

GOD'S TRIUMPH  
IN  
GRACE AND MERCY.



---

NOTES OF ADDRESSES  
By J. S. G.

---

LONDON:  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD WHEREIN YE STAND ...	1
THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN MERCY ... ..	14
THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD ... ..	28
THE COMING OF THE LORD TWOFOLD ... ..	42
"THE MAN CHRIST JESUS, THE EXPRESSION OF SOVEREIGN MERCY AND GRACE" ... ..	59
"FLEEING TO CHRIST JESUS AS THE MAN OF COUNSEL" ... ..	73
"CHRIST IN YOU" ... ..	87
"SAINTS IN CHRIST" ... ..	100
THE LIGHT OF GOD'S TESTIMONY UPON EARTH ...	115

# GOD'S TRIUMPH IN GRACE AND MERCY.

---

## THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD WHEREIN YE STAND.

(ROM. V. 1, 2; 2 PET. III. 17, 18; 1 PET. V. 6-11.)

GOD is pleased to make known to us the great end that He is going to reach—an end which will be worthy of Himself. But it is important for us to remember *how* it is reached, that is to say, the way that God takes in order to reach that end.

He works in us by the Spirit, and through the gradual work of the Spirit the great climax is finally reached. In God is absolute moral perfection, and therefore He could only be satisfied with a universe delighting in Himself, and thus He Himself, as revealed in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, will become the supreme and absorbing Object of all. God works patiently in

mercy and in grace, century after century, in individual souls, forming different families for His universe until, through His goodness that great end is reached.

God has been pleased to use certain expressions in scripture, such as "grace" and "mercy," which characterise those dealings by which His end is reached. One word that characterises the revelation of God to man in reference to forming a universe to His praise and for His satisfaction is "grace." It may be profitable to us to consider the light that God has been pleased to give us in connection with this word GRACE. Unless the word expresses something clear and definite to our minds we shall not get the help intended for us by God. God is pleased to use our coming together to read the scriptures, and ministry, that we may be helped to comprehend the thoughts contained in the words used by the Spirit.

These three passages speak of GRACE. In the first (Rom. v. 2) we find "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." This is a very important expression, and through not being in the light of it many are greatly hindered in their spiritual career. Do we know what it is to have found access by faith into this grace, so as to *stand* in it? If

not there cannot be progress according to God. When we are brought to know what it is to *stand* in grace, then we find how important it is to "GROW in grace," and there can be no growth unless we are kept consciously in grace.

The moment the soul gets off the ground of the absolute grace of God, growth and any real progress are hindered. Hence the importance of being brought to know in our souls what it is to *stand* in the grace, so that we may "*grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.)

Then we read of "the God of all grace." (1 Pet. v. 10.) There is no limit to the grace of God. It cannot be limited, for God is the God of "*all* grace."

The meaning of the word grace is necessarily our first consideration. In the New Translation the Greek word is translated "favour," "grace," "thanksgiving," &c. It therefore involves the thought of favour, but it has a much wider meaning than the word favour expresses. Neither do the words "unmerited favour" fully express its meaning, which must be gathered from the way in which it is used by the Spirit. It appears to need a combination of words to express its force adequately. The scriptural contrast

always helps our minds to conceive the thought expressed in any scriptural word. We read, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth subsist by Jesus Christ." The contrast to "grace" is "law," and the principle of faith is in contrast to the principle of works. The blessing is through grace, and received on the principle of faith and not through that which man accomplishes.

The law made known to man what God required from him if he continued to live on earth on the ground of responsibility, and, being holy, God cannot lower His standard.

Grace is what God is towards needy man in contrast to any demand being made upon man. Grace is what God is as revealed in *the Person of Jesus Christ*, in view of all the ruin, chaos, and helplessness of man through sin. So though there are thoughts which are nearly akin to it in the Old Testament, yet grace is properly a New Testament thought. In our beloved Lord there was manifested what God was towards lost, guilty, ruined man, and the whole scene that had been ruined by sin. In Him we see how God felt for man, His intervention on the behalf of all men, and the pleasure or delight it gives God to bless man, and all these thoughts appear to be included in the word

grace. In Him God was revealed, and hence in Him was the true measure of all things, and also what God was for man even when he had departed from Him. God was ever a God of perfect grace, but when Christ came grace characterised the way in which God approached man. So grace characterises God as known in Christ when the whole scene had been ruined by sin. There is the danger of limiting the revelation of grace because Romans v. 1-11 states what is true of believers, and of overlooking the fact that chapters i.-v. shew what God is for all men.

We each need to know "access into this grace." It is dangerous to hold that because any one is a believer these divine realities are true *of* him. Do we know entrance into this grace so as to "*stand*" there?

There are two lines of teaching in the Epistle to the Romans. One is what God is for man, which is unfolded in the first five chapters; then there is expanded in chapters vi., vii. and viii. where and how we can live to God on earth. We need first to learn what God is for all men in the faith of our souls, and this awakens the desire to respond to His grace and thus prepares us for chapters vi., vii. and viii. How often those who truly believe upon the Lord Jesus have no real peace,

because they have never apprehended, in the history of their souls, what God is for all men as made known in the death and resurrection of Christ. We have each to travel in the faith of our souls through the death and resurrection of Christ as expressive of what God is for all men before the wonderful results are known by us.

In this passage, then, we find "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." It is in the faith of our souls that we pass consciously into standing in grace. We are thus brought to know what it is to stand in what God is and has done in view of all men. Have we lost all hope in ourselves, both in bad self, and in good self, or in any other kind of self, so as to trust only in Christ? Until we come on to that ground there is no possible chance of being really for God in this world.

The thought of standing in grace is elementary, but of the greatest importance. In the world it is said "that a man has not a leg to stand on," which means he has no case. Now take the contrast—a man can stand because he *has* a good case, and we have indeed a good case if we stand in that grace which God is for all men. "Standing" is in contrast to man having fallen. Man fell when he was upon the earth, and he is made to *stand* upon the earth in grace.



We do not think standing is exactly connected with heaven, for to enter there an entirely new state is needed; standing is connected with the earth, and it is on earth that we have to learn what it is to *stand in grace*.

Adam was placed in the garden, and his standing was in obedience. He had to abstain from eating of one tree which God in His goodness prohibited because man was not capable of solving the question of good and evil. There could hardly have been an easier test. He had only to abstain from one tree. To "stand" in his case was very easy, but man cannot stand in what *he is for God*. There is no standing save in what *God is for man*. Hence Adam's fall.

Then Israel had the opportunity of standing on the ground of law—what man is for God, but that people, though trained and educated under law, did not even know the Lawgiver Himself when He came; they rejected and crucified Him. It is, therefore, no use to think of man standing in anything that he is for God, but, thank God, we can stand in what God is for man.

When the helplessness of man had been demonstrated, God intervened in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ in grace, and we stand in what God is for man. We stand on the ground of what God has done, and in

what God is for all men. "The grace of God that carries with it salvation for all men has appeared." Grace is as universal as the sunshine. Grace characterises the revelation of the blessed God through which He secures, out of a scene ruined by sin, that which is for His own eternal glory. Thus all will be to the praise of His glory, for all will be of Him.

Are we thinking of what we are for God? If so it gives no power to overcome sin, for power is only known when our souls are occupied with God, and we triumph through what God is *for us*. On that line there is the power of the Spirit to support us.

It is well to remember that grace is not the same thought as love. Love is the nature of God, the manifestation of His heart. Grace is what subsists as light through the coming of our beloved Lord, manifesting what God is even when the state of man was abhorrent to God. Then the light of what God is for man shone forth in Christ when God intervened to meet the ruin and bless man.

As sinners we need grace; as saints we need it, for it is as saints that we stand in grace. If we get away from the sense of grace it is serious, for instead of overcoming we are soon overcome by that which is

around. It is grace in which we are set up here in the Spirit's power, and it is by grace we overcome, for we are not under law but under grace.

Thus it is in grace that God meets us as bankrupt and ruined sinners, having made full provision in view of the serious condition of His universe; in grace ample provision is made for us the whole time of our sojourn here on earth, and through grace the whole universe of God will ultimately be filled with His glory. To stand in grace means that a man knows God as the One who has made abundant provision; knows that it is by grace he is preserved and kept in the present; and that it will be through grace alone he will be in the glory, which will fill the universe of God. Thus we are brought to depend entirely on God in regard to what He *has* done, what He *is* doing, and that which He *will* bring to pass, so that we stand in grace. The practical traits which result from standing in grace are, first, our souls being conscious that all good and blessing come from the God of all grace, we shall always give Him the praise even in the smallest detail; secondly, we shall be preserved in touch with God in our spirits and shall overcome through the service of Christ on high and the presence

of the Spirit here ; thirdly, " grace " will also go back to God by our being maintained in a praising and thanksgiving spirit and in devotedness to Christ. How important for us to be made to stand, not like Adam, who stood in what he was for God, but in what God is for all men as made known in the Person of His own beloved Son. It is indeed a wonderful moment for the soul when this is known, and let us beware of the error which marked the Galatians, of turning to law, and thus making the blessing to depend in *part* upon the creature ; or, like the Corinthians, losing the sense of grace through worldly associations, for both of them lead to one end, namely, the loss of being in the *consciousness* of standing in grace. The standing, thank God, cannot be lost when once entered upon, but the consciousness of it is easily rendered feeble, and then the practical life is marred through the sense of grace being lost in the soul. Still, let us ever remember that all our relations with God are on the ground of pure grace, and that our standing is in what God is for all men.

Having been brought to know something of what it is to stand in grace, we need to *grow* in grace. There can be no growth otherwise. The moment there is departure

in thought from the sense of what God is for us, and from the atmosphere of grace, growth is hindered. The sun shines in heaven, and the result is warmth, fertility and growth. In the cold weather the grass does not grow, but warm rains and heavy dews, with the sun's shining, produce growth at once. The difference is soon seen, and in some countries, like Australia, the effect is very apparent. Let us remember that it is only in the atmosphere of grace that we can grow. It is in grace, in what God is for man, that there is growth.

The growth of the Galatians was hindered, and Paul laboured to restore them to the sense of grace. They might *boast* of being spiritual and still "bite and devour one another," but grace regulates all according to God. We naturally like the principle of law because it exalts man, but grace only exalts God. Then, as we grow in grace, we are prepared for growth in the knowledge of Himself—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is nothing more important for us than being brought to *stand* in grace, and then to *grow* in grace. In these difficult days we must not forget that we are no more sufficient for easy times than for difficult times, and really the easy times are more testing. How very often saints who have shone

brightly under pressure get astray when left without pressure! The Spirit contemplates difficult times in the Epistle of Peter, and calls upon us to be "sober." The moral developments in the professing church and in the world shew the gravity of the moment. Satan is very busy. He would devour us if he could, but God is the God of all grace. And let us never forget that though Satan is active, and evil is asserting itself, nevertheless God finally has His own way, or He would not be God. The Lord is "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and He overrules all things, so that He will be *manifestly* the First and the Last.

Satan is active, and we have to resist him. "Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." Then we have, "the God of all grace." Could anything be more precious? When we think of needy man and needy beings how could we have anything more blessed than "the God of all grace"? If we fail through carelessness God still remains the God of all grace. Will there ever be a moment when there will not be sufficient grace for us? Never! He is "the God of *all* grace," and He "hath called us unto his eternal glory." He intervened in grace, and supports us by grace

and has called us to His eternal glory in grace.

May "the God of all grace," after we have suffered a while, make us perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle us. "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."  
(1 Pet. v. 10, 11.)



## THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN MERCY.

(EXO. VI. 6-8; XIX. 4-8; XXXIII. 18, 19; JER. XXXI. 31-34;  
2 COR. III.)

God, in His goodness, is working to secure a certain end in His universe, and in effecting His thoughts and purposes certain words are used which speak of great principles, and it is important for us to have a clear understanding of them.

The word grace, even with those who have very little idea of its full meaning, is prized and valued. This is the result of the work of God in the soul, but He has given us His Spirit that we may *intelligently* understand the meaning of the words He is pleased to use.

The word mercy has an important place in the scriptures, and we all have a certain idea of its meaning. We love the thought of mercy and grace. Grace is what characterises the blessed God revealed as Saviour in relation to all men, and mercy is *how* He accomplishes the thoughts of His heart. When the spiritual universe is completed every bit of it will bear the stamp of the sovereignty of God in mercy. It is *how*



God has His way in the blessing of man in spite of what man is as fallen. When we have been brought to appreciate the grace of God our hearts often refuse the thought of God's mercy because it sets us aside altogether by the knowledge of how all blessing depends on God acting in sovereignty. When Moses had gone up the mount to God the people became idolaters, and, therefore, God must either act in the sovereignty of His mercy, or exterminate the people by judgment. The law declared that judgment must fall upon an idolater, and the whole nation had become idolatrous. God retreats into His sovereignty and says to Moses, "I . . . will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." (Exo. xxxiii. 19.) Look at the beauty of this statement. The nation deserved the judgment of God, and if righteousness alone had had its way they must have been cut off by judgment. But God says, as it were, "I am God, I am sovereign; I have a right to do as I like; I *will* shew mercy." He is sovereign, and the mercy of God by which He maintains His sovereignty in righteousness and in blessing is a very precious thought. We love the thought of His grace; but our souls revel in the thought of His mercy, and that

all blessing depends on God moving in the sovereignty of His mercy.

We read, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16.) Let us inquire, How is it that we have been brought to believe the gospel? We became exercised. But why were we exercised when our neighbour was not? He is a rejecter of Christ and we are accepters of Christ. But why? Were we better than our neighbours? Was there that in our hearts that would receive Christ and not in the heart of our neighbour? We were just the same morally, but God shewed mercy, and it is only through the mercy of God that we have received Christ. We went the wrong way as long as we could. God intervened in His mercy, and we were brought to know the Saviour-God. Thus God is glorified, and not the least credit attaches to the creature even in connection with his having been brought to believe on the Lord Jesus. It is all entirely through God's own mercy. The soul is never established until firmly rooted in the sovereign mercy of God. A common difficulty is, why did God not shew mercy to the neighbour? But we reply, why did he not believe in God revealed in grace? (Titus ii. 11.) The only hindrance was his own stubborn will.

(John v. 40.) God did not hinder him from believing, but wrought in every way that love could devise to win him, and *he* would not be reconciled. Then has not God a perfect right to do as He pleases? The natural heart always seeks to blame God. "Who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20.) We, who are the objects of His mercy, can only bow before Him in thanksgiving for His goodness towards us and to all men.

The mercy of God is the divine principle on which God acts, by which He secures the person for the blessing and the blessing for the person; so that all glory redounds to God Himself. We do not read of the *gospel of mercy*, but of the *gospel of the grace of God*, for in grace God is for every man alike, but it is on the principle of mercy that God forms the persons in the pathway of exercise and experience so that they render the suitable obedience for inheriting the blessing, and thus the blessing is secured for the persons and the persons for the blessing.

In Exodus vi. 6-8 God says to Moses, "I will," "I will," "I will." He does not say, *I* will if *you* will, but seven times He says, I will. "I will" speaks of the sovereignty of God. *We* dare not say, I will. God is the only One who can say, I will, hence He

speaks and works with the ultimate end He has in view. God made Adam, but He had Christ in view. (Rom. v. 14.) God's end may be reached in different ways, nevertheless He always speaks from His own standpoint. In this scripture God says, "I will," "I will." The principle that the blessing was dependent on God's intervention in the sovereignty of mercy was clearly stated.

The Israelites were helpless slaves in the hand of Pharaoh. Who could deliver them but God? Did they deserve to be delivered? They were there through their own sin, and God did not come in because they *deserved* His intervention, but because of what He is in Himself, and in view of what He had in His own heart. Did they appreciate what God did in bringing them out? God acted according to "I will," but, alas! their hearts, like ours, do not naturally appreciate the mercy of God. Hence, directly God proposes to them that they should be blessed upon the ground of their obedience, they say, in self confidence—"All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." The result is—all is lost, for when Moses goes up into the mount to receive the law, God has to tell him to go down because the people had corrupted themselves by having made gods of their own. They had even dared to

say, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." They connected the glory of Jehovah with what they had made with their own hands. How serious it is to have even the *thought* that the blessing depends on that which is done by the creature! On that ground everything is lost. But some one may exclaim, That was law! so it *was*, but Moses went up the second time, and then mercy was mingled with law, and the glory of mercy was reflected in the face of Moses. The people were then placed under law *and* *mercy*.

Then the name of the Lord was declared to Moses: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth . . ." but He would in no-wise clear the guilty. Let us remember that it was the second time Moses went up, when mercy had been added to law, which the Spirit calls a "ministry of death and condemnation." (2 Cor. iii.) It is the *second* giving of the law, when mercy was mingled with it and glory shone in Moses' face, which is called a ministry of death and condemnation. Oh! that every one could learn the lesson that blessing partly dependent upon God and partly dependent upon the creature is only a "ministry of death and condemnation." It

only shewed the solemn fact that death and condemnation was their portion, even though the mercy of God had been mingled with law.

But there is a new covenant in contrast to the old covenant. God had borne the children of Israel on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself, and no nation had such laws, neither was there ever a nation so privileged as that nation. God's goodness was manifest and stamped upon everything that took place even with the first covenant. The *goodness* of God is seen in the first covenant, but the *heart* of God is seen in the new covenant. In the old covenant God said, "If ye will obey, then ye shall," &c. Obedience was demanded of the creature. God in His goodness had taken them up and placed the blessing before them, but they had to render obedience suitable to the blessing. How simple, how easy, if they only had had hearts that loved God and their neighbour, but when tested it is seen that man hates God and his neighbour. We read, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 8.) The Old Testament shews that man *did* not; the New Testament that man in the flesh *cannot*, because his whole moral being is corrupted by sin.

The goodness of God was seen in the old

covenant, but the very heart of God comes out in the new covenant. God was not satisfied with the old covenant, for it never brought His people near to Him, neither did it enable Him to give them the blessing. He then says, "I will make a new covenant," "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Then they will not be able to say to their neighbour, "Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." Where then is the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant? The old covenant manifested the goodness of God, but obedience had to be rendered by the creature. In the new covenant the love of God is seen in forming the creature in mind and affection in His sovereign mercy so that obedience is secured from him, and thus the people are secured for the blessing and the blessing for the people. Israel will be born anew, will pass through certain exercises, and God will write His laws in their hearts and put them into their minds; then there will be a nation that will love God and love their neighbours as themselves. Thus the blessing is secured for the people and the people for the blessing; but all through sovereign mercy.

We must bear in mind that there is no covenant with the church as such. The covenant applies to us because we are here upon earth, and thus God secures an obedience pleasing to Him. The truth of the new covenant subjectively wrought in saints is the fundamental principle of the work of God prior to church formation. Hence we need the truth of the covenant before we are ready for the truth of the church. The death of Christ is the foundation of all blessing, but many overlook that God has to lay a foundation in us by the work of His Spirit, which corresponds with the foundation laid in the death of Christ. God has dealt with sin unsparingly in the cross according to His holiness, and we should judge everything in the light of the work accomplished. Our standard is to be as perfect as our Father in heaven (Matt. v. 48), and every deviation should be judged by us.

We must now briefly consider how God works in us in His mercy. We are first of all born anew by God's sovereign operation, and after this has taken place, we are brought, as the result of exercise, to believe on the Lord Jesus. The actual terms of the new covenant apply to Israel, but the spirit of it applies to saints in the present period.



God will write the law in the hearts and minds of *Israel*, but upon *our* hearts Christ is written. Our hearts were indeed hard, harder, speaking figuratively, than the tables of stone, but God by His own work made them impressible, and has impressed Christ upon them. The Spirit brings Christ into our hearts, and He is appreciated in our affections. The anointed Man who will fill the universe with what He is morally is appreciated, and thus Christ has a place in our affections and minds which eternity will never efface.

In the past, six hundred thousand left Egypt, and only two of these entered into Canaan, but this secured the triumph of God. The old covenant, even when mercy was mingled with law, and introduced with glory, was indeed a "ministry of death and condemnation." *Now* the terms of the new covenant are actually verified and established in the Man Christ Jesus, and by giving us His Spirit the terms of the covenant are brought into our hearts and minds. We see how the love of God has triumphed in Him, for the terms of the covenant are livingly presented in perfection in Him, and by the ministry of the covenant we are being builded up in an order of thought and affection which bears

the stamp of righteousness. It is not now a demand made *upon* us, but the spirit of what is right put *into* us, so that an obedience worthy of God is the spontaneous effect of God's work in us. The ministry of the covenant, the ministry of Christ as the living expression of its terms, direct the heart and mind of the saint to God Himself as the governing object of his affections and thoughts, and the whole order of things thus formed answers to the very nature of God Himself. Thus God secures the persons suitable for the blessing and the obedience from those persons befitting the blessing.

The response to what God is, as revealed, is set forth in perfection in the Man in glory; the spirit of all that God desires in man is found in Him; and this ministry of righteousness and of the spirit of the covenant does indeed eclipse the ministry of death and condemnation. When mercy was mingled with law it only demonstrated that it was death and condemnation, but now it is in pure mercy that God gives us the Spirit of the Man in whom all that He desires for man is found. There is a ministry of the Spirit, the bringing home to us how God has triumphed in having One in His presence in whom the spirit of the covenant is seen.

The apostle had said that the letter killeth but that the Spirit giveth life. Now the Lord is the Spirit of the covenant, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. God took the name of Jehovah in relationship with Israel. It was His covenant name, and Jesus is Jehovah. Thus the Spirit of Jesus-Jehovah is given to the saint. The One who makes the covenant gives His Spirit to those with whom the covenant is made, and thus an obedience is secured which morally corresponds to Jehovah Himself. Jehovah faithfully fulfilled His side of the covenant in the past, but the people failed on their side. In the new covenant Jehovah writes His law in their inward parts, and thus will obtain faithful fulfilment from the people. (Jer. xxxi. 31-40.) We, having already the Spirit of Jehovah given to us, can enjoy perfect liberty. We are commanded to love one another, but the very Spirit of the One who loves perfectly is given to us, and thus we spontaneously do that which the command states. The Spirit of the One who is the living personification of the terms of the covenant is given to us, and that gives perfect liberty, because there is in the Spirit a corresponding taste and desire to obey every command through the sovereign mercy of God; and, on the other

hand, we are able to look on the glory of Jehovah in the unveiled face of Jesus.

Moses desired to see Jehovah's glory, but the time had not come to gratify that desire. Moses was put in a cleft of the rock, and the goodness of Jehovah passed before him and the name of Jehovah was proclaimed, but liberty to contemplate His glory freely was reserved for another day. Now our privilege is to look upon the glory of Jehovah in the face of Jesus without any veil to hide that glory. The Spirit of Jehovah being given, the affections and mind directed into right channels, we can contemplate the glory of the One who is the perfect expression of the love of God which led Him to work in sovereign mercy in us, and in whom also we see the perfect answer or response to the revelation. The glory does not repel us, nay, it attracts; it so enchants us that we are held by it, and are gradually transformed. What Moses desired is now the common privilege of all saints, and through beholding His glory we each become more expressive of Him until all the saints are an expression of Himself, through having His Spirit. The moral glory that we can behold in His face transforms us morally into the same image from glory to glory, until there is a vessel expressive of that glory which shines

in the face of Jesus-Jehovah the Saviour, through our having the Spirit of that One.

May we each have a deeper sense of the sovereign mercy of God, that we may contemplate more the glory of the One in whom the love of God is fully seen, and that in response to that love we may now be, through having His Spirit, more like Him in the scene of His rejection, for His praise and glory.



## THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

(ROM. v. 5-8; VIII. 9-27.)

THE present period is characterised by the great fact that God has intervened in His great goodness in reference to the deep need of man and His creation in view of His purpose. This revelation is summed up in the word *grace*. *Mercy*, on the other hand, has reference to the way in which God, in His goodness, secures the persons for the blessing and the obedience from them necessary for the enjoyment of the blessing. The persons and the blessing are, through the love of God, made secure on the principle of sovereign mercy. (Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Eph. ii. 4, 5.)

We now desire to draw attention to the presence of the Spirit of God. This is a subject of vital importance to every Christian, for the fact that saints are indwelt by the Holy Spirit is one of the principal features of this privileged church period.

It is well in these evil days to keep clearly before our minds that the Spirit is a divine

Person,\* who is one with the Father and the Son. Hence it is stated that Ananias and Sapphira lied to God. The Spirit of God was present. God was dwelling in His house, and therefore the lie was uttered, not "unto men, but unto God." (Acts v. 4.)

We desire to suggest that the presence of the Spirit connects with two distinct lines of truth, which it is important to distinguish, though both are linked together in proper christian experience. In Romans i.-v. we have unfolded the revelation of God in a scene of darkness, the work of Christ, and the presentation of Christ for the obedience of faith. On this line—the line of faith—the Spirit is given consequent upon believing on Christ risen and glorified. (Acts x. 42-44; Eph. i. 13.) Thus the heart of the believer is made conscious of God's great love to *man*, and he learns to glory in God revealed in Christ. This is apprehended by faith according to the measure of our spiritual stature, though enjoyed by the Spirit and through His work in us. In Romans vi. the believer learns that he has in Christ a title, to *reckon* that he is dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus; in chapter vii. he learns what he is in himself, his own weak-

\* 1 Corinthians xii. 11; Acts xiii. 2; 1 Timothy iv. 1 prove the Deity (absolute Godhead) of the Spirit.

ness, his inability to respond to the light; and this leads to chapter viii., where we have the presence of the Spirit on the experimental line.

Let us briefly consider the presence of the Spirit on the divine side—the faith line. There are some who often raise the question in their own minds—Have I received the Spirit? Let us not forget that the enemy of our souls would always seek to turn our vision in upon ourselves, and that the danger of self-occupation in all its subtle forms is great. The normal work of the Spirit is to direct our gaze to Christ, to unfold His glory, to shew us things to come; and He only occupies us with ourselves when there is the need of self-judgment. We repeat that it is never the normal work of the Spirit to occupy us either with bad or with good self, but with Christ and the enjoyment of God's thoughts concerning Him. And the first work of the Spirit in us is to shed abroad God's love in our hearts.

We read, "Hope maketh not ashamed"; and the reason is, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." If there are any who doubt whether they have received the Spirit, that difficulty can very easily be solved. Do we know what it is to rest in and



enjoy the love of God? Can we look up this evening in the consciousness that God loves man? If so it is plain that we have, through divine grace, received the Spirit. The heart of man is enmity against God, therefore no one, apart from the presence of the Spirit of God, can taste or enjoy the love of God. The death of Christ has revealed God's love, but only a divine Person—the Spirit of God—could make my heart sensible of the love of God. There are men here upon earth who have received the Spirit of God, and He has shed abroad in their hearts the love of God, and He has made them conscious that God loves man; not simply that they can look outside and admire the love revealed in the cross, but they have the inward consciousness of it in their hearts, and the result of this is that a Christian taught of God looks at all that occurs around him, as well as all that touches him personally, in the light of God's love to man revealed in the cross. He has trials and difficulties, and he comes under pressure as well as other men, but he knows that a God of perfect love orders or overrules all, and therefore "Hope maketh not ashamed." He may not be relieved from pressure, he may be even passed through more trouble than other men, but, if walking with God, he never gets "ashamed," for he views all in the

light of God's love revealed by the death of Christ. There may be no outward evidence of it, but by the Spirit he has tasted the love of God expressed towards all men in Christ's death, and he regards all that takes place in the light of that love. What a wonderful fact it is to have the Spirit of God! How great is the privilege of walking through this scene in the light of the divine reality that God has expressed His heart to all men through Christ, and of looking at everything in the light of the love which the Holy Spirit has shed abroad in our hearts!

One who has believed in Christ risen and glorified is filled with joy and peace in believing, for the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. The reception of the Spirit is a reality known by the heart being made conscious of the love of God. Other things may have come in and hinder the enjoyment of God's great love if we have not been walking in the Spirit, and other lessons have to be learnt; but it is a wonderful thing to have received the Spirit and to enjoy the love of God revealed in the cross of Christ.

It is worthy of notice that after chapter v. there are two chapters in which the Spirit is not mentioned, and then in chapter viii. the thoughts connected with the presence of the

Spirit become the prominent theme. The omissions of scripture should always be weighed, for the Spirit has a moral purpose in them as much as in His positive statements. Let us then consider *why* the Spirit is not mentioned in Romans vi. and vii. Many of us though we have been brought to know the love of God have still to learn the true character of the lawless system around, as well as the powerlessness and entire corruption of ourselves. This prepares us to receive the truth that God has condemned sin in the flesh in order that a state may be formed "in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," which is in perfect accord with the work of the cross. In fact until we have in measure learnt our own inability to overcome sin in the flesh we know little of the presence of the Spirit on the experimental line. We must observe that the believers contemplated in Romans v. have the Spirit, and therefore their state is "in the Spirit," but it is not until chapter viii. that this teaching is brought out and that believers are viewed as having reached this state in their experience. Those who have in measure learnt that they are helpless and that their whole moral being is polluted by sin, are thus brought to appreciate Christ as the One through whom God delivers them

and as the Husband who supports them. The self-occupation which marked them is broken; Jesus Christ our Lord is before them as an object in which their souls delight; and now they are ready to receive the teaching concerning the indwelling Spirit and to prove in their experience the gain of the presence of the Spirit. Thus we see divine wisdom in the inspired Word in the omission from chapters vi. and vii. of the teaching concerning the Spirit as *power*, &c., in us; for until Christ is the object before me as the result of the experience recorded in Romans vii. I regard the Spirit in relation to me as an isolated individual, instead of His being a divine link with Christ, to the end that Christ in the grace of His Person may flow into my heart and mind for the shining forth of Him and the complete displacement of myself. This soul-experience of turning away from myself to the One in whom I see every perfection that is to be desired is of great importance and prepares us for the unfoldings concerning the indwelling of the Spirit of God. In Paul viewed as a Christian in daily life the traits of Christ were distinctly seen; they were fundamental principles in his soul, and clearly expressed in his responsible pathway—"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 has loved me and given himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20, New Trans.)

The saints of the church period have the Person of the Holy Ghost indwelling them, and their state—the character of their moral being—is "in the Spirit." These two thoughts must be distinguished but not separated. If a man has the Spirit of God indwelling him his state is "in the Spirit"; which is the character of his moral spiritual being in contrast to "in the flesh." Hence we read, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." This verse is not speaking of that which has been accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ, but of that which God brings to pass in His saints on earth by the reception of the Spirit. The consciousness of the love of God to man produces the desire to be here for God; then we learn that our whole state here in flesh is sinful, and this prepares us for the glorious tidings that God has given us a new state in the Spirit. We know that "when we were in the flesh" we were slaves to sin, but in the Spirit we have holy desires with power and ability to carry them out. The first man was placed in the garden in flesh, and sin polluted his

whole moral being, but now the saints have tastes, desires and aspirations according to God, with ability to fulfil them. It is a great moment in our spiritual history when we arrive at the fact that we "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." It is of great importance to recognise the momentous fact that the Spirit of God dwells in us, and that therefore our state as saints is in the Spirit.

There are two fundamental characteristic expressions used in regard to the Spirit's presence in us, namely, the "Spirit of God" and the "Spirit of Christ." In Romans i.-v. we have the revelation of God in Christ in relation to His universe, and in chapter viii. the wonderful fact that "God's Spirit" dwells in the "we." Thus the character of God as revealed in holiness in the cross shines forth in His righteousness, power, and love, as witnessed to and expressed in the death and resurrection of Christ. These characteristics are reproduced in measure in the moral features of the saints by the Spirit of God dwelling in them. There are not merely right feelings like those which existed in Adam before the fall; but motives, desires, &c., that morally correspond to the revelation of God; and thus gradually, through glorying in God, and through exercise of heart and conscience,

the saints are being formed as moral spiritual beings who will actually correspond to the revelation. The full results to be ultimately reached are there *in embryo*—potentially—in the Spirit, but they could not be predicated of us at the moment that we receive the Spirit, for we have gradually to grow up in Christ in order that these things may be actually true of us through the *work* of the Spirit.

But besides the revelation of God there is also the truth of the “one Man” through whom all the blessing comes to man, and in whom there is the perfect response, the living personification of the answer to the revelation. The Spirit of that Man—the One who is the Centre of God’s universe—our Lord Jesus Christ, is given to us that we may be gradually formed after Him, and thus become a living witness of the revelation of God revealed in grace.

We must bear in mind that the Spirit has not come to occupy us with Himself, but with Christ. We need to recognise His presence, and to bear in mind that the Spirit of God dwells in us. He brings into us motives that are of God, so that as moral spiritual beings we are glorified (illuminated with the light of the glory). He is power in us to enable us to live, and walk, and enjoy

divine things according to the measure in which Christ is an absorbing object before our souls. Let us bear in mind that our occupation with Christ is the measure of our spiritual stature, and that we shew how small we are by thinking or speaking of ourselves instead of Christ.

God having condemned sin in the flesh, and displaced our state in the flesh by giving us another state in the Spirit, we are not debtors to the flesh. It does not say that we are debtors to the Spirit, for that would place us under law instead of under grace—on the ground of what we are for God instead of what God is for man. If we live after or according to flesh—gratifying ourselves as natural persons—we shall be spiritually inactive, and *shall not be maintained in the enjoyment of the revelation of God*. If, on the other hand, *we* by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body then we shall live—through glorying in God, there will be a spontaneous answer to the revelation, and the marks which characterise persons living in the Spirit. The body is the vehicle through which we can either gratify ourselves naturally, or accomplish the will of God by the power of the Spirit through the enjoyment of God as revealed in Christ. Let us remember that though God has given His



Son *for* us, and has given His Spirit *to* us; *yet* the way of life is trodden and the vital enjoyment of Christ is known, when *we* by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body; for if we move on that line the Spirit is free to glorify Christ and to shew us things to come.

When *we live*, then we are ready to be led into the enjoyment of the counsels of God, the fulfilment of which is our hope. The creation even will be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; the "sons" will shine forth like the sun in the material heavens; but in the present time it is our privilege to suffer with Christ, and in holy liberty and freedom groan in sympathy with the groaning creation around us. In chapter vii. the man desiring to please God groans in bondage, having no power; but in chapter viii. he is so free of himself that he groans in sympathy with the misery around, having as his hope the complete emancipation of the whole universe for the pleasure and glory of God.

What a glorious present deliverance is placed before us, while we are still actually here in flesh and blood, through being "in the Spirit." We have power to put to death the deeds of the body and live. It is our privilege to be led of the Spirit, doing the will

of God in a spirit of sonship, knowing that we are children of God by the witness of the Spirit, groaning in sympathy with the creation which is still in bondage, and rejoicing in view of the glorious end which is for God's delight and glory. How precious it is to be able to turn to God as our Father, knowing that we are to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren, for God's eternal pleasure and glory.

Thus the divine order in which the truth is placed before us is—that we are brought to know in measure, by the working of the Spirit, our lost and ruined condition; we believe on the Lord Jesus, who has entered in triumph into glory; and we receive the Spirit on the divine side. The Spirit makes our hearts sensible of God's love to man, so that we view all things in the light of that love, and are brought to glory in God. On the experimental line we learn that Christ has died to sin and lives to God, that He lives to support us, and that He has given us His Spirit, that in moral nearness to Himself we may do the will of God without effort, being gradually led into the enjoyment of His Son as the centre of all His vast counsels, rejoicing in hope, and groaning in sympathy with the present creation.

May we each be kept conscious of the fact that we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, walking here in self-judgment, and led more to Christ personally as the centre of another scene, that the characteristics we have been considering may be more livingly expressed in us, for the glory of God!



## THE COMING OF THE LORD TWOFOLD.

(I THESS. I. 9, 10; II. 18-20; III. 11-13; IV. 13-18;  
V. 23, 24.)

It is of great importance that we should be exercised to hold the whole truth of God and to be governed by it. It is harmful and dangerous for a Christian to become a *specialist* in divine things. Some have favourite parts of scripture, favourite books, and they read these parts and neglect others. God has been pleased to give us in His word what is necessary for our spiritual profit and if any part of it is neglected we suffer correspondingly. God in His goodness works by His Spirit so that the truth, as presented in scripture in its own connections, should be formed in our souls, so that we may gradually become governed by the whole system of divine truth.

The coming of the Lord Jesus has a very important place in the scriptures, and it is healthful for us to raise the question—Has it that place in each of our souls? If it has not that place, then it is clear that something is wrong, and there must be a corre-

sponding defect in our daily life. When we speak of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ we are not merely referring to the catching away of the saints to be with the Lord, though that is included; for our gathering together to Him is in view of His coming "with all his saints." The translation of the saints is an important and a very blessed event, but each part of the divine thought has its own peculiar importance. The Lord is coming to change the whole order of things existing to-day on earth and in the heavenlies. Are we awaiting the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope? We are taught in Scripture to look for God's beloved Son to come and change the whole order of things as they now exist. . Satan and the wicked spirits will be cast out of the heavenlies (Rev. xii.), their effect upon earth will be done away, and Christ will have His rightful place in the universe of God, surrounded by His own.

There are many who are injured and hampered in their apprehension by the idea that the rapture of the saints and the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ are two separate events, instead of seeing that they are *two* parts of *one* event. We know that the saints will be caught up to be with the Lord, and that afterwards Christ will come

into view with all His saints, but these are presented as two parts of one great event. The word which is translated "coming" in the scriptures that we have read means "presence." He will come and be present in contrast to having been absent. We read, "They that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23), that is, at His presence. The Lord Jesus is absent to-day, but there is going to be a great change. He is coming into view, and then He will be *present*. What a wonderful effect His presence will have! This is the blessed hope of those who "love his appearing."

We know that there is a period of time between the translation of the saints and the appearing of the Lord with His saints; and this has assumed such importance in many minds that the moral connection of the two parts of His coming is lost. Supposing we only had the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, could we prove that there is any interval of time between the translation of the saints and the appearing? We could shew that there are the two things, but we could hardly prove, from the first epistle, that there is any interval of time between them, though there is plenty of room left for that interval. The Spirit of God so presents the truth that those two parts of one event are

looked upon in their moral connection with one another. Now in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians the Spirit of God distinctly shews that there will be an interval, during which certain events will develop on earth, between the two parts of that one *great* event.

We would like to suggest a few thoughts in connection with each of the scriptures we have read. In chapter i. we have (vers. 9, 10) the great hope of the Christian, though it is not developed. The Thessalonians had been "turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God," and not simply to wait, but "to *await* (New Trans) his Son from the heavens." Let us ask our own hearts, are *we* awaiting God's Son from heaven? Do we pass along our way, day by day awaiting God's Son from heaven? It must make a profound impression upon a person who is awaiting God's Son from heaven; it must alter the whole tenor of his life, and let us notice that this is actually involved in the thought of conversion, as we see in the Thessalonian saints. We await God's Son from heaven to change the whole order of things as they exist at the present time. Let us notice it does not say to take *us* to heaven, or to take us out of our difficulties, though we *shall* be taken to heaven out of all our difficulties to be with the Lord,

but we await the coming of God's Son to establish everything according to God, that God the Father may shine forth filling this scene with His glory, and that the Lord Jesus Christ may have His rights and His true place according to eternal purpose. We do well to challenge our hearts by inquiring—have we been turned to God from idols? You may say, "We were never idolaters." But there are two kinds of idolatry, one is a bowing down to that which men make to represent God, and another is a moral idolatry, which is far more dangerous for us than the other. It was the *moral* idolatry that marked us. An idol is anything that displaces God in my heart. Is it a reality that we have been turned to God from idols—those inside and those around, and that we are serving the living and true God, awaiting His Son from heaven? Think of the glorious prospect that lies before us! Have we in fact that prospect before the vision of our souls? The heavens are to be filled with saints who will exercise a divine influence throughout the vast creation; the earth is to come under the influence of heaven; heaven and earth are to be filled with the glory of God. How important for ourselves and for His glory that we should be really awaiting His Son from heaven!



We would suggest that in 1 Thessalonians ii., iii. we have the climax of our responsible pathway connected with the coming of the Lord. We are upon earth, living a responsible life in flesh (Gal. ii. 20), but that life will end, and it is important to see the true moral end of the responsible pathway. We often have difficulties in regard to the moral connections of the truth, but if we face them they yield profit and we gradually understand the setting of the different parts. Our responsible path will actually end when we are translated, for we shall then be taken out of the place in which responsibility applies to us, but our responsible pathway according to scripture morally ends with Christ's coming from heaven. This is what we mean by a moral connection. In figurative language we shall go into heaven in the "best robe" (Luke xv. 22), which is by Christ being formed in us; and our responsibility cannot be brought in there, where all is pure grace. Nothing goes into heaven but what comes out of heaven. Do we realise that we go into heaven as a piece of divine handiwork, as formed in love, a new creation? To connect responsibility with going into heaven is surely a grave mistake. But to return to figurative language. If we go in in the best robe, how do we come out? When we

appear with Christ, as we read in Revelation xix., He brings us clothed, not in the best robe, but in fine linen. The priests were clothed in fine linen, and fine linen "is the righteousnesses of saints." (Ver. 8, New Trans.) Let me still follow up the figurative language a little. Could the best robe ever require washing? That thought could not be connected with the best robe. But do our white robes need washing? It says distinctly that one company "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Then again we read, "Blessed [are] they that wash their robes." (Rev. xxii. 14, New Trans.) There was One who trod this earth whose robes were absolutely pure and white. He could make atonement for us because of, *who* He was, and because of *what* He was in daily life (John xiv. 30; Lev. xvi. 4), but every saint of God that ever trod this earth will need his white robe washed so as to appear with Christ in glory. We go in as God's workmanship, holy and without blame before Him in love; we come out with Christ—clothed in the triumph of divine grace, with everything that God can approve of from the path of responsibility.

The closing verses of chapters ii. and iii. have in view the end of the responsible path.

The principles involved in them apply to all saints. In chapter ii. it is work, and in chapter iii. it is walk. All saints are privileged to take part in the work of the Lord, and each is responsible to Him in regard to that work. We may have had the thought that the result of this work will be manifested when we go in, but the scriptures shew that it is when Christ comes that every man will have praise of God. (1 Cor. iv. 5.) The saint is also responsible in connection with his walk, for it says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." The end of the Christian's walk—the Christian's pathway, is morally "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all his saints.*"

Now we will look a little more at the thought of "work," for while it is not the privilege of all to preach it is their privilege to be engaged in heart in the work of the Lord. The great work of the Lord is to have each saint morally suitable for the day, and each saint desires, according to the measure in which he has grace, to take part in that work. Paul, who followed his Master so closely, said, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" Paul looked for that day, and that future day was a present reality to

his soul, and he was labouring and working for the saints to be ready for that day. His great exercise was to have the saints ready to come out with Christ, for they will go in accepted in the Beloved, and he laboured in view of the day of Christ. He desired that they might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil. i. 11.) Since the Reformation everything has been made by many of going to heaven, but the apostle laboured that the saints might be suitable to *appear* with Christ. In the figurative language to which we have alluded his great exercise was regarding the white robes in which the saints will appear with Christ. Let us ask ourselves, are we labouring thus in heart? Is the great desire of our hearts to see the Spirit of Christ in evidence in all His saints? Is our exercise that they may now be clothed in clean, white garments and thus be suitable companions *for Him* at His coming? The actual coming of the Lord was future, but this was a present reality to Paul's soul, and thus the future became present to him. Let us remember the end: Let us judge *ourselves* now, but leave our *work* for the Lord to judge, for the great thing is how He will regard it and how will it look in that day when the counsel

of the heart will be brought into the light and every unworthy motive judged by us.

Now we will pass on to *walk*. "Walk in love," because it is only in the atmosphere of love that saints grow. The love of God—God's love to man so enjoyed that we increase and abound in love one to another and to all men, for the only atmosphere in which we can grow is by being kept in the sphere of the activities of divine love. Then there is growth in holiness, and thus the divine intention will be reached by the confirming of our "hearts unblameable in holiness." "Unblameable in holiness!" Every motive, desire, taste and aspiration of each saint governed by affections which will be absolutely according to God, and therefore ever delighting in that which the blessed God Himself delights in. We shall be "unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." All that which has been contrary to God will be seen in the full light of God when the saint stands before the judgment seat. Hence the need of walking in the light of the judgment seat *now*. We must remember that God has judged everything at the cross, but He will have *us* to judge everything in the light of what He has done, and this is the great gain

of the judgment seat.\* In the scriptures there are three things that are inseparably connected—the judgment seat, the appearing, and the kingdom, and it is when the judgment seat is passed that we read of saints being “unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

In these two scriptures we see that the apostle had these divine realities before the vision of his soul, and though actually future yet they were ever a present reality to him, which affected and gave character to his daily life. Let us ask ourselves, are we walking and working with that end in view? Is our standard that which is suitable for the day when the blessed Person of Christ will shine forth in all His glory? Are we increasing and abounding in love so as to be gradually confirmed unblameable in holiness, and so morally anticipating that future day?

In chapter iv. the Spirit of God speaks of that which would comfort or encourage the saints.

\* We shall have been conformed to the image of God's Son and enjoyed our full portion in God's presence before passing the judgment seat. This will enable us to review our responsible path with the intelligence and in the full light of our place with God.

It is in this scripture that we have unfolded the catching away of the saints before the manifestation. It is of importance to raise the question, What are we looking for? We know that we are going to be caught up, but we look for His manifestation. Do you remember, when a dear brother was going home, some one said to him, "You will soon be gone to be with the Lord," and he replied, "I shall soon be coming back with Him." Do some exclaim, "But going in is our special portion"? But we inquire, Is there not that which is more important than *our* portion? Surely *Christ's* portion is more important than ours, and let us remember that in scripture the *full* portion of the church is always presented in connection with her manifestation with Him. The saint looks for the manifestation of Christ, but he knows he will be caught up first. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, said, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." He looked for the appearing and spoke of it. We speak of what we are looking for. But before the manifestation Enoch was translated, just as we know that *we* shall be translated, for it is necessary that we should be taken *to* Him that we may come *with* Him; so the catching up is a means to an end. Enoch had the testimony

that he pleased God, and if we have the characteristics that were seen in the Thessalonian saints we shall have the testimony that we please God. These characteristics are what are suitable for those who will come out with Christ. "Work of faith," "patience of hope" and "labour of love," are fitting marks for those who are to reign with Christ in heavenly glory.

We need to be exercised as to whether this is the character of our walk and work. Going *in* is wholly through sovereign mercy and grace, but our responsible path here is connected with the manifestation of Christ.

The fact of Christ's manifestation was so real to the Thessalonian saints that they feared that those who had fallen asleep would lose some of the blessing connected with that manifestation, so the apostle says, "But we do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are fallen asleep, to the end that ye be not grieved even as also the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus has died and has risen again, so also God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus." (New Trans.) When Christ comes in His glory will there be one heavenly saint that has fallen asleep absent? Not one! Every saint that has been put to sleep by



Jesus will be there. This met their difficulty, but it did not explain to them how it would be brought about. Hence we read, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming\* of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." "The Lord himself," for He will not use an angel to call His own to be with Him. Angels willingly serve the saints, and will be used in the restoration of Israel, but it is the Lord Himself who will descend from heaven with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice, and with trump of God. The *Lord* shouts, and the title *Lord* is connected with the *kingdom*. . "My Son" is connected with My *Father's house*, and with saints in heavenly privilege, but Lord with the saints viewed on kingdom lines. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout. The moment He has waited for will have come, then He will shout for joy, and every saint on earth will respond. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." Those that have been brought into blessing during this present period, and who have fallen asleep, will all rise, and "then we which

\* This is the word that means presence.

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The word Lord characterises this passage. We often speak of the translation of the church, and those who form the church will be translated, but they are *viewed* as in the kingdom and therefore called by the Lord into His presence. The Lord can only recognise what is real. The Lord could not translate His own as enjoying heavenly privilege unless they did, and many have no idea even of heavenly privilege ; and, alas ! how little any of us know of it. But every saint bows to Christ as Lord, though he may know little about His glory as Lord, and therefore the title Lord is prominent here.

The translation of the saints is thus on lines that cover every individual saint on the face of the earth. You may know that some teach that only those who are positively watching will be translated. Let us beware of connecting anything that depends on *us* with the rapture, the catching away is through sovereign mercy and grace. Responsibility of saints has its place and is connected with the appearing, but translation is entirely through mercy and grace. Hence it is connected with that which is elementary.

It is the Lord who catches us away, and it is that we may be with the Lord.

One word more before closing. If we love the Lord Jesus we desire to be pleasing to Him, both inwardly and outwardly. The Pharisee is concerned about the exterior; a saint is concerned about his motives, feelings and desires. If walking with God we are concerned far more with our motives than with our actions. We cannot excuse the least feeling that is contrary to God if we walk with Him. Many days we can look back upon and are not conscious of having done wrong, but has Christ been manifested in us? He wept over Jerusalem, He rose up a great while before the break of day to pray. When there was the appearance of popularity, He said, "Let us go into the next towns." If we read the gospels and see what that blessed Person was, and did, we are only able to say—We are indeed unprofitable servants. But we seek grace to purify ourselves even as our beloved Lord is pure (1 John iii. 3), and this end *will* be reached. The moment is coming when our thoughts and desires will be in perfect accord with Christ. If here to-morrow we must seek grace to answer to this perfect standard, but if on the morrow it is not reached let us remember we *shall* reach it

and be "pure, even as he is pure." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." From the inner part of our moral being to its outward part, the apostle desires that we may be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." We await the happy moment when He will come; when His glory will fill the whole scene; when the whole earth will come under the influence of heaven; when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; and when we shall *actually* be what we *would* be, because we shall perfectly answer to every desire of His heart.

May every one of us have the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ more before our souls, that we may walk and work in view of it, draw our comfort and encouragement from it, knowing the moment is at hand when we shall be everything that He desires us to be. May these divine realities be so before our souls that they may greatly affect us, that we may be more to His praise and glory even now.

---

## “THE MAN CHRIST JESUS, THE EXPRESSION OF SOVEREIGN MERCY AND GRACE.”

(GEN. I. 1, 2; MATT. I. 1.)

THE reader will perhaps have noticed that in the New Testament we have the opposite order to that in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament it is first recorded that God created the heavens and the earth, then we read of the chaos and the scene formed for man, and last of all the creation of man and how he was placed over the works of God's hand.

The New Testament opens with the Person of Jesus Christ, and in the last book, Revelation, we read of a “new heaven and a new earth.” We would suggest that the reason is that man—the first man, was the one to be tested in order to demonstrate whether *he* would and could render the suitable answer to God's manifest goodness. The result, of course, was foreknown to God. The New Testament opens with a *Person* who has come in sovereign mercy, grace and love declaring what God is. This Person

has been tested while on earth, but every test only brought into greater relief His moral excellence. Matthew writes from the standpoint that Christ has passed triumphantly into heaven, and then records His rejection by the leaders and nation of the Jews. So it is the generation of Jesus Christ, the One who as man has entered into the presence of God, and who will fill this scene with the moral traits of Himself as the anointed One. He writes in the light of what is expressed by our beloved Lord when He says, "From henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matt. xxvi. 64, New Trans.) The New Testament commencing with the Person of Christ, who fulfils all the pleasure of God, can in its gradual unfoldings conduct us to a scene where everything is in accord with the nature of God, and where God can eternally dwell in the midst of a universe formed upon the holy foundation of the death of His Son.

We desire to review the history of the man who is brought on the scene in the Book of Genesis. In the ways of God each period of time manifests a distinct trait of character. It is important to have before us the moral lessons learned from the history of the man that God has removed in the

cross, because we still carry that man about with us and we know how easy it is for that man to be manifested in us. We learn the evil of our own hearts in three ways—from the history of man, from our own experience, but above all from the cross of Christ.

The first test that man was subjected to was in innocency. How the goodness of God was seen in that test! Every way to fall was barred except one, and to eat of the forbidden fruit was the only way by which man could depart from God. God must be God, and the creature must recognise that God is God; hence there was *one* test. He was not told to *do* anything, he was simply prohibited from eating of one tree. There was everything that a good Creator could supply, but one tree was prohibited. Alas! what he does is the very thing that he was told not to do. Do not let us forget the moral lesson to be learned from the first man being upon trial—the thing prohibited is the very thing he *did*.

We will pass on to the long period from the fall to the flood. How often is the lesson entirely forgotten that man has had his golden opportunity for improving and putting the world right. God left everything in the hands of man, save that He providentially kept His hand over all, but when man had

done his best in governing and ordering the world, God having looked down was morally forced to come in and wash the earth clean by the flood. Whatever man in the flesh upon trial puts his hand to he spoils. He may mean well, like the nation in Isaiah xviii., but it will prove to be a mistake.

We will pass on to the third test. (Gen. ix.) God in His goodness commits *government* into the hands of man. Man is made responsible to govern, but alas! he cannot govern himself, and the whole scene was soon filled with idolatry. Then God called Abraham, and later delivered his seed, which had become a nation, out of the land of Egypt. To that nation the law was given, and after that the priest was given to maintain the link between the nation and God; then the prophet Samuel was given, and by him the king was anointed. The law told man what he must be and do if he continued to live on earth. "Do this and live." The serious end was that man so privileged said in his heart, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance." (Matt. xxi. 38.) When man had been entrusted with government he refused the only One who *could* govern.

The next test is the presentation of Christ in grace. What a marvellous moment! God's



beloved Son upon earth and the perfect grace of God shining forth in Him. But this only drew forth the hatred of the human heart as expressed in "Let him be crucified." (Matt. xxvii. 23.) The trial of responsible man in flesh has come to its end, and man is thoroughly exposed, whenever he is tested *he* is seen to be in opposition to God. If there is prohibition he does the thing prohibited. If he is left to himself he fills the world with wickedness. If God tells him what to do he does not do it, and if God comes down in lowly grace he hates Him.

But though man's trial is ended, he is still tested. Christ is risen and glorified, and the glad tidings concerning Christ as Lord and Head still go forth. What a wonderful day of privilege! Another world under Christ comes into view, and the gospel announces that the way into that world is open for all men. Alas! man left to himself refuses the glad tidings of Christ glorified, and eventually he will set up a man as a rival king and priest, having refused the One whom God presented in testimony. What a solemn end. Those nations privileged to hear the glad tidings of God's grace to all men in open defiance setting up one who usurps the place belonging to Christ as King and Priest. (Rev. xiii.)

Man will be tested in one more way; the "world to come" will be established in visible power and glory, and the Lord Jesus Christ will reign, having "purged out of His kingdom all things that offend"; the righteous will pass into life eternal, and those who know not God will be cut off. Numbers will be born during the time Christ is reigning in His glory and will participate in the blessedness of that reign. But at the close of that wonderful reign it is necessary that Satan should be loosed that those who have enjoyed these privileges should be tested. Alas! that man is unchanged and unchangeable, and, led by Satan, many rise in rebellion against God. The whole scene had been filled with blessing and joy, and until they were tested they had enjoyed the fruit of the reign, but when tested they shew that their hearts had not really been affected by the manifest goodness of God. The last test of man in the flesh ends. The serious lesson is plain. When the first man—the responsible man is tested in *any* way (and God has tested him in *every* way), he always proves perverse and in opposition to God.

We will now gladly turn to the New Testament to trace the ways of God with the ONE who has passed through the heavens

into the very presence of God. We will notice the order of the words in the first verse in Matthew i., "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Why not "Son of Abraham, son of David"? Afterwards, in the *genealogy*, the latter is the order in which it is given, but in the first verse of the chapter it is "the son of David, the son of Abraham." In the Person of Christ God has intervened in sovereign mercy, when all was lost in the hands of that man who has had the opportunity of rendering an adequate response to God. A divine Person takes a bondman's form to meet every question that is necessary for the glory of God, and to lay a foundation upon which a universe can stand eternally. In that spiritual universe man is not on trial, for it is all the work of God based upon the death of Christ. Our Lord being spoken of as the Son of David gives prominence to the thought of sovereign mercy. In the Book of Samuel we find the priesthood had broken down. How solemn that the offering of the Lord was "abhorred" through the conduct of the priests. Then God in His sovereignty communicates with His people through the prophet. A little later the ark is taken by

the enemy. Saul is made king by the people's choice, but God watches over His people. We read, "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. . . . He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved . . . he chose David from the sheepfolds." (Psa. lxxviii.) Thus God came in in sovereign mercy, and this is seen in His choice of David, the shepherd king, being placed over His people. The fact of God's intervention in *sovereign mercy* is most strikingly confirmed in connection with David's seed. From Jeremiah xxii. 30 we find that Jeconiah, the royal seed, was to be "childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." What a serious thing, that the posterity of the man that God had set up in His mercy and entrusted with the kingdom had fallen under the curse, and thus the promises could only be fulfilled by the intervention of God. God is never baffled. Hence Christ came of the *seed of David* through Mary; Mary being espoused to Joseph who was the legal heir to the throne. But it was Jehovah—the Saviour who came in perfect

love and grace on the principle of sovereign mercy. We suggest, therefore, that one reason why "son of David" is placed before "son of Abraham" is because that on the ground of responsibility all title to inherit the promises had been lost, and sovereign mercy is the only principle upon which God could fulfil the unconditional promises made to Abraham.

We will now consider very briefly our beloved Lord in four different positions. Our Lord lived upon earth about thirty-three and a-half years, and because of who and what He was He fulfilled every thought of God regarding man. We could not speak of Him as being a man placed on trial, though coming into this world He was tried as no one else could be, and He rendered fullest response as man to God. There was far more than this in His wonderful pathway, but it was necessary for God's triumph that He should fulfil *every thought of God regarding man*. In type this is seen by the priest on the day of atonement being clothed in linen garments and not in his "garments of glory and beauty." Our Lord lived a life of absolute holiness and righteousness, and, therefore, because of what He was *as man*, He could, on the behalf of man, meet all the claims of God in

regard to man's deep ruin. On the other hand no one but One who was God could measure the distance brought in by sin and the holy claims of God's throne.

We commend for contemplation and adoration this wonderful Person—Jehovah, the Saviour. It was Jehovah Himself who became the Saviour, and He has settled every question in connection with what man should have been for God, that He may become the source of life in a scene where what God is for man shines in eternal brilliancy. In that blessed One there was everything that God Himself could desire in man, and so He was sealed by the Holy Ghost on account of His own intrinsic perfection, and the Father's voice declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

In our Lord's death the whole question of sin and sins had to be settled by His meeting everything that had come in, according to the demands of God's holy nature. The blessed Person of Christ has eternally met all these questions and ended the life of the man set up to manifest whether *he* would render adequate response to God. The life of that man in bodily condition on earth was the blood (Lev. xvii. 11), and our beloved Lord laid down that life as man on earth never to take it again. He who

was intrinsically holy could, by being a sacrifice for sin, end the life of mankind to which sin and responsibility attached by bearing the sin. Hence we suggest that the Gospel of Matthew presents the death of Christ as the trespass offering where it speaks of Him giving up the Ghost, using an expression very similar to that in John's gospel. We desire specially to draw attention to two things, namely, that perfect provision has been made in connection with what man should be for God, and that the life of the man, who should have rendered an adequate response to God, is ended. Therefore there is a foundation on which God can work and form in resurrection a universe answering in character to the foundation, unassailable by the enemy, and filled morally with that which shone forth in the death of His blessed Son.

We will pass now to His resurrection, the result of which is that there is a sphere in which everything can be formed according to God upon the moral foundation of His death. Nothing that is formed there can ever be assailed; no one in this present period can enter that sphere in the life of the man who was placed on trial, neither can Satan touch anything there. Before ever that sphere came into existence by the

resurrection of Christ, the life of the first and sinful man had been ended in the cross. Hence, when anything is formed by the Spirit of God, it is of the second Man and belongs to that sphere which is outside all that man can touch and spoil, for all there is wholly of God Himself.

The fourth thought is connected with Christ at the right hand of God. It is of great importance to see that Christ fulfils the purpose of God from *thence*. It is often overlooked that Christianity is not simply based upon Christ being rejected, but upon the momentous fact that Christ rose from the dead, and has "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God." Stephen presented Christ in glory to the Jewish nation ready to return and establish His kingdom, and by the rejection of Stephen's testimony the message was sent to Christ in glory, "We will not have this man to reign over us." But Christ will come and set up His kingdom in power and manifest blessing. Thus Christianity in its fulness commenced with the rejection of Christ in heaven, and the Holy Spirit indwelling His own on earth. Stephen thus rendered a twofold testimony. He gave the last word to the Jewish nation and livingly expressed the truth of Christianity. Christ glorified on



high has been refused, but God is working to accomplish His thoughts by the Spirit, who has come consequent upon Christ being at the right hand of God. God works in the power of the Spirit, fulfilling every thought of His own heart on the principle of sovereign mercy and grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is hardly anything more important than being transferred in the apprehension of our souls from the line of what man should be for God to the line of sovereign mercy and grace. On the former line persons are marked by instability, but on the latter by stability. It was necessary in the ways of God that man should be placed on trial, but that which satisfies the heart of God, and is for His glory, must be entirely and wholly of God Himself, through God forming families responsive to the revelation of Himself, that He may dwell in the responses of His own. (Psa. xxii. 3.)

The gospel announces that Jehovah Himself has come, and by propitiation has met the holy claims of God regarding all the result of man's departure from God. As MAN He has passed into the glory of God, and now He is the spring and source of families who will fill God's world, and because of divine formation will be responsive to God. The

thought of what man *should* be is unsuitable in connection with that scene, for in it the adequate response is secured by God's own work in forming each individual and each company based upon the work of redemption. The very idea of man rendering an adequate response loses its force in a scene where all is of God, so that the response is secured from all through God having *formed* all families and things responsive to Himself.

The Bible largely presents to us two men—the *first* man, who should have fully answered to God's goodness, and the SECOND Man—the One 'out of heaven—who is the expression of sovereign mercy and grace. From the one, the race sprang which manifested its inability to render any adequate answer to the goodness of God, but *Christ* is the source and spring of *many* families for the pleasure of God, who as the fruit of divine love working in mercy will render a response which will satisfy the heart of God.

May God, in the greatness of His grace and mercy, give each one a deepened sense of the complete failure and collapse of the man set up on trial, that we may boast more in the One who is the expression of divine love and of sovereign mercy and grace.

## “FLEEING TO CHRIST JESUS AS THE MAN OF COUNSEL.”

(HEBREWS VI.)

GOD in His goodness is forming an immense system of blessing, which will fill His universe. This system is future in the sense of public display, but present for faith in spiritual power, because Christ is at the right hand of God, and the Spirit is here indwelling the saints.

In connection with this wonderful system of blessing there are certain thoughts which characterise it; and which are of great importance to each of us. There are certain questions which have arisen in God's universe, and we cannot exactly explain how or why God was pleased to allow it, but we know that God is a God of perfect love. Hence we know that what He orders or allows must finally prove to be the right and the best thing that could take place. When all is seen in the light of God, then we shall understand how all that God ordered or even

allowed was necessary for the ultimate good of His universe.

It was necessary that the question of God's sovereignty should be raised and established in His dealings with angels and with men. The whole system of blessing that God is forming, each individual and family, the position and particular blessing of each, will bear the stamp of divine sovereignty. There are two scriptures which may help to elucidate the divine idea of sovereignty. In Luke xix. 12-27 the servants have positions over the cities according to their faithfulness, as a reward on account of what they had gained while their Lord was away, but in Matthew xx. prominence is given to God's wisdom and sovereignty. This is remarkable and instructive in connection with the responsible pathway of the saints. When the Lord says, "Well done, good and faithful servant," the saints will have passed before the judgment seat, and their position in the kingdom will be according to divine sovereignty, which position is reached through a path of exercise, suffering, and renouncing, where our Lord was rejected. Many, we fear, think of sovereignty as a mere fatalism—that what must be will be. But God maintains and reaches His end in sovereignty by the

triumph of good over evil. In sovereignty God gives light to individuals and gradually expels the darkness by the work of the Holy Spirit, and thus each individual will reach his position in the kingdom assigned by God in His wisdom and sovereignty as one fitted for that position through the schooling he has received in overcoming evil with good. Thus God secures His own end and forms His universe according to His purpose and pleasure, fulfilling His counsels by sovereignty, under which the conscience, heart and mind of each saint is so developed that the position for which he was chosen may be occupied intelligently.

We will now consider the transfer of the soul from the line of what man is for God when on trial to the line of what God is for us in sovereignty and counsel when the trial of man is ended. It is of great importance, so that real progress may be made, and that we may be fitted to stand for God in the scene of responsibility.

When God placed man on earth he was responsible to obey and act consistently with the privileged position granted to him as distinct from every other creature. *He* had to yield this response. With Israel God raised the question—Would man render to

God the obedience which is necessary because of His holiness, and therefore live on earth by the fulfilment of the demand? (Rom. x. 5.) God Himself has given the verdict both in the Old and New Testaments. We read, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psa. xiv. 2, 3.) And again, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.) In the cross of Christ the end of man, as a race set up in the bodily condition, on which the blood is the life, was morally reached, and Christ has gone on high into the presence of God to fulfil all God's thoughts in sovereign mercy by the Spirit. The thought of the responsibility of man is *specially* connected with Israel. The response in obedience was demanded of them on the principle of law, and in the future, by the work of God they will be responsive and will spontaneously render the obedience required for man to live on earth. Under law God's pleasant plant "brought forth wild grapes (Isa. v.), but in mercy God says, "From me is thy fruit found." (Hosea xiv. 8.) Responsibility applies to the church and to

individual believers in the present period, because they are on earth where they are being educated in the ways of God. It is while on earth, living a life in blood and flesh, in a mixed condition, where God's purpose is being fulfilled in saints, with the actual developments of good and evil taking place in and around them that responsibility applies to them. In the life of Christ, as risen with Christ (Col. ii. 9-13), and as formed “ holy and without blame before him in love ” (Eph. i. 4), the thought of responsibility is unsuitable, because saints are there viewed in the life of the One who has passed out of the sphere of responsibility. In Ephesians i. 3-6 the saints are viewed as God's workmanship, according to eternal purpose before the question of responsibility was raised with man, but this and every other blessing and privilege brings its corresponding responsibility, because we are here in the condition of blood and flesh. Hence the saint is not responsible on the line of *demand*, like Israel in the past, but he is responsible to answer to the formative work of God and blessing given in grace. It is not, therefore, a legal response, but the manifestation of what saints are by God's work. The Spirit works so that the saint has motives and desires that are of God, and in the Spirit he has the power by which

they are accomplished, and according to the measure in which this is true the saint answers to his responsibility. We must proceed no further with this important subject, but let us ever remember that the saint is responsible because he is here in the *bodily* condition of the *first* man, and that the measure of his responsibility is the revelation of God's mind as seen in Christ. The saint being on earth is responsible, but he is not on that ground in his soul. He recognises his responsibility, but his hope is like an anchor "which entereth into that *within the veil*." It is clear that "that within the veil" refers to counsel. Only that which spoke of Christ was there. The resources that God had in the Man of counsel, when Israel had failed, was there seen.

The high priest went into the holiest of all once a year (under the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat, lest he should die) to make atonement by sprinkling the blood before and upon the mercy seat. In figure thus the claims of God were met and He could remain amongst His people, but there was no thought of a person *remaining* within the holiest. Moses and Aaron went in and came out, and blessed the people, but even they did not *remain* within.

Now Christ has gone in, having first



perfectly settled every question regarding sin according to the holiness of God, and He *remains* there during the whole period of Christianity. This clearly shews that there is a portion within for those connected with the One who has entered in according to counsel. We have, therefore, "a better hope," and we await the One to come to establish by divine power the blessing that will fill the universe according to counsel. Hence the Christian has a better hope, because it is in the One who is within the veil; and even those who have not the privilege of going *within* will enjoy a higher character of blessing through Christ having remained within, when all will be established according to counsel. In the beginning of our chapter we read, "Let us go on to perfection," or "full growth." There is no security in merely *knowing* the things connected with Christianity as a system established on earth. These are true, but security lies in knowing *Christ in glory*, who is the Man of counsel. Many recognise that there is that established on earth which is very good, and that those who live pious lives upon earth gain by it. That is good as far as it goes, but it does not touch Christianity in its specific character. The Spirit says, "Let us go on to perfection"—to know the Person of Christ in

glory, the One who is the centre of a vast extent of blessing according to counsel, in contrast to knowing Him merely as the Messiah upon earth. Two prominent thoughts in Hebrews are the Person of Christ in God's presence in heaven, and divine counsel. The writer tells them that they have become like babes, unable to distinguish between good and evil. Their tastes and desires are similar to those under law. Hence the word is, "Let us go on to perfection"—to that which characterises Christianity—the knowledge of Christ in heaven. He then speaks of thoughts on which additional light had been thrown by the coming of Christ, and yet not characteristic of Christianity. (See verses 2, 3.) Then He alludes to privileges through the presence of the Spirit and experiences known amongst God's people on earth, which may be tasted without any vital link with the Person of Christ who had entered within the veil. A person may taste heavenly giving in meeting the bodily needs of the saints, the wonderful effect of the presence of the Spirit, yet, if there was no vital connection with Christ within the veil, he may fall away without hope of recovery. If Christ in heaven, as the expression of divine counsel, was refused, God had nothing better to present

to them. Then, at the close of the chapter, he seeks to transfer their souls, from the line of blessing, dependent upon man answering to demand, to the line of promise and counsel fulfilled in grace and mercy.

In the pathway of responsibility there is no time to sleep or to take our ease, but to "shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." (Vers. 11, 12.) We need to be ever awake and on the alert, for there are dangers on every hand. We need to see that we are not slothful but pressing onward toward the goal, being "imitators of those who through faith and patience have been inheritors of the promises." He would encourage them in the path, and give impetus to their spiritual vigour by reminding them that those in the line of promise had God's word and His oath, which were the expression of God's counsel. It was to Abraham that God made unconditional promises. There was no promise to Adam, though it is often said that there was. God gives no promises to the man after the flesh, which had to be ended in death. The promises were made to the one called in sovereign mercy, and confirmed to the Seed (that is, to Christ risen), in view of counsel. God made these promises without imposing conditions. God announced what

He was going to do, and the promises to Abraham were unconditional, in contrast to those proposed to his seed when Israel accepted the condition of obedience to law. God had delivered them out of Egypt in mercy and grace, and then God proposed conditions which they accepted, and the result was that everything was lost. With Abraham it was God freely binding Himself to bless Abraham without condition, though He knew how through Abraham's Seed—Christ—He would work in mercy and thus secure the obedience suitable for those who would inherit the blessing.

“When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.” This is clearly not a legal binding where a certain response was rendered, but a free spontaneous binding to fulfil certain promises unconditionally, and confirmed by God's word and His oath. If it were on the line of responsibility it would be, “I will bless if you obey,” but being on the line of sovereign mercy and counsel God says, “Surely blessing I will bless thee.” This was not fulfilled immediately, for the inheritors of the blessing are morally prepared in the responsible pathway, where faith,

patience and endurance accomplish the desired end, with the cheer and comfort flowing from having God's word and God's oath.

With the inheritors of promise there was no outward sign of the fulfilment of promise, but they had God's word and His oath. What encouragement to have God's word, but how gracious of God to add His oath. God's word is as stable as Himself, and to this He added His oath. God desires the "heirs of promise" to be conscious of "the immutability of his counsel." There we get stability. There we have under our feet solid ground that neither men nor demons can disturb—immutability of God's counsel.

Unless we know what it is to put our feet there we can never stand for God in this changing scene. It is the great stay, cheer, and comfort to the saint that God is developing His own immutable counsels, fulfilling His thoughts, which nothing can ever change or alter. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." *Have* we fled for refuge? This is not addressed to sinners, but to those called "heirs of promise," that they may have "strong consolation, who have

fled for refuge." How important it is for us to "have *fled*"! Have we learned that there is no hope of blessing connected with that which depends on frail man, so as to flee to the One who has passed within the veil for the fulfilment of divine counsel? Christ came "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," but the Jews refused Christ on earth and the offer of His returning from glory. (Acts vii. 54-60.) Hence if God had not had His own purpose all would have been lost, and thus all blessing is according to divine counsel and fulfilled in sovereign mercy. The Spirit in this passage evidently refers to a man fleeing to the city of refuge, where he remained until the death of the high priest. His hope lay in a change of priest, not exactly in a new order, but a distinct change. The fulfilment of all blessing on earth is connected with Christ coming out as Moses and Aaron. (Lev. ix. 23.) Meanwhile we flee from the responsible system connected with man tested, even by the *offer* of Christ's return from glory, to the Person of Christ, who has entered within the veil according to the secret purpose of God. The great hope of the Christian is for Christ to have His rightful place, and for everything to be established according to counsel by the manifestation of the Person

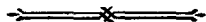
of Christ. He will come out and will give higher character even to the earthly side of the blessing, through all taking character from the blessedness known within.

The Spirit appears to refer to a man fleeing to the city of refuge, and to a ship being drawn into harbour by the anchor being securely fastened inside the harbour. Those who have fled for refuge have the hope which is like an anchor securely fastened inside even "into that within the veil." The hope is not in poor frail man—the one who always fails, who never answers to the mind of God, but in the perfect One, God's beloved Son, the Man of His right hand, who is the Man of counsel, the expression of the mercy and grace of God. This hope enables a person to be steadfast and immovable in a scene marked by departure, and encourages him onward, while in affection and mind he is being drawn to the One who has gone within the veil. That One has gone in according to counsel—the Forerunner, and the *runners* will soon be actually with Him. But already they are being drawn in Spirit to that Person in the place where He is. Thus the hope of the Christian is in that One who has gone *in* and who will come *out* to fill the universe with priestly grace. Meanwhile we are privileged to know Him as

High Priest "after the *order* of Melchisedec," though He is officiating after the *pattern* of the priesthood seen in Aaron.

In the sphere of responsibility there are grave dangers, and to be able to stand for God there our souls must be transferred from the line of what man when on trial is for God to the line of divine counsel as expressed in Christ where He is. The moment we apprehend the blessed Person of Christ within the veil we reach the thought of divine counsel, and our hope is in Him,—the One through whom all the counsels of God will be effected. This enables us to stand for God in this scene where everything is breaking up, and which will break up more and more until it disappears to make room for the Person of Christ who will fill the whole scene with His glory.

May we each know experimentally what it is to have fled for refuge and to be marked by stability here, being increasingly drawn to Christ where He is!





## “CHRIST IN YOU.”

(ROM. VIII. 9, 10; GAL. II. 19, 20; COL. I. 24-29.)

It must be a joy to every Christian's soul to think of the moral greatness of the Person of Christ. We indeed rejoice, knowing that He has passed into God's presence to give effect to the whole counsel of God; but how it delights the heart to think of Him as morally great enough to give character to that universe which will delight the heart of God. We may well remind ourselves that that universe will be composed of numerous families of saints and of angels, though in fact we know very little of its vastness. But we delight to think that the Person of Christ, the anointed One, is to give character to that universe and to fill it with His own moral and spiritual perfection and beauty.

There will be one family distinct from the others through Christ having been *formed* in them. Christ will give *character* to all the other families, but the thought of

the *formation* of Christ in them appears to be confined to the church, which is His body.

We will first seek to gather the meaning of the expression, "Christ be formed in you." If we think of this fact in its completeness and perfection the thought may be more clear in our minds. There will be one company—Christ's body, in which the power of holy discernment, the intelligent apprehension and the affections of Christ will be found, and therefore the moral beauty of Christ will be expressed in them. The feelings and sensibilities of Christ will be in that body, and this will distinguish that family from all the others which will be in the universe of God. This body will be composed of an immense number of individuals, and the work of God in each will fit each one to fill his own peculiar place in the body of Christ in which He will be perfectly expressed.

In the cross there had to be a foundation laid according to God's holiness, and in each individual soul the fundamental principles corresponding to that foundation have to be made good that God may build what He pleases thereupon. We are not merely speaking of being born anew but of individual exercise of soul through which a

person is passed, so that the principles of rising above evil through delighting in good, and loving righteousness, which mark the revelation of God, may characterise us. This kind of moral foundation is first laid in each soul to prepare it for the formation of Christ. Some appear to think that because they have the Spirit they have everything subjectively, but it is the Spirit's *work in* them that leads them into all truth. The one who has the Spirit *belongs* to the church, and is in the church as a divine formation according to the measure in which Christ is formed in him. In the future God will take up the nation of Israel and will make the terms of the new covenant operative in them so that they will be a righteous nation, enjoying certain blessings. They will take character from Christ, "The law will be written in their hearts and minds," but it is not said that Christ will be *formed* in them. The work of God connected with the kingdom and the new covenant which will take place in Israel must necessarily take place in us also, but it is initiatory, and in view of God forming in us what is distinctive and characteristic of Christianity. The kingdom and covenant are not distinctive of this present period, but Christ formed in saints and saints created in

Christ Jesus are thoughts peculiar to this interval of grace.

Having believed upon Christ risen and glorified, we receive the Spirit, who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. We then begin to learn our own weakness and pass through an experience by which we are prepared for learning the truth of the presence of the Spirit on the *experimental* line unfolded in Romans viii. There we read, "Now if any man have 'not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of him," that is, he has not been brought into relation or attachment to the "ONE MAN." Then, based upon having the Spirit of Christ, it can be said, "And if Christ be in you." The *reception* of the Spirit is clearly prior to His *formation* of Christ in us, for the Galatians had received the Spirit, yet the apostle says, "My children, of whom I again travail in birth until Christ shall have been formed in you." (Gal. iv. 19, New Trans.) The apostle had been used to their conversion, and he now desired that Christ should be formed in them. Hence we are quite justified in saying that the Spirit is given *in view* of the formation of Christ in us, but if a person has the Spirit of Christ, Christ is there, and that appears to be the extent of the thought as expressed in the Epistle to the Romans. So Romans

speaks of "Christ in you," but Galatians of Christ being *formed* in saints. The Spirit of Christ is given in view of Christ being *formed* in us, and it is very serious for a Christian to hinder this. The Galatians and the Corinthians had thus hindered the work of the Spirit in them. The former by their legality and the latter by their worldly and earthly mindedness.

We can certainly hinder Christ being formed in us, but on the other hand it is the Spirit who forms Christ in us. Hence we must not grieve the Spirit by being unfaithful to the revelation of God, or by not walking in subjection to the Lord, so that the Spirit may be free to lead us into the enjoyment of the deep things of God and gradually to form Christ in us. But if the Spirit is grieved through our lack of self-judgment, or by our being caught by the influence of the world, or of the earth, His formative work is hindered until we judge the departure.

We will now consider Christ formed in the saint in view of his responsible pathway and in view of eternal counsel. In the Epistle to the Galatians it appears that the formation of Christ in saints is in view of them treading their responsible pathway, though every trait that is formed in a soul is of

Christ, who is the Man of counsel, and is wrought in sovereign mercy and grace. Any trace or trait of the first man would mar that work, for it is the One who is going to fill the universe with His moral beauty and spiritual perfection for the eternal glory of God who is being formed in us. But that formation has a marvellous effect upon us in our responsible pathway. Paul speaks of that which was true of him experimentally as a Christian, and therefore uses the personal pronoun. Through grace he could thus speak, and each must decide whether he can take up this language. He says, "For I, through law, have died to law, that I may live to God." Saul was a man of blameless character who lived on good terms with himself until through mercy the law brought home death to him. Henceforth in his own eyes he was the chief of sinners and "less than the least of all saints." One of the greatest tests is how we secretly regard ourselves, and this is according to the measure in which we have learned what we are. When the law came home to Saul he saw that he had a heart that desired many things instead of God, and then he gradually learnt that there was only death in him, and that he had been ended in the death of Christ, so that he could

live not merely *for* but *to* God. His whole life would be Godward—to God through God being the object before his soul's vision. Then he says, "I am crucified with Christ," not I *was* or have been, but "I *am* [it is the present tense] crucified with Christ." Under God's eye Saul was ended in Christ's death, but he was terminated in his own eye too, so that it was an *ever* present reality to his soul, hence he could say "I [Saul—*great*] am crucified with Christ," that is, terminated. Let us ask ourselves if that is true of us. Are we individually terminated in the death of Christ, not only under God's eye but in our own judgment, so that it is a present reality to our souls? He then says, "Nevertheless I [Paul—*little*] live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It was not morally Paul living, for Christ had displaced him, and therefore those who saw Paul would see Christ in moral character expressed in him. What a triumph for Christ! Paul's own natural tastes set aside by Christ in him so that there was a man who in his path here was marked by the sensibilities of Christ. He loved the brethren, but it was characteristically the love of Christ, and he loved them because they belonged to Christ. In him there were the tastes and love of Christ by the work of the Spirit,

so that he could say, "It is no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." We are probably unable to take up this language like Paul, but we can ask ourselves under the eye of God, is that the line we are on? Is Christ living in us? Have we learnt that our own tastes, our best desires, are valueless? Have we been brought so to appreciate the moral perfection of that One that we desire everything that once marked us to be displaced by Christ being formed in us by the Spirit. Paul was but a man, but he followed the Master very closely, because he had Him—Christ as the one Object, before his vision, by which he was held and controlled. The Christ in glory who by the Spirit was living in him was the Object by which he was sustained in the life which he was living in the flesh—his life of responsibility here. This life Paul lived by faith (which was also true of the Old Testament saints), but in Paul's case it was the faith of the Son of God—that is the full light of Christianity—the One "who loved me and gave himself for me." Paul, like all of us, must be sustained and governed by an object outside of himself in his life of responsibility, and his object was Christ, the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. Here he is a Christian in his life of responsibility,



but is it what is of Paul or of Christ formed morally in him that was pleasing to God? Paul gloried in the fact that Christ lived in him, that Christ had displaced Paul, and he gloried in the Son of God, who loved him and had expressed that love in giving Himself for him. The grace of Christ shone clearly in his life, because He was as the Object before him, and hence His perfections were manifested in him. Do we so know the Person of Christ and enjoy His love, that He has His place before us continuously as an absorbing Object, so that we are governed by Him under the sweet constraining influence of His mighty love? Do we each pass through this scene maintaining secretly in our souls "I am crucified with Christ"? Think of the unspeakable blessedness of Christ superseding myself—Christ living in me! Life is, indeed, worth living if each one of us were to be the continuance of Christ here. To depart to be with Christ was "*gain*" for Paul, but to live was *Christ*—the continuation of Christ morally.

The Spirit always works on the principle of attraction. He works in us until we turn from ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, thankful that He is to displace ourselves. (Rom. vii. 25.) We then begin to prove the Spirit's power and ignore ourselves.

This leads to the light of purpose, as known in the Son of God being enjoyed, and it is the preparation for accepting total extinction or termination in the cross. "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 has loved me and given himself for me." (New Trans.)

We must now consider the second part of our subject—Christ formed in us in view of purpose. In the responsible pathway the thought of the individual is necessarily prominent, though every collective privilege carries with it corresponding responsibility. The verse that has occupied us in Galatians is intensely individual, but now we read of "the riches of the glory of this mystery." (Col. i.) This is, indeed, a wonderful secret. God has brought to pass a marvellous fact, and He desires that we should know not merely "the glory," but "the *riches* of the glory of this mystery." The word "mystery" does not mean something mysterious, but a secret that by the Spirit we should now know. This great secret is "Christ in you [saints] the hope of glory." The hope of Israel was that their Messiah would come and reign as King in their midst with the nations subservient. Christ has been presented to them

as King, and they have refused Him, and Israel is now scattered amongst the nations. Christ has personally gone on high into glory, but He is in saints the hope of universal glory, both heavenly and earthly. Christ was here, and they have got rid of Him personally, but He is here in the hearts of His own, who are *ready* to sing the song of triumph when they see Him in His glory. Christ is in saints, and the hope presented in the Old Testament is now greatly enlarged by the unfolding of the heavenly part of "the dispensation of the fulness of times." If Christ is in our hearts a glory far greater in extent than even Abraham, Moses or Daniel had any idea of is before us. The expanse is beyond comprehension, but the Spirit is here that we may apprehend with all saints, and know Christ as Head of every principality and power, as well as of the church, and of all the families of saints. How it delights our hearts to contemplate Him—that Person, the Centre of all God's glory, and to know that He is now in us, the hope, the substance of all that is coming for the glory of God. This hope is not of a little kingdom, such as Israel looked for, but a vast system of heavenly and earthly glory that will characterise the universe of blessing. How great is the

triumph that Christ is now in saints the hope of that glory.

Jews as a nation have been set aside and have no special place. They are scattered amongst the Gentiles, and hence divine work characteristically is amongst Gentiles. Individual Jews are blessed, but a mark of Christianity is Christ in you (Gentiles), the hope of glory, while Israel as a nation is "Lo-ammi." Satan led man on to reject Christ on earth, but now we know of a wider glory according to eternal purpose, and already Christ is in the hearts and minds of saints, and Christ in moral character is being formed in them for the shining forth of Himself.

Soon Christ's body will be completed, and then the tastes, sensibilities, affections and grace of Christ personally will be formed in His body, and thus it will be a vessel in which Christ will be seen. God has conferred a marvellous favour upon us in having taken us up to form part of that vessel—His body, in which Christ is being formed to the eternal glory and praise of God. Let us cherish the thought that God has given us the Spirit in view of the formation of His Christ in us that we may display the moral features of that blessed One.

May we have grace so to walk with God,

that the Spirit may be free to carry on His work in us, that Christ may be seen more in **us** in our responsible pathway, and that He **may** be more manifestly in us "the hope of glory," for the glory and satisfaction of our God.



## “SAINTS IN CHRIST.”

(2 COR. V. 13-19 ; XII. 1-9 ; 2 TIM. I. 1-9.)

WE desire to draw your attention to the divine reality of being in Christ. It is of great importance for all of us to see clearly the different lines of truth unfolded in the scriptures. All true believers see that a great work has been done for them by Christ's death, but comparatively few know the blessedness of being "*in Christ Jesus*." We would ask all to consider prayerfully the distinction between these two great facts—what has been effected by Christ's death, resurrection, and triumphant entrance into God's presence, and what it means to be *in Christ Jesus*. God has no lower thought for any Christian than "*in Christ Jesus*." If a person has received the Spirit of God he belongs to the order of things *in Christ Jesus*. It is a great thing for us to pass through this scene conscious of the blessed fact that God's thought for us is *in Christ Jesus*. In purpose it was God's thought for us before the foundation of the world, but all God's

thoughts are livingly seen in the Man Christ Jesus ; when we receive the Spirit we belong to that order of things, and when we arrive at the fact it is true *to* us in our spiritual apprehension. The full fruition will be when we are actually in the heavenlies. God seals us in view of His thought for us in Christ. We have to grow into the apprehension of being in Christ though it is by creative power that we are in Him, and we are now privileged to know that God has in grace “taken us into favour in the Beloved.”

We have previously considered *Christ in us*, and the two truths—namely, Christ in the saints, and the saints in Christ Jesus—are intimately connected. We will seek to consider the distinction between these two thoughts. We read of Christ being formed in the saints, which is clearly a work of God that takes place in them, and also that we are created *in* Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 10.) The tastes and affections that are formed in the saints by the work of the Spirit are morally Christ's. Besides this and inseparable from it, saints are viewed as “created *in Christ Jesus*” for God's eternal pleasure. The one speaks of that which God *effects in* us, and the other of that which God *creates us* in Christ Jesus. If I think of those

in Christ Jesus all is perfection, but the work *in us* is gradually being carried on by the work of the Spirit. When speaking of *in Christ Jesus* we have not the work in us in view, but the great fact that God creates us in the moral perfection of Christ who has passed into God's presence. These two thoughts, though intimately connected, are clearly distinguished in the Word, but they will eventually coalesce and correspond. Christ personally is a real living Man in the presence of God. God creates us in His moral perfection, and hence the saints will be for God's eternal pleasure in Christ Jesus.

Let us now consider the different passages before us. Romans viii. 1 is a wonderful statement, and it is the soul's first experimental sense of the blessedness of being in Christ Jesus. Chapter vii. shews the exercise of soul passed through in arriving at this. In chapter v. a new system—a divine system that is entirely of God, is introduced, characterised by righteousness, justification of life, and eternal life, and it is all *through* the "one man," our Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter vi. we read of *reckoning* ourselves dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God *in* Christ Jesus. There is no life apart from



the Person of Christ, who *is* the Centre of this divine order or system of things which is brought in through Jesus Christ our Lord. So that if a person *lives* he lives in that order of things.

The soul learns in chapter vii. that in himself he is entirely corrupt, and without strength to do that which he desires and knows is pleasing to God, and consequently he is constantly under the sense of condemnation because of what he is in himself. It is not exactly that he is afraid of the judgment of God, but he is powerless, though desiring, to do the will of God, and is always condemning himself for *being* contrary to what he desires to be. But at the close of the chapter he looks outside of himself, and in the vision of his soul sees Jesus Christ our Lord\* as the One through whom God will deliver him—the same One whom he had been brought to know as Lord, and he breaks forth in the triumphant language, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This

\* Notice the order of our Lord’s titles. It is through Jesus Christ this divine system is brought in, and it is through Jesus Christ that we are delivered—that is, what we are is *displaced* through being occupied with Christ and the work of the Spirit. But in Romans viii. 1 it is “in Christ Jesus” and not in Jesus Christ.

verse does not unfold *how* we are in Christ Jesus, or what it is to be in Christ, nor the blessedness of being in Christ Jesus, but states an abstract fact, "There is therefore now no condemnation to *them* which are in Christ Jesus." If we have known something of the unhappy experience of chapter vii. we know what a delight and joy it was to our souls to apprehend that there was another order of things in Christ Jesus to which through grace we belong, and that in Christ Jesus there could never be anything that we could condemn because there is nothing that God could condemn, being wholly of God Himself, and therefore entirely according to God.

We are passing through a scene which is contrary to God, we carry that by which we can respond to evil, and we find, alas! that which has to be condemned and judged. It is therefore of the greatest importance for each one of us to know the immense relief and joy it is to have the consciousness of belonging to that order of things which is absolutely everything that God desires, and that, therefore, condemnation can never rest upon us *there*. The thought is not pursued here, but the parallel thought of *in the Spirit*. The Spirit does not here unfold the wonderful sphere or

order of things that is "in Christ Jesus," but He speaks in view of the responsible pathway where we have to *walk* in the Spirit; if in the power of the Spirit we are to enjoy God's eternal purpose and grace. Let each one answer to himself before God whether as walking in the Spirit there is that which he has to condemn, but this must not be allowed to weaken the fact of "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." If we think of our walk are we satisfied? The happy and normal path of the Christian is to walk before God engaged with Christ, so that he does not think of himself. The sin of Satan was thinking of himself, and let us beware of falling into it. Have I in my pathway of responsibility yielded an adequate response to the wonderful grace and love of God? If not I should judge myself in the light of being one of those who are in Christ Jesus. But what a relief, what a joy to know that there is an order of things in which every desire formed in me by God has a perfect answer, because all there is of God, and being all of God there is nothing that could be condemned. The Spirit now pursues the thoughts of the Spirit of life operating in Paul, the Spirit in us, Christ in us, which is all connected with the path of responsibility, and viewed as

that which is in us, which is the counterpart of the truth of "in Christ Jesus."

In 2 Corinthians v. 16-18 we find more the positive side, and some great features of what it is to be *in Christ Jesus*. The apostle says, "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." Do we know what it is to be beside ourselves or in an ecstasy? Some might say Paul was mad, but if he was in an ecstasy it was towards God, through the knowledge of God and the enjoyment of those divine realities which lie outside and beyond the responsible pathway. Would to God we all, through divine grace, knew a little more of this, but he also speaks of being "sober," and adds, "for your cause." The moment we think of the path of responsibility, the state of the saints, and our own state, it calls for sobriety. Think of the state of the church to-day! Is it not enough to make any one sober? If any one says, Shew me the house of God or the body of Christ, it reveals the fact that it cannot be shewn. How humiliating! The new man, the house, the body of Christ is here on earth, but obscured! Was this the divine idea? The house of God was the way that God was pleased to put Himself in communication

with mankind, but, alas! it is hidden through the departure from the faith through our unfaithfulness. These divine realities remain through the presence of the Spirit here, but through our lack of energy in devotedness in the Spirit's power a great deal which is not of God has become attached to those who form the house. Thus it is obscured, and it is well to review soberly the actual condition in the light of God. The apostle continues, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." (Ver. 14.) How great the blessedness of being constrained by the love of Christ! The Person of Christ is in the presence of God, but have we been caught in the embrace of His love so that we are being held by its mighty influence? Then being constrained by the influence of the love of Christ Paul's judgment was maintained "that one died for all, then all have died." The fact that Christ died for all demonstrated the state of all, and in the vision of Paul's soul all had died, so that this scene to him was a vast graveyard. Christ having died for all, the love of Christ becomes a powerful motive, so that those who live, live to Him instead of to themselves. Man without the knowledge of God has himself in view in the tenor of his life, but coming under the warm rays of Christ's love produces a new motive, so that self is dis-

placed and Christ is the Object in view. Thus the whole character of life is changed and the divine end is in measure attained. That Christ died for all is a powerful lever in the soul in the pathway of responsibility, and under the warmth of His love the purport of life is towards Him for His pleasure. It is not here living *for* Him but *to* Him "who died for them and has been raised." The love of Christ known, its sweetness enjoyed, His love expressed by even having died, the Person of Christ being the Object in life—the effect of all this is to know "no one according to flesh." "If even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know [him thus] no longer." Christ, the One who came to fulfil the promises made to the fathers, was known upon earth, but He had died, and is known in that way no more. He is known as risen, and the promises made to the fathers *will be fulfilled*, but by Christ who has passed into the presence of God. "So if any one [be] in Christ [there is] a new creation." The two thoughts, namely in Christ and new creation, are here brought together and appear to coincide, though used to express different shades of thought. "In Christ" appears to emphasise what we are Godward, and new creation the moral display of God's work-

manship. If any one is in Christ, *there* is new creation. Every one in Christ is there by the operative power of God in new creation. This is characterised by what we would call an intelligence of love which had never been in thought connected with man before. The saints created in Christ Jesus will be marked by an intelligent love suitable for the holy place of relationship with the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a display of "the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us." In 2 Corinthians v. the one who has morally reached "in Christ" in his own soul (as Paul had) enjoys the "new things," and the thought of display appears connected with "become God's righteousness in him." In Romans viii. 1 the blessedness of those who are in Christ dawns upon the person, but in 2 Corinthians v. it was morally reached in Paul's soul. Hence he knew the enjoyment of a sphere where "old things" that connected with man in responsibility had passed away and "new things" were known. In Christ all is of God and according to God. It is our privilege to know the present enjoyment of that order of things, which we see from these verses Paul enjoyed.

In chapter xii. there are two things we

desire to notice. Paul knew a man in Christ caught up to paradise who heard unutterable things. He says, "I know" (it was a present reality to Paul) "a man" (one expression of God's thought effected by creative power) "in Christ." "Of such [a one] I will glory." We are safe to glory of a man in Christ because he is God's workmanship for God's pleasure in a scene where all is of God and where failure cannot enter. Paul gloried in that man, a man in Christ, one looked at apart from the actual circumstances and bodily condition in which he actually was. "Of such a one I will boast, but of myself I will not boast, unless in my weaknesses." We have here two thoughts simply and clearly expressed. Paul boasted of a man *in Christ*, but of himself—a man in his responsible pathway, where he looked at everything soberly, he would not glory save in his infirmities. He would there rather boast in his weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon him. Paul, devoted man as he was, having been caught up to the third heaven, was in danger by the exceeding greatness of the revelations of being exalted, and therefore, a "thorn in the flesh," a "messenger of Satan," was allowed in his responsible pathway that he might be kept conscious of his weakness and prove the



reality of being supported by Christ to the glory of God.

In 2 Timothy the great departure is clearly depicted. Hence the need of being established in that which ruin cannot affect. The promise of life in Christ Jesus, the grace in Christ Jesus, to live piously in Christ Jesus, cannot be altered or changed by the unfaithfulness of man, and therefore *in Christ Jesus* becomes a great stay to the souls of the faithful in the midst of confusion and unfaithfulness. How can man erring from the path change that which is in Christ Jesus, where all is of God? Thank God, ruin, corruption and departure cannot affect that which is created and established in Christ Jesus. We are greatly affected in the responsible pathway by the knowledge and enjoyment of what is in Christ Jesus, for it gives us stability and courage to stand for God in the ruin and confusion. One who lives godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution in his responsible path, while another who lives, it may be in a sense, piously, but not characterised as in Christ Jesus, escapes persecution. A man who owns God, is kind to his neighbour and serves his country, may be well thought of, but if in his responsible life he is regulated by the new order of things "in Christ Jesus," he will suffer persecution. The world

will not tolerate that which speaks of its being set aside and displaced, by that which excludes the earthly man. Those that live godly in Christ Jesus declare by their life that the whole system of present things will be judged and removed, and hence they suffer persecution.

We will now very briefly consider some of the passages where we see how "*in Christ Jesus*" affects us in the path of responsibility. Paul tells the Corinthians that Titus would put them in mind of his ways in Christ Jesus. Paul lived in the atmosphere of new creation; he had no lower standard than that in his responsible path, and therefore could speak of his *ways in Christ Jesus*. "In Christ" was no indefinite thought to him. He lived in the enjoyment of it, he lived in the sphere of new creation, and consequently knew the blessedness of this divine reality, and therefore in his responsible path his ways were regulated by *in Christ Jesus*, which Titus could bring to their minds.

We will notice a few other passages. In Romans xvi. 3 we read of his "fellow-workmen in Christ Jesus." These fellow workmen had taken character from this truth, and hence they in life and work had that character which was seen in their risking their necks for Paul. Thus there was the evidence in

their responsible pathway of the traits of new creation, so that Paul could speak of them as "workmen in Christ Jesus." Then Apelles was approved "in Christ Jesus." He walked according to the rule of new creation (Gal. vi. 16), and in his responsible life he was approved in Christ Jesus. Then we read of those "in Christ before me," which we would suggest shews that a spiritual man like Paul could discern from the manner of life those who were in Christ Jesus. *In Christ Jesus* is a divine reality which, if known, does and must give colour to the life of responsibility. It is a marvellous moment when any one awakes to the blessedness of those in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 1), but better still if we morally *arrive at the fact* of being in Christ Jesus. (2 Cor. v. 17.) Then this greatly affects us in the responsible pathway, for the true character of Christianity comes into evidence.

In Christ Jesus is an order or sphere of things which is of God and in which God creates us for His own pleasure and delight. While we tread a responsible pathway every privilege brings its corresponding responsibility or obligation, and according as we enjoy the privileges we are enabled to answer to the responsibility or obligation. But let us not forget that ruin and the unfaithful-

ness of man can never touch or affect the order of things which is "in Christ Jesus." May we all have a deeper sense of the divine reality of being *in Christ Jesus*, that in intelligent affection we may tread our responsible paths more to His praise and glory.



## THE LIGHT OF GOD'S TESTIMONY UPON EARTH.

(LUKE XI. 33-36; REV. I. 12, 13.)

WE desire to present a few thoughts on the subject of God's testimony upon earth. The character of the testimony and upon whom its maintenance depends are alike of great importance. *A* testimony, even though established by God, generally fails; but *the* testimony of God *never* fails. We will, therefore, seek to trace how the testimony of God is maintained. It is necessary during the present interval to distinguish between the church as the vessel of testimony which fails, and the church as built by Christ, against which the gates of hades cannot prevail. To confound these two in our thoughts is serious. In Matthew xvi. our Lord announces that "On this rock I will build my assembly, and hades' gates shall not prevail against it." It is very clear that the church, viewed from this standpoint, is impregnable; no ruin or failure could possibly be connected with it because it is built by the Son of God and is a spiritual

structure viewed apart from man's responsibility.

But the church is also viewed in its position of a candlestick given of God, to be the vessel of the light of God's testimony upon earth. (Rev. i.—iii.) When we have this thought the scriptures clearly state that there is failure—ruin—though, I repeat, *the* testimony of God never breaks down or fails.

Having briefly distinguished between these two aspects we would suggest one or two things which are of great encouragement. Our beloved Lord is seen in Revelation i. 13 as having taken a place in the midst of the seven golden lamps to maintain the light of God's testimony upon earth. This is connected with the church as a responsible body on earth, but the maintenance of the light depends upon Christ, who sustains it by the Spirit in the faithful. The Lord is not presented "in the midst of the [seven] lamps" until the church, viewed from the standpoint of which we are speaking, had already fallen. This is suggested by John having to turn and look behind him to see the church, whereas *the* testimony is in relation to the public establishment of the world to come by the appearing of Christ. The church having fallen, Christ Himself takes a place to secure and to

maintain upon earth the light of God's testimony until He returns and establishes in divine power that to which the testimony bore witness.

In Exodus xxvii. 21 there are directions given in connection with the inauguration of the typical system in the midst of Israel, and Aaron and his sons had the charge of ordering the light, though the children of Israel were to bring the oil. In Leviticus xxiv. 3, where we have the ways of God by which His end is reached when failure has come in, the sons of Aaron are omitted. While the ordering of the light in Exodus was committed to Aaron and his sons as typifying Christ and those who form the church as priests, in Leviticus, the sons are omitted, and it is only Aaron, that is, Christ glorified. Aaron, type of Christ as the true Priest, is now seen as the One who will sustain the light of God's testimony upon earth.

God has always maintained a light upon earth, but the character of that light the world would and could not value. In the early days of this world's history Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham were all in the line of God's testimony. Later the nation of Israel was called out of Egypt, and as *a* testimony completely failed, but *the* testi-

mony of God was ever maintained in their midst. They were given the position of testimony or witness in the midst of the nations, but, alas! owing to their conduct the nations blasphemed the God of Israel. Israel placed as *a* testimony upon earth fails, but *the* testimony of God is maintained in the Elijahs and Elishas throughout the darkest days. In Christ—the Word become flesh, God was His own testimony. The whole mind of God regarding man was livingly and perfectly expressed in Him. In Him the true light of what God was for man shone, and there was also the perfect answer to the light from man in Christ. Now the Person of Christ has been rejected, and the church, having been given the position of light-bearer on earth, has fallen; and the Person of Christ is presented in the midst of the churches to maintain God's testimony.

If God has a testimony it must answer to His thought regarding it; and if it deviates from His mind it has failed, and will be set aside, though God may in mercy leave it for very many years upon earth. We can use this first scripture that we read (Luke xi.) to illustrate the character of the testimony. Our Lord speaks of lighting a lamp and setting it on the lamp-stand, "that they who enter in may see the light." Then He says,



"The lamp of the body is thine eye: when thine eye is simple, thy whole body also is light; but when it is wicked, thy body also is dark." If a person is *in* the testimony his body is luminous, *luminous*. If his body is not luminous his eye is not single or simple, for he has been diverted and he gradually ceases to be in the testimony of God. If the eye is simple, Christ is the object, His glory alone is thought of, and the light of Christ by the Spirit shines and the body is luminous. This person is in the testimony here upon earth.

It is well ever to bear in mind that mere acceptance of doctrine never puts us in God's testimony. The testimony of God is the living expression of what God is as revealed in the Person of Christ, and the living response seen in Him, which will in sovereign mercy be made good in the different families composing God's universe. Whether it is individual or collective, any testimony for God is the living expression of what God is morally as revealed in Christ. Hebrews xi. 1-16 appears, in the persons named there, to give us the features or characteristics of those in God's testimony, while verses 17-22 give more the character of what the testimony is in itself; and in the remainder of the chapter the light of the

testimony is seen expressed. The Lord has taken His place to maintain the testimony of God by the Spirit upon earth, and we know no greater encouragement than the fact that its maintenance does not depend upon feeble, frail man; for if it did it would have gone long ago; but *it depends upon the Person of Christ*, and He will maintain it for the glory of God. The Person of Christ alone is the "Yea," but the church should have been the "Amen." Has the church ever been the "Amen"? The Spirit of God came down and for a brief moment there was the manifest power and result of the presence of the Spirit of God in the saints. Then we read in the next chapter, "but," and though there was great devotedness, yet there was a condition that made it possible for Ananias and Sapphira to appear amongst them. (Compare Josh. vii.) This evil was immediately dealt with, but it was soon followed by a more general manifestation of decline. (Acts vi.) How clear it is that the light was no longer undimmed, and gradually the development of a strong Judaizing party appeared. (Acts xv. 1, 5; Gal. ii. 11-17.)

In Revelation i. the Lord is in the midst of the seven golden lamp-stands to use the divine snuffers; and the assembly is viewed as seven local assemblies that had been

established by a *divine* hand. They were *golden* lamp-stands placed in their respective positions with the oil of the Spirit and with the priest, the minister of the holy places, to attend to the light. Yet when the Lord addresses the church (Rev. ii.), though He speaks in a commendatory way, He has to say, "Thou hast left thy first love," and "Remember therefore whence thou art fallen," and "do the first works: but if not, I am coming to thee," and "I will remove thy lamp out of its place, except thou shalt repent." The assembly as the vessel of the light of God's testimony upon earth has failed, fallen, but the testimony of God cannot fail. The church as a testimony has broken down, but *the* testimony is still maintained. The church never repented, and eventually the lamp is removed out of its place, but the testimony is maintained in the overcomers. The testimony of God is maintained in the overcomers right through the whole church period. This is accomplished through exercise of soul, so that the departure is judged, and individually the Lord is known as the One who sustains when the church has fallen. It is the Minister of the holy places who maintains the light of God, and the glory of sustaining it is His. It is now no longer a question of merely overcoming

the world, but overcoming *inside* the *professing* church upon earth, where that which is contrary to God is in the ascendancy.

The overcomers are a witness to the ruin of the assembly, for they are overcoming where the mass have departed, and are only that which the whole should have been. Still the light of God is maintained by Christ through the overcomers, and through overcoming they enjoy privileges which belong to the whole assembly. The privileges of Christianity can now only be enjoyed by overcoming that which is contrary to God inside of the *professed* assembly upon earth.

It is very encouraging to notice that as things grow darker and darker the promise to the overcomers is brighter and brighter until Thyatira, where the end is reached in the coming of Christ. The promise to the overcomers at Ephesus is: "To eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." To the overcomer in Thyatira is given "the morning star." In communion the enjoyment of the heavenly portion with Christ as its Centre is known, who will give character to the coming day of glory. In the midst of the corruption and assumption the heavenly portion is enjoyed, and therefore the overcomer is morally superior to the course of things

around him. The individual intimacy with Christ enjoyed by the overcomer in Pergamos is exceedingly beautiful and very encouraging. Let us remember if the days grow darker Christ maintains the light of God's testimony upon earth, and those maintained by Him enjoy a more intimate portion as they approach the day when Christ will shine in all His brightness and glory. The overcomer enjoys that which belongs to all the saints, but in a dark day individual communion is perhaps enjoyed more than when things were so bright at the beginning.

The last four churches, apparently, go on to the close. In Thyatira, or at least Jezebel, we have Romanism which will continue to the end. This is proved by the fact that the Lord says, "I will cast her . . . into great tribulation," and the coming of the Lord is the only hope for the godly. There is now no longer any hope for the mass, and the overcomers alone are addressed as having an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. Later, Sardis, followed by Philadelphia, and last, of all Laodicea come into view.

Romanism (Thyatira) and Protestantism (Sardis) are two distinct bodies which can be looked upon with the natural eye,

but Philadelphia is in character a remnant testimony, though representing the whole in the eye of God. God never restores that which has fallen, but triumphs over the failure by establishing that which was according to His counsel. Philadelphia is not the whole of the saints of God recovered, but a remnant testimony in character, though representing the whole under God's eye. Thyatira and Sardis were still existing as large and visible bodies, with overcomers in each. - There was a general movement which was marked by devotedness to Christ and caring for the glory of His name which answered to Philadelphia. But now, around and in our own hearts, the principles of Laodicea are easily discovered. The character of the day is rapidly becoming Laodicean, and is a grave danger to each one of us. Philadelphia is devotedness in obscurity, forgetfulness of self through delighting in Christ, but Laodicea is marked by lukewarmness to Christ, with self-satisfaction and spiritual pride, using even that which is divine to exalt themselves.

In the closing moment we must not look for the recovery of the whole church, for that would be contrary to the principles of scripture. When our Lord came previously there were Anna and Simeon, &c.—only

that which in the eyes of men would appear valueless, but the testimony of God was thus maintained. In those early chapters in Luke we find that the great individual and collective principles were maintained in the few moving individually before God, though known to one another, so that what was of God was preserved under God's eye, and it appears that it will be similar at the close of the church period. The testimony of God cannot break down because it is supported by Christ; but the great question for each one of us is, are we maintained in it? Let us remember that breaking bread, though one of our greatest privileges, holding certain doctrines, or walking in outward separation, does not necessarily put us in the testimony. These privileges are great, but only a *living* presentation of God and His thoughts as revealed in Christ is being in the testimony. There will surely be maintained that which is for God's glory by persons walking in the truth, and to be thus preserved will be an immense favour from the Lord. It appears serious to have the thought that before the saints are caught up the whole will be recovered, for it displaces the immediate expectancy of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and is in principle saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming." It is also contrary to the way

God works in the midst of departure and corruption which characterise the close of any period.

It is evident that Philadelphia is marked by thinking and making *everything of Christ*, and therefore the forgetfulness of self in devotedness to Christ is one of its principal features. The contrast to this is seen in Laodicea, who make everything of themselves, not in a worldly way, but using that which is of God to exalt themselves. The overcomer in Philadelphia is to be "a pillar in the temple of my God," and the word "*My*" suggests special association with His own blessed Person as the reward for their appreciation of Christ in the midst of all the religious corruption and darkness of coming apostasy.

Laodicea boasts in being "rich" through having light from Philadelphia, but being in the dead state of Sardis, the Lord in grace counsels them "to buy of me gold purified by fire." That which is divine can only really be enjoyed with God in the life of Christ, and if the fire of God's judgment, expressed in the death of Christ, is not maintained in us by walking in self-judgment, even that which is divine is used for self exaltation. So the Lord says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold purified by *fire*." We



must remember that all spiritual blessing is through the death of Christ, which sets the first man aside, and that it is the man "in Christ" to whom these spiritual blessings belong. To take that which belongs to those in Christ, and attach them to myself as a man here, is the line of Laodicea. If Christ is displaced, even with the blessings that God has given to His people, we are in our souls, on the line of Laodicea. How solemn that at the close the sin of Satan is repeated by the church. Satan was created a beautiful angel, *but he thought of himself, of his own beauty*, and Laodicea thinks of itself and boasts in that which has been given of God, while Christ is outside knocking for admission.

The testimony is maintained in the overcomers through the church period, then in faithful souls when corruption and apostasy predominate, and, lastly, in the two witnesses, who will be upheld by God in the presence of the beast and Antichrist. (Rev. xi.) Thus the light of God's testimony shines until Christ appears, when all that the testimony had spoken of is established in divine power to the praise and to the glory of God. What encouragement to our souls that it is the Person of Christ Himself who attends to the lamp of testimony so that the light of God's

testimony can never be allowed to lapse upon earth. Hence we can move forward, counting upon Him, our exercise being to be sustained by Him in nearness to Himself, and thus maintained in this scene in the light of God's testimony.

May that be true of each one of us for the Lord's name's sake.

