which the words—"through faith which is in Christ Jesus" describe. This is not simply faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the One in whom we believe for salvation (Acts xvi. 16), but the faith which characterises those who are in the order of things which is "in Christ Jesus." We first believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and subsequently He is, by the Spirit, made known to the soul as the Beginning and Head of an entirely new system which is "all of God." If we are sustained in walking with and before Him we shall be characterised by the divinely-formed state expressed in the words, "faith in Christ Jesus." God's anointed One, and that world of which He is the foundation, centre, and finish, is thus

before the soul, and the scriptures make us "wise unto salvation."

"All scripture" (both the Old and New Testaments) "is given by inspiration of God." God so controlled the writers that they absolutely expressed, in their writings, the mind of God, and were so under His power that all contrary to His mind was *excluded*. It is God-breathed, and thus His love, His holiness, &c., pervades the whole. Neither is it simply the *force* of any passage that is inspired, but *the very words* (1 Cor. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 20, 21) are *of God*.

There are certain marks which characterise each vessel used of God, and this was ordered by Him; but each writer was so controlled by the Spirit as to give us, in writing, the mind of God, and that which is profitable for us to know, as well as divine guidance in *every* exigency. How important then is it that we each should maintain, in the faith of our souls, that the whole Bible is inspired of God, that it may come armed with all the authority of God, as expressed in "Thus saith the Lord." This is of the greatest importance, for the enemy is seeking on all hands to throw doubts on its authenticity, and *we* must receive it as *His* voice to *us*!

Whatever is stated therein must be accepted. It is the *final* "court of appeal."

We may not *fully* apprehend it ; and *if* our finite minds could *fully* comprehend it all it would but prove that it was not the inspired revelation of an *infinite* mind. Being the divinely written testimony of the One who is infinite, it *must* be beyond the grasp of a finite mind. (1 Cor. ii. 11-16.) Still, if we prayerfully read and meditate on it, looking to God to enlighten us by His Spirit, He will in due time give understanding ; but, I repeat, it is most important that the *fact* of its inspiration should be maintained in our souls, that it may always be "the voice of the Lord" to us. "*All* scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof," &c. (2 Tim. iii. 16.)

The "gifts" are given for, or in view of, certain results (Eph. iv. 12) ; and the scriptures, too, are given for, or in view of, a definite purpose. (Eph. v. 26.) The "gifts" are to keep the mind of God before the saints with a view to their edification, and the scriptures for teaching, &c.

We do not exactly learn *from* a "gift," or even *from* the holyscriptures, but *from* Christ, *through* scripture, *by* the Spirit of God bringing home the presentation of *Himself* to the soul. The Spirit applies the scriptures to those who form the house of God (Heb. iii. 7), and thus it is the living voice of God to us.

There are now *no* fresh revelations from God, neither are there any inspired writers ; but as long as the "house of God" is on earth (Heb. iii. 6 ; 1 Tim. iii. 15) Christ as the Apostle will, by the Spirit, give a living application of the truth suited for the particular moment and state then existing among God's people. The Spirit also applies scripture to give light among the Lord's own in times of exercise and difficulty (Acts xv. 15, 16) ; also to the servant at a critical moment (Acts xiii. 4) ; and the Word is always "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa. cxix. 105.)

The great thing is to seek to apprehend *the spirit* of any scripture ; then we shall see how the spirit and the letter agree ; but if we are only taken up with the letter of scripture, we miss the spirit of it. We need the truth to be balanced in our souls. "The scriptures cannot be broken" (John x. 35), and if we are in subjection to the Lord and have Him before us, the letter of scripture will be maintained in the power of the Spirit.

If the scriptures are taken up lightly instead of being read prayerfully and in dependence on God, little profit will be derived, but then the fault lies in ourselves. Unless we are going on with God, and in

His fear, the enemy will gain an advantage, and perhaps even use a mental handling of scripture to lead us on the wrong road. The *Spirit* uses the scriptures to present Christ to our souls, and also to exercise our consciences and to draw our hearts more to the Person of our Lord; and if we are really walking with God, we gain great instruction from them. While building us up in Christ they reprove and expose our motives to ourselves, and thus lead to self-judgment, which saves us from public exposure. They correct and place things in divine order and proper proportions in our souls, freeing us from human ideas and enabling us to *discern* according to God. Thus the great end stated by the Apostle Paul to Timothy can be reached, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What an end to be reached by those who desire to be for God now while left here on earth! What a treasure, indeed, we have in the scriptures! Surely in these days when Satan has been allowed to obscure what is of God, and when everything outwardly is leavened (Matt. xiii. 33; xv. 11, 12) by human ideas, how priceless to us are the scriptures, and they should be more and more valued and prized by us all. For through them

divine thoughts are rightly adjusted in our souls, and we are freed from the human ideas which man and the enemy have attached to them, and thus we are gradually instructed in the will of God.

We have an unfailing resource in "the Lord and in the word of his grace"; there is in the Spirit all the power that we need, and we have the simple holy scriptures to appeal to for instruction in any emergency. How we have been cared for by our God! But let us ever remember that the scriptures are only of real help to us as we are maintained by the Spirit with God in the secret of our souls.

May the Lord keep us greatly valuing His precious Word, and so dependent on Him that we may walk in the Spirit, so that the holy writings may accomplish the purpose in each of us for which He has given them, that we may be completely "furnished unto all good works," till He come! Amen.





# NOTES OF READINGS ON GALATIANS.\*

## No. I.

### CHAPTER I.

J. S. G. The Epistle to the Galatians has a special voice for *us* to-day. The saints there had believed the gospel which was preached by Paul, and they had received the Holy Spirit, but they had been turned aside by false teachers. They had not made progress according to God, though they probably thought that they had. They had not moved forward on the line of the Spirit; but they had, through these false teachers, been shunted on to the line of the flesh and law. This state of being (the line of the flesh and law) is characteristic of the present day, and hence this epistle is specially helpful in meeting the general state of the Lord's people; and it is an intensely practical word for each one of us. It meets the need of souls generally; it exposes us all, and places the two systems in marked contrast. If we

\* At Brisbane, Australia, September, 1911. Revised by J. S. G. and slightly enlarged.

do not move forward with God, we drift into looseness of walk, or of doctrine, or perhaps of both; or else we get on to the line of the law and the flesh, and this latter leads to most unseemly conduct. (Gal. v. 15.)

The Spirit of God, through Paul, seeks to help these Galatian saints by giving prominence to the fact that God has introduced another Man—His Man, and that God is now revealed as Father, which involves a system of heavenly relationships, which cannot be mixed with this world. He also shews that Christ is God's beginning, and that "Christ liveth in me" is normal Christianity. That was true of Paul experimentally. There are other important facts brought forward which we will notice as we proceed.

QUES. What do you mean by God's beginning?

J. S. G. Historically Adam came first, yet he was "the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. v. 14), but man in the flesh was to be removed. "The first man" was to be displaced by "the second Man" (1 Cor. xv. 45), &c., and all God's purposes were connected with the "*last* Adam," "the second Man." The first Adam was the father of a race, to be placed on trial; but the last Adam is the Source of life for all, and to

His own He is life, that they may live in eternal blessing. "The first man" came in provisionally for a time; but all God's thoughts of eternal blessing are bound up with "the second Man."

Thus God's "beginning" is in Christ risen and glorified. He is "the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. iii. 14; Col. i. 18.) God laid His foundation in the death of Christ, and He began to fulfil His purpose by placing the Man Christ Jesus at His own right hand. God's dealings and His work in souls previously were preliminary and preparatory, in view of placing them in His system in relationship with Christ—the Head of that system.

Supposing you are going to build a house, you may use some of the boards that are to be utilised in the building to erect a small shed to hold the tools, &c. But you have not yet begun to build the house. Then, later, these same boards are used in the house itself. God is now building up a vast, gigantic, and morally great, system, in which He will dwell. He has now placed Christ, the Head of that system, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 21.) God has thus

already placed Christ—the One who is “the beginning” of His creation, in the position assigned to Him according to eternal purpose; then “the church” will have its place, and afterwards the Old Testament saints (material which God had gathered in view of His purpose before Christ came) will have their place. (Heb. xi. 40.)

The heavens and the earth were all created in view of the purpose of God. His dealings, His work in mercy in bringing individuals to know Him, and taking up the nation of Israël, were all preparatory and necessary in connection with the testing of man; but *Christ* is “the beginning,” origin, and commencement of everything that is for the pleasure of God. Historically, in man’s reckoning, Adam would be God’s beginning, but in reality it is Christ. Adam was merely a figure of the One who was coming.

QUES. How would you say God was preparing?

J. S. G. He wrought in mercy in individuals in view of *His purpose*. Still, no company will actually have the position allotted in that purpose until the coming of Christ. Christ is God’s beginning, and we read (Heb. xi. 40), “God having provided some better thing for us [those who form the church], that they without us should not

be made perfect." This shews that the Old Testament saints wait for the church to be completed and to have its unique position in this vast system before receiving theirs.

QUES. Do you refer now to what it will be in glory ?

J. S. G. Yes, when God's purpose is *completed*; when that which now exists will come into display.

Historically, Adam came first, but we must look at these things morally, according to God's order. God does not live in time (2 Peter iii. 8), but in eternity; and the more we can look at divine things apart from days, months, or years, the clearer divine ideas become to us.

Thus God's real beginning was in Christ. The gospel is concerning Christ glorified. Paul's apostleship was by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.

Formerly the priests were the sons of Aaron; the Levites were the seed of Levi, and descended from him; they had a most important place in the Jewish economy. Paul was not an apostle of men, nor through man, but by the direct call of the Lord Himself from the glory. There was a distinct new departure in the ways of God, and all flowed from Christ risen and glorified.

Christianity is characterised by the introduction of a new kind of man entirely. Man, as originally set up on earth, has been removed *sacrificially* from under the eye of God (Rom. iii. 25), and is displaced *in* those who by the Spirit know God. (Rom. viii. 9.) Hence Paul was an apostle by Jesus Christ. Jehovah had become the Saviour—a real Man among men; but He had been rejected, and in His death God, in mercy, by sacrifice, had judged and ended the man that had “come short” of His glory. The One rejected by man was the anointed One in glory. Paul was an apostle, constituted such by the rejected but anointed One in glory. Thus his apostleship was based on the setting aside of fallen man, and the introduction of another—an entirely different *kind* of Man, of whom Christ risen and glorified was the full exhibition, according to eternal purpose. Thus Paul’s apostleship was not based on the recognition of the cultured man of privilege, as seen in the Jew, but on the removal of that man—of man in the flesh, whether cultured or not. Paul came direct from the anointed Man, who will entirely displace throughout the universe every trace of the man that was removed by judgment at the cross.

Paul was an apostle “by God the

Father." Christianity is marked by the revelation of the Father and by the heavenly relationships connected therewith. He was the apostle—or sent one—by the Lord's "call" on his way to Damascus; but, apparently, by the Father, in the assembly at Antioch. All was, therefore, from a resurrection source, and hence had no connection with Judaism or anything that existed on earth, or that formed part of this present world, for it was entirely new and heavenly in character.

The Lord had wrought wonderfully in Jerusalem, which was the centre of the order of things previously established on earth; but Paul's apostleship was in no wise connected even with the assembly at Jerusalem. He was called directly by the Lord, who was risen and glorified, and he went forth from the bosom of the assembly formed at Antioch. (Acts xiii.)

There they evidently knew something of the enjoyment and liberty flowing from the setting aside of fallen man and his displacement by the Spirit, and also of the heavenly relationships connected with the revelation of the Father.

Christ is God's centre and beginning; but there was a circle on earth from which Paul went forth, a sphere where these divine

realities were known and enjoyed. He literally went forth commended by the brethren at Antioch, but at that place they evidently had appropriated and appreciated some of those precious things belonging to the people of God universally, and thus he went forth from the bosom of the assembly.

We live in certain places, and therefore come together locally, but we should ever enjoy that which belongs to the whole circle of the saints, and thus, in mind, we are associated with the whole church. Through the church on earth the light of the glorified Man can shine, and it should be, in the power of the Spirit, the means of light and blessing all around, for the church is the "habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. ii. 22.)

• We walk through the wilderness individually, but in mind we should never separate ourselves from the *whole* family of God; and when together we can then specially enjoy the privileges which belong to the ~~whole~~ assembly. Thus we have here leading characteristics of Christianity, Paul being an apostle by the anointed Man of God's purpose, God revealed as Father, and all connected with Christ risen. Then from a circle where these truths were, in measure at



least, known and enjoyed, Paul went forth on his first mission to the Gentiles.

The Galatian saints had departed from the truth which had been ministered to them, so Paul included "all the brethren" with him in addressing them. He wishes them grace ~~and~~ peace from God, in the character of Father, and from *our* Lord Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

QUES. Why did Paul write to the Galatians like that?

J. S. G. Because they, like us, had fallen under the power of the present world. It is a rebuke to have to be told that Christ died to deliver us from the world. If they had been true to the gospel they *had* received, there would have been no need to have stated the fact. The gospel is concerning One rejected here, but glorified on high. If our hearts are won to Him, then we refuse a place where He has been crucified, and are drawn to Him where He now is.

QUES. What is the character of the world we have come under?

J. S. G. The best part of it—the religious portion, is formed of what suits man naturally connected with an outward profession

of the Lord's name. Judaism was a religion connected with the world. If Israel had answered to God's mind, they would have been a centre of light and blessing for the whole of mankind. They failed utterly, and Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. The Lord gave *Himself* (He could not give more) to save, or deliver, us from the present course of things, which is evil; and we can only understand the mind of God, and be pleasing to Him here, according to the measure in which the power of present things is broken to us.

QUES. Why is it *evil* world?

J. S. G. It has been tested by the presentation of absolute and perfect goodness in Christ, and the world has hated Him thus presented (John v. 45; xv. 24), and so it is proved to be entirely corrupt and depraved. Hence it is the will of God, our Father, to deliver us from it while we are living surrounded by that character of things. The whole character of Christianity has been blighted through Satan having succeeded in enticing God's people to mix socially and religiously with the world that crucified Christ, and thus to connect them outwardly with this present evil world.

REM. That is very solemn!

J. S. G. It is indeed, and *we* do well to be exercised regarding being, in heart, apart from, and outside of, every principle which makes up man's world.

QUES. Was the eunuch of Acts viii. delivered from the world?

J. S. G. Philip, the evangelist, preached Jesus unto him. He had made a long journey to seek to realise a desire which had been awakened in his heart by God, and it was on his *return* journey with that desire unsatisfied that Philip presented to him the moral traits of the Man whom the world had refused—His moral excellence, His unique, lowly character! The eunuch had never heard of such a One before, and his heart was won. He desired to be identified with Him: he only wished to be *with* Him. If the world had refused Him, he desired to be buried with Him, and so, he said, "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" In effect, this man said, "I want no place or position where *He* is rejected, and so why should you not bury me in baptism *with* Him?" (Rom. vi. 4.)

REM. That is a good example of what you were saying.

J. S. G. Would to God it were more true of each one of us! So many, and even among God's people, are wanting to get on

*here*, which results in getting up in the world that Christ has died out of. We little value His cross, though we sometimes sing—

“Thy cross has severed ties that bind us here ;  
*Thyself* our treasure in a brighter sphere !”

REM. The apostle says, “the *present* evil world.”

J. S. G. It is shewn to have become completely corrupted, beyond all improving, through having been tested by the Person of Christ. The best part of it, that is, those who had been instructed in the only true religion of that day, hated Him “without a cause.” (John xv. 25.) We have been brought up in what is called “the Christian world,” and therefore we are in danger of not discerning its true character. *The world* is still the same, and every principle of it is opposed to the Father. The only way of escape is accepting crucifixion with Him, that we may not live, but Christ may live in us. He must fill our hearts so that there may not be room for “the world,” or its “things.” (1 John ii. 15.)

If the gospel of a glorified Christ is received, it separates our hearts from the world-system around ; but Satan immediately sets to work to seek to divert us. His object

is to entice us on to a wrong line. The apostle tells the Galatians he marvelled at them so quickly changing from Him who had "called" them to a different gospel. This "different gospel" was not really "glad tidings" at all, which God's gospel *is*; but a perversion of the gospel of Christ. He solemnly says, If any one announces as glad tidings anything besides what we have announced, or besides what they had received, let him be accursed. He would not admit of any addition to, or subtraction from what he preached, and which they had received. He was Christ's bondsman, and sought to please his Master only, and not men. His gospel was not according to man. He neither received it, nor was he taught it by man; but through the revelation of a Person—Jesus Christ.

REM. That is the gospel Paul preached.

J. S. G. Yes. He received it by, and from, the revelation of the Person of Christ. It was not a question merely of some words which he had heard, but that Man in glory was revealed to him. He *saw Him* (1 Cor. xv. 8), and therefore he could go and announce Him as "glad tidings." The glad tidings are "concerning" Him (Rom. i. 3), a glorified Man, the Man of God's purpose, the Man of His right hand; and He is the

One who will, by the power of the Spirit, fill the universe of God!

QUES. Is it the religious world that is our danger?

J. S. G. Not only that. To "walk as men" (1 Cor. iii. 3) is to be governed by the principles of the world. The character of Christ should be seen in us, and it would be a disgrace to us to display the traits of the man whom God set aside in judgment at the cross.

REM. We then would not be true to our baptism.

J. S. G. Certainly not, if we were governed by the principles of the world to which we have been buried in baptism. There is only one way of escape, which is, to be under the control of the Lord, and to walk here "in the Spirit." In Christ, personally, there was nothing which Satan could touch; there was nothing *within* to respond to the principles which govern this world. (John xiv. 30.) Satan is called, in scripture, the "prince" and "god" of this world. It is often stated—Prince *politically* and god *religiously*.

QUES. Had the Galatians known the import of having the Spirit?

J. S. G. I do not think so. Some have the Spirit on the *divine* side (Rom. v. 5), but know little of His presence on the *experi-*

*mental* side. A young bird has wings, but it has to learn to use them. We have to learn to "walk in the Spirit." The apostle comes to that later on in this epistle. First, he would impress upon them that his apostleship was from the resurrection source by One who was an entirely new kind of Man, and by God revealed as Father. That He had given Himself in order to "deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." And His gospel was made known to him by the revelation of a Person in glory, and therefore it had nothing to do with the course of things here. His ministry was based entirely on, and directly from, what he had received from Christ in glory.

They had heard of his former life in connection with a recognised religion on earth, and how he had persecuted the assembly of God, and had advanced beyond many in Judaism. Then God, who had set him apart and "called" him by grace, was pleased to reveal His Son *in*, not *to*, him, in order that he might announce Him as glad tidings.

QUES. "In Him," is that practical?

J. S. G. I think "his Son" had His place in Paul's affections and mind, and therefore He was seen *in*, and expressly *by*, Paul.

QUES. Paul was *what* he preached, is that the thought?

J. S. G. It is hardly that thought here. Paul was a chosen vessel to make known the great truths of Christianity. The greatest is "Sonship," which is association in life and nature with the Son of God. The Son had come. When He became Man He could say, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." This One, as born in time, had a unique place in the Father's affections. He was loved of the Father. It states, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." (Heb. i. 5.) The heavens opened to Him more than once, and the Father expressed His delight in Him. He was His Son—the One in the bosom of the Father! That One had His place in Paul's affections, and so was revealed in him. It must have been a great privilege to have heard Paul speak to the Father, for His Son being revealed in him, he must have entered very fully into the truth of what sonship really involved for those who form "the church." God had revealed the Son to others (John vi. 45), but Paul, when called, did not confer with flesh and blood. He did not go up to Jerusalem—to where the other apostles were, but he went



to Arabia. Then, after some quiet in the Lord's presence, Paul returned to Damascus, and afterwards he went to Jerusalem, and abode with Peter fifteen days. The other apostles did not see him at that time. He was unknown to the churches of Judæa, and they glorified God, who was seen in Paul.

We have most important truths brought before us in this chapter. God has introduced His Man, and heavenly relationships are revealed. The gospel was taught Paul by the revelation of the *Person*—Jesus Christ in glory; and the full truth of sonship was made known through him, and the saints "glorified God" as seen in Paul. This all shews *the heavenly character of true Christianity*, and how those who have the Spirit are in touch with a living Man in heaven, though they are still on earth.



## No. II.

### CHAPTER II.

J. S. G. We were noticing at our last meeting that Paul was an "apostle by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Thus we have the fact brought before us, that God's Man has been brought in and placed as Head of the new order of things now present in the power of the Spirit. The man set up on earth in responsibility had been removed from under God's eye in the sacrifice of Christ. The man who would not do for God had been morally ended for God when Christ was crucified; and God's Anointed One, who is the beginning of everything for God, had been placed as Head of that world which was *now* being formed! Then God had been revealed as FATHER, and thus heavenly relationships characterise Christianity. To add law to Christianity is to make it an earthly system, instead of heavenly, and falsifies its whole character.

QUES. Did Paul know Christ on earth?

J. S. G. It appears as though he never saw Him in humiliation, but only in glory.

(1 Cor. xv. 8.) He was not one of the twelve. They were witnesses of the resurrection, and were used of God to establish the heavenly system of Christianity in its outward aspect and character.

Paul was a thirteenth—he was an apostle outside of that which was connected with perfect administration on earth. He was not sent to baptise (1 Cor. i. 17), but was himself admitted by baptism, as all others had been, save those who formed the house of God at the first. (Acts i. 15 ; ii. 1-5.)

Paul's apostleship was connected with the internal aspect and privileges of God's house. (Eph. ii. 13-22.) He unfolded the heavenly side of God's purpose ; and though received like others by baptism into the profession of Christianity, yet he received his gospel direct from the Lord by the revelation of Himself—Jesus Christ—in glory.

God had chosen to reveal His Son in him, and when he had been called by grace he "straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." (Acts ix. 20.)

The first time he saw all the apostles at Jerusalem was fourteen years after his call, and the historical account is in Acts xv. He had previously gone there to see Peter ; but

he says, "Other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother."

The fourteen years had plainly manifested the ways of God with Paul, and demonstrated to the eyes of all the reality of his call, and the work given to him to accomplish. Thus proof of his apostleship had been given, and could not be disputed. He was an apostle, but his call was by the Lord Himself, distinct from the twelve, and not connected with the assembly at Jerusalem.

Paul visited Peter, and then went up with Bárnabas, who was well known to the brethren there. Barnabas had also accompanied him on his missionary tour, and Paul had gradually, through his spiritual power, taken the lead. (Acts xiii. 2, 9, 13, 16, 43, 46.)

QUES. Do you gather *that* from the order in which the names are placed?

J. S. G. Yes, Paul was the chosen vessel, and Barnabas evidently recognised it. (Acts xi. 25, 26.) Paul went up "by revelation." The Lord has thus communicated to him that it was His will for him to go to Jerusalem at this time. But he did not go up to receive from the twelve, but to communicate—to lay before them the gospel that he preached to the nations.

REM. All that shews how distinct his mission was.

J. S. G. It does indeed. Titus was not circumcised, and thus the question was actually settled by Paul's own act, prior to its coming before the apostles and elders at Jerusalem; though the Lord did not allow it to be *formally* settled until it *had* come before the leaders at Jerusalem; Barnabas was well known at Jerusalem, and had accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey; he could testify of how the Lord had wrought through them among the Gentiles, and he was a witness that could command attention. Then Titus being uncircumcised shewed beyond dispute that Paul did not recognise the teaching of the Judaising brethren, though in christian liberty he circumcised Timothy so, as not to give offence.

In Israel one tribe was chosen for service, in connection with that which was "a shadow" of heavenly things, but Paul, a thirteenth apostle, preached Christ in glory, and was chosen to make known the full heavenly portion of the saints according to eternal purpose.

On account of these false teachers, Paul made known *his* gospel privately to the prominent leaders, but there was no compromising of the truth; there was no subjection given to these false teachers, and

the truth of the glad tidings was fully maintained. Neither did the leaders in the assembly at Jerusalem communicate anything to Paul, but they gave to him the right hand of fellowship to continue on in the work the Lord had called him to accomplish. Paul had communicated *to them*, for the Lord had revealed to Paul the full heavenly character of Christianity, but they had nothing to make known to him, and they gladly recognised that the Lord was working through this chosen vessel.

This shews that not only was Paul's ministry distinct from Judaism, but also distinct from the twelve apostles, and from the church as formed at Jerusalem, where links with the former system were still recognised. His ministry was heavenly in character, for he had received it from Christ in glory, and he recognised no centre save Christ in heaven, and the assembly, where heavenly relationships were known and enjoyed.

The old centre was set aside, and those who were taken up and formed through sovereign mercy were in separation from all here, being *united* by the Holy Ghost to the living Person of Christ in glory.

The glory connected with the earthly system must fade from the view of those who saw the surpassing glory of that which

was now introduced. What could be compared with saints in unison with one another by one Spirit, and all united to the living Man, Christ Jesus, in heaven !

Then when Peter, who was one of those conspicuous at Jerusalem, came to Antioch, Paul rebuked him before all. He evidently accepted it. He had unlocked the mystery of the kingdom to the Gentiles, and had rejoiced in the fulness of grace, but now he had acted inconsistently with the truth of the gospel. He *had* enjoyed christian liberty with the saints at Antioch, but when some came down from James he withdrew and separated himself, eating no more with them because he feared those of the circumcision, and even Barnabas was entangled in the dissimulation.

REM. That appears to be a very trifling thing.

J. S. G. But it was very serious, for it set aside the truth of the gospel. It brought in the man whom God had removed in judgment, and it recognised what was part of this evil world after Christ had given Himself to deliver us out of it. To recognise the man or the world that has been set aside by God in the death of Christ is, in principle, to deny the gospel. The gospel is concerning Christ, who is the Head and

Centre of God's world, and that proves that man and his works has gone before the eye of God. Hence, if faithful to the Lord, we cannot receive patronage or support from, or recognise anything which is part of, the world that has been judged; or appeal to, or seek to attract, the man who has proved to be incurably bad (Jer. xvii. 9, New Trans.; Isa. i. 6) and has now passed out from under God's eye in the death of Christ.

QUES. How could you appeal to that man?

J. S. G. With music, nice singing, or anything which suits the natural tastes of man. Paul preached in faith in the living God, counting on God to work by His Spirit, and recognising nothing but the Spirit's work. (1 Cor. ii. 14; iii. 7-19.) We do not want to appeal to the natural sensibilities of man, for God's work in us is to displace that man through forming Christ in us by the Spirit.

QUES. To whom should we preach?

J. S. G. The gospel is announced to man universally, but each servant must preach where his Master sends him and *what* his Master tells him to preach. We know the natural man cannot receive what is of God. Hence we must have faith in God to bless and work by the Spirit, and then through the



conscience and heart of man being reached God gets His rightful place in the souls of those that are drawn to Him.

REM. The true gospel is not palatable to man ?

J. S. G. Paul's gospel is not, for it gives no place to man in the flesh, but these false teachers did, and *we* must be exercised not to move on *that* line. Man in the flesh has been removed for God in the cross, and is displaced in us by the Spirit.

QUES. What do you mean by the gospel ?

J. S. G. God's *glad* tidings concerning His Son, who is the head, centre, beginning and all of God's system, which is already present in the power of the Spirit, and will fill the universe. The death of Christ has opened the way for all men to come into the blessing under Him. Hence the gospel covers all the good news which God sends to men concerning His Son, and the vast circle of blessing connected with Him by the power of the Spirit. It includes the good news of Christ glorified, the presence of the Spirit, and all the good things provided for man by God.

REM. That is 'a great deal more than relief.

J. S. G. The gospel, if received, does bring a man relief, but it also makes known

that God has provided a very rich portion in Christ.

REM. It was not preached fully until the Spirit came.

J. S. G. It could not have been, for the gospel testifies of what is in Christ on high, and that which may be known here now in the power of the Spirit.

QUES. Does every one who believes the gospel receive the Spirit?

J. S. G. The Spirit sheds abroad God's love in our hearts, and forms Christ in us. What encouragement to those who love Him! The Spirit is here, not simply to enable us to know Him, but to give Him His place in our hearts' and minds. A person receives the Spirit when he believes on Christ risen and glorified. (Eph. i. 13.)

The principle on which Peter acted when he dissimulated really makes Christ the minister of sin; he had lived in christian liberty with the rest, and then he turns and recognises what belongs to Judaism. Judaism had been set aside in Christ; to return to it was to imply that Christ had directed it, and thus Christ would be "the minister of sin." To return to that from which I have separated on account of its having been set aside by God is to be unfaithful, and to act as though Christ had

led me to do what is wrong. If I have been led to separate, why return? If it is right to return, it is clear that it was wrong to separate. Christ could not lead to both, or He would contradict His own directions; therefore to act thus is to constitute one "a transgressor." Now in contrast to this Paul states what was *experimentally* true of himself, and which is God's mind for all His people. He says that through law he had died to law, that he might live to God. The law had come home to him morally in power, causing him to see his true state in God's sight, and shewing him that death was his portion. But, Christ having died, he appropriated His death, and in his mind he had died with Christ that he might live to God. Thus he had escaped from the dominion of law to be wholly for God.

QUES. Is the law here the ten commandments?

J. S. G. Law was the principle on which man in the flesh stood before God in the past. God required that which was lawful and right from man. Paul died to the principle of demand, and then on the principle of grace he could live to God.

QUES. Why does he use the pronoun "I" here?

J. S. G. It is experimental, and he could

not say it of the Galatians. Later on in the epistle he shews the road by which they could reach it.

REM. He says, "Be ye followers of me."

REM. I suppose "died" is experimental?

J. S. G. I think so. The law made known what God required of man, but now what God is *for* sinful man is revealed. Paul says elsewhere, "I was alive without the law once," but when the commandment reached his conscience, "sin revived and I died." (Rom. vii. 9.) Death was brought home to him morally, and then he learnt that he had died—not in himself, for that would have meant eternal judgment, but in Christ, who had given Himself as the victim on man's behalf. Now in Him, the risen One, he could live to God.

QUES. Is that for the pleasure of God?

J. S. G. The object, or purport, of his life was with God before him; he would no longer live for himself, for his own pleasure, but the end of life to him would be God Himself. It is our privilege to live *to* Him and then we shall live *for* Him.

QUES. What do you mean by that?

J. S. G. We must first learn that God has chosen us for His own pleasure, then we respond by living *to* Him, and thus we shall be here *for* Him.

QUES. Is this personal experience ?

J. S. G. I think so. In Romans iii. it is taught that God has removed the man offensive to Him from under His eye in judgment, in the sacrifice of Christ.

Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ." Christ had actually been crucified, and *in Paul's mind* he had been crucified *with* Him. Christ had, in death, ended vicariously the man who had departed from God, and Paul, in his mind and soul, had accepted that fact. It was a *present* reality to his soul in the power of the Spirit. He says, "I *am*," not "I *was*," crucified with Christ.

REM. God can then lead such a soul on.

J. S. G. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ"—terminated. That is not annihilation; it is not extinction of the personality, and so he adds, "Nevertheless I live," but it was not *Saul* who lived, it was Christ living in him. The Spirit had formed new tastes, new desires, new aspirations, so that really it was no longer Saul living, for Christ had been morally formed in Paul, and Christ was expressed by him. Hence, for him to live was Christ.

REM. He suffered the loss of all things. Why ?

J. S. G. He had something better. Christ

was living in him. We all naturally desire things here, but in Paul, Saul was displaced by Christ being formed in him. What Christ was morally had displaced the moral characteristics of Saul, so that the traits of Christ were seen instead of Saul's natural characteristics.

QUES. Is this not the mind of God for us all. Why, then, the failure?

J. S. G. Our faces must be set in the right direction. Paul saw a light brighter than the world's sun, and so it was eclipsed for him. He had naturally great advantages and prospects; but the love of Christ had laid hold of him. Henceforth that love constrained him. The Person of Christ was his absorbing object, and through this, Christ was gradually being formed in him by the Spirit, so that Christ displaced Saul and became *everything* to him. So may it be with us. The Spirit within directs our spiritual gaze to Christ, to His moral beauty and perfection, and as this enchants us we feast on Him with great delight. Thus through Christ being assimilated He is formed in us and lives in us.

QUES. Is that true of all believers?

J. S. G. It was not true of the Galatians, for Paul tells them he travailed in birth again until Christ was formed in them.

QUES. Would that mean that the natural had died?

J. S. G. The personality ever remains, but what the man *is* morally is displaced by what Christ is.

REM. It is moral transformation.

J. S. G. Yes. The identity is the same, but *the state* of that person is completely transformed.

QUES. Will that be true throughout eternity?

J. S. G. The personality will always remain, but the natural man will entirely disappear. I once did not know God; now, through mercy, I do know Him, and I shall be eternally in His blessed presence, but there will not be a trace left of the man that did not know God, for that man will have been extinguished.

The Epistle to the Romans teaches that the sinful man, which has been ended in the cross, is practically displaced by the Spirit. If we do not go on with God, that same man will appear as of Ishmael—the flesh; but if we walk in the Spirit, Christ is formed in us. Practical deliverance from the sinful man lies in the Spirit; and *deliverance from* that man when even trained in the house, as was Ishmael, is through Christ being formed in us by the Spirit. The Epistle to the Galatians

shews that the true Isaac gets His place in us consequent upon Ishmael being exposed and cast out. There was no place in the house for the one who mocked, for Isaac must fill the whole place. He must not simply have the *first* place, but He must have His true place, which is complete possession of our hearts and minds.

REM. Ishmael must go!

J. S. G. That is it. Man in the flesh, when trained and cultured by every advantage which God could give him, only manifests his inability to appreciate Christ. The more that man is trained, the more manifest it is that the best trait of his moral being hates Christ, though it may be covered up by that which deceives man. Hence *that* man cannot be improved, and he *must* be "cast out."

REM. It is plainly manifested in this age.

J. S. G. Ishmael, though fourteen years in the house of Abraham—"the friend of God"—mocks when Isaac is weaned. There is tremendous opposition in the man of the flesh against Christ living in us, for all that *we* are, in connection with Adam, opposes it.

REM. You mean the *best* in man, naturally, hates Christ.

J. S. G. Yes, the *flesh* is not improved when we receive the Spirit, but we some-



times try to train it for God, and that is really the thought of Ishmael. We seek to be for God in the power or energy of the flesh, instead of ignoring that man, and living to God in the Spirit. We may educate him, so that he is not so obnoxious, but it is still Ishmael, and not Christ. Ishmael was trained, but not transformed; but this is taught further on in this epistle.

Here the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

QUES. What is the thought here of living in the flesh?

J. S. G. In Romans it says we are "not in the flesh," for God has made us to live in the Spirit. Here we are viewed as continuing natural life—eating, drinking, &c., the same as all men. We have to work, sleep, &c., because we are still in a natural condition. Now Paul's life in flesh was regulated and sustained by the One before him, who had "loved him and given himself for him." Christ was his motive power for, and in, everything, and thus, whether he ate or drank, it was all in the name of the Lord. (Col. iii. 17.)

REM. Paul made tents.

J. S. G. He did, and his soul was sustained with God when doing it by the One who was ever before him. We are not tested so much by some great event as by our souls being maintained continually with God in connection with our daily life in flesh. Christ never changes, and the Spirit has come that He may not only be before me, but that He may live in my heart and mind, and so fill them. .

QUES. What do you understand by "the faith of the Son of God"?

J. S. G. It is characteristic of Christianity, and by it we overcome the world. (1 John v. 5.) Paul lived by faith, so did all the Old Testament saints, but Paul's faith was "the faith of the Son of God," and so he overcame the world.

QUES. Is it the principle—"The just shall live by faith"?

J. S. G. I think "by faith" is that there he mentions what characterised his faith, which is the faith of Christianity—God being fully revealed. That Person was before his soul. A real Person, who loved and gave Himself for him. It is intensely individual—"He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*." Christ lived *in* him, but he had ever to be sustained by an object *before* him—the Person of the Son.

QUES. Old Testament saints "lived by faith," did they not?

J. S. G. Yes, but not by "the faith of the Son of God."

QUES. What is the difference?

J. S. G. To live by faith is to live in the light of what is unseen by the world, but which *will* be displayed.

"The faith of the Son of God" is the full light of Christianity. The Son of God, One in whom we can see all that *God* is, in display, the Centre of God's universe, the One who loved Paul perfectly, was ever before his soul, and thus he was sustained.

QUES. Is it open to every believer to look up and say, "The Son of God who loved *me* and gave himself for me"?

J. S. G. There are many who *say* they believe, and perhaps *do* to a certain extent, but yet they have not the living Person before them. The gospel presents Christ raised from the dead and glorified, and the Spirit is given after a person believes on Him risen from the dead. The soul who has appropriated Him enjoys His love, knowing by the Spirit that he is one whom Christ loves.

REM. No Old Testament saint could say *that*.

J. S. G. No. The great thing for *us* is

not to *say*, but to see that *we know*, experimentally, the reality of having Him before us, and thus live in the enjoyment of His love.

QUES. Is it possible that a long time may elapse between being "born again" and receiving the Spirit?

J. S. G. It *may* be so. There is no rule. God *gives* the Spirit, but to receive the Spirit I must believe on Christ *risen*, for the Spirit can only connect us with Him glorified and the new order of things of which He is the Centre.

REM. I suppose my apprehension will grow, but I must believe on Him first.

J. S. G. We believe on Him risen from the dead, then the Spirit is given, and our apprehension and appreciation grows as we have Christ before us.

QUES. Did the Galatians get that far?

J. S. G. They had received the Spirit, but had been stunted. Paul would entice them, and us, onward by the magnificent prospect of having Christ living in us, and "the Son of God" as an object before our souls to sustain us. These false teachers had got the Galatians off the line of faith, and hence the flesh was substituted for the Spirit.

QUES. Had these persons (the false teachers) the Spirit?

J. S. G. They certainly had not the Spirit, or else they had got far away from God, and so were being used by the enemy to corrupt the gospel.

REM. Abraham knew something of resurrection ?

J. S. G. Yes ; through receiving Isaac from the dead in figure he gained a distinct knowledge of God as "able to raise the dead."

QUES. Is it possible to have the forgiveness of sins and yet not to have the Spirit ?

J. S. G. If a man knows the forgiveness of sins and is free with God he has the Spirit. When Peter presented Christ risen to the household of Cornelius the Spirit fell on them. (Acts x. 44-47.) The presence of the Spirit is opened up upon two distinct lines in scripture. One line is, we believe on God, who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, and the Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. The other line is in Romans vii. and viii., and there the Spirit is the power of life, so that we can live to God and respond to His love. The first connects with faith, and the second with experience.

QUES. Why did not the Samaritans receive the Spirit until the Apostles Peter and John went down ?

J. S. G. That hindered Samaria being

made a centre, and helped to maintain unity.

Do not let us forget the important points of these two chapters. Paul was an apostle from a resurrection source by the anointed Man in glory, and God revealed as Father. The Lord had given Himself to free them from their sins, which connected them with this world, that He might deliver them *out* of this world. His gospel was received by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul thus came in testimony direct from Christ in glory, and did not even see the other apostles until there was ample evidence of the *Lord Himself* having committed a ministry to him. Then, he was not regulating man in the flesh by law, nor recognising the directions given to man in the flesh, as seen in the privileged Jew, for Christ was living in him, and he was sustained in his life here by the Son of God being before him, and his soul in the enjoyment of His love. May *we* follow on that line through the Lord's goodness.

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## No. III.

### CHAPTER III.

J. S. G. The apostle having brought before the Galatians that which he greatly desired for them—"Christ liveth in me"—proceeds to state the point of departure with them. He calls them "senseless." They had been "bewitched," led astray, though Jesus Christ had been portrayed before the gaze of their souls and they had received the Spirit.

QUES. Was it not singular that the Galatians should be in such a condition when they had received the Spirit?

J. S. G. They had been entrapped, and were thus shunted on to a wrong line.

REM. I hardly think it would be possible for us to be so entrapped. They supplemented "the law" to the work of Christ.

J. S. G. It is similar to the idea of the law being "the rule of life" for the Christian. They believed in Christ, but they wanted to *add* the law to make themselves perfect. The apostle shews that there are two systems which are in marked contrast

from one another, and which cannot be connected.

QUES. Are *we* not in danger of being, in principle, under law?

J. S. G. That is one of the greatest hindrances to our spiritual progress. It may not be in such a glaring way as with the Galatians, but it is the same in principle, though in a more subtle form. How often people complain of not finding love amongst the saints. This is being under law, in principle. We must not be on the line of expecting love to be shewn by others; but if we are enjoying God's love we shall be *showing* love, and then we shall soon find response.

REM. We are apt to slip into it. I heard of a sister leaving the meeting because when she had been absent for a time no one shook hands with her.

J. S. G. To be expecting from man is always to be disappointed. Christianity is characterised by two great principles—*loving* and *giving*. The scriptures do not teach me to look for *others* to love and to give, but it teaches *me* to do so.

REM. Christians in system are under "the law as a rule of life."

J. S. G. If *we* were free of it it would be a great mercy. We all know, doctrinally,



that we are not under law, but are we in principle so free of the law that we are manifesting the grace of Christ? Are we marked by loving and giving? The Galatians had been started on right lines, for through Paul's preaching Christ crucified had been portrayed before their spiritual vision.

QUES. What does that mean?

J. S. G. The gospel presents Christ, and where there is faith, Christ, as an object, is before my soul, and thus by the power of the Spirit I see Him. (John xiv. 19.) Christ crucified had been presented to their souls as *ending*, sacrificially, the man who *could* be put under law. This had been portrayed before them, and, by faith, they had received this light, but they had not been true to the light.

QUES. What do you mean by that?

J. S. G. That which has been presented to the soul, even if it has been received by faith, has to be worked out in practice in the power of the Spirit. Paul had preached Christ as the One who had ended, in sacrifice, the sinful man. They had not merely assented to it, but had believed it, and Christ *crucified* had been placed before the vision of their souls.

QUES. Were not the Corinthians on the same lines?

J. S. G. Yes, but it took a different form. Christ *crucified* is the ending in sacrifice of the sinful, wise, or legal man.

QUES. Had they lost sight of that?

J. S. G. They certainly had, and perhaps had never understood the force of it. It was indeed perplexing for them that those legal teachers should come among them; but if they had been true to the light they had received through Paul they would have refused their false teaching.

REM. Perhaps it was allowed for *our* profit.

J. S. G.. Now Paul appeals to them, and shews the foolishness of such teaching. Did they receive the Spirit by works of law, or by the hearing of faith? Having begun in the Spirit, would they be made perfect in the flesh? These questions would exercise them, and their own answers would shew the absurdity of the false teaching. Then we must bear in mind that we cannot separate the presence of *the Spirit as life* from the death of Christ as having morally ended the man.

REM. Please explain that.

J. S. G. God has removed the man of the flesh in judgment, in the sacrifice of Christ, and He has given the Spirit that *that* man may be displaced *in me*. These two thoughts

go together. We can distinguish them, but they must not be separated.

QUES. Do we get the Spirit as life in Romans viii. 10?

J. S. G. The man is removed by being ended in God's sight when Christ died, and of this the blood is a witness. (Rom. iii. 25.) Then we have the divine intention *for us* (in Romans viii. 3, 4), but this we have to reach in the spirit of our minds and in the history of our souls, and then *we prove* the Spirit to be life, enabling us to walk in righteousness, not recognising the man that God has condemned in the cross. The measure of my appropriation of the death of Christ will be the measure of the displacement in me of the obnoxious man by the Spirit. We may even insist doctrinally in the energy of the flesh, on the *removal* of that man, and still *retain* him. The fact of his removal can only be *maintained* by "walking in the Spirit," by whom he is displaced in me practically.

Here the apostle speaks of Christ crucified and then of the presence of the Spirit.

Christ bore on the cross the wrath of God—all that He was in holiness against sin—and thus the life of the sinful man was ended. *The same death which puts the sins away morally removes the man—the sinner.*

QUES. Do *we* learn it separately?

J. S. G. We learn what took place when Christ died. There are many aspects and types of His death, but they all point to the one death of our Lord. We may, perhaps, learn here a little and there a little; but all was complete and perfect under God's eye the moment Christ died. The apostle said (Acts xiii. 38), "Through *this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins"; and here, in Galatians, he says, "Christ crucified" was portrayed. This shews plainly what Paul preached.

REM. The gospel preached that does not present the *end* of the sinful man would be defective.

J. S. G. It would indeed, and would not be *the* gospel. We may be slow to learn it, but the end of man in the cross of Christ is the divine fact. Israel wandered thirty-eight years before they reached the brazen serpent. The ground had been cleared for *God* in Exodus xii., but figuratively *they* did not arrive at the divine intention for them until they came to the brazen serpent and the springing well.

REM. What *they* were was manifested in their wanderings.

J. S. G. The wilderness is where we should learn what God is, and the fourteen

days is necessary. God would have us to gain an experimental knowledge of Himself, so that

“There no stranger-God shall meet thee,  
Stranger thou in courts above.”

QUES. How fourteen days?

J. S. G. Three days to Mount Horeb and eleven to Kadesh Barnea. We have to learn God in three connections: the One who leads us *out*, who maintains us in our *journeyings*, and then the One who takes us *in*.

QUES. Do we not often speak as though the thirty-eight years were necessary?

J. S. G. They wandered thirty-eight years through not keeping the feast.

QUES. What feast?

J. S. G. God brought them out to hold a feast (Exo. v. 1), but instead of keeping it, they put themselves under law. (Exo. xxiv. 7.) They did not appreciate His *grace*, and undertaking to be obedient and to do God's will, they missed the feast, and wandered instead of journeying. Through not feasting they had no desire for that which God had purposed for them; and the man that did not appreciate the purpose of God was (figuratively) morally removed at the brazen serpent and displaced by the springing well.

There are two leading features connected

with God's people on earth during the present period. The first is faith, and the second is the presence of the Spirit. Faith is a principle on which God's people have moved from the beginning, but now we are privileged to have the complete plan before us of that which will be displayed in the coming day. Then the presence of the Spirit is *the* characteristic feature of the present period; for the unique position and portion of the church depends on the indwelling of the Spirit. It is *by faith* we receive God's testimony concerning what *will* be *manifested*; and by the Spirit it is enjoyed and possessed in hope.

QUES. How would you describe faith?

J. S. G. Unseen things become real to the soul by the Spirit on that principle. A newborn child has eyes, and gradually its power to perceive grows. Faith enables us to see what is set forth in testimony. If you walk across this room, you do not fall over the table, because you see; but if you were blind, you might walk against it. It is our privilege to walk by faith, governed by the principles of God's world, which no natural man has seen, or can see.

REM. We believe what we cannot verify.

J. S. G. We believe *God's* testimony.

QUES. Is faith the product of new birth?

J. S. G. When born anew, figuratively speaking, the soul has eyes, but light is needed to be able to see. A person may have splendid sight, but he cannot see in the dark. Thus a soul born anew needs to be brought into the light of God. He needs the revelation of God presented to him, and then he gradually perceives that God is absolute goodness. Thus the light, which is objective, becomes subjective, or *light in his soul*; and this is what governs him if he walks with God.

There may be three pictures on this wall, but I may have only noticed one; then you call my attention to them, and I see two, and later on a third. Thus Christ is presented in testimony, and He becomes *an object* before my soul, and as I walk by faith in the power of the Spirit, I see more of His beauty and grace, and also the vastness of that immense order of things of which He is the appointed Sun and Centre! To walk by faith is to be governed by Him and by that which is now unseen, but which will shortly come into actual display. Faith is connected with that order of unseen, but eternal things!

QUES. Is faith light?

J. S. G. They are not identical though *ts* *Light* is God revealed as the embodiment of all moral perfection. *Faith* is the principle

by which the soul comes into blessing in contrast to by works; then, if he goes on, he *lives* by the enjoyment of, and in the light of, what is unseen (2 Cor. iv. 18); and the *walk* is governed by the same. By faith we apprehend that which is set forth in divine testimony.

REM. Spiritual eyesight appears to me to be a good description of what you are speaking of.

J. S. G. We see, or have, before us by faith, that which God now affirms, but has not yet publicly established. Scripture describes more the *characteristics* of faith than what it is in itself. We might have a difficulty to explain exactly what sight is, but we do know that we can see, and that sight has certain results.

The leading feature in Christianity is the presence of the Spirit. The truth of "the body" and "the house" depends on the indwelling of the Spirit; and no company of saints outside the church will be indwelt by the Spirit. Directly we are off the line of faith we substitute flesh for Spirit.

REM. That would reinstate the man removed in the cross and bring in the principle of law, and this would be worse than the Galatians were.

QUES. Is living connected with new birth?



J. S. G. It is not so connected in scripture. Living is connected with the knowledge of God revealed in Christ and the presence of the Spirit. God acts in sovereign mercy, and by the operation of the Spirit upon us we are "born anew." Then begins *a work of God* in the soul, which is carried on by the Spirit.

REM. I do not quite see the force of that expression "upon us."

J. S. G. You must have a person before there can be a work of God in him. A person has no existence spiritually until he is born anew. The person then begins to exist in connection with God. The Spirit now works in him and exercise is produced; the light of the gospel shines in, and after the reception of the Spirit Christ is gradually formed within.

QUES. Do you distinguish between being "born anew" (John iii. 3) and being "born of God" (John i. 13; 1 John iv. 18)?

J. S. G. I think "born of God" gives the full thought of birth. Being "born again," or anew, is the initial work of God in the soul. A spiritual existence is imparted; but "born of God" includes a moral character, which is the result of the reception of the Spirit and the work of the Spirit. It is necessary to be born anew

that we may be *able* to see. Except a man be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John iii.) "Born of God" is to have tastes and character suited to those who are taken up for the pleasure of God.

QUES. Is the being "born anew" true in all dispensations?

J. S. G. Yes. In all dispensations or periods since man fell, man must be "born again," or, as the New Translation renders it, "born anew," to perceive what is of God. It is the sovereign act of God in mercy by the Spirit, and is the *beginning* of a person's existence spiritually; then, through the presentation of what God is in the gospel, that person takes character, and is born of Him. (1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John ii. 29.)

REM. The Galatians, to whom Paul wrote, had not only been born anew, but had also received the Spirit.

J. S. G. Yes; but, alas, they did not continue in faith on the Spirit's line.

QUES. I would like to ask where repentance comes in?

J. S. G. In connection with the exercise of soul prior to believing the gospel, but we are ever learning, if walking with God, what a hateful thing sin is.

QUES. Is it before conversion?

J. S. G. Conversion is being *turned to God*.

Born anew is God's act in divine sovereignty by the Spirit in mercy, and then when the person hears the gospel he turns to God. The order is: "Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

QUES. Did the prodigal of Luke xv. repent "when he came to himself"?

J. S. G. There was a measure of repentance then, but full repentance was after he was "covered with kisses." Full repentance can only take place in the light of the *love* of God. A person then sees *who* he has sinned against, and can then face the extent of his complete ruin. He could not do this before, for he would be driven to despair apart from some light as to the goodness of God. The younger son fully repented when he had been covered with the Father's kisses; and Israel *will* repent of their rejection of Christ, as described in Psalm li., when they know God revealed as presented in Psalm l.

QUES. Is it preaching the grace of God, or is it the judgment of God, that works repentance?

J. S. G. Luke xv. shews clearly that it was the absolute goodness of the father that led the son to entirely condemn himself, and freely and fully confess his sin. The man who was in hell, in Luke xvi., had refused the grace and love displayed in Luke xv., as

did the elder son. It is a *difficult* thing to go to hell; for a man has to pass by all God's overtures in mercy and grace, and refuse everything that a God of perfect love could present to attract him.

QUES. Should we not have "the terror of the Lord" before us when preaching?

J. S. G. The apostle knew "the terror of the Lord," and this led him to "*persuade* men." This means, I judge, the seriousness and awfulness of a sinful man having to stand before a holy God! This is much needed. We have to measure ourselves in God's presence. There is often little exercise because persons have never experimentally met God. The woman in John iv. was interested when the Lord spoke to her, but when He touched her conscience she felt the influence of His presence.

QUES. What is the difference between preaching the cross and the preaching of the gospel?

J. S. G. The preaching of the cross *is* preaching the gospel. The cross is the death of shame. The man in the flesh is thus set aside. The gospel is the *whole* glad tidings, and the preaching of the cross is the application of Christ's death, which excludes the wisest and best man the flesh can produce. The gospel is God's testimony to man con-

cerning Christ on high, and all the blessed results through the presence of the Spirit here. It is the means by which God delivers souls out of this present world and brings them now into the enjoyment of the blessing of Abraham. The great thing for us is to see that we are enjoying in our own souls Christ, who is the Centre of all.

REM. We should then move forward.

J. S. G. These false teachers had probably pressed that through circumcision and law they were connected with the line of God's people on earth, and therefore with Abraham. Hence the apostle shews that the portraying of Jesus Christ crucified, the reception of the Spirit, ministering the Spirit, and the working of miracles, were all on the principle of *faith*. This corresponded with how Abraham was reckoned righteous, and circumcision and law came in afterwards.

REM. The Jews were wrong when they said, "We have Abraham to our father."

J. S. G. They of course spoke of what was true by natural descent, but they were not morally sons of Abraham. God has said, in view of the justification of the Gentiles by faith, "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." So those on the principle of faith are blessed, with Abraham, who

believed God, but those on the principle of law-keeping are under the curse of a broken law. These are most important principles for us to weigh before the Lord. Faith exalts God, but makes nothing of man. By faith we believe God's testimony, and then we enjoy the blessing by the Spirit. On the other hand, to be on the line of law, or demand, is, in principle, to be under the curse. On the line of demand, expecting from man, there is only barrenness of soul, disappointment, and unhappiness; but righteousness and life characterise those who, on the principle of faith, by the Spirit, enjoy the blessing.

REM. It is the children of Abraham who come into the blessing?

J. S. G. Yes; those who have his character. He was a man of faith. Christ had redeemed those who had been Jews from the curse that the blessing of Abraham might come to the nations in the power of the Spirit. How immensely important it is for us to see to it that *we enjoy* the blessing. Christ—the "Seed," has now come. He, for faith, has now His place as Head of that vast order of blessing according to eternal purpose. Righteousness, life, and the full spiritual force of the words, "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed,"

can now be enjoyed. What a great difference there would be if we were all free from the principle of demand, and were glorying in God Himself, in what *He* is, in His purposes, and in His love, and thus enjoying the blessing. Then we each would be contributors at the different meetings, and to all God's people. Both brothers and sisters are contributors to the spirit of the meeting and to the spirit existing generally among the Lord's own. If not in the enjoyment of the promised blessings we hinder rather than help, and this should cause exercise. Hence it is important to see that the blessing of Abraham is *experimentally* reached, and that we are daily living in the enjoyment of it. Nothing but this can really deliver from the spirit of legality, which is so natural to us all, and from the sad departure from the truth and the ways of God which has taken place and is so general. Professing Christendom is characterised by emulation and strife, instead of by love, and by demand and begging instead of by giving. Let us each see that we in our feeble measure are marked by that which is according to God, through Christ being formed in us, expressing divine love, and therefore being *contributors* instead of expecting from others. The perfect One when on earth has left us an example, for

He "came not to be ministered unto, but to *minister*, and to *give* His life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.) He also said in word and deed, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.)

QUES. How do you understand "He that ministereth to you the Spirit"?

J. S. G. I suppose that, through the preaching of the gospel, they received the Spirit. Paul laid his hands on those at Ephesus. The Galatians had been idolatrous under the influence of evil spirits, and the result of receiving the Holy Spirit must have been very distinct and in marked contrast. *Now* everything has been corrupted, and the outward marks are not so manifest. The Spirit is grieved generally, and hindered, though He still maintains livingly all that is for God; and *we* need to be self-judged, and to walk in separation if we would prove the Spirit's power.

REM. The fact of receiving the Spirit sets the man aside.

J. S. G. I am then able to say, "I *myself*," that which is of nature, and corrupted by sin, I still carry about, but *that* is not "I myself." The Spirit displaces the sinful man in me, so that I am able to take account of myself as apart from what I am as descended from Adam, and as morally



formed of God. "So then," I can say, "with the mind I *myself* serve the law of God."

REM. Paul had said, "In myself dwelleth no good."

J. S. G. He had looked at the inward movements as himself, then he looks at sin as not himself but as an enemy, and so he can, through grace, think of himself as living to God—I myself; and all the rest is a burden which he is now free of in mind, and will actually get rid of when called into the presence of his Lord in glory.

REM. In John's epistle the saints are looked at in the same abstract way.

J. S. G. It is a great day for our souls when we are individually able, in truth, to say, "I myself." Then, later, we can look at ourselves as "born of him," and again as "Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are *all of one*; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.)

Moses broke down in faith when wanting his father-in-law for eyes; soon after the people complained and lusted after the things of Egypt, but the first departure was with Moses.

The covenant had been made with Abraham, and was confirmed to Isaac,

which is Christ, really. This covenant expressed the spontaneous, free blessing which God promised to Abraham in Genesis xii., and confirmed to Isaac in Genesis xxii. The law came four hundred and thirty years later, and was *added* to raise the question of righteousness, until Christ, "the Seed," should come. It was ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator.

QUES. What is the thought of a "mediator" ?

J. S. G. A mediator stands between two parties. In the Old Testament the mediator is *from man to God*, and the one side of the covenant depended on man fulfilling it, and therefore everything on those terms was lost. In the New Testament the Mediator is *from God to man*. He reveals all that *God* is, and is the expression of the whole mind of God regarding man. Hence for those who live in Him the blessing is certain, for all is dependent on God Himself. This (all being dependent upon God Himself) was God's original thought when the *promise* was given, for the promise was unconditional. The law, which was added, is not against the promise, but it shews that on account of what man is, *all* must be fulfilled in sovereign mercy, on the principle of *faith*. The law demands, but cannot give life. So it was

the tutor until Christ came, but *now* we are "God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus."

QUES. What is the thought in verse 23? Was there not faith before Christ came.?

J. S. G. "Faith," there, is the faith of Christianity. It is connected with the revelation of God in Christ. Therefore now it is no longer the position of servants under law, or children under tutors, but *sons of God* by faith in Christ Jesus. Then in verse 29 he says, "But if ye are *of* Christ Jesus, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." Being *of Christ*, these are the moral traits which are seen in Abraham, and thus they would be the true "heirs."

REM. "If ye were . . . ye would do the works," &c. (John viii. 39.)

J. S. G. This chapter (Gal. iii.) speaks of us as being *of* Christ, but it does not reach "Christ liveth in me." The principle of law stands in marked contrast to promise, or grace and faith, and hence *the* "blessing" is not known on that line. Now we are "all one in Christ Jesus." There is no Jew nor Greek; there is no bondman (slave) or free-man; no male or female; these distinctions cease "in Christ."

QUES. Does verse 27 lead to that?

J. S. G. I think so. Christ is "put on"

in baptism. He is named over the person baptised, and thus Christ is professedly put on.

QUES. Is that the christian circle in verse 28?

J. S. G. It alludes to it.

QUES. To "put on Christ," is that nominally?

J. S. G. This is spoken of Christians, and supposed to be real. I do not think any should be baptised unless they believe on the Lord, or belong to a christian household. The head of a christian household can count on God for them, and *if there is faith, with obedience*, they will be all brought to know God. *Apparently*, when the house of Stephanas was baptised, it did not go beyond the slaves; but when they "addicted themselves to the ministry," the hired servants, or some others, were included. At least, so it seems, for the larger word (in the original) is then used. If the head of the house trains the household according to the baptism, it will affect those who feel its influence.

REM. It bore fruit.

J. S. G. It must bear fruit if taken up in faith and in the fear of God. With some it is a matter of law; they say it is to "obey a command," and that is really to place souls on Galatian ground; and, besides, it is giving

something to the sinner to *do* ; for in scripture baptism is a living man buried to Christ's death, and not a dead man. Paul says, As many as have been baptised "*unto* Christ Jesus have been baptised unto his *death*." (Rom. vi. 2.)

The importance of the Epistle to the Galatians is great, and we need to be exercised as to what line *we* are on. We cannot make ourselves grow, but we must be in the conditions which are necessary for growth. Then, with *proper food*, we *shall* grow. May we each be more in the enjoyment of the "blessing" of Abraham by the Spirit, that we may better represent God, who is in His nature *love*, and who has revealed Himself as a *giving* God.



## No. IV.

### CHAPTER IV.

J. S. G. The apostle has spoken of faith, the presence of the Spirit, and the blessing of Abraham; he now develops the great leading feature of Christianity. This is not the position of servants, or even children under age, but of *sons*, with the state connected therewith; *sonship* is the greatest privilege to which we are called.

REM. Brought to know the Father.

J. S. G. To know the Father in association with the Son of God.

REM. There could be nothing higher.

J. S. G. We are *united* to the *Man* Christ Jesus; but we are in *association* with the *Son of God* in life and nature.

REM. It is important to see that it is in association with the Son of God that we are *sons*.

J. S. G. We could have no idea of sonship according to God, except through seeing the place the Son of God has with the Father. "We have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father." (John i. 14, New Trans.) It is a term of affection. He was the only One, the unique

One, the One who had a glory as of an only-begotten Son; the One in the bosom of the Father, who, in His own Person, shews the position which is ours, for His own delight and the Father's satisfaction.

QUES. Do we get the thought of sonship first with Israel?

J. S. G. No, first of all it is with angels; we read—The sons of God (angels) shouted for joy when they saw the work of God in creation. (Job xxxviii. 7.) And God said of *Israel* to Pharaoh, "Let my son go." (Exo. iv. 23.) This was national. God called the nation whom He had chosen, "my son, my firstborn." (Exo. iv. 22.) This adoption belonged to Israel (Rom. ix. 4), but the full divine thought of sonship is only seen in *the* Son of God.

REM. "Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Hos. xi. 1; Matt. xi. 15.)

J. S. G. That speaks of Christ, who went down into Egypt and recommenced the history of Israel in His own Person. He is the true Israel, the stock from whence "the Israel of God" springs. (Isa. xlix. 3.) But the place of sonship given to those who form the church is far beyond that of Israel's.

QUES. How do you define the difference?

J. S. G. Angels are sons of God. They,

in measure, display God. They are holy, blameless in their ways, have intelligence through observing the work and the ways of God, and they can rejoice in what God performs. (Job. xxxviii. 7; Luke ii. 13, 14.) Then all those who have part in the resurrection from among the dead are sons of God. (Luke xx. 36.) And, again, all "overcomers" are sons of God. (Rev. xxi. 7.) Thus in the future it will not be sonship for Israel in a national sense merely, but there will be an intelligent response from each *individual* in Israel, and the nations will be brought to know God. Revelation xxi. 7 shews that in the eternal condition of things each individual will belong to one of the many families of sons. There will, I judge, be degrees of intelligence and intimacy with the different companies, though all will be *sons*, and all supremely blessed according to eternal purpose. The different families will be formed so as to respond intelligently to the love of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" according to the position assigned them by God in His perfect wisdom. But the position of those who form the church is *far* beyond this, for they have "the Spirit of God's Son."

REM. "Bringing many sons unto glory."  
(Heb. ii. 10.)



J. S. G. That is said of *us now*, but it will have an application to others after we are gone.

QUES. Can you make the difference a little clearer to us ?

J. S. G. This scripture shews that those under law were like children cared for by guardians and stewards, but when the suitable moment arrived God sent forth His Son. He came of woman, came under law, to redeem those under law, that they might receive *sonship*. Then he says, "And *because* ye are *sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.)

Let us ponder the words, "Spirit of his Son." There could be nothing more marvellous. What could we have more than the Spirit of *His Son* ! This is unique and belongs only to those who compose the church. The sons in the other families (Eph. iii. 15) will not have "the Spirit of his Son." They will be sons, and as such know God as Father ; but I know of no scripture which even hints of them having "the Spirit of his Son."

QUES. Does that go on to eternity ?

J. S. G. Certainly. It is ours now through the presence of the Spirit, but at present we are hampered by being in the

body. Soon we shall enjoy it unhinderedly in the full power of the Spirit with the Son in the presence of the Father. There is no natural relationship which *fully* illustrates it, though even in nature a son has the thoughts and feelings of a son; he takes character from the father, and expresses traits seen in his father. One prominent thought connected with sons in scripture is expression of character, so we read of "sons of light," "sons of your father," &c.

God sent forth His Son. This One—the One sent forth, had a unique position in the Father's affections. He was actually the complete answer to every desire of the Father's heart. He was in His bosom (John i. 18), and there was from Him the perfect intelligent response to the Father's affections. He was ever perfectly, throughout His whole life on earth, in the full consciousness of it. He could say, "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Of Him it was said, "I will be to him for Father, and he shall be to me for Son." (Heb. i. 5, New Trans.) This unique position of relationship as Man He entered into by becoming Man, though it is based on, and cannot be separated from, what He was eternally with the Father. We thus see in Him, the Son of God on high,

One who has become Man—One who is all the Father could desire, and with the Father in the fullest intelligent response to Him.

Now "the Spirit of his Son" has been sent into *our* hearts that there may be with *us* the intelligent response as seen in Him. Of course *we* are only finite creatures, and He is infinite, though a real Man. Still, "the Spirit of his Son" has been given to us that we may, being loved as He is loved (John xvii. 23), have, in measure, the holy responsive feelings toward the Father which He had. This is beyond all human ken, and almost too holy a subject to speak of, and surely we can in the thought of it only bow in adoration and praise?

A son has feelings towards a father that an adopted son could not have. If you had an only son, you could not impart his feelings and the response which flows from being in the relationship, to a boy whom you might adopt. Let us ponder over this divine fact, that God has sent forth *His* Son. Then because we are sons, He has sent forth the Spirit of *His* Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father! The greatness of this should impress us, and should impart real purpose of heart, that we may experimentally know more of this marvellous fact.

Our Lord in His deepest hour of trial,

apart from the actual cross, was in the fullest consciousness of His relationship with the Father. It was then He said, "Abba Father." Now the Spirit of His Son has been given to us (all who form the church) that there may be the same holy response from us—that we may intelligently respond in uttering the same words, "Abba Father." What holy liberty! What heavenly joy this speaks to us of! May we know more of what it is, in association with the Son, to be before the Father in adoration and worship.

QUES. Is not sonship connected with inheritance?

J. S. G. The shining forth of the sons is, but here it is the *position* and *state* of sons that we have with God.

QUES. Is it not a future thing?

J. S. G. It is future in its full fruition, but it is a present fact. *Sons* are in association with the Son of God glorified, and *children* are in association with Him where He has been rejected. We are *now* children, and we have the Spirit of God's Son in our hearts. In the *future* it will involve our being "conformed to the image of his Son." Our place as sons will be displayed in glory, but it is a present divine reality, for it is the place given to us now in association with Him before the Father's face.

REM. It is God's purpose for us.

QUES. Is responsibility connected with children ?

J. S. G. Not exactly. We are "born of God," and our present privilege is to live in the consciousness of the Father's love being set upon us ; the same love which rested on Christ as Man down here being bestowed on *us*—the children, and the characteristics which mark children of God will shine forth—that is, righteousness and love. (1 John iii. 10, 14, 16.) Children are the divine generation, living in the Father's love, in the scene of the Lord's rejection, and this is entered into in the power of the Spirit by faith. (John i. 12, 13 ; 1 John iii. 14 ; Rom. viii. 14.) Sons is association in life and nature with the Son of God in the Father's presence.

REM. "As sons before Thy face," as one of J. N. D.'s hymns has it.

J. S. G. That is the thought. It is our present place with the Son where He is, in the Father's affections, though in its full actuality we shall reach it when we are with Him.

REM. We are not in the full position yet.

J. S. G. We are in the *position* of sons, but not actually in *the place* to which, as sons, we belong. In Romans viii. 15 it is "*a*

*spirit of sonship*, whereby we cry, Abba Father."

In Galatians it is position and state in contrast to servants, and children under age: "No more a servant, but a son, having the Spirit of his Son." In Ephesians i. 5 we have the full thought of sonship, and the place to which such belongs in the heavenlies, according to the good pleasure of His (the Father's) will. It is our privilege to enjoy this in the assembly now (John xx. 20, 22), if we do, we shall surely, in our own souls, ever seek to maintain the blessed consciousness of it.

We may well each ask ourselves, Do we really *believe* these divine facts?

QUES. Does not every child of God believe them?

J. S. G. To believe truly produces a result. If we believed that this hall was on fire, should we sit here very long quietly speaking to one another, as we are? So, if we believe that God has given us the position and state of sons, this must produce exercise in desire to taste and enjoy the reality of it, and the Spirit is here to lead us into it. *Has* this been the result with you and with me?

REM. We are a sleepy lot!

J. S. G. We often, through mercy, *speak* of these things, but there is the danger, if

we are not kept in nearness to the Lord, of the greatness and the sweetness of them passing away from us.

What a momentous fact—the Son, the Creator of all things, has become a Man! And men were privileged to hear Him—the Son of God, freely addressing the Father. What a privilege for man! With what holy liberty the Son could speak to the Father. Then how marvellous that the Spirit of His Son is given to us that *we*, in our measure, may be thus before the Father.

This was His own personal place as “the Son of God” in manhood; but it shews the position which those who form the church have by divine grace! Thus it is not merely being sons, marvellous as that is, but all the precious liberty and nearness which flows from having the Spirit of God's Son.

What a stupendous fact it is that one divine Person—the Son become Man—should privilege men to hear Him say to the Father: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” Then again: “And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” And again: “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the

love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John xvii. 24, 23, 26.)

QUES. How can we lay hold of its greatness?

J. S. G. It is brought before us in the Son. Faith sees it, and the Spirit is within us that we may appropriate—enter into it livingly in our souls. The heart is thus captivated by the presentation of the Son, the face is then set in the right direction, and the Spirit gradually leads the soul into the consciousness of the wonderful place given us according to eternal purpose! We all need our hearts to be more captivated by His greatness and the vastness of God's purpose concerning us, so that *we* may have more purpose of heart to be here for His glory.

QUES. Does Satan hinder?

J. S. G. Directly we are brought to know the Lord his effort is to hinder us from entering into the purpose of God. Then he always persists in seeking to catch us, so that we may *lose* the conscious enjoyment of the best thing our souls have entered into.

QUES. What is the present gain of sonship?

J. S. G. That we may know and enjoy our place of privilege with the Son of God in the presence of His God and Father. This would fit us to take part in the wor-



shipping company, and there would be the response from us which the Father "seeks." If this were known experimentally, neither the best things of this world, nor the best things of earth would or could detain us.

QUES. What characterises us if we do not move forward?

J. S. G. We are caught with the earth like the two tribes and a half; or those invited to the feast (Luke xiv. 18-20), and thus the *present* possession and enjoyment of the heavenly portion is lost.

REM. Satisfied with present things. This does not unchristianise people, does it?

J. S. G. The two and a half tribes still belonged to Israel, but they did not have the privilege of a portion over Jordan. This is a great snare, let *us* beware of it. The Galatians had been brought to know God, and had received the Spirit; but they were in danger of returning, and in measure had returned, not to idolatry, but to a more subtle kind than that which they had been called out of. An idol is anything which displaces Christ in the hearts (1 John v. 21, Col. iii. 5) of His people. Hence to take up Judaism was to return to idolatry, for that system had been set aside in the cross. How important for each of us to watch against the first germs of idolatry and departure.

QUES. Was their condition worse than that of the Corinthians?

J. S. G. One would judge so, from the way the apostle speaks. Evil doctrine is more dangerous than immorality, for the natural mind can discern and condemn the latter, even when they themselves have been caught by the former.

QUES. Why does the apostle use such high truth as sonship to correct them?

J. S. G. He puts before them what they had not known—the best that God can bring in, to produce movement Godward, so that the departure may be fully and unsparingly judged. The apostle was very concerned about them. He says, “I am afraid of you.” He also said, “Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” And again, “My children, of whom I travail in birth again until *Christ* be formed in you.” He was deeply distressed on their account. They had not injured him personally by saying that he was not under the law of Moses, though he was always under the law of Christ—that is, he was ever subject to God. He reminded them of their former joy, and of how it was manifested. He also desired to be present that he might clearly place before them the two systems—law and grace.

QUES. What do you mean by the two systems?

J. S. G. The one—"the bond woman and her son," is characterised by flesh, law, bondage and persecuting. The other—"the free woman and her son," is marked by "promise," sovereign mercy, freedom and liberty. He appealed to those desirous of being under "the law." Did they listen to its voice? Abraham had two sons, one of the maid servant and one of the free woman. (New Trans.) The source by whom the sons came stand in marked contrast, for one was a slave and the other was free.

In Genesis xxii. and xxiv. Isaac appears to be a type of Christ, and in Genesis xxvi. a type of the heavenly saints, with Christ formed in them.

In this scripture the two systems are contrasted, and it is shewn that Isaac—Christ really—must have His place—be all in all—in the house, and that Ishmael, and what he represented, had no part with the children of promise. Thus Christ would have His place in the individual—"Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20), and likewise collectively, "Christ formed in you." (Gal. iv. 19.) The lesson taught here goes much farther than Romans vii. There Paul, based on what he learned during the "three days," shews that

man in the flesh has no strength, that "the law" only exposes his sinfulness, and weakness, and entire helplessness under the power of sin, though he is desirous of pleasing God. The Galatians had received the Spirit, having believed on Christ risen and glorified; and then afterwards they brought in "the law" to *regulate the man* removed from under God's eye in the cross, and displaced in them by the indwelling Spirit. Thus Ishmael appears to be typical of the reinstating and training of the man that God has set aside in judgment in the sacrifice of Christ, and who is displaced in us, as stated above, by the power of the Spirit given to us.

REM. Ishmael—the religious man, had the privilege of being where Isaac—Christ—was; but this only manifested clearly that he could not appreciate Him.

J. S. G. Few indeed there are who recognise that *the man* has been displaced by the Spirit, and we are all prone to forget it. When that is the case, we seek to train, correct, pull ourselves up and cut off what is offensive, instead of *ignoring* that man entirely, and living to God in the Spirit. Thus we bring in Ishmael.

REM. The man under training.

J. S. G. The nice, well-behaved man *appears* to be all right, until Christ receives

His proper place in the house; then *that* man "mocks." What a solemn lesson! The best-cultivated trait of my nature, no matter how long or carefully trained, only hates Christ. This is because *that* man must be displaced *in me*. He must go, with all his good and bad qualities, to make room for Christ. Not one bit of what *I* am *naturally* can remain, for Christ must be all in all. The scripture has said, "Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." It is allegorical language, of course. These are—as to interpretation—the two covenants. The one, given at Mount Sinai, when Israel had been delivered out of bondage. Then, after they had completely broken down, having lost everything on *that* ground, we read of a "*new covenant*." (Jer. xxxi. 31, xxxii. 40, 42; Heb. viii. 8-13; Luke xxii. 20.) God thus declared the terms (in both cases) of the relationship between Himself and His people. The great contrast between them is, that in the first covenant the nation of Israel would *retain* the blessing *if* they were obedient; but in the second, or "*new covenant*," God forms the people Himself, in mercy, so that their *delight* is to do His will, and therefore they cannot miss the blessing. In the first, God gave the

blessing; but the retaining of it depended upon their faithfulness to the *terms* of the covenant. In the "new covenant" God writes His will in the heart and mind, and then brings them into the blessing. Thus, in the "first," the fulfilment of the terms depended partly on man; but in the other everything depends on God Himself, and thus He secures His people for Himself. He forms His people according to Himself, so that they can inherit the blessing. Oh, what *mercy* and grace!

With the giving of the first covenant, there was obscurity, darkness, and no real liberty. Moses—that meek man—even said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. xii. 21.) This, we are told, answers to Jerusalem in bondage with her children. This was but too painfully evident, for they were not only not in the possession and enjoyment of God's blessing, but they were slaves to the Gentiles. The Jews, though God's chosen earthly people, then, and now, distinctly shew the painful results of being the children of the bond woman. They could not fulfil the demand, and so they reap the solemn results under the hand of God in government.

The Jerusalem which is above is free, for it is all of God. It is formed by divine

handiwork. In sovereign mercy and grace He wrought and formed His people, by the work of the Spirit, according to Himself, so that they might live in the enjoyment of all He is in His nature (LOVE) as revealed in Christ.

QUES. What does "our mother" in verse 26 (New Trans.), mean?

J. S. G. Ishmael sets forth those under the old covenant. He took character from his mother, who was an Egyptian, and the result was bondage, as seen in the earthly Jerusalem. *We* belong to the heavenly Jerusalem, which will be manifested, but is now seen in the Son of God. The freedom of that "city" is ours, and our character is formed by knowing God, as revealed in the Son, according to the intimacy that belongs to the internal privileges of the holy city. Thus we have two thoughts: the children of the free woman and the freedom of the city.

QUES. What is the thought of "born of the free woman"?

J. S. G. Christians are, through grace, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," and then begotten through sovereign mercy. We owe our spiritual existence entirely to God Himself! He comes in to secure a people for Himself. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,

but of God who shews mercy!" (Rom. ix. 16.) Thus "all is *of* God and *for* God," and nothing is dependent on man.

REM. How that excludes all boasting!

QUES. Is the great point "I will write"?

J. S. G. The old covenant shews how good God was to His chosen nation (Deut. vii. 6-8); but now, according to the new covenant, God makes the terms subjectively good in His people. Thus, in the "new" covenant, we can see what God is in His nature, and that all depends on His sovereign mercy!

REM. He makes our hearts to delight in His will!

J. S. G. He says, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 33.) Thus, by working in His people, He shews His great love to them!

QUES. Is the result liberty?

J. S. G. Perfect liberty. He forms the man and places him in conditions suitable to him, as begotten of God. He is free, and in the freedom of the city.

QUES. The city is "above," but who are those of whom it is composed?

J. S. G. It is now seen in the Son of God, and in the future it will be composed of the



saints who form "the church." (Rev. xxi. 2, 9, 11, 23, 27.) The church, as "the city," will display to the universe *what God is*; it will be *the centre* of rule and administration, and those who form it will enjoy the intimacy in *nearness* (distance having disappeared) to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The characteristics of "the city" is now found among the saints by the Spirit, and hence we read, "Christ has set us free in freedom." (Gal. v. 1.) That is true of the saints in the Spirit's power.

QUES. Would the result be Christ formed in us, and therefore Christ now *expressed* in our lives?

J. S. G. Yes; the Spirit, through Paul, places before these Galatians that which, if entered into and continued in, would bring them to what he had stated in chapter ii. 20, 21, "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me; but in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (N.T.) Verse 27 is an interesting quotation from Isaiah liv. 1. The remnant of Judah will be brought to repentance, also to see how perfectly the One they had rejected has met their needs, and that the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand. Then as they look on the

church they reckon that those who form it were the children of Jerusalem in the time of its desolation, and that it was more fruitful than when it had a husband. They can therefore say, "Rejoice," "Enlarge." The grace seen in the church will cause them to break forth on the right hand and on the left, and say, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," &c.

Having shewn that Christians are the children of the free woman, in contrast to the bond woman, through the promise, in contrast to "according to the flesh," and free, in contrast to "in bondage," he says, "But ye, brethren, after the pattern of Isaac, are children of promise." (N.T.) The child of promise was the heir, the loved one of the father, having full title to all the liberty of the house.

The one born according to flesh persecutes him who is according to the Spirit. All the training in the house where Isaac was, where love reigned, had not changed him; and hence we get, "Cast out the maid servant and her son; for the son of the maid servant shall not inherit with the son of the free woman."

There is no place for the bond woman—the old covenant of demand—and her children in the system formed through sovereign

mercy fulfilling God's purpose. Grace, and not law, characterise God's dealings now. All who belong to that order are givers, contributors (rather than those who make demands) in the power of divine love, and the law of demand is excluded. "So then, brethren, we are not maid servant's children, but children of the free woman."

QUES. How is that reached experimentally?

J. S. G. God has "found fault" with the old covenant, and set aside that whole system, and *we* have to go with this *in our minds*, by the power of the Spirit. Then as Christ, the true Isaac, has His place in our hearts, we prefer *Him* to ourselves. It is a great *test* to ask, Do you prefer Christ to yourself?

REM. Some might say, All Christians do.

J. S. G. It is not what I *say*, but *is it true* of me? How often we shew by, or in, our lives that self is preferred to Christ.

REM. It comes closer home than we think.

QUES. Is casting out of Ishmael continual?

J. S. G. It has to be maintained. God has removed that man, and by His Spirit has displaced him in me. If, notwithstanding that, I try to train him, I find it is of no use. He has been ended at the cross, judicially,

for God, and I can only be practically free of him as I "walk in the Spirit," in self-judgment, so that *he* is ignored. There must be no place given to self in our affections, for the *whole* heart belongs to Him and He claims it.

QUES. Is that once for all?

J. S. G. There is a moment which, in mind, Christ has His true place in us, but that has to be maintained by the Spirit.

REM. The question is, have we recognised the casting out of Ishmael so that Christ *has* His rightful place?

J. S. G. No quarter must be given to self. Neither is it any use to cultivate that kind of man, who but "mocks" when Christ has His place. We do need to "walk in the Spirit" that Christ may be formed in us.

QUES. Is that owning Christ as LORD?

J. S. G. It is *more*. If we walk under the Lord's direction we shall be "walking in the Spirit," and then, as a result, Christ will be formed in us.

It would appear as though some do not desire Christ to be formed in them. They read books and papers and go to different places to link themselves with worldly associations for temporal advantages that are grieving to the Spirit and contrary to the Lord's expressed will, who said, "Be ye

separate," and thus hinder the Spirit's work in forming Christ.

They may not be alive to the seriousness of it, but I trust the Lord will deeply exercise us all as to these things, and in regard to Christ being formed in us, for His name's sake.



## No. V.

### CHAPTER V.

J. S. G. This epistle clearly establishes great elementary principles, but also leads to deep and most precious things in the divine storehouse. The death of Christ has terminated the fallen man *for God*, and for those brought to see with God, and the Spirit displaces *that* man in them. Then the blessing of Abraham is brought in for faith, and is to be enjoyed in the Spirit now. It is not simply that we are relieved and brought out from under the effects of the fall, but our portion is to live now in the positive blessing of God. Christ is the Centre, and those who are linked with Him by the Spirit can know the blessedness of *a system characterised by righteousness and life*. "The Spirit of his Son" has been given to us, that we may know the blessed liberty and intimacy with "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," seen in the Son as Man. We are "of the free woman," and therefore we are on the line of "promise," which is the expression of "purpose," of the Spirit which has displaced the flesh, with all the privi-

leges flowing from having "the Spirit of his Son." Now, in this chapter, we read, "Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a yoke of bondage." (New Trans.) Being of the free woman, we are free, and the freedom of the city is ours! What great results God has, in His great goodness, brought to pass! His thought for us is to be "free in freedom."

QUES. How do you illustrate that?

J. S. G. God has brought His people into surroundings which are congenial to them through having the Holy Spirit of God. God has now intervened in sovereign mercy. He "forms" His own by writing Christ on the affections; hence His laws, principles—the expression of His mind—are in their hearts and minds, and they know God-revealed in absolute goodness. They have been formed within in desires, tastes and aspirations according to God, and therefore they can only be really happy in the congenial atmosphere of the "city." Its atmosphere is holy and heavenly, and those who are free find their joy and pleasure in this freedom, glorying in God, who is the Source of all. Hatred and demand are unknown, but the law of love and heavenly grace rules there.

QUES. Do you think the Galatians entered into it ?

J. S. G. Like us, I fear, they were very dull and slow, and indisposed to go forward, through not walking in the Spirit. They evidently knew a little of the joy which flows from tasting it, but had fallen short and had not gone forward. Paul recalls to their minds "the blessedness they spoke of" (chap. iv. 15), and places before them that which would attract them to Christ, that, by the work of the Spirit, *Christ* might be "formed" in them.

REM. It says they "did run well"—made a good start.

J. S. G. Through receiving the Spirit, they so tasted the blessing that they were ready to have plucked out their own eyes—the most precious thing they had—and given them to those who had been used to minister such blessing to them.

REM. An illustration came to my mind. A slave might escape from slavery, but if in the country where slavery was permitted, he could not be in freedom. As free, we need to be in a *sphere* of freedom.

J. S. G. It is a great thing to be free-born. To know that our existence and blessing is through sovereign mercy. God, in electing love, chose us in Christ before



the world began, and in time He *called* us, and has written Christ on our hearts. Isaac was the promised seed. There was no effort to obtain Isaac. He came through the sovereign intervention of God in mercy, when humanly speaking there was no hope, for both parents were as good as dead, being past age. Ishmael, on the other hand, was obtained by effort, and the greatest sorrow of Abraham's life flowed from it. They *would* anticipate the Lord, and possess the promise in the flesh, if it were possible, and this effort was not of faith, but in unbelief. Thus they would have lost the promise that they sought to hasten, for only the seed could inherit it, and therefore Ishmael must be "cast out." He cannot have any share with Isaac. The flesh, though well trained, cannot inherit the blessing, for it is incapable of appreciating the One who is the Centre of all for God.

QUES. In what way can we live in the city now—"Jerusalem which is from above"?

J. S. G. There is no temple—no distance there. There is no artificial light, for *God is fully revealed*. "The Lamb is the lamp of it." God is fully made known in His nature! The cities on earth are all polluted and dens of iniquity, but in this city love prevails, and holiness characterises it; and all is

according to God. Thus the whole atmosphere is suitable to those who have been made "partakers of the divine nature." This means perfect liberty and freedom. The tastes of those who compose the city are all formed by the work of the Spirit through the revelation of God in Christ, and they live in the light of God revealed in holiness and love, which is in perfect accord with the tastes and aspirations of those formed by the Spirit. Thus they are "free in freedom." Then each there has "the Spirit of his Son," so that the full enjoyment of relationship with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in association with the Son, is known. The saints *as formed of God* are "holy and without blame before him in love," and enjoy the place of relationship and affection which He purposed for His own delight. This should clearly be known and enjoyed now by the Spirit in the assembly.

REM. And then the *effects* would be expressed in a moral character according to God.

J. S. G. The *enjoyment* of Him in His own circle *forms* us, so that He lives in us, and then shines forth in our lives. (Col. ii. 12, 13; iii. 10-16.) In this chapter we have, first, "stand fast," because being free in

freedom is the divine thought for us, that individually we may be consistent with the privileges enjoyed in the freedom in which divine grace has set us. Then, later on, we have "walking in the Spirit," that the man set aside at the cross may be *practically* displaced in us, and that the fruit of the Spirit may be evidenced in our lives. Then we shall find our joy, not in *looking for* love, but "*by* love serving one another."

QUES. When the apostle says, "Be ye not entangled in the yoke of bondage," does he refer to Judaism or to idolatry?

J. S. G. They had been Gentile idolaters, and for them to take up Judaism was to return to idolatry, for Judaism had been set aside in the cross. They had been, like the Thessalonians, "turned to God from idols," but were in danger now of a more subtle form of idolatry. He had therefore said he was afraid of them, and he shewed there could be no mingling of the two systems. A man who had been a Jew might have conscientious difficulties, and would have to be borne with; but for Gentiles to take up Judaism was to return to idolatry.

REM. John says, "Keep yourselves from idols." (1 John v. 21.)

J. S. G. Yes, and 1 Corinthians x. is a solemn warning to us.

QUES. Is that true of professing Christians to-day?

J. S. G. The important question is, Are *we* clear of it?

QUES. *How* could it be true of us?

J. S. G. If Christ does not fill our hearts, something else will, and that something which displaces Christ is the idol. Idolatry is that which hinders God from having His rightful place. So to be *at home* in this world, where Christ has died, is idolatry. When Moses was absent on the mount they "sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." In that way they shewed their indifference as to "what had become of him," and that is the kind of idolatry which we are specially warned against.

When the people had returned from Babylon they never worshipped idols made of wood or stone, but a more specious form of idolatry came in. God was displaced by spiritual pride, and their additions to His commands nullified divine thoughts (Matt. xv. 6), and thus there was a kind of man, or *hero-worship*, which is more fully developed in our day. Religious pride always leads to honouring man instead of God, and this leads to the worshipping of man.

QUES. Would you say indifference to Christ is idolatry?

J. S. G. It is clear, if Christ does not command my affections, something else displaces Him. It may be self, money, pleasure, or some trifling thing; but if it has *His* place in my heart, it is idolatry. The only way of salvation from it is to walk in the Spirit, so that *Christ* may be *formed in us*.

It is a marvellous place of liberty that belongs to us. All the blessed effects of having "the Spirit of his Son" marks that "city." What a happy thing it is to be under His influence and control—the sway of the One who loved us even to death, that He might bring us into such wealth of nearness to Himself and to His Father!

QUES. How can I be *maintained* under His influence?

J. S. G. First, like blind Bartimæus, our eyes are opened to see "the Son of God," and we receive the Spirit. Then, as we walk under the Lord's guidance in the power of the Spirit, we are maintained under His influence.

In the second part of this chapter we have therefore teaching in regard to walking in the Spirit. The details of life can be taken up under the Lord, and thus we can gain what will be of value to us hereafter through being with God in life's pathway.

REM. We are privileged to have the Lord

before us in everything that we are engaged in.

J. S. G. The true wife has her husband in her heart, and therefore he comes into all the details of her life. If Christ has His paramount place in our hearts, the Spirit forms Him in us, so that we partake of what He is morally. Then it is our privilege to *do everything in His name*; that is, every word and act would be coloured by what *He* is.

REM. We are either in subjection to the Lord, or we are walking in lawlessness.

REM. Having the Spirit, we can be maintained in subjection to the Lord.

J. S. G. In Romans v. we have what God is for man, and in chapter viii. the Spirit is in us, that there may be the response that God desires from us. The enemy is always seeking to get us entangled either in loose associations—perhaps under the plea of charity, which is really lawlessness, or else in legality, so that we are on the line of demand.

QUES. Is the “yoke” in this chapter “the law”?

J. S. G. In the New Translation it is “*a yoke*.” They were being entangled by the law through these false teachers. We must remember that the great thing for *us* is *the*

*principle* of law and its application. We all know we are not under "the law"—the ten commandments; but are we free of the *principle* and its application of demand? This is so natural to us and it is only by walking in the Spirit in the enjoyment of what God is that we are delivered from the principle of the law. Let us see that we are walking in liberty and not held by any "yoke of bondage."

To be "circumcised" was to recognise the man God had removed at the cross, and had displaced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. This would put the person on the ground of responsibility, and make him a debtor to the whole law, and deprive him of all profit from Christ, for he would stand before God on the ground of what he was in the flesh. Thus the person would fall from grace, be robbed of Christ, and lose all the blessing of which He is the centre. Let us take warning and see that *we* are not commencing to travel that road.

Christian standing is in all that *God is* for all mankind as revealed in Christ. It is through sovereign mercy in the grace of God. Law and grace cannot go together, for they are principles which stand in direct opposition one to the other. The demand on man was given by Moses, but now *all*

*that God is for sinful man*, who has departed from Him, is revealed in Christ. The result is, God will have *His* place, and every creature his place. Grace does not make light of evil, but makes provision in mercy to meet it righteously. Grace does not for a moment tolerate sin, but *removes* it in such a marvellous manner that divine love is expressed in the act. Under law there was demand, but no power to meet the demand. Grace meets the need according to what God is, and wins the heart of man drawn through mercy. Then Christ being before the soul, the whole power of God is present by the Spirit so that we may live in Christ.

QUES. What is the force of verse 5 ?

J. S. G. I thought it was that we await the great climax, or consummation, which will be brought in by the "appearing" of Christ. Our hope is not bound up with man in the flesh and his scene, but with Christ, and an entirely new order of things, founded on a righteous basis laid in the cross. In that condition of things, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, or anything which is of the man removed in the sacrifice of Christ by the mercy of God avails, but what *does* avail, is faith working by love.

REM. Our whole life, then, is in view of God's world.



J. S. G. May the Lord grant that it may be so with each one of us until we see Him. The Galatians had run well for a time, but had been stopped in their "obeying the truth." This was not of God, who had called them. A little evil working soon permeates the whole. "Leaven" is evil in activity.

QUES. Is it by self-judgment that we are saved from it?

J. S. G. We carry sin about with us, though we do not recognise it as part of ourselves, but as an enemy; and it is only through grace, by walking on the principle of self-judgment in the power of the Spirit, that we are saved from it mastering us.

The apostle had confidence as to these Galatians *in the Lord*. Looking to Him, and remembering how He *had* wrought in them, gave him "confidence." To look at *them* was to see persons commencing to travel a road which would lead to apostasy. The Lord will always hold His own, but these warnings are given to hinder us from *starting* on a road which His love would lead Him to hinder us from travelling, and the end of which He will never allow His own to reach. Still it is for us to see that we do not go that way, but stand fast in the liberty and freedom in which grace has set us.

If the apostle preached circumcision, if he

recognised that man had a standing here in the flesh, why did he suffer persecution? To give a standing to the man that God has removed in judgment, is to do away with the reproach of the cross. True circumcision is that we are *cut off* in the circumcision of Christ. (Col. ii. 11.) The apostle said, "I would that they [the false teachers] would even cut themselves off who throw you into confusion." (New Trans.) They preached circumcision—cutting off—but, if they had only known what it was to apply it fully to *themselves*, all difficulty would have ceased. Those to whom he wrote had been "called unto liberty," but it was not to be used for opportunity to the flesh, but by *love* to serve each other. Thus the law would be fulfilled; but to "bite and devour one another"—the real outcome of a legal spirit—was to put themselves in danger of "being consumed one of another."

Thus we see law brought in to train man is of no real help, but it is a great hindrance to true spirituality. It is only by grace sin can be overcome, and then through the enjoyment of the love of Christ, we *can* "in love serve one another."

QUES. Should we not always be set for the spiritual gain of others?

J. S. G. That is our privilege. His com-

mand to us is, that we "love one another." And love always delights to serve the object loved. Selfishness leads to self-occupation, to expecting from others, and therefore to disappointment. It looks to be served, but love leads us to serve, without being occupied with the service.

On account of the state of the Corinthians, he says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," but still there is what is "more excellent." The love which serves others, with self entirely forgotten, is that set forth in Christ. Thus in the power of the Spirit we are privileged to serve one another, for divine love alone can regulate things according to God, and this is the highest kind of service that can be rendered.

REM. There would be no effort in such service!

J. S. G. No ostentation or self-importance, but in lowly grace each would be set for the the good of others through thinking of all dear to the heart of Christ in forgetfulness of self. The *service* does not *engross* the one who truly serves thus; *Christ* and His saints, because they are His are before him; and he quietly goes on serving, being sustained through enjoying Christ in his own soul. If his service is acceptable, it does not elate him, for the power by which

it is rendered is of God ; and if not accepted, he will still go quietly on serving the One who sent him.

QUES. Does "serving one another" involve a special gift? Is it not, rather, the spontaneous activity of the Spirit towards one another?

J. S. G. Special "gifts" are given to certain individuals, but *all* should serve each other. In a hive of bees each bee serves the whole colony. This illustrates *our* privilege, for we should never, in mind, separate ourselves from the whole church.

QUES. Is this service illustrated in John xiii.?

J. S. G. Yes. In verse 16 of our chapter the apostle says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh." If a person lives, it is "in the Spirit," and therefore we should "walk in the Spirit." Thus only can we escape from fulfilling the desires of the flesh. God has made us to live in the Spirit, and now we have to walk in the Spirit. We are not, according to *scripture*, said to have *life* before we receive the Spirit, though we have spiritual existence by being "born anew." Then, when we have received the Spirit, the Spirit in us is life, that we may do the will of God, which, for us, is righteousness.

Having the Spirit as life, the great question is—Are we *walking* “in the Spirit”?

QUES. Is that being controlled by the Spirit in everything?

J. S. G. We live by the Spirit in the enjoyment of God’s love, and thus new *motives* are formed; and the new motives should influence every movement; thus our walk would be regulated by the Spirit; for it is only through having the Spirit that we can escape from lawlessness. The motive and power to be with and for God lies in having the Spirit; and though we perhaps may do the same things that we did prior to knowing God, yet they can now be done in the name of the Lord, and to the glory of God.

REM. We can thus, even as servants to an earthly Master, serve the Lord Christ.

J. S. G. The Spirit works in us, and desires, according to God, are produced, and then He is the power by which we do those things which are pleasing to God. An exercised soul, without the Spirit, must be in unhappy bondage, for it is only by the Spirit we can be, or can do, in any measure, that which we desire through being “born anew.”

QUES. Is walking in the Spirit submitting to His control?

J. S. G. Is it not a little more than that? We are in subjection to the Lord and then, as there is desire to move and fulfil His will, the Spirit is the power for it. We normally live under the influence of Christ, but are directed by the Lord, and the Spirit is the power by which we move with God. We stand in the grace of God, delighting in Christ, and walk in the Spirit. A man may be so busy as not even able to think of the Lord, yet having the Spirit, others can see Christ manifested in him. If in subjection to the Lord by the Spirit, I am controlled so that which is inconsistent with the name of the Lord is not manifested. We desire to act rightly and the Spirit is given that we may do so.

QUES. Is "Walk in the Spirit" an exhortation?

J. S. G. It is a direction rather. God having given us the Spirit, the flesh is not to be the source or spring of movement, but the Spirit.

REM. Moving on that line?

J. S. G. The Galatians had been turned aside. Through moving in the flesh, they were apparently biting and devouring one another. The law is powerless to correct the flesh, for it is incorrigibly bad. Therefore the apostle says, "Walk [move] in

the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh."

REM. The Spirit would not be the power to do that.

J. S. G. No, He is power in us to enable us to accomplish *God's* will. He has not only wrought desires and new motives, but He is the power by which we can be maintained with God in the secret of our souls when occupied with the things of this life. We have a greater power in us than sinful flesh, and therefore there is no need to serve "the law of sin."

QUES. If a Christian walks in the flesh, what is the result?

J. S. G. He is not with the Lord in his own soul and is in danger of getting far away from God, "piercing himself through with many sorrows." The Spirit brings in new motives, and the motive gives value to the act. We have to learn to walk in the Spirit, like young birds learn to fly. If there is the consciousness of our own weakness and we have the desire to please the Lord, then the Spirit is the power for its accomplishment.

We have to learn that there is no strength even to do His will in ourselves, and thus realise how dependent we are upon the One who is the support of His people, and then

we prove the Spirit's power, enabling us to rise above the desires of the flesh, even as the young birds with their wings rise above the earth.

QUES. Have all Christians these spiritual desires?

J. S. G. If there is a work of God in their souls there must be movement Godward, for those indwelt by the Spirit have a new moral being. Thus they have tastes, desires, and aspirations according to God, and the Spirit is the source of vitality, life and power by which they are carried into effect. Still it is possible to take spiritual poison and therefore to be spiritually unhealthy and sick. Look at the literature many read, and then they tell you they do not enjoy the Bible readings. Of course they cannot, for spiritual discernment, taste and appreciation for divine things are checked, and such persons are morally and spiritually seriously ill, and yet *may* be in ignorance of the fact. We have, through grace, the Spirit, but must ever remember He is the *Holy* Spirit of God, and we must be careful *where* we go, *what* we do, and what literary food we eat.

Many who apparently have tasted the grace of God do not appear to be even sufficiently exercised to be in the unhappy state of Romans vii.



If we desire to please God, we shall soon learn that we have no strength in ourselves. What a day this is for people to complain! Now a Christian should be in marked contrast to this. He should be happy and contented, finding his "joy in God." If naturally of a discontented mind, he should, in the power of grace, rise above it. Thus, through walking in the Spirit, he proves the strength of the Lord and triumphs over what he is in the flesh. "Murmuring and complaining" is a disgrace to a Christian or a christian family; for "giving of thanks" should mark us.

REM. Not only "giving thanks in all things" (1 Thess. v. 18), but also "FOR all things." (Eph. v. 20.)

J. S. G. We are all tested in this way. We see how little the flesh has been practically displaced, and we often find that we are not under the influence of Christ. Then, through not walking in the Spirit, the formation of Christ in us is hindered, and therefore we are spiritually very weak.

REM. Our wills are often active.

J. S. G. What provision God has made for us! In the cross the sinful man is ended and set aside in us by the Spirit. While here on earth it will ever be true that there are these two opposing principles; yet there

is no need for us to be controlled by the flesh, for we have a greater power in the Spirit given to us. So if we walk in the Spirit, the apostle says, "Ye shall no way fulfil flesh's lust." (New Trans.)

QUES. What is it to "walk in the Spirit"?

J. S. G. Naturally, our movements are according to our own tastes, desires and aspirations, and as our whole moral being is corrupted by sin, so, there can be no movement that is pleasing or acceptable to God. We read, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." The Spirit of God works in me, so that I have tastes, desires and aspirations according to God; and if by the Spirit my soul is kept in touch with God, I can move with God according to the desires formed in me by the Spirit. I may have to do the same things that I did before I *knew* God, but I do them with a different motive, and *the value of an act lies in the motive*. The Christian has motives according to God, but these are produced by the Spirit through the soul being kept with God.

REM. Then we should be preserved ready for the service of God when gathered together.

J. S. G. Decidedly. For our movements

to be directed by our natural sinful desires unfits us to take part in the holy things of God. How could a person who lives to make money during six days of the week be ready to enjoy the christian privileges connected with coming together? If he is kept with God in his soul by the Spirit, his walk, or movements, are in the power of the Spirit, and he is pleasing God and gathering up for the gain of his own soul

QUES. Must we not begin at home?

J. S. G. The divine principle is to walk in the light of the assembly. It is only through the revelation of God and from the position of Christ and the assembly that we can learn the full mind of God regarding our natural relationships. Then all the grace known in the assembly forms us, and according to the measure that this is entered into in the soul it is expressed among men. This is the order in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, but in that to the Corinthians, where they had got away from God in their souls, the principle of separation in chapters i.-x. comes before the privilege of coming together in chapter xi.

REM. The world would then see that we had something they had not; for they would see a satisfied people without knowing the secret of their satisfaction.

J. S. G. If thus with God, we should be expressive of God as One who *loves* and *gives*. This would be the true light shining.

QUES. Is the flesh opposed to the Spirit a general principle?

J. S. G. They are two antagonistic principles, between which there never can be peace. "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these things are opposed one to the other, that ye should not do the things ye desire." (New Trans.) The Spirit is a power superior to the flesh, so that we should not do that which *naturally* we desire.

Still, though these principles are antagonistic, they should not be always in active warfare in me. Proper christian experience is in *subjection to the Lord* and walking in the Spirit, and then the Spirit is free to fill the soul with Christ, and to shew us "things to come." In the Epistle to the Philippians, where we have true christian experience, sin is not mentioned, and "flesh" is only alluded to as that which Paul had "no confidence" in; and "flesh" *there* is connected with that of which many would, even now, notwithstanding all the light of Christianity, boast in, but which Paul forgot. We, alas! it is to be feared, know practically but little of this experience.

QUES. Have we not to war against the flesh, like Israel against Amalek?

J. S. G. But Amalek is hardly a type of the flesh. Amalek, we are told (see Exo. xvii. 16, *margin*), put his hand to the throne of Jehovah. This Satan has done: he disputed the government of Jehovah over His own people. Therefore the Lord has war with Amalek—Satan—until his name is blotted out from under heaven. God is not warring with the flesh. He has "*condemned* sin in the flesh." That kind of man has been *set aside* at the cross and *DISPLACED* in us by the Spirit. God has made us to live in the Spirit, and therefore we should walk in the Spirit, ignoring the flesh. The war with Amalek—Satan—will go on until he is cast into "the lake of fire."

QUES. Does Satan, as Amalek, work through the flesh?

J. S. G. It was when Israel had murmured concerning the lack of water that Amalek came out and fought against Israel. To walk in the flesh, to desire according to the flesh, is to open the door for Satan to attack us.

QUES. Do we learn the corruptness of the flesh by walking in the Spirit?

J. S. G. As we walk in the Spirit, we see the dreadful character of the flesh, for it would lead us to refuse all the good things

a God of perfect love has provided for us. Then as we are in subjection to the Lord, under the influence of *the one Man*, moving in the Spirit, we are led into the present appreciation and enjoyment of God's purpose.

QUES. We do not need to learn what the flesh is through coming under it, do we?

J. S. G. No; but I am afraid we *do* learn a great deal in that painful way, but it is to our disgrace. There are two ways of learning what sin and the flesh are—one is from the cross through walking with God in the power of the Spirit, but the other is by bitter personal experience. We are privileged to walk in the Spirit to be led forward in triumph by the Spirit, and then we are not under the law of demand, but living by the enjoyment of God's love. The works of the flesh are a marked contrast to the "fruit" of the Spirit. Those who are characterised by the former will "not inherit the kingdom of God." How could they? There is the absence of the knowledge of a holy God, for if He had been known, it would have led to self-judgment.

Through the presence of the Spirit, there is fruit maintained under God's eye. What an honour is conferred upon us! We can be, through mercy, by the power of the Spirit, displaying under God's eye that which

delights God's heart—the moral traits of His own beloved Son!

If we walk in the Spirit and are led forward by the Spirit, this "fruit" will be increasingly shining in its lustrous beauty under God's eye. Active service in ministry is not brought in here, but the *holy character* of Christians. May we all, through grace, be more marked by "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and self-control," for no law could condemn such, and thus we should be more to His praise while here on earth.

May this be so with us all, for His name's sake.

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## No. VI

### CHAPTER VI.

J. S. G. The thought of liberty is prominent in this epistle. They had been called into liberty, but by misdirected zeal had been drawn into bondage. To be expecting from man, to be in our own souls on the line of demand, always brings bondage. We must live in the sunshine and enjoyment of what God is, and being maintained with Him in our souls in the power of the Spirit, then we enjoy christian liberty, and He—as a *giving* God—is in measure expressed in and by us. The epistle reaches that which is most precious when it speaks of “the Spirit of his Son” being given to us. The Spirit of Christ is that of the anointed Man, but “the Spirit of his Son” is, in thought, far beyond that, though it is the same Person. The Son became man, but how totally different to all other men! Not only was there the *absence* of what is not according to God, but there was in Him every spiritual and moral trait that even God Himself could desire in man. He also fully revealed all that the Father was, and He was everything that



the Father could wish. This unique One, with whom none can be compared, was His SON. What holy affections and joys must be bound up with the thought of His Son! The Spirit of *that* Person, "the Spirit of his Son," is given to us, that we may know the holy liberty of relationship in association with Him, which is seen in the adorable Person of His Son. What marvellous liberty for us is involved in the Son making us free. You remember the Lord said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii. 36.) The "city" (Rev. xxi. 9-27) internally is characterised by this holy liberty; and those who form "the church" are privileged now to know its blessedness, for they *have* the Spirit of God's Son.

All that the Son was in the glory of His Person gave character to Him as Man. On earth it was that He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Then immediately He adds, "This commandment have I received of my Father." (John x. 17, 18.) Precious Saviour! everywhere alike perfect inwardly and outwardly; in thought, word

and deed, absolute perfection. May our eyes be opened to see more what Thou art, so that our souls may be captivated with Thy moral beauty and perfection, and our hearts closed to all but Thee and what is of Thee, that we may live only to love and serve Thee better.

The Son who had become Man was "His Son." The oneness of affection is most beautifully seen when the Lord speaks to the Father. (John xvii.) What a holy privilege for us to be allowed even to read the words He used when addressing the Father. Surely it is beyond all human comprehension; but it is a divine fact that "the Spirit of his Son" has been given to *us*.

The apostle speaks of the fact, but the immense privileges involved in it are not opened up in this epistle. He seeks to awaken their spiritual aspirations, and then to meet the particular need of their souls. The two systems, law and grace, the one being earthly and the other heavenly, cannot be mingled together. He therefore calls upon them to "stand fast" in the holy freedom which belongs to the "free born," and then to "walk in the Spirit," that they may bear fruit for God.

QUES. Is "fruit" always for God?

J. S. G. I think so. It is an immense

thing that fallen creatures as we were are now taken up by grace, and that we can bear fruit to the glory of God. Next to worship, this appears to be the greatest privilege for a Christian. Many are absorbed in the thought of service, but fruit-bearing is, I think, a far greater thought. If we are bearing fruit for God's pleasure, we shall be effective in bearing testimony. (John xv.)

QUES. What do you understand by "fruit"?

J. S. G. The moral perfections and graces of Christ were *natural* to *Him*, because of what He was; but *with us* they are the fruit of having the Spirit, and of Christ being formed in us. We might perhaps say, that it is the characteristics of the divine nature seen in the Man, Christ Jesus. What immense privileges are placed before us! We are taken up in mercy, and through having the Spirit, we can be used for the display of that which Christ was. These moral traits shone in absolute perfection under the eye of God when Christ was on earth; these characteristics were what Christ absolutely was, but with us they can only be expressed according to the measure in which Christ is formed in us by the Spirit, and this is fruit. May there be more of it to His praise!

QUES. How do you understand verse 24?

J. S. G. The New Translation reads, "They who are *of* the Christ," &c. If we have been made to live to God by the Spirit, we have a new moral being, with tastes and desires according to God. Thus we are of Christ, and those who are of Him have *in their minds* crucified—terminated, the flesh, with its passions and lusts.

QUES. We are thus new beings morally through having the Spirit, I suppose?

J. S. G. Yes, the Spirit is a *holy* Spirit, giving us tastes and desires according to God. He is the Spirit of the anointed Man. He is life—a source of movement, so that new motives become entwined in our thoughts, impulses and acts. Thus Christ is *in* us, and we are *of* Him. The germ, so to speak, is in each one who has the Spirit of God, and as this is developed Christ is formed in us. All that we were remains unchanged, but as Christ is formed in us, what we *were* is less and less seen, and gradually disappears from view. What we once were we still carry about, and it is ever seeking to intrude in a more subtle way. So it always remains true that "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"; but, thank God, we are now of Christ, and can now think of ourselves as *of Him*.

For Christ to be formed in us we must

walk in the Spirit. God having made us to live by the Spirit, he says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us walk also by the Spirit."

QUES. Will that save us from what we have in chapter v. 26?

J. S. G. It will. We shall neither be "vain-glorious," nor "provoking," nor "envying" one another, unless it is to be to "provoke unto love and good works." To move in the Spirit is to manifest Christ, and thus to stimulate one another on the same road.

REM. It is very practical and makes great claims on us.

J. S. G. But we have the whole power of God by the Spirit to enable us to fulfil our obligations.

REM. Nature could not do it.

J. S. G. Naturally we could not, but we can by walking in the Spirit. It is an amazing fact that the Spirit of God dwells in us! Therefore every command in scripture to a Christian is an encouragement, for it only states the road he desires to travel, and the one he has the power to move forward upon. If I were walking from a distance to Brisbane, every sign-post having on it "To Brisbane" would encourage me, for each such sign would *confirm* me on the road towards the desired end.

QUES. What is the thought of a "spiritual" person?

J. S. G. One who, through walking in the Spirit, has a character of that nature formed by Christ living in him. What he is, naturally, has in measure disappeared, and through walking with God in subjection to the Lord, his thoughts and whole deportment and life mark him as formed by the Spirit of God: consequently he is "spiritual." We are not spiritual through thinking we are, but through a formative work carried on by the Spirit. A really spiritual person does not think he is so, but is occupied with God and His interests; and others take account of him as spiritual by what he is. Spiritual persons are not characterised by finding fault, but by seeking to restore one caught in a fault.

QUES. Is it that the one who catches him in the fault should be spiritual enough to restore him?

J. S. G. If one brother caught another in a trespass, I hardly think it would be right for him to assume the responsibility of it himself. He would tell two or three others, and then if it was a thing which had not to come before the assembly, no more would be heard of it. The spiritual are characterised by being able to "restore." It appears to

me to be here a kind of challenge. The Galatians thought they *were* spiritual, but they were really "biting and devouring one another," and the apostle says, "Ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

QUES. Is it a person overtaken with a fault?

J. S. G. It does not speak of a person being overtaken *with* a fault, but a person being taken or caught *in* a fault. That idea which we often hear, when even there is positive sin, of "Oh, poor fellow, it is his weakness," is simply *excusing* sin. Nothing wrong must be *excused*; but a person *can* be "restored."

QUES. What is meant here by a "fault"?

J. S. G. Something wrong, but which does not call for excision, or "putting away from among yourselves."

QUES. Why does it say, "ye who are *spiritual*"?

J. S. G. Only "spiritual" persons are suited to do it. It was, I think, a challenge to them. If a man be caught in a fault the spiritual could "restore" him. Then it would be done in a "spirit of meekness," not as being superior, but considering that, at any moment, one may be tried and fall,

unless preserved through mercy and grace. Spiritual persons are marked by serving others quietly in love, and by restoring the erring. We need to *grow*, that we should be thus marked.

QUES. Is it John xiii. ?

J. S. G. In Galatians it is *restoring*, but in John it is more *reviving*, or invigorating.

REM. It tests a person's spirituality !

QUES. What is the thought of being overtaken ?

J. S. G. It is not that the fault overtakes him, but *he* is overtaken, caught, taken in a fault. Then we are privileged to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." If they desired a law, here was one for them. He was, and is, the great burden-bearer, and we are to follow on that line.

REM. The "spiritual" were to "consider" themselves.

J. S. G. We must ever be kept conscious of our own weakness.

QUES. If we consider ourselves strong on any point, is that not where we are likely to fail ?

J. S. G. Surely, for that would be self-confidence. If we consider ourselves "something," when, in reality, we are "nothing," we deceive ourselves. We must prove our own work and then there *may* be something



to boast in, instead of boasting of that which another has been used to accomplish. The false teachers evidently boasted a great deal, but it was Paul who had been used to open men's eyes in Galatia. In connection with service, each one would "bear his own burden," because each is directly responsible to his own Master.

QUES. How do you look at verse 6 of our chapter?

J. S. G. Those taught, or being instructed in the word, have the privilege of sharing, with those who are *used* to teach, in all good things, and those sent of God, to care for others, care for their spiritual gain and progress; and those who *receive* the teaching, can share the needful things of this life with them.

We have now a solemn word in connection with the government of God. Though "called with a heavenly calling," yet being on earth the government of God applies to us. We should not be "deceived," God is not mocked. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also *reap*. For he that sows to his own flesh, shall reap corruption from the flesh; but he that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall he reap life everlasting" (New Trans.) If God has made us to live in the Spirit, then it is His will we should

walk in the Spirit; and if we do *not*, the solemn results will be reaped. If we walk in the flesh we shall sow to it and reap its harvest. The very thing desired and pursued may be obtained;—but having sought to gratify ourselves, it yields that which gives sorrow of heart and becomes obnoxious in our own eyes. Lot saw the well-watered plains to be, as he thought, “like the garden of the Lord,” but he soon had to flee to the mountains, and became the father of those who were the perpetual enemies of God’s people. How solemn the warning. May we each take heed to it.

On the other hand, to walk in the Spirit will be to “sow to the Spirit,” and from the Spirit to reap life everlasting. The Spirit will be free, *if ungrieved*, to lead us into all the blessedness of “life,” outside this death scene. If I am moving on the principle of self-judgment in the Spirit’s power, God has His place before my soul, and then the Spirit springs up so that eternal life is “laid hold” of, known and enjoyed *now*!

Abraham, in principle, may illustrate this, for, through walking with God, he enjoyed that which was outside of the domain of death. He could provide refreshment and enjoy Jehovah communing with him, and also intercede for others, being himself out-

side and apart from the whole scene of death and corruption, which was soon to disappear by the solemn judgment of God.

QUES. Is "eternal life" to be enjoyed here?

J. S. G. The great time to enjoy eternal life is *while here*. It is outside and apart from this region of death; but the Spirit is the power for its *present* enjoyment, though we are actually passing through the valley that death has cast its shadow over.

In the *future* we shall be "sons" in the place to which we properly belong; but *now* is the time to "sow to the Spirit," and to know the enjoyment which flows from "eternal life," which is characterised by the knowledge of "the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent" (John xvii. 3) outside and apart from this scene of death. The one who has "eternal life" is the believer on the Son of God (John iii. 36), and he enters into it through having the Spirit (John iv. 14).

Then, do not let us get "weary in well-doing," for a day of corruption, like this, is calculated to chill the affections, to check spiritual aspirations, and to be a damper on spiritual courage; but after we have been tested and have proved and learned the lessons needed, "we shall reap, if we faint

not." So we should seize opportunities—*do good to all*, and especially to "the household of faith." Like the Saviour-God, we should be kind and good to all; but *His own* must have a special place in our affections if we are with Him in our own souls, consciously.

Paul was so distressed on account of their state, that he wrote this letter "with his own hand." His heart was bound up with God's people, and it came out in his deep concern, leading him not to employ another to write this epistle.

Those who desired to make "a fair show in the flesh," and to escape persecution, constrained them to be "circumcised," and to keep the law, thus maintaining a status in the flesh. How subtle the snare! To allow, or to recognise, or to glory in, anything which gives *me* a standing here in man's world, is to forget our "heavenly calling"; really, to "sow to the flesh," and therefore to "reap corruption."

Paul would glory *only in the cross!* There "the world" had been fully exposed, and therefore morally judged. Paul, who saw with God, looked at himself as crucified with Christ, and therefore the world was so to him. He, in his mind, was ended there as a man in the flesh, and the world was crucified to him through the Lord Jesus Christ. In the

cross, the love of God to man has also been expressed (John iii. 16), and therefore Paul was crucified to the world. He had no place, portion, or interest in it; but he delighted to make known the grace, goodness and love of God toward it, though he, in his life here, was in separation from it.

*In Christ Jesus* there was neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creation*. In walking according to its law, or rule, the whole power of the Spirit of God was available. Hence, to walk after the law of Christ (ver. 16), the rule or law of the new creation is perfect freedom, glorious liberty, and to enjoy "peace" and "mercy" through being the true princely people who have obtained favour with God!

To depart from *this* rule or guide is to get into bondage, to omit the "ribband of blue" (the heavenly colour in the detail of life), and to come short of God's present mind for us.

QUES. Is that Romans xii. ?

J. S. G. It goes further than that.

QUES. Is Christ new creation ?

J. S. G. *We* are "new creation *in Christ*." It is what we are "formed" in, and which is outside of, and in thought is apart from all that which was connected with "the first

man" (1 Cor. xv. 45) as God's creature set up on earth.

QUES. Are we to be formed in the sphere of "new creation," and then to be guided by it in the detail of life here?

J. S. G. We are "born anew," which is by divine light acting on us, and after we have believed the gospel of our salvation we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Then, in the Spirit's power, we pass into a new moral scene (I say "scene" for want of a better word), and we are privileged to enjoy the immense privileges that lie in new creation. And, in our responsible life, this guides and influences us, so that the most inferior things, so to speak, are done in the light of the highest place of blessing given to us.

QUES. Is that reconciliation?

J. S. G. The full thought of "reconciliation" for us lies in our being "in Christ"—where there is "new creation."

New creation is that which God has brought to pass for His own pleasure, and that which lies outside of any thought connected with man in the old creation, and in it we are characterised by every moral perfection that the heart of God delights in.

There is a distinction between "the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14) and "new crea-

tion." (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15, New Trans.) All things will be made new (Rev. xxi. 5), but those who form "the church" belong to new creation. *All* saints will be in "the creation of God" and the new heaven and new earth, but I do not think that it is quite the thought of new creation.

QUES. What do you mean by the *new order of things* which you mentioned just now?

J. S. G. All that is connected with Christ risen and glorified. It is that order of things over which "the Son of man" is placed, in contrast to that which exists to sight.

We should all be exercised to be found "walking in the Spirit," that Christ may be formed in us. Then the law of the new creation will be the guide suited to the desires formed by the Spirit.

Paul was a slave *branded* with "the marks" of his rejected but glory-crowned Master in the heavens.

May we each know more of *walking with the Lord*, and by the Spirit enjoying the heavenly relationship involved in having "the Spirit of his Son," that we may always wear "the ribband of blue" on the skirts of our garments to His praise.