

"The Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory
that should follow" (1 Peter i. 11).

FROM THE CROSS TO THE KINGDOM:

OR,

CHRIST CRUCIFIED. CHRIST GLORIFIED.
CHRIST RISEN. CHRIST COMING.
CHRIST REIGNING.

BY JOHN R. CALDWELL,
Editor of *The Witness*.



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"To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

FROM THE CROSS TO THE KINGDOM.

PART I.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

READ the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 1st chapter, 23rd verse :

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness : but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Also the 2nd chapter, 1st verse :

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

And also in the 1st chapter, 18th verse :

"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish, foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

The fact that the Apostle should write

thus shows clearly that in the mind of God the great fundamental truth of the Gospel is Christ crucified. And it is for this reason that I have chosen it for the first place in this series. I desire that we should have something of God's estimate of the glorious work accomplished by His Son upon Calvary. And we see here that there is power in this testimony. Did you ever hear of souls passing from death to life under any scientific or socialistic teaching? Did you ever hear of anything being the means of rescuing drunkards, harlots, self-righteous Pharisees, covetous men, from the power of their sin and making them saints, able to walk worthy of God, but the simple story of Christ crucified? I never did, and I don't think anyone would pretend they ever heard or saw such a thing. This Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and to us who are saved, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

To the Jews it was a stumbling-block. If you look at the 12th chapter of John you will see what that means. Read from the 31st verse:

" Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die. The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever ; and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up ? Who is this Son of Man ? "

This was the Jews' difficulty. They could understand a reigning Messiah, but could not understand a suffering Messiah. The fact that the Messiah came in lowliness, came to suffer and to die, and to die the ignominious, accursed death of the Cross—that was a thing they could not understand. And so to the Jews a suffering Messiah was a stumbling-block. It is only when their eyes are opened to see that all the Old Testament prophets spoke, both in plain language and in type and shadow, of the sufferings of Christ, that the veil passes away, and they discover that the One whom they despised and rejected was indeed the Son of God.

To the Greek it was foolishness. The Greeks represent the wise men of the world—the learned—and to this day the Gospel of Christ crucified, the One who

suffered, bled, and died in atonement for sin, is foolishness, even as it was of old. Oh, how sad it is that there are now men professing to be ministers of God and expounders of the Scriptures who would have you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was a holy and good man who died as a martyr for righteousness' sake, but who deny that by His precious blood He effected the great work of atonement, and provided for the remission of sin. But so it is, and the fact that it is so only goes to prove the Scriptures, for we are abundantly informed by the prophetic Word that in the last days men would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, believing doctrines of demons, teaching destructive heresies, and taking up anything and everything except the plain, old-fashioned Gospel which alone is the power of God unto salvation for lost sinners.

Now, in 1st Corinthians, 15th chapter, 1st verse, we read :

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Now, before I read further, some stumble at that word, "believed in vain," but you will find it explained in the 14th verse :

" And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

That is the hypothesis under which, and under which alone, you could believe in vain : " If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." But we know that Christ is risen, and, therefore, the one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall surely be saved. Let us now read on :

" For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

My object in reading this passage is to call your attention to the words, " according to the Scriptures." This necessarily means the Old Testament Scriptures. It was to these Scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appealed when, in resurrection, He taught His two disciples, on that walk to Emmaus, how every one of the prophets testified concerning Him, His sufferings and His death, and His entering into

glory. "He unfolded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And here the Apostle lays weight on the fact "that He died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, and that He was buried, and that the third day He rose again, *according to the Scriptures*." That is to say, everything took place exactly as God from eternity had foreknown it, and exactly as God from the beginning of His revelation to man had predicted it. Everything was "according to the Scriptures." Heaven and earth may pass away, but the Word of God cannot pass away. "The Scriptures cannot be broken;" the inspired written communication of God to man must triumph though all else should pass away; so that we have the Scriptures set before us here as the foundation of all our faith. There is one verse that says, "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy great Name;" or perhaps more clearly, "Thou hast magnified Thy word *upon* all Thy great Name." That is to say, the Name of God means the character of God. Name in Scripture denotes character. God has magnified His word

upon all His character. He has, so to speak, staked His character upon His word. If God is love, if God cannot lie, then His word is truth. If God is omnipotent, then His word must come true, so that the whole character of God is at the back of His word.

Now, I want to trace a few scriptures with you that tell us in type, in figure, in shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ as the suffering, crucified One. And let me say here that shadow, type, figure is what I may reverently call a favourite way in which God reveals His mind to His people. And I will tell you one reason why. It is only the humble soul who seeks the teaching of God's Spirit who can understand the types and shadows. To the wise man—wise in his own conceit—they are foolishness.

I well remember, before my eyes were opened, that a dear old friend put into my hands a book which she had greatly enjoyed, and which I since have learned greatly to value, which unfolded the meaning of some of the beautiful Old Testament types of the Lord Jesus. I said, "It is all fanciful—it is mere imagination." Now, you can see

why I sympathise with people who don't understand or accept the typical teachings of the Old Testament. But when their eyes are opened to discern the beauty, the glory of them, and how they prove to us that God has foreseen every detail, and that every word written in this Book is of God, who alone can tell the end from the beginning, then we see something of the value of them.

I would now take you back to the first book of the Bible. The book of Genesis has been very aptly called "*the seed plot*," because we get in it the germ of every truth that is afterwards developed in Scripture. The word Genesis means "*the beginning*," and it is not only suitable for the book because it is the first book of the Bible, or because it begins at the beginning and gives us the only divine and credible record of the creation, but also because that in the book of Genesis there is the beginning, the first intimation, of every truth, and of every line of truth that afterwards is wrought out in the Scriptures.

In the 22nd chapter of Genesis we have the story you are all familiar with, the story of Abraham offering up Isaac.

I need hardly refer you to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, but let us read it at 17th verse:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

We are not here left to imagination. We have the inspired instruction of that epistle to tell us that the offering up of Isaac was a type of the offering up of the Son of God. You notice that Isaac is here called the only-begotten son, a term that the Lord Jesus applies to Himself:

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.”

Then you notice it is said here that Abraham received him again from the dead “in a figure.” That is to say, Isaac was as good as slain as far as Abraham was concerned. He offered him up; the knife did not descend; God interposed; but as far as Abraham was concerned the deed was done. Just as we may say with regard to the death of the Lord Jesus; as far as man was concerned,

it was the wicked hands of man that crucified and slew him, but as far as He was concerned

"No man taketh it [My life] from Me; I lay it down of Myself."

Now, look at Genesis, 22nd chapter, 4th verse :

"Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off."

For these three days Isaac was in the heart and purpose of Abraham as good as dead. It was when Abraham heard the command of God, and rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass—it was then that in his own heart's purpose Isaac was slain. The journey occupied three days—days during which according to Abraham's reckoning Isaac was as good as dead. The third day comes—the day upon which the wondrous deliverance is given to Abraham, in which he receives him back again from the dead, as it were, in a figure. And notice, as they go along that road together (5th verse) :

"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together."

The "wood" is the same word as "tree" in that passage of Deuteronomy which says,

"Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Abraham took the tree, and laid it upon his son. There is a picture of the blessed Son of God going forth, outside the gate of Jerusalem, bearing His own Cross.

"And he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together."

It was the judgment-fire of God that was the bitterest pang in Calvary's sufferings. The Lord Jesus was there, not only going up to endure the very worst that man or Satan could do to Him, but He was going there to suffer it all amidst the forsaking of God, amidst the hiding of the face of God, amidst the darkness which outwardly was but a type of the inward darkness that enshrouded His soul when He stood in the sinner's place and bore the sinner's curse; when that God in whose love He had ever dwelt, on whose bosom He had ever reposed, hid His face from Him, and left Him in the hour of His dire distress to suffer alone. Alone! Oh! the loneliness of that

Cross: "I looked for comforters, and I found none." He cries out to God, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" No response. "Thou art silent." But "Thou art holy." He justifies the silence of God by saying, "Thou art holy, the infinitely holy God." God must hide His face from the One that was made sin for us. Oh! the mystery of the Cross!

Now, you see here, as it were, a little picture drawn in broad and beautiful lines—a foreshadowing of Calvary. A well-beloved son, in whom all a father's hopes were centred—an only-begotten son, led as a lamb to the slaughter, unresisting, laying down his life there, offered up and received back again from the dead in a figure. Oh! the joy of Abraham as he unbound his son, whom he had laid upon the altar, and lifted him up; and there he was, the one in whom all the promises were centred, alive from the dead; the one in whom all God's purposes were to be wrought out. Blessed day for Abraham! And then in the doing of that, in God's wondrous wisdom, another type is introduced: Isaac delivered from the dead—raised up,

through the offering up of a substitute, a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. As Abraham had said to Isaac, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering," so when John the Baptist saw Jesus walking he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Here is the Lamb that God has provided for the sin of the world.

We have here the two thoughts combined in one—the father giving his only-begotten and well-beloved son, and then, when bound and laid on the altar, raised up and set free *by the death of the substitute*—a combination of the two great thoughts of the Gospel in one type, in one story, in one incident. Who but God could devise such a thing? Now, it is with reverent and thankful hearts we look back to a passage like that, and see how from the beginning God's ways and purposes are set forth in the types.

Turn with me now to Exodus xii. You remember how the Passover was to be a lamb, the firstling of the flock, fitly to represent Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was the first born of His mother Mary. Then you know it was to be "without

blemish," and in 1 Peter i. 19 we see how He answered to the "Lamb without blemish and without spot." Then, it was to be kept up for three days, separated from the rest of the flock, and, as it were, under observation, living before the eyes of those interested in it: three days in which they might examine it, look upon it, and ponder it, to see if it was without blemish.

This may answer to the three years of Christ's public ministry before the gaze of men, watched, provoked, examined, tested in every possible way, and what was the result of it all? "I find no fault in Him," said Pilate. "Truly this was a righteous man," said the Centurion. "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God," said the demons. Judas said, "I have betrayed the innocent blood," and God from above testified, "This is My beloved Son!" All conspired to declare Him to be the holy, spotless Lamb of God! O how fitted was He to take the sinner's place, and by His own precious blood to vindicate the character of God, and bring in everlasting righteousness for us!

Then one point in this 12th chapter you will find in the 46th verse :

"In one house shall it be eaten : thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house ; neither shall ye break a bone thereof."

Now turn to John xix. 33-37 :

" But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs ;

" But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

" And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true ; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

We are never asked to believe anything that is not true. God claims to be believed on the ground that His Word is truth.

" For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ' A bone of Him shall not be broken.' And again another Scripture saith, ' They shall look on Him whom they pierced '."

The Holy Spirit here emphasises the fact that in the providence of God the legs of the Lord Jesus were not broken, when those of the two thieves were. It was the fulfilment of the Scripture which said of the Passover Lamb, " Thou shalt not break a bone of Him." It must have required very careful

work on the night of the Passover to carve the lamb into its pieces and hand it out to all the family, and not break a single bone. The beloved Son of God was wounded and bruised, His precious flesh cut with the Roman lashes, His brow with the thorns ; but, oh ! amidst all these sufferings God saw that His word was fulfilled, and there never was a bone broken. How perfect was this foreshadowing of the Cross, telling us that " Christ died for our sins."

Then, again, look at Psalm xxii. 16:

" The assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me ; they pierced My hands and My feet."

This psalm was written by David. In spite of all the professors, I still believe it was written by David. Were the hands of David and the feet of David ever pierced ? We have no record of such a thing having happened to David. He was speaking by inspiration ; his tongue was " the pen of a ready writer " ; the Writer was God Himself. It is the Spirit of Christ in David who is here speaking, and who says, " They pierced My hands and My feet." He goes on to say :

"I may tell all My bones ; they look and stare at Me."

That Blessed One felt the shameless staring of that crowd that surrounded the Cross ; and notice here that if it could have been possible for any human intelligence to forecast what might happen at so distant a date, it could never have entered into the mind of man, especially of a Jew, to suppose that one should be put to death by crucifixion. The Jewish method of execution was by stoning, but they could not stone a man to death without breaking bones. The idea of crucifixion could only come from Him who foresaw that His Blessed Son would be delivered into the hands of the Romans, and put to death according to their custom. And so the Spirit of God says, "They pierced My hands and My feet."

But how is there no mention of His side? Clearly the piercing of that holy side formed no part of His suffering. You may take the body of a dear one after he has departed, and that body may be cut up for a *post-mortem* examination, but that gives him no pain ; it is no part of his suffering. And so it was not until the Lord Himself had

breathed out His Spirit that His side was pierced, and so it finds no place in this 22nd Psalm which is the record of His suffering, and thus the perfection of the Word of God is shown.

It reminds me of that 69th Psalm where He complains :

“I am become an alien unto My mother's children.” But He never was an alien to *His Father's children*. His Father was God, and all who are the children of God love Him. But He was actually an alien to His mother's children.

These are some of the accuracies of Scripture, and these little points go to show us that the Scriptures are indeed divine.

Put a magnifying glass upon the finest piece of human workmanship, and the more you magnify it the more evident are its imperfections. But put a magnifying glass on the wing of a butterfly, and as you discover that every particle of dust on that wing is a perfectly-formed little feather, you say, That is not man's work! You get a little sand from some parts of the world so fine that it would do for a minute-glass for boiling an

egg, and yet when put under the microscope it is found that every particle is a perfectly-formed shell. You say, Man never made that.

God has two books in which He has revealed Himself; one is the book of NATURE, and the first half of the 19th Psalm tells us of God's glory displayed in Nature. But God has also a written Book, and that is referred to in the second half of the 19th Psalm, the Book we have in our hands—the BIBLE.

Man puts it at the bar and criticises it just as Pilate put Christ at the bar and cross-questioned Him; but it is man's madness and folly: he might as well judge and criticise the book of Nature. The Lord Jesus shall judge Pilate, and the words of this Book will judge the very men that are its shameless critics.

Let God's children seek the child-like spirit which will go to the Book and reverently enquire in His holy temple, and then you will discern how glorious it is; depth after depth you will find opened up to you, and you will be consciously in the presence of God.

Then another passage I don't like to omit—in the Book of Numbers, 21st chapter and 8th verse :

“ And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole : and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

“ And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

Now, we know how the Lord Himself referred to that passage in John iii. 14, 15 :

“ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“ I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” taking us back, as it were, to the very words of the 21st chapter of Numbers. The serpent, the type of sin ; Christ on the Cross, “ made sin for us, though He knew no sin.”

Then look at the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. I need not go over the details of this very familiar chapter, but there is one point in it that I would direct your attention to in the 9th verse :

“ And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.”

I think we have very good authority for saying that this might equally well be read, “ His grave was made with the wicked, but He was with the rich man in His death ”—that is to say, there were three executions to take place upon that day. I think it is exceedingly probable, although I only throw it out suggestively, that the centre cross was intended for Barabbas. He was a notable prisoner, and a murderer. We know that the Jews rejected their King, and chose Barabbas, and so God’s blessed Son, the Prince of Life, took the place of the murderer, but naturally there would be three graves dug for the three criminals, and we read :

“ His grave was made with the wicked, but He was with the rich man in His death.”

God in His providence again interposed, that no indignity, no unnecessary dishonour, should be heaped upon that Blessed One.

After He had finished the work, after His side was pierced, and the last word that was written concerning the suffering, dying

Saviour had been fulfilled, then God interposed, and the hands of love took Him down from the Cross, the hands of love bore Him to the sepulchre, "wherein never man lay," hewn out of the rock, the memorial tomb, provided by the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. In that wondrous sepulchre there was no taint of corruption, nothing but the fragrance of spices, "for He saw no corruption."

How marvellously exact the fulfilment of the words of the old, despised Book—a Book that is despised and rejected by the world that knows not God, and yet, in spite of all, is working its conquering way and saving its thousands.

What has been said may serve to show that when the apostle said, "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures," he was referring to the whole burden of Old Testament prophecy, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Now, I would like to look a little at another aspect of this truth. Turn with me to Col. 1st chapter, 19th verse:

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all

fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death."

I want you to notice here that God (to whom it was pleasing that in Christ all fulness should dwell) accomplished a work in that death upon the Cross, on your behalf and mine, which we could never have known anything about unless He had told us. In connection with this read Hebrews ix. 13, 14:

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Notice in the 14th verse that we have the blood of CHRIST, we have the eternal SPIRIT, and we have GOD THE FATHER. We have here what is commonly known as the Trinity. We have a work accomplished by God Himself. Darkness has settled down upon nature—darkness such as never fell upon the earth before. Man has no part in this work; man

is excluded. The holy, eternal, beloved Son offers Himself:

"I lay down My life of Myself; no man taketh it from Me."

He is led up to the Cross by the Spirit, just as one might lead a lamb to the slaughter, an unresisting Lamb.

The Holy Spirit led Him into the desert to be tempted; led Him every step of the way; led Him out that night to Gethsemane; led Him right up to Calvary, and there through the Eternal Spirit He offered His spotless life to God. What was the result? Colossians i. 20:

"Having made peace through the blood of His Cross."

It was God making peace for you and for me. Many years ago now, I sat in the area of a church and heard one in the pulpit say, "There are two words in this Book, and if you only believe those two words you will be saved." And I thought, "Well, surely I will believe if it is in the Book;" and he read that verse, "Having made peace"—made it; not *to be* made. No effort of man was needed. It is a work

accomplished amidst the darkness of Calvary, effected by the blood of His Cross. Have you got peace with God? Do you believe it is made for you by the blood of the Cross? Can there be any peace with God for a guilty sinner upon any other ground? Can my tears or reformation ever bring me peace? Did you ever know a dying soul at peace upon the ground of having done the best he could? I never did; but I have known many a one pass sweetly into the presence of the Lord, resting on the word which testifies of "peace made by the blood of the Cross."

See how the Apostle John bears testimony to the fact. John xix. 35:

"He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

Blood may have flowed under the stripes of the Roman lash and from His thorn-crowned brow, as we sing,

"See! from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!"

but all that would never have procured our pardon. It is the blood of His Cross; it is

the blood that gushed at the point of the Roman spear from His very heart ; it is the blood that bore testimony that He had poured out his soul UNTO DEATH ; it is *that* which gives peace.

We know thus, certainly, that He died ; that He was not in a swoon, from which He afterwards awoke and His disciples took Him away. No ; " He died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and we therefore know that He is now raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand.

Let us now glance at the 27th of Matthew, 50th verse :

" Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost."

When the centurion heard that strong cry from the dying Man he said, " Truly this was the Son of God." Even Pilate marvelled that He was so soon dead. This was not exhausted nature uttering a feeble wail or moan. Oh, no ! it was the strong cry of One whom man could not put to death, but who laid down His life of Himself, as He said, " I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." You and I

have not power to lay down our lives. Suicide is a crime. But the Son of God had the power, and so He says, "This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x. 18).

There was no need, I say it reverently, that wicked hands should murder Him. God could have found a way without His being murdered. He offered Himself. The Son of God laying down His life in atonement for sin was an unique act.

Notice here that when "He yielded up the Ghost," or breathed out His Spirit,

"The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Now, see what took place immediately upon His death. It is God's instant testimony to the efficacy of that finished work. The rocks are rent; the graves are opened; the veil is rent from the top to the bottom—not from the bottom to the top; it was the hand of God that rent it. Thus the whole way is clear, from the depths of the grave to the

very throne of God. At one sweep God opens the way from the depths of hades to His own throne for every poor, guilty, helpless sinner that trusts in Him who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Now is salvation presented to you. Are you going to let the opportunity pass? There never was a madder thing done on earth than to treat with indifference this wondrous finished work!

What were the thoughts of God as that Holy and Beloved One cried, "It is finished," and bowed His head in death; when the whole earth quaked; when the rocks were rent; when the graves were opened? Did that earthquake mean death? Oh, no! it meant life from the dead: and that rent veil was in order that there might be nothing standing as a barrier between the guilty sinner and the throne of God.

"Just as I am; Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come."

There were other aspects of the Cross of Christ I intended to look at, but I must leave them.

There is that in Romans vi. 6, in which the believer is identified with Christ :

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ."

God reckons that the very nails that went through the hands of Christ went through my hands. I am crucified with Christ. The death penalty passed upon me has been borne by me in the Person of my Substitute, so that not one sin that ever these guilty hands committed can be brought up again.

And that other passage in Galatians vi. 14:

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

This world, this guilty world, is lying under the dark shadow of that Cross, and if you are not trusting in the work accomplished on it, then its shadow is lying upon you for eternal judgment. Oh! I beseech you, accept the finished, atoning death that was presented to God upon the Cross. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and then you are saved and delivered from this present evil world and its doom for ever. You no longer belong to it.

Wrath must come upon it, but you will be sheltered from it.

God grant that not one who reads this may treat with indifference or unbelief God's testimony to the finished work of His own beloved Son.

PART II.

CHRIST RISEN.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

I DESIRE first to note that the truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is an essential part of the Gospel. The Gospel is not merely concerning One who died, but concerning One who rose again, and who lives at the right hand of God.

I expect from this to find that in the Old Testament Scriptures His resurrection as well as His death is spoken of. The Jews did not understand that He would rise again from the dead. Even the disciples, apparently, did not take it in; it was a truth that

they could not lay hold of. And their eyes, veiled by unbelief, or only partially opened, failed to see in the Old Testament Scriptures how the resurrection was the key that unlocked so many of its mysteries; but we have it here emphasised that His resurrection was "*according to the Scriptures.*"

When we were looking at the subject of the Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus we saw how abundantly the Old Testament Scriptures bore testimony beforehand to the facts connected with His death, and I would like now to look at some scriptures which in the Old Testament show us that it was God's purpose that He whom He had sent should rise from the dead.

But before doing so turn to one or two scriptures showing that the resurrection of Christ is an essential part of the Gospel.

Acts iv. 1, 2 :

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, *i.e.*, a literal resurrection of the body.

When the apostles preached concerning Jesus—when they preached the Gospel—they could not help preaching that God had raised Him from the dead, and so we read in verses 10 to 12 :

“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.

“This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

“Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”

So we see that this truth formed an essential part of the Gospel as preached by Peter.

Then look at Acts xxvi. 22, 23 :

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come : that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

Then, if you look at the Gospel of John, xx. 30, 31 :

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this Book ; but these are written that ye might believe

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name."

We saw, when looking at the subject of the Crucifixion, that John called special attention to the fact of His death. He says in the 19th chapter, verse 35 :

"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true ; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

Now, there are the two great facts of the Gospel—two facts that have to be believed—first, that He really, actually, literally died ; and, secondly, that He was raised again from the dead. The death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, we thus see, are the great fundamental truths of the Gospel. It is but a poor, weak Gospel that stops at the death and does not bring in the resurrection of the Lord ; for, after all, what we need is not only salvation but a Saviour, and if He is not risen, then where is my living Saviour to save me every day ? He is the Risen Son of God. And you notice that it is not "that ye might believe that Jesus *was* the Christ." Oh, no ; it is not a mere historical fact—not as we would believe that Julius

Cæsar was Emperor of Rome, or that Napoleon was a great conqueror in his day—not that Jesus *was* the Christ, and that He *was* crucified, and that He died; no; but that “ye might believe that Jesus *IS* the Christ *now*; that though He was crucified, yet He rose again, and is exalted to the right hand of God. He is there, the Son of David, the promised Messiah, the One that all the Old Testament Scriptures predicted and foreshadowed, the One who is yet to reign in the very world that rejected Him. Jesus *is* the Christ: let us be clear about this.

Now look at some Old Testament Scriptures. Take first the 16th Psalm, verses 8 to the end:

“I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;

[“*Sheol*; that does not necessarily mean the place of torment, but the place of the departed Spirit, “*Sheol*” answering to the Greek word *Hades*.]

neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.

We have here the two parts, the soul and the body—the soul, not left in Hades; the body, not suffered to see corruption.

“Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Here we have death, sheol, the grave, life, the presence of God, the right hand of God. What a little compendium of the great, fundamental truths of the New Testament and of the Gospel!

Next look with me at the 22nd Psalm. You know that the 22nd Psalm, up to a certain point, is the Psalm of the Cross. We were looking at the words, “They pierced my hands and my feet.” Up to the middle of the 21st verse it is the Cross. In the middle of the 21st verse the change comes: “Thou hast heard me.” Then in the 22nd verse:

“I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.”

There we see the *Resurrection*. We have the Cross in the first part of the psalm; we have the Resurrection in the second part of the psalm.

"Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel."

You can see clearly, in the light of the New Testament, that what explains the change in the 22nd Psalm is the fact of His resurrection.

Then look at the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Up to the 9th verse we have the Cross, or the grave. In the 10th verse:

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin."

Antitype of all the sin offerings, Antitype of all the blood shedding of the Old Testament; and if that blood shedding was not a prefiguring of the death of Christ, then it was nothing—it had no meaning. But here is the Antitype of all

"When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin."
What is then to happen?

"He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

There is the Resurrection. First, the soul made an offering for sin. He is "obedient

unto death, even the death of the Cross." Then comes the Resurrection. He prolongs His days for ever and ever, the pleasure of Jehovah prospers in His hands, and He sees the results of the travail of His soul; and as He looks on that wondrous, redeemed, quickened, blood-bought company surrounding Him in the Eternal Glory, "He is satisfied." Yes, He will indeed be *satisfied*, on account of all that He suffered, in the glorious results of His redemption work. O may each one of us make it our business to see that our lives are such that He who loved us and bought us by His blood may find satisfaction in us!

Now look at Acts xiii. 32, 33:

"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again."

Not simply that He sent Jesus, but that "He hath raised up Jesus again."

"As it is also written in the Second Psalm, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."

What day was that? Without doubt that was the Resurrection morning, the day He

raised up Jesus again : " As it is written, " Thou art My Son ; this day have I begotten Thee."

And now look at the Book of Revelation, 1st chapter, 5th verse :

" And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth."

The " faithful witness," as He trod this earth, sent by God the Father ; the " first begotten " from among the dead in resurrection ; and the " Prince of the kings of the earth " when He comes as Son of man in His glory.

Meantime, He is the " first begotten." That was Paul's testimony—that He should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, for in all things He must have the pre-eminence. And when we read of the graves being opened, and the rocks rent, and the veil of the temple rent in twain ; when we read that many bodies of the saints which slept arose, it was not until " after His resurrection." They were not raised before Him—He was the first that should rise.

Then look at Matthew xii. 40 :

" For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

There we have the Spirit's own witness that Jonah in the belly of the fish, underneath the billows and the waves of judgment, was a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as to the very duration of time that he was there, being a foreshadowing of the three days and three nights that the Son of man was in the heart of the earth.

Then one other passage in Hosea vi. 2 :

" After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

A remarkable prophecy, in which the Spirit of God is looking at all God's redeemed people as quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with Christ ; for, you see, with God there is no past, present, and future. With God all is present, and when God raised up the Lord Jesus Christ He quickened together with Him every believing soul. A wondrous truth more fully expanded in the New Testament.

Then glance a moment at the Book of Genesis, 8th chapter, 4th verse:

“And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.”

We know that the ark was a remarkable type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those that were in the ark were saved; all outside of the ark perished. Those that are in Christ are saved; all that are not in Christ shall assuredly eternally perish. O what a position for anyone to be in!

We find that the ark rested on the top of Ararat on the very same day that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The Passover was eaten and He was slain on the 14th of the month, and three days after brings the seventeenth day. And the month is most probably the same, because at the time of the appointment of the Passover in the 12th chapter of Exodus,

[“This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”]

what had been the seventh month became the first month.

The Jews have two calendars—the political and the ecclesiastical calendar, so to speak. In the one Abib is the first month, and in the other it is the seventh month, so that in all likelihood it was exactly on the same day and the same month that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, showing how God had foreseen and appointed all these wonderful details.

Let us now see what evidence we have that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead.

1 Corinthians xv. 5-8 :

"He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

"After that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

"After that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles.

"And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

Here, then, is abundant evidence of the fact of His resurrection. There could be no mistake about it. Indeed, those competent to judge have been obliged to admit that very few facts of so remote a date are supported by anything like the same amount of evidence. There is no question about it as an historical

fact that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and was seen by many witnesses.

Look also at Acts i. 3:

"To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

These forty days going in and out amongst the disciples, showing Himself to them in all kinds of circumstances, and eating and drinking in their presence, left no room for doubt.

Acts x. 40:

"Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly.

"Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead."

Then in Luke xxiv. 36-39:

"And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

"But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

"And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have."

Curious speculations about the resurrection

body of the Lord Jesus are not for us at all ; we can only abide by what is written. We read here that the Lord caused them to feel His body in order to assure them that He was literally raised up from the dead. To prove that it was the very same body, He showed them the marks of the nails in His hands and His feet, and made Thomas thrust His hand into His side and feel the scar that was there. So we see that it was a literal resurrection body, with flesh and bone. Now, while it was a literal resurrection body it was a spiritual body. That is a thing we can neither define, nor understand, nor explain. But the fact is that the Lord, in that body, could be seen and handled, and yet in a moment He could be invisible. He could pass out from the sepulchre without the stone being rolled away, and He could pass into the room where the disciples were assembled, the door being shut.

These things we may not understand, but this we do know, and it is blessed to know it, that the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus is the pattern to which the bodies of all God's redeemed people are to be conformed.

We are to be fashioned "like unto His glorious body." That resurrection body will be no clog to the Spirit, as the present one is. There will be no proclivities downwards to what is earthy and evil—all will be in perfect consonance with the heaven-born spirit, begotten of God.

Again, in 1 Cōrinthians xv. 17-20—this great resurrection chapter—we read :

"And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

Christ is risen from the dead. What then? My sins are put away; my faith is not vain; I am not believing in a myth; I am not believing in a person that once existed and is long passed away; I am believing in the One who died to put away my sins, in token of which—in proof of which—God raised Him from the dead.

Now, look at Romans iv. 23 to end:

"Now, it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone that it [righteousness] was imputed to him.

"But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Notice that in this, and other passages we have looked at, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is always attributed to God the Father. He was raised again from the dead "by the glory of the Father."

So that His resurrection is the testimony that God Himself has borne to His satisfaction with the finished, atoning work of His own dear Son. The fact that the Lord Jesus, who "was made sin for us" on the Cross, on whom God caused to meet the iniquity of us all, "who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities"—the fact that He who became my Surety, who became responsible for the discharge of my criminal liability, has been raised from the dead by God, and set at His own right hand, is the proof that my sins have been put away for ever.

If Christ be not raised, then it means that my Surety has not discharged my debt. "But now ~~is~~ Christ risen;" my debt is there-

fore discharged. Oh, blessed release! blessed liberty! He was delivered—that is, delivered over into the hand of justice, bound and delivered up to the curse—on account of my offences. But He is raised from the dead on account of my justification. The justifying work has been completed, the precious blood that justifies has been shed, and God the Justifier has raised Him from the dead. What a Gospel is this! Who will tell me the resurrection is not an essential part of the Gospel? It is the very soul-satisfying climax of the Gospel.

In nearly every passage where the words “from the dead” are found it is literally “from *among* the dead.” The Lord Jesus was raised up “from among the dead.” And when the Lord comes and quickens those who have fallen asleep in Christ He will raise them also “from among the dead.”

At the end of the thousand years, when those are raised who had not had part in the first resurrection, it is never said of them that they are raised “from among the dead”—it is “the resurrection of the dead ones” then. But the Lord Jesus, and the saints when He

comes, are raised up "from among the dead." Any who care to follow that out will find it very interesting and instructive.

Again, in 1 Corinthians xv. 20 we read:

"But now is Christ risen from the dead [or from among the dead], and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

Let me mention that this chapter has not in view the wicked dead at all, but only those that slept. The word "sleep" is never in any passage applied to one who dies out of Christ. That would be too gentle a word to apply to such. It is a blessed word reserved for those who are in Christ. "He became the first-fruits of them that slept." Now, you know the meaning of the first-fruits. I have said already that Christ's resurrection is the pattern to which at His coming His people will be conformed. The very idea of "the first-fruits" is that it is a sample of the whole. The sheaf taken from the field of wheat or oats, the first ripe fruit of the apple-tree or the vine—"the first-fruits"—are just a specimen of what is to follow after. So Christ is the first-fruits from the dead, and those who follow will be like Him.

Turn to Leviticus xxiii. 9-11 :

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying :

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest.

"And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you ; on the morrow after the Sabbath shall the priest wave it."

Now, what was the morrow after the Sabbath? Was it not the first day of the week? Here, then, we have a sheaf of first-fruits brought in on the first day of the week and waved before the Lord. There was no need of a sin-offering to go with that ; it could come before the Lord, so to speak, in its own right. Christ the first-fruits could ascend to His Father in His own right. It was on our behalf that He was made sin ; it is on our behalf that He must needs go in with the wounded hands and feet, and the pierced side, because He is there in the presence of God for us. He is there as the wave-sheaf for us. I have no reason to doubt that on that first day of the week when the Lord Jesus stood in the midst of His disciples, the blinded priests—the sacerdotal

order — were carrying out their exploded ritualism, and waving a sheaf of wheat before the riven veil. The great Anti-type that had been raised from the dead that very day now stood, in the upper room, in the midst of His own. Oh, what a mockery was the temple service then! Religion, formalism, ritualism, but no Christ! God save us from outward forms and ceremonies with no Christ!

Now, look at the fifteenth verse (Lev. xxiii.):

“And ye shall count from the morrow after the Sabbath.”

That is, “the first day of the week.” The Sabbath commemorates the first creation, the first day of the week commemorates the resurrection of Him who is the Head of the new creation. We have bid good-bye to the first creation at the Cross of Christ. The first creation is under the death-sentence of the Cross. The new creation is there in the Risen One, the glorious “Firstfruits.” The first day of the week is the Lord’s Day, and celebrates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Now, it is good for the world to keep a

Sabbath, and alas! for the nation that gives up its Sabbath to work or recreation. The days when our forefathers pulled down their blinds in their homes on the Sunday were good for man. But am I to call upon a world that has rejected and does not believe on the Lord Jesus to observe a day in commemoration of His resurrection? Surely that is only for the saints. The world never set eyes on Him in resurrection. He didn't show Himself openly to *all* the people. He showed Himself to witnesses chosen before of God—redeemed ones saw Him, and none other. Many saw Him, but the world never saw Him. The first day of the week is a blessed day; don't secularise it, keep it for the Lord whose day it is—prize it as one of those precious privileges which God permits us to have in the enemy's world—one day in the seven to wait upon the Lord. I love every first day of the week: as the daylight dawns we remember it is the day on which the Lord Jesus burst the bars of death and the grave—it is the Resurrection Morn. Oh! may His saints value it.

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow

after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths

[that is, seven weeks, seven periods of seven]

“shall be complete:

“Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.”

“Fifty days.” That fiftieth day was what we have in the second of Acts—the day of Pentecost. Pentecost means “the fiftieth.” It was the first day of the week too; “the morrow after the Sabbath.” And what was to be brought on the fiftieth day?

“Ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.”

This is indeed something new. The like of this never took place before. Whoever heard before of a meat offering like this:

“Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two-tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first-fruits unto the Lord.”

Loaves baked with leaven! Was not leaven prohibited? Yes, leaven was prohibited in all the offerings to Jehovah *made with fire*. Leaven could not come on the altar, for anything that comes upon the altar represents Christ, and there was no leaven in Him.

Therefore these two loaves are not to be put upon the altar. But, why two? The "new man" that God has fashioned out of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; the new thing that has "risen with Him" is the Church, "the body of Christ," gathered out of Jew and out of Gentile—the two are made one and both are accepted in the one risen Son of God. Hence two loaves. But why with leaven? Because they are a type, not of Christ, but of the Church, and the flesh is in us yet, and until we drop this old man and depart to be with Christ, or when the Lord comes, and in a moment we are changed into His glorious image—until that moment we have evil in us. Evil in us is one thing. Paul said: "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing." He was conscious that evil was in him. But evil in us is one thing; evil *breaking out* is quite another. God teaches us here that notwithstanding that the believer has a corrupt nature and a heart that is ever ready to turn aside, and a proneness in the flesh to that which is evil, notwithstanding all this, he is "accepted in the Beloved."

Now, look what follows—18th verse:

"And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams; they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the Lord.

"Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

"And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs."

Now, do you see the difference? The sheaf of firstfruits did not require this, it was essentially pure; but when you get the "two loaves baken with leaven," seven lambs, one bullock, two rams; the kid, and the two lambs must all be presented with them—blood must flow, otherwise they could not be accepted. But waved before Jehovah with that which told of death for sin, they are accepted; they are holy. And you and I, conscious of infirmity, conscious of evil within, are accepted in the Beloved One by His precious Blood which cleanseth from all sin. Let me mention here, in passing, that the word for "firstfruits," elsewhere used,

is different altogether in the Hebrew from the word "firstfruits" applied to the two loaves. The former word is not only first in order, but first in the sense of pre-eminence, whilst that applied to the two loaves only means first in order. So the Church "is a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James i. 18) being gathered out of all kindreds, and nations, and peoples, and tongues, and united to the Son of God in heaven. When all Israel shall be saved, and all nations shall be blessed, that will be the harvest. Christ is pre-eminently THE FIRSTFRUITS. We are "a kind of firstfruits" accepted in Him. By-and-by the harvest will come, when the world will be placed under the reign of the glorified Son of Man.

I will ask you, in conclusion, to glance at the 5th chapter of Romans, 10th verse:

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be *saved by His life*."

I want to press that verse upon you. When God speaks about being saved He means more than being simply justified. If God

was to account me righteous, and leave me just as I was, that would be a poor thing; but God does more than that. He knows my weakness, the corruption of my nature, and that I need a living Saviour, therefore He has provided for me a High Priest within the vail, who is able to save to the uttermost *all* that come unto God by Him. "We were reconciled, when we were enemies, to God, by the death of His Son." God could not reconcile an enemy on any other ground, consistently with His own righteousness. But being reconciled, "How much more shall we be saved by His life." If He so loved an enemy that He died for him, that is, if He died to win me, how much more will He save me now that He has only to put forth the mighty power of His resurrection life. Oh! these "much mores" of the 5th of Romans: mark them every one.

It is a living Saviour that we need to save us; we must be in continual touch with the Mighty Redeemer at God's right hand. The power of Christ alone can save—"Without Me ye can do nothing." We are absolutely powerless. We are like an electric car going

up a hill ; detach its arm from the wire overhead, and it will slide down the hill as fast as it can to destruction. We need to be in touch with the power of the living Saviour. This is not a mere theory ; it is not doctrine—precious as doctrines are—for Christ is the summing up of the doctrines of His Word. But it is possible to be up in all the doctrines of Scripture, and yet not be in touch with the living Christ.

There was one poor woman pressing through the crowd to get at Jesus, but the crowd was so dense that she could only, by stretching out her hand, reach the hem of His garment ; for she said within herself, “If I may touch His garment, I shall be whole.” Did Jesus say, “Thy touch hath saved thee” ? No ; “Thy faith hath saved thee ;” and the same faith can touch Him now. You may receive His power now—power to love what you hated, and power to hate what you loved ; power to overcome sin, no matter what its hold upon you is. There is no sin that the Blood of Christ cannot cleanse, and none that the power of Christ cannot deliver from. It is not merely

to know truth, to know doctrine, but to know a living, present Saviour.

My dear old friend the late Mr. Lincoln used to print a little card every New-year's day, and give one to each attending his ministry. Once he gave me one of those cards. I will tell you what was on it :

“ Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality,
More present to Faith's vision keen
Than any earthly object seen ;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.”

I said to him, as I read it, “ Is that all there is of the poem ? ” I thought there might be several verses. Turning to me in his abrupt way, he asked, “ What more do you want ? ” I felt rebuked. I felt there was no more needed than that to know the living Saviour, to be in direct contact with Him, to know His love, to know His power, to know His wisdom and His grace. “ What more do you want ? ” God grant us a better knowledge of the risen Son of God.

PART III.

CHRIST GLORIFIED.

IN 1 Peter i. 11 we read of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." These are the two leading subjects of the whole Scripture. In one of the parables of the Lord He said: "A certain king made a marriage for his son." The marriage, and all the arrangements about it, the feasting, the garments, and the guests were intended to work together for the honour and for the joy of the king's son—he was the central object of it all. And the central object of all God's purposes and plans revealed to us in the Scripture is the exalting of Christ, the glorifying of His Son. The sufferings, looked at from one point of view, were a means to the end, and the end is the glory; so that, when we look at some aspects of the glory of Christ, we see that which God had in view as His great purpose, viz., the glorifying of His Son. The highest interests, and the highest joy, and the highest blessing of all God's creation is to know God Himself.

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” If we consider that God’s object in creation, in redemption, and even in judgment, is the display of Himself, then we see that in exalting and glorifying His own dear Son He is working for this end. Now, in this passage we have brought before us the truths that the prophets (and I think that here includes all the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures) wrote of, and which they had afterwards to enquire into, and to find out the meaning of. That is the peculiarity of prophecy, and wherein it differs from teaching, viz., that the man uttered words given him by the Holy Spirit, and afterwards enquired what they meant. He might have little or no knowledge of what they meant at the time he uttered them, but they were God’s words, and therefore he enquired into them, “searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.” Such is prophecy.

And just at this point let me call your attention to a common error, that is to speak

of *the men* as inspired. We have no such thought in Scripture. It is *the words* that are inspired. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," or literally, "all Scripture is God *breathed*." That means that the words are not words of man's wisdom, but words which the Holy Spirit inspired. They are Divine words—God's words. The men might be such as Balaam, or Caiaphas, or Saul—he, also, was among the prophets; they were not inspired men—they were very fallible, or even unregenerate men; but the words they spoke or wrote were inspired words. Now, these words God has preserved for us wonderfully in the Old Testament and in the New; and they form a complete Book, a Book that is not merely what some would have us to believe, viz., a collection of old manuscripts put together after a human fashion, but an organic whole, like a tree from whose smallest fibre in the root to the smallest twig of its outgrowth is instinct with one life, in perfect order and harmony—a living organism. Such is God's revelation to us of all that He has seen fit to communicate

for our blessing and His glory—the Scriptures of Truth. Now, as I have said, the chief subject of God's revelation—as He is the object of all God's purposes and plans—is the Lord Jesus Christ; first, His sufferings, then His glories that are to follow. Sufferings first, glory afterwards!

Now let us look at another passage or two. Acts ii. 32 :

" This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Wherefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Read also chapter iii. 13 :

" The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

We have here the great issue between man and God. Man denied Him, and murdered Him; God has raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand. God has glorified the One that man murdered,

and that is the great question still. The question is, Does your heart acknowledge the worth of the Lord Jesus whom God hath raised up from the dead and set on the throne? There is only one way to know Him, viz., by knowing yourself a lost sinner and knowing Him as an Almighty Saviour. That is the way to know His worth. If you now receive Him as your Saviour He is willing to receive you. There is no question about that. He loves the sinner. He gave Himself that such might be saved, and now He is waiting simply for you to trust Him.

Now turn with me to another passage. John vii. 37:

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.

"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

"But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Now, you remember we read in Acts ii. that:

"Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

The Holy Spirit descended on that day of Pentecost from the throne of God and filled the assembled disciples that were waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, and this fact was the evidence that the Lord Jesus was now glorified. According to the Word

"The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

What was the glorifying of the Lord Jesus? It was not that any glory could be added to Him as the eternal Son of God. The glory of the eternal Son—the Divine Person; how could it be added to? But you know that He humbled Himself. He became partaker of flesh and blood, He became a Man—a *true* Man, but absolutely free from every taint of human corruption. Begotten by the Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary, born into this world a little babe, He grew in stature, and grew in wisdom, and grew in favour with God and man. He became truly man—God and man in one person. Unitarians may scoff at it, but it is the Divine teaching in the Scriptures that He was God-Man—"Emmanuel, God with us." And when He became flesh He

became God and Man for ever, and it is "Jesus Christ of the seed of David" (2 Tim. ii. 8) that is now at the right hand of God. Oh, wondrous mystery of godliness that God should be manifest in the flesh! God has glorified the Man Christ Jesus, and He is now at the right hand of the throne—not merely God, as He was before He came into the world, but God and Man in one Person for ever—Emmanuel! I cannot understand how that Man in whom God was manifested, whose every word, and every work, and every step was a manifestation of God, should be rejected by the world. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." Light came into the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. As we have seen, the world did not know His worth. A few whose hearts had been touched, whose eyes God had opened, a few recognised Him, trusted Him, loved Him, obeyed Him, contended and suffered for Him—a few—but the world did know Him. He was in the world, but the world knew Him not. Now, what has God done? God has publicly acknowledged His work and worth. God

has shown what is His appreciation of that blessed Man who trod this earth as a heavenly stranger. God has signified His delight in Him not only by raising Him from the dead, but by putting Him at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and putting all authority in heaven and upon earth into the hand of the One who was nailed in weakness to Calvary's Cross. Thus God has glorified His Son Jesus Christ. We cannot see it, but we know it is a fact; we know it is true. Our God is a God that hides Himself; He is sometimes inscrutably hidden; we cannot discern His hand oftentimes, but faith knows assuredly that the Lord Jesus is at the right hand of God on the throne, and that in the end everything must work together for the glory of God who has exalted Him, and for the good of those who are His own loved ones and redeemed. God has glorified His Son Jesus. Beloved friends, is it not a delight to us to think of it? Is it not a joy to our hearts to consider that the Cross and the shame, the sorrows and sufferings are all past, and past for ever, and that the One who sorrowed and suffered here is now in that

Presence where there is fulness of joy, and at the right hand of God where there are pleasures for evermore?

Now let us read John xii. 14 :

" These things understood not His disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him."

They did not see the meaning of these things at the time. It had never struck them that every detail had been predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures, but " when Jesus was glorified"—that is, when He had sent down the Holy Spirit to dwell in them—then they remembered. Fresh light was shed upon everything when they were possessed of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that you and I need to bring the Scriptures to our remembrance—to show us the meaning of them, to enable us to use them effectually for the good of others. To go about the work and testimony in the power of an ungrieved Spirit is the need of this day. But I turn to this passage specially to show that the result of the glorifying of the Lord Jesus was His sending down from the Throne the

very choicest gift He could send. From the midst of the glory of the Throne of God He sends down His own blessed Spirit to dwell in His people. There were perhaps some people years ago that were very fond of you—they were bosom friends of yours—but they got on in the world, and rose to such a pinnacle that they don't care to know you now, and if they met you on the street would rather turn away their heads than recognise you. Happily some are above that, and don't forget their old friends. But there is one Man that never does. The glory of the Throne has not altered the affections of the Lord Jesus. He came to the Cross and He has gone to the Throne in eternal and unchanging love, and the first thing He does from the Glory is to send down His holy and gracious Spirit. He loves us just the same on the Throne as He loved us on the Cross. There is not a bit of difference. The glorified Christ is surrounded with the acclamations of myriads of angels, holy, exalted, glorious beings, but He never forgets for a moment the feeblest on earth that has trusted Him for salvation.

"Thou hast ascended up on High," "Thou hast received gifts for men." He didn't receive the gifts for Himself. Some of us receive gifts for ourselves; we put them in our own pockets. The Lord Jesus received the gifts for men. "Yea, for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them." And so having reached the Throne He sends down the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in the very streets that had re-echoed with the cry, "Away with Him, away with Him!" but fifty days before, thousands are now saved, justified, and sanctified, indwelt by His Spirit, praising Him, loving Him, glorifying Him, waiting for Him, and longing to see Him and to be with Him. What a change! That is the love of the glorified Christ. Oh, it is grand to think of Christ in the glory, and to know that the Friend we have there is One that never changes—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!"

Look at it from another point of view. Ephesians i. 15-23:

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto the saints,

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him :

[You see, if the spirit of wisdom is given, it is for one divine purpose—it is for the knowledge of Him. There is no growth in grace except there is growth in the knowledge of Him.]

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

"Which He wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come :

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church,

"Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all "

Here we have a most elaborate description of the glory given to Christ. It describes the glory of the place that God has given Him in most unmeasured terms. And after

the Holy Spirit has led us to look up, up, past angels and all the most glorious, intelligent beings in God's universe, and has shown us the glorified Christ invested with all authority, "Now," He says, "that is the Head, and you are the members." So just as the feeblest member of my body is in living, vital connection with my head, so the feeblest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is in vital connection with the One that is at the right hand of the Majesty on High, so much so that He is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." I cannot understand it, yet so it is.

It has been discovered recently by scientists that all sensation is localised in the brain; that everything you feel, whether it be with the finger, the foot, or any other part of the body, is communicated as if by electric current to the head. All sensation is located in the head. Oh, what a thought that is, that the Lord Jesus up there on the Throne feels for every one of His members! Thus the sufferings of His members here are still called "the afflictions of Christ" (Col. i. 24). What a thought! Touched with a feeling

of our infirmities! Then you know also that all intelligence is in the head. If you could imagine a man living without a head, you would say that man would not be much worth! We sometimes hear it said, "He has got no head," which simply means that he has got no intelligence; and if we had not Christ we would have no head, no intelligence. He is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. We have no supply for our needs but in the Head; we have no wisdom to guide us but in the Head. It is only as we are receiving the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ from day to day, it is only as we are being vitalised and empowered by the indwelling Spirit received from Christ, the Head, that we can live to His glory.

Christ is the Head of the Body—the Church—and just as the body needs the head, so the head needs the body, and the very members that are the most feeble are oftentimes the most necessary. Christ's fulness needs my emptiness, Christ's power needs my weakness, Christ's wisdom needs my foolishness, and so the body is the comple-

tion of Christ just as Christ is the completion of the body. The Church is the fulness or completion of Christ in Ephesians i. 23; Christ is the fulness or completion of the Church in Colossians ii. 10. What is this Church which is His Body composed of? Frees, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, &c.? No. If they all amalgamated to-morrow, that would not constitute the Church, for the world has no place in the Church, and no unsaved one forms a part of it in God's account. The Church is composed of every living member of the Body of Christ—everyone quickened by the Holy Ghost, everyone who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, everyone that is counting on Him for salvation, they constitute the Church.

Oh, may God give us to see distinctly this aspect of the Church—the Body of Christ—and then don't let us ever despise a member of that Body. A mother does not value her children by their age. Many a mother that has lost her little infant of only a year old has found it the deepest sorrow of her whole life. Our Lord Jesus Christ loves everyone,

the feeblest and most ignorant member just as much as the oldest and most experienced. It was John who spoke of Himself as "that disciple that Jesus loved." Was it that Jesus loved him more than the rest? No. It was just that John better knew the love of Christ. Oh, that He may give us, with His life, with His power, with His blessing, with His peace, to know the love that passeth knowledge.

Read Philippians ii. 5-11 :

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who . . . humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ; wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him," &c.

Observe here that the Lord Jesus is glorified on account of His obedience. Sin in its essence is simply disobedience to God. You see it clearly in the Garden of Eden. The sin of our first parents was simply disobeying God ; and all the sorrow, and misery, the sickness and death, all the bloodshed, all the passions of men, all the evil in this world since, is the outcome of one principle, disobedience to God. It is a revolted world, a world of men and women who will not obey

God. Into this scene came One—a holy, heavenly stranger—who obeyed God. He became obedient from the very first breath he drew till the very last that He breathed on the Cross. It was one complete act of obedience. “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

In the case of heavenly beings—angels who hearken to His voice and do His will—obedience never costs them suffering. But in the path set before the Lord Jesus when He said, “Lo, I come to do Thy will,” He knew that obedience meant suffering, shame, and death, “even the death of the Cross”; He knew it meant the bearing of the curse; He knew all that was to come upon Him. He came with one object, to do the will of His Father, and He accomplished it; He never failed. “Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished,” knowing that there remained only one little thing yet to be fulfilled, said, “I thirst,” and the sponge of vinegar was given unto Him. That was the last thing written that remained to be fulfilled, and that being done He said, “It is finished,” and breathed out His Spirit to

God, "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Now, God had determined that He who was obedient unto death is the Man that shall reign. The path to authority is obedience: there is no other way to power. The disobedient child will never be fit for authority—never! Young people! learn that the path to power, to influence, to blessing is the path of obedience, even of a child to its parents. The path of promotion to a servant is obedience. The path of promotion in the Church to one that wants to serve the Lord is to be subject, and if you have not learnt subjection you are not fit to rule. It was the Man who was subject, who became obedient unto death, that is put on the right hand of the Majesty on High.

And so to us in 1 Peter i. 14 it is written:

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

He wants to have pleasure in us. You who have children know that the disobedient child is just as much your child as the obedient one, but you have not the same pleasure in it. So God has pleasure in obedient chil-

dren, in every one who is seeking honestly to do His will. Obedience may cost something—it will not always be pleasant—but it will be found when the Lord comes and His kingdom appears that the obedient one is the one that God delights to honour.

Turn to Hebrews v. 1-5 :

“ For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins : who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way ; for that He Himself also is compassioned with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest ; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee.”

Notice here that in being called by God the Father to the office of High Priest, the Lord Jesus was invested with a new glory. “ He glorified not Himself to be called a High Priest.” You know that when God called Aaron, and constituted him the high priest of His people Israel, God was putting Aaron in the place of the highest honour of any man on the face of the earth. Even the honour of being king was not equal to the honour of

the priest. The priestly dignity, the privilege of going in to the immediate presence of God, and of serving God as the representative of His people, was the highest honour that God could put upon man, and connected with this priestly office that was bestowed upon Aaron, you remember that certain garments were to be made for him in which he was to minister, "garments of glory and of beauty" (Ex. xxviii. 2).

The Lord Jesus Christ personally was always perfectly glorious in the sight of God. Many years ago I read a book called "The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus."* I never read any book that gave such an opening up of the perfections of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. It just seemed to set out the four Gospels in a new light. Now, the moral glories of the Lord Jesus could never increase or diminish, being always perfect or divine, but they were mostly brought out and made manifest to us through suffering, opposition, temptation; all that which in us would have developed irritation, fretfulness, insubjection, was only the bringing out of His moral glories.

* By J. G. Bellett.

But the glorifying of Christ, as we read of it in these other Scriptures, was different from that. It is His public, official acknowledgment, as worthy of all glory ; and so we have Him here as the great Antitype of the high priest in Israel. When Aaron the high priest came forth robed in those garments of glory and of beauty, a crown of gold upon his head, with "Holiness to the Lord" engraven upon it, a breastplate upon his heart, with the names of the people, garments that were constructed with the skill and ingenuity that only the Spirit of God could impart ; blue, and purple, and scarlet, and gold interwoven, what a glorious sight he presented !

But that man was only a type of the risen Christ, of Him who is now in the presence of God, who is there in all the moral glories of His character, in all the perfection and value of His finished work as God's great High Priest ; there, as the representative of all His people, with the name of every one upon His breast. Such is the glorious Person who stands before the face of God for us.

Can such a High Priest become us ? Yes, for we are the sons of God. Such a High

Priest became us who was holy, "harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," down here, higher than the heavens up there. That is the High Priest who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," who "has compassion on the ignorant and those who are out of the way." That is the High Priest I can come to, and to whom I can unburden my poor heart, and tell all my sorrows, my sins, and my fears.

Do you want to know who he is? Read the four Gospels. Do I want to know what His character is, and whether He is accessible to me, a poor, erring one? Read the four Gospels. Was He accessible? Did He ever cast out one who came in need? Did He ever turn away one poor sinner? Never! He is just the same to-day. I love that hymn, "The very same Jesus." There is no change in Him, and you and I can come to Him, for He is God's glorious High Priest, and He is there in the presence of God for us—FOR US. "He ever liveth," and therefore is "able to save unto the uttermost," able to save to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day—to the very end—"all,"

whatever their character, however low they may have fallen, "that come unto God by Him."

There is one other aspect before I close. Look at Hebrews ii. 5-8:

"For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come. But one in a certain place testified [that is David in the eighth Psalm], saying, What is man [*enosh*, frail, mortal man], that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man [*i.e.*, the son of Adam], that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

If you read the first chapter of Genesis you will see that God put everything in subjection to Adam. Again, we read in almost similar words that God put everything in subjection to Noah (Gen. ix.); and you find almost in the same language that God made Nebuchadnezzar, as it were, king of the whole world. With what result? Hebrews ii. 8:

"But now we see not yet all things put under him." What do we see? We see man a total wreck, having lost all authority. We see the great Powers of the world in deadly struggle together. We see man a slave to

sin, to Satan, to disease, corruption, and death! We do not see the fulfilment of God's purposes at all. And what of the Man who was born to have dominion, who was presented to Israel as their King, over whose Cross was written, "The King of the Jews"? He has been rejected, and cast out of the world. Let us read verse 9:

"But we see Jesus, who was made [who became] a little lower than the angels for [because of] the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

By faith we see Jesus on the right hand of the throne of God! Man has failed; Adam failed; Noah failed; Nebuchadnezzar failed; all men that God has entrusted with authority have failed, utterly failed; they have ruled for themselves and have not ruled for God. Aaron, as high priest, and all his successors proved a total failure.

Then, is God's purpose to be frustrated? Is not man to rule at all? Yes, yes; God will have His way. God's Man is on the throne up there. He is exalted as the second Man, the last Adam, the Lord from Heaven. He is there at the right hand of the Majesty on High, and in a little while He is coming

again. Then will be seen the fulfilment of God's purpose, when all things are put under His feet. It is the Second Man that is to reign. We can only have turmoil, wars, and rumours of war. We can have no settled peace in this poor, sin-stricken world until He comes, who is the Prince of Peace, who has the right to reign. Well may we pray, "Thy kingdom come." "Even so; come, Lord Jesus!"

PART IV.

CHRIST COMING AGAIN.

LET us begin by reading Titus ii. 11-14:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts [or desires], we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Read also in 1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10.

"For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God:

and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

Also in 1 Timothy, at the beginning :

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Hope."

In these three passages we have set before us the hope that God intends every believer to cherish, and to live in the power of.

Further, in Philippians iii. 20, 21 we read:

"For our conversation [and I may say here that the word "conversation" is not in this place the ordinary Greek word for conversation, which means our behaviour, but a word which signifies our *citizenship*] : For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ : who shall change our vile body [the body of our humiliation], that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

Bringing these Scriptures together, we have : "Looking for that blessed Hope," "Waiting for the Son of God from heaven," and "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;" and in Timothy that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself "is our Hope." There is one thing characteristic of the New Testament, and that is,

that salvation in all its aspects is summed up in a Person. It is not merely doctrine, not merely truth—though we highly value both—but doctrine and truth are really only of value as they lead us to the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Saviour and our Hope.

In saying that the Lord Jesus is our Hope, that does not mean that there are not many blessed and glorious things connected with His coming again included in that hope. There are, and we shall look at these shortly. But it means that the centre and the sum of all blessing, all gladness, and all glory is to be in His presence and to behold His glory. He is God's beloved Son ; He is the One in whom God is well pleased. In the parable of the king that made a marriage for his son, everything was provided, and purposed, and planned with a view to the honour and delight of that son ; so God's whole work is for the glory and delight of His own beloved Son.

Hence it is that He who is God's delight is our delight, for we are called to fellowship with God. What He loves we are called to love, what He hates we are called to hate.

We are called to fellowship with the Father and the Son ; and if God says of His Son, " This is My beloved Son," then the Church—the Bride—can say also, He is our beloved, and our delight.

I want you next to look at one or two passages where the Lord has very specially told us about His personal return. Look at Acts i. 9-11 :

" And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up ; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

I don't think words could be more explicit than these—the same Jesus coming in the same manner, and His people waiting His return. Then if you look at John xiv. 1-3 :

" Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also."

We know from other Scriptures, and even from this very chapter, that there is a sense in which the Lord Jesus comes by His Spirit into the hearts of His people, so that the believer can say, "Christ liveth in me." It is by His Spirit that He lives in the believer, but when He says, "I will come again," the word *again* limits the meaning. It is, "I, the very same personal Jesus, that am now telling you that I am going to leave you; I will come again, and it will be for this definite purpose, to receive you to Myself." That is a fixed and definite point in the future—a personal Saviour coming again for a definite purpose.

Will you look at the 9th of Hebrews. Let us read from the 24th verse :

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. . . . now once in the end of the world [or, age] hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many : and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Notice in this passage we have the Lord in three different, grand operations :

First, His coming to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Secondly, His appearing in the presence of God for us; and

Thirdly, His appearing the second time (which we call the Lord's second coming), apart from sin, for our complete salvation.

In each of these three it is a personal Saviour. It was the Person of the Lord Jesus Himself who appeared to put away our sin; it is the Person of the Lord Jesus Himself that is in the presence of God for us; and it is the same personal Saviour who is coming again—mark it—the *second time* (it has the same force as the word “again” in the 14th of John), without sin unto salvation.

It is sometimes supposed from this verse,

“As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,”

that *all* men, both saved and unsaved, must necessarily die. It is supposed to be the common lot of mankind, and so it is in a sense. Up till the New Testament revelation it was perfectly right and proper that a believer should use such language as this, “For we shall *all* die, and are as water spilt

upon the ground." That is Old Testament language. But where in the New Testament do you get the thought, "We must all die?" Nay, we get the very opposite.

In the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians :

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

But note particularly this passage:

"As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."

There is my death, judicially, in the Person of Christ as a guilty sinner under the curse and condemnation of a Holy God. Christ has died for me, and I have died in Him, and when He appears the second time it is "without sin."

When He came the first time He came "for sin" (Rom. viii. 3). He came for the very purpose of dealing with the question of sin. By His death He settled it for ever for all who trust in Him. But when He appears "the second time" He comes apart from the question of sin—for that was settled at the Cross long before—He comes "without sin unto salvation." That is what we

are waiting for. Oh ! blessed, glorious prospect ! Death has been called " the debt of nature " ; but the man who has died in Christ has no debt of nature left unsettled—it is settled for him. It may be that God will call you, and me, and everyone of us (if the Lord does not come within a few years) to pass through death, and by that way, viz., death and resurrection, to enter the glory ; but if the Lord comes to-night, there is no question unsettled, there is no debt unpaid, there is nothing to hinder Him in the plenitude of His redemption to take us, every one of us, to Himself without tasting death, even as He took Enoch and Elijah. So complete is the work of Christ, so perfectly glorifying to God is the great redemption price paid on Calvary, so perfectly has sin been settled, " purged," " put away," for all who believe in Him, that if He comes to-night He takes them all to His embrace, aye, without one living soul tasting death.

As a burning-glass focuses the rays of the sun until they come to a burning point, so the hope of the Lord's return is a focusing of every ray of gladness and of glory into

one supremely blessed moment. No wonder it is called a "blessed hope."

There's a familiar saying among us that "there are none so deaf as those who don't want to hear." Is it not plain that the doctrine of the hope of the Lord's coming is necessarily bound up together with the doctrine of the assurance of salvation. If I don't know whether I am saved or not, if I don't know whether my sins are forgiven or not, if I don't know whether His coming will be to waft me to His eternal glory or to leave me outside the door of salvation a wretched, hopeless Christ rejector—if I don't know which it is to be, how can I hope for it? Don't you see that wherever the doctrine is held, that a man cannot know in this life whether his sins are forgiven or not, it is of no avail to minister the truth about the hope of the personal return of Christ?

No man can receive it as a hope but the man who knows that when the Lord Jesus comes again, it is his best Friend in heaven or earth that is coming to take him to be with Himself. I think that fully accounts for the fact that the hope of the Lord's com-

ing died out of existence almost, along with the obscuration of the simple gospel. Whenever the simple gospel was obscured, mixed up with works, with uncertainty, with the idea that nobody could ever know in this life whether his sins were forgiven or not, so long the hope of the Lord's coming must be out of sight, effectually barred out. But with the revival in these last years—these last sixty years especially—of a clear, definite, peace-giving gospel bringing souls into light, peace, liberty, and fellowship with God, along with that has come a revival of the blessed hope of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In connection with an incomplete gospel, and in order to put some meaning upon the many Scriptures that speak of the Lord's coming, another theory had to be invented, which has been, and is still, very generally held, viz., that the Lord comes at death to each believer—that, practically, to you and me the Lord's coming will be at death.

I would like, once for all, to explode that theory. To begin with, nowhere in Scripture is death called His coming: death is

called the believer's departure "to be with Christ." We are not told much about it. There are not many Scriptures that give us any information about the intermediate state of the believer between death and the resurrection; but there are two leading ones. Philippians i. 23:

"To depart, and to be with Christ, which is [very] far better;"

and the other in 2 Corinthians v. Read verse 4:

"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

You see the point there? The one reason why the apostle does not wish instantly to die is that death is not victory, therefore he rather desires the resurrection moment, when death shall be swallowed up of life.

Verses 5 and 6:

"Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God. . . . Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord."

There is a play upon the word "home" here

that does not come out in our translation. It might read :

" Whilst we are *at home* in the body, we are *from home* from the Lord."

" We are confident and willing rather to be from home from the body and to be at home with the Lord, wherefore we labour that whether at home or from home we may be ' well-pleasing unto Him '."

Thus you see it is distinctly taught that the believer " absent from the body is at home with the Lord." If you were asked to-night to sleep at Windsor Castle in the Royal residence, and when you got there were shown into a beautifully-furnished room, with everything very comfortable for your reception. " Oh," you would say, " it is all very nice and pretty, and very comfortable, but I am not at home here." But new-born spirits, begotten of God, in the surroundings of the Father's house, will be at home at once.

" There no stranger God shall meet thee—
Stranger thou in courts above.
He who to His rest shall greet thee,
Greets thee with a well-known love."

The moment a believer closes his eyes in death, he is at home with the Lord. Said a

mother to her dying girl once: "Jeannie, you'll soon be in the dark valley." "Na, na, mother, I'll soon be past it." She knew that all the darkness was here. The well-known Dr. Cumming of London once said: "Away in the far north there is a region where the beams of the rising sun of the morning meet and mingle with the beams of the setting sun of evening." And many a time on the death-bed of a believer the very brightness of the glory that he was entering shone in before the brightness of his testimony here had died out.

It is a reality that death is abolished and life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel. Blessed Gospel! Is there anything like it under the sun? The *Vedas*, the *Korans*, and all the so-called sacred books of men, have they ever shed one ray of light into the darkness of the tomb? No; nothing but the blessed Gospel of a crucified Christ; a risen Christ: an almighty Christ in the presence of God: and a coming Christ with resurrection power, can lighten up the darkness of the tomb. When He comes death shall be finally and eternally abolished

as regards all who are His, for He is the resurrection and the life.

I have often stood by the grave and helped to lower the mortal remains of loved ones into their last resting-place, and one thought has ever come in upon my soul and comforted me, and it is this, as I hear the cold clod falling on the coffin lid, this is the last that sin and Satan can possibly do. There is nothing more. The next is the shout that shall call them from the grave to the glory of the Lord. I want to dwell a little on that. Look with me to 1st Corinthians xv. 47-51 :

"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery."

We might paraphrase it, "Behold, I tell you a secret." That is about the sense of it. It means, "Behold, I am going to show you something that has never been spoken of before." You say, "Is that so?" Yes,

it is just so. There is an aspect of the hope of the Lord's coming spoken of minutely by the Apostle Paul that is not to be found in any other part of Scripture.

"Behold, I show you a mystery." This was not what he had learned by studying the Old Testament Scriptures: it was what had been revealed to him by the Lord Jesus Himself. Verses 51 and 52:

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

A *change*, mark you, that is equivalent to death and resurrection. Because flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God, therefore the necessity for this change.

"In a *moment*." Oh, a moment! That is too long. "In the *twinkling of an eye*." That is less than a moment. I asked an electrical engineer once how long it took the electric current to bring a message from Australia. He thought a moment or two and then said, "About three-sixteenths of a second!" About three-sixteenths of a second! Well, you go out to Australia, and you travel in one of the fastest vessels that plough the ocean, and you take six weeks to go, and

you begin to think what rate a current can travel at so as to give you intelligently a message over all these thousands of miles in three-sixteenths of a second, and you say you cannot understand it—you can hardly take it in: yet we know it is a fact of every-day experience.

That shows us what rapidity there is in God's actings. With Him "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years." He is a patient and a long-suffering God. He has waited thousands of years, not willing that any should perish. But, oh! when God's moment comes, "in the twinkling of an eye," from the right hand of the throne will He descend who is "the Resurrection and the Life," and the dead in Christ shall be raised and the living shall be changed. What a marvellous change! And all caught up, one glorified company, to meet the Lord in the air, and to be for ever with Himself. He does not say, "I will come again and take you to heaven," that is true, but that is not all; nor is it, "I will come again and take you where you will be free from all evil, and sorrow,

and pain." That, also, is true, but that is not all; it is, "I will receive you to **MYSELF**." It is to be with Himself. It is to see Him as He is; it is to gaze on that Face, "which was so marred, more than any man's"; it is to see that Brow, which was crowned with thorns; it is to look on those Hands, that were nailed to Calvary's cross; it is to see Him as He is; it is to be with Him in blessed companionship, and that for ever; and it is to be perfected in His likeness, so that every one of us shall fully reflect His image. This is "the blessed Hope."

I once heard about three brethren who were conversing together about the coming of the Lord, and the question was asked, "What do you think is the brightest and most blessed part of the prospect?" One said, "Well, I think it is that we shall *see Him as He is*." Another said, "I think it is that we shall be *with Him*"; and the third said, "I think it is that we shall be *like Him*." Now, there's a puzzle: Which is the most blessed? But, oh! when we put them all together, and consider that they are

to happen in one blessed "moment," "in the twinkling of an eye," then who shall say that this is not the "blessed Hope"!

Oh! how is it that any earthly hope, or any earthly ambition, can claim our hearts for five minutes with such a hope as that before us. We walk as if we were befogged in unbelief—we don't half believe it. But, oh! if we were waiting, watching, looking, expecting the Son from heaven, the glory of that Hope would dim every earthly pleasure and prospect. May God open our eyes to behold that glorious prospect! May God reveal to us that blessed Son, and reveal Him *in* us, so that our hearts may be set on the coming glory!

Let us look again at this 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, verses 52 and 53:

"For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

What is the difference? Those that are dead are corrupting; those that are living are mortal; those that are in their graves, the corruptible, put on incorruption; those

that are alive, and mortal, put on immortality, so that the whole redeemed resurrection company are incorruptible and immortal. Sin, death, mortality, corruption can never lay a finger upon us again. Thus is mortality swallowed up of life. We have life—eternal life—and it is our privilege not only to have it, but to have it “more abundantly.” Who shall say we have this eternal life in us as abundantly as we ought to have? But though we had it ever so abundantly, it could not be said that mortality was swallowed up of life. Nay, it would make me groan all the more, because of the presence of a body of sin and death. But when the Lord comes, and speaks that quickening word, death is swallowed up in victory, and mortality is swallowed up of life. When a thing is swallowed up you see no more of it. Thank God! That is the end of it for the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I can quite understand a man who has suffered much—a man whose sufferings have been long continued, weakness of body, or great temptation and trial, one suffering great reproach and distress—I can under-

stand a person under such circumstances hoping for death as a deliverer: but it is not natural to man to set death before him as a hope. Death is "the last enemy," and it is an enemy to the last. Death is not a friend, though poets may picture it so. Death is an enemy, albeit his worst can be turned into blessing to us.

If I saw a snake, a deadly viper, coming up that passage there, making straight for me, I would loathe it, I would hate it even though I knew assuredly that its fangs were drawn. Our whole nature shrinks from and abhors death. It cannot be otherwise; and when a dear one dies, even when we know that they are happier far, still we weep, we groan, and we cannot help it. No, death was never meant to be a hope.

Paul undoubtedly was a great sufferer, perhaps the greatest sufferer of all the Lord's servants. He says: "I am in a strait betwixt two. I have a desire to depart." Ninety-nine out of a hundred cannot, and do not, say this. But the coming of the Lord is the blessed Hope.

There are three instances in the Gospel

where the Lord Jesus raised the dead. One was the daughter of Jairus, a little girl twelve years of age, who had just died. Another was the widow's son, a young man who was being carried on a bier and on the way to the grave. The third was Lazarus, who had been four days dead, and whose body, according to nature, was stinking. These are three degrees, and they are not without meaning. One was a child, the other a young man, and the third probably a middle-aged man, showing that the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ can meet death in all its stages and under all its aspects.

But what I specially refer to this for is to point out to you that when Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus He delivered the child to her parents and withdrew, saying, "Give her to eat." When He raised the widow's son He delivered him to his mother and withdrew. When He raised up Lazarus the next place we see him is seated at the table with his two sisters, and the Lord Jesus eating and drinking with them. What does that tell us? If anyone has a doubt about mutual recognition in resurrection,

send your doubts to the winds. It was the very joy of the Lord Jesus to behold their joy as He restored the links that death had severed. That is His recompense, that is His delight. Oh ! why didn't He take that young man to His embrace ? Because He knew the widow's heart, and He knew the joy that it would give her to embrace her son again. That is the joy of the Lord Jesus when He comes. What a joyful coming ! What a greeting ! What a re-union ! What blessed, eternal intercourse about the way He has led us ! How he provided for the widow and the orphan ! How He came in and helped and cared for us, and all will be to the glory of Him who loved us unto death, and who exercises all His infinite Godhead power now and for ever on our behalf.

I heard a story about a son who had been long away abroad. I don't know how or why, but he came back without giving any intimation of his coming. He had left as a young lad ; he returned as a full-grown man with moustache and beard. When he entered into his mother's house he knew her

perfectly well, for there was not much change on her, but she did not recognise him in the least. He stood still and allowed her to look at him, but she could not make it out. "Don't you know your son?" Instantly she recognised him, and her arms were round about him. I am quite sure of this, that many of us will be much changed for the better in resurrection. All the wrinkles will, somehow, be smoothed out, and all the lamenesses and deformities will be gone for ever, for the work of the Lord Jesus will be perfect work, and there will neither be "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," when He comes.

There will be great changes, but we will not be unrecognisable; we will know one another, and will sit down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and, as it has been said,

"The saints will be there, both the great and the small,

And I shall shake hands with the blessed St. Paul."

But, oh! the more blessed part of it will be that every eye will first be turned on Him who is the "chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely."

In the First Epistle of Paul to the Thesalonians, chapter iv., verse 8, we read :

" Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, and I do seek, above all things, that any ministry God permits me to exercise may be to comfort. There are some men whose ministry makes you sore:—they never heal. But this is a *comforting* Hope, and not only so, but the Lord says :

" Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with Me."

It is an *encouraging* Hope—encouraging us to serve, and to serve diligently ; to go on in patience, waiting in the power of that blessed Hope for His coming again. It is also a *sanctifying* Hope, for it is written :

" He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as Christ is pure."

Mark, it does not say he *ought* to purify himself, but it says he *does* purify himself. If I am not purifying myself, if I am not seeking to grow in grace and in holiness, then it proves that this hope is not in power in my

soul. But if I am waiting, looking, expecting, longing for the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, that I may see Him, and be with Him, and be like Him, then my life will tell it. It will be an unworldly, unselfish life, lived for Him for whom in patience I am waiting.

PART V.

CHRIST REIGNING.

LET us look at the Gospel by Matthew. Many of us have long believed that each of the four Gospels has its own special characteristic. They give us four different aspects of the Son of God. In the Gospel by Matthew we have specially, Christ as *the King*; in the Gospel by Mark we have Christ as *the Servant*; in the Gospel by Luke we have Christ as *the Son of Man*; and in the Gospel by John we have Him as *the Son of God*.

The Gospel by Matthew is especially the Gospel of the Kingdom. In the 2nd chapter, verses 1 to 3, we read :

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying,

Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him. When Herod the King had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

Why was Herod troubled? Why should all Jerusalem be troubled? Alas! there was good reason for it. They knew that the coming of the King meant the setting up of God's Kingdom in the earth. They were familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, and they knew that when God's King at last came, and when His Kingdom was set up, it would be a reign of righteousness—absolute, inflexible righteousness. They knew they were not prepared for it, and they were troubled. Look next at chapter iii. 1, 2, 10, 11, 12:

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His

floor, and gather His wheat unto the garner : but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

This was the testimony of John the Baptist. Such was to be the action of the coming King at the commencement of the long-predicted Kingdom. We know that when the Lord Jesus had been raised from the dead, and had gone to the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven, and all who believed on Him were in that Spirit baptised into one body. But the burning up of the chaff with unquenchable fire has been postponed in the long-suffering of God, and "the acceptable year of the Lord" has been lengthened out. The "day of vengeance" has not yet come, but it is coming as sure as God lives; so surely as God's Word cannot be broken, so certainly will every prophetic utterance concerning the wrath and judgment that is to come upon this world have its fulfilment. Look now at Matthew xxi. 4, 5 :

"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughters of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

We know how the Lord rode into Jerusalem upon an ass, and how the multitude that went before and followed after, cried, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest! And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?"

The King was in the midst of them, but they did not know who He was, so utterly unprepared was man for the Kingdom of God. Then in Matthew, 27th chapter, 11th verse:

"And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest."

That meant, "Yes; it is so." It was the confession before the governor that He was the King. Then look at the 37th verse:

"Pilate set up over His head His accusation, written, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'"

Now turn to 2nd Timothy ii. 8:

"Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my Gospel."

Paul hereby intimates to Timothy that although the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Kingdom and the King had not

yet received their fulfilment, they have not lapsed, they are not forgotten, they are only in abeyance—not one of them will be broken. He who was “of the seed of David” was last seen by the world hanging upon Calvary’s Cross with the inscription over His head: “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” But raised from the dead, He is now at the right hand of God awaiting the time appointed by the Father, when He shall take the Kingdom.

Now look at the Book of Revelation, 1st chapter, verses 4 and 5:

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia : Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne : and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.”

You notice here these titles :

“THE FAITHFUL WITNESS.” That is what He was when He was upon the earth, God’s “faithful Witness.”

“THE FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD.” That is what He is now at the right hand of the throne of God.

"THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." He will be manifested thus when He comes in His glory as King of kings and Lord of lords.

So that the Lord Jesus Christ, born King of the Jews, nailed to the cross with the superscription over Him, "King of the Jews," the Seed of David, now at the right hand of God, is coming again to take possession of His kingdom, and to reign according to all the prophecies of Old Testament Scriptures.

Now turn to the Gospel by Luke, i. 30-33:

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

That passage is most clear and definite—that the Lord Jesus is to receive the throne of David his father, that He is to reign over the house of Jacob, and that His kingdom is to have no end. Words cannot be plainer; I take them just as they stand in their literal

sense. We have no business to spiritualise what is literal. When reading passages that are clearly allegorical, as in the Book of the Revelation, then let us seek to know what their significance is, in the fear of God; but when plain, distinct, emphatic statements are made, as here, it is our business to accept them, to believe them, notwithstanding that there be many apparent difficulties as to how they are to be brought about.

Before going further I would ask you to look at another aspect of the Kingdom. In Romans xiv. 17 :

"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

You see here the spiritual characteristics of God's Kingdom. From such a passage as this many have thought that the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ is *only* spiritual, in the hearts of His people. That he *does* reign, is true in a sense. That He wields all authority in heaven and upon earth is true; that the heart of every redeemed sinner—every one that has believed in Him—owns his authority as the One whom earth has rejected, but

whom God has glorified, is true ; and every heart ought to be in loyal subjection to Him whom God has exalted. But look at another passage in Acts ii. 36 :

" Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Also the 10th chapter of Acts, 36th verse :

" The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ : (He is Lord of all)."

Thus incidentally that expression comes in here, " He is Lord of all." Look, again, at the 14th chapter of Romans, verses 8 and 9 :

" For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

In these passages I want you to note that, speaking of the authority the Lord Jesus wields in relation to the Church, the title the Spirit gives to Him is " Lord," not " King." He is the absolute LORD of His redeemed people, whether they are alive or whether they have departed to be with Him. He is our " Lord." We are his bond-servants.

We are not our own, for He has purchased us with His blood. Oh, that we acknowledged it in the depths of our hearts! Look at our armies; they acknowledge that, being in the service of the Sovereign, they must go at the word of command and take their lives in their hands. Such is the loyalty of many that they are actually volunteering to go to the front though they know that it must mean great hardship, and that it may mean their death! They go willingly—they go joyfully. There may be a great deal of excitement in it perhaps, but there is the fact. But do we know and confess that the claims upon us of the Lord Jesus Christ, who bought us with His blood, are ten thousand times more potent than the claims of the British Sovereign upon the army. Are we willing to go as volunteers for Him into His service though it may mean reproach and suffering, or may cost us our lives? That's the meaning of the word "LORD." He is now at the right hand of God both Lord and Christ. He is never called King to the Church. He is our Lord. Kingship implies national government. A King is ruler

of a nation. "Head" implies a body. "Lord" is one whose we are by right, and whom we are bound to serve.

If you examine 1st Corinthians, which was written in order to correct abuses in the Church, you will find that in that epistle Jesus is called "the Lord" oftener than in any other, because the only cure for those abuses was the acknowledgment of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until you and I acknowledge the paramount claims that the Lord Jesus has upon our lives, to witness for Him, to serve Him, to obey Him, we do not know the meaning of the word "LORD." "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It may be said with the lips, but none can say it from his heart unless taught it by the Holy Spirit of God. We continually hear the Lord Jesus addressed as our King. It has become almost fashionable to call Him so, especially in hymns. I suppose, one reason is that the word "king" rhymes with so many other words, such as "sing," "bring," &c., and so "king" is used far oftener than Lord. But although the Lord Jesus in rela-

tion to the Church is not called King, yet He is the King. He is the King of the Jews; He is God's King, He is coming to reign, He will yet reign over the house of Jacob, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

In the 13th chapter of Matthew there are seven parables which represent under so many striking figures the Kingdom of Heaven as it exists at present in the world. In the 11th verse we read: "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven." The Kingdom of Heaven as seen in this chapter is a "mystery." By-and-by the Lord will come and reign in manifested glory. There will be no mystery then. In the parable of the *sower*, Satan is at work opposing, first, as the birds taking away the seed; next, raising up persecution and tribulation because of the Word; and, lastly, so bringing those who have received the Word into worldly entanglement that, by cares of this life, deceitfulness of riches, and "lusts of other things" or "pleasures," the Word is choked, and they yield no fruit.

In the second parable *the enemy sows tares*, and in the time of the fruit the work of the

enemy becomes evident, but judgment is deferred till the end of the age. In the parable of *the leaven* in the meal, the leaven of evil doctrine (for leaven in Scripture invariably represents evil) is seen to be introduced by the woman into the meal (meal as uniformly representing that which is good), and so it works until the whole is leavened or transformed in character, being altogether like the leaven that was put into it.

In the last parable of *the drag-net*, bad and good are gathered, to be finally separated by judgment.

Such is the Kingdom in its present form, although in the parables of the pearl and the treasure God's object is seen, and all the enemy's power and subtilty will not frustrate His counsels.

But throughout, the enemy is at work either openly or secretly; the heavenly claims of the Kingdom are opposed, its principles corrupted, the children of the Kingdom counterfeited, and yet the adversary is suffered to do his work up to the end of this age.

This is so different from any Old Testament prophecy concerning the Kingdom of

the Heavens, so unlike what it will be in manifestation, that it is evidently a period comprising mysteries to be understood, not by the world, but by him only who has "an ear to hear."

But this period of "mystery" will terminate in judgment. The Lord shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun." There will be no mysteries then. Mystery will give place to manifestation. The execution of judgment pertains to the Kingdom in the day of its manifestation. Now, the characteristic testimony is grace, patience, suffering for righteousness' sake. Then the Lord Jesus Christ will appear as the King, and with Him will appear the saints who had previously been taken to be with Him, sharers of His sufferings now, and also of His glory and kingdom hereafter.

Of this we have various intimations. For example, in Luke xxii. 28:

"Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations: and I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me: that ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

This is perfectly explicit. Restored Israel, with Jerusalem as the centre, will dwell in their land, extended to its utmost predicted dimensions, fruitful, peaceful, and glorious, the precedent nation upon earth. To be the appointed judges of Israel under the King will be to occupy the place of highest influence and honour in the Kingdom. This is reserved for the apostles of the Lamb.

In 1 Cor. vi. 1 we have a further intimation of the honoured place in that Kingdom reserved for the saints of this dispensation :

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matter? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?"

Now, this is not written to a select company of saints notable for spirituality or devotion, but to the most faulty of all the Churches: showing that it is the common calling of the saints as one with Christ, joint-heirs with Him of the Kingdom.

Again, in 1 Cor. iv. 8:

"Ye have reigned as kings without us, and I would to God ye did reign that we also might reign with you."

Mark the point here: they had been anticipating the time of the Kingdom as though they were called in this present age to a position of honour and influence in the world, while the apostles, true to their heavenly character and testimony, were the "off-scouring of all things." And false religion always tries to anticipate the reigning time. Dominion over the world is what Rome has ever sought; the Pope claims to be an earthly potentate. Established Churches are all allied with the world's present reigning powers. These principles the apostle, with divine insight, detected working already at Corinth, and hence his keen contention.

He says in effect: "I wish indeed that you were reigning, for then, instead of us being in this condition of reproach and suffering, we would all be reigning together with Christ in His Kingdom."

To this time, also, the parable of *the talents* in Matt. xxv. 14-30 refers, and also that of *the pounds* in Luke xix. 12-27.

Now let us turn to the Book of the Revelation xx. 4:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them."

Now, we want to know who these are who are here enthroned. To find this we must go back to chapter xix. 11: "And I saw heaven opened." Then follows a description of Him whose Name is "the Word of God." Then verse 14:

"And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

In verse 7, previously the Lamb's wife is seen "arrayed in fine linen," and lest there should be any doubt as to who is referred to, it is added: "For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," or "the righteous acts of the saints" (R.V.). In verse 14 the saints are seen, not as the Lamb's wife, but as the armies of the King of kings. Here they are the same persons, but connected with the Kingdom, with judgment, and with the earth.

It must be to these, and no other, that reference is made in chapter xx. 4. The saints who form the bride or wife of the Lamb, who constitute the armies of the King, are enthroned officially for the judgment of the world. These, together with "those that had not worshipped the beast," are the

"blessed and holy" ones of the first resurrection; "they are priests of God and of Christ," and they are "kings" also, for they reign with Him a thousand years. In short, they are the Royal Priesthood of 1 Peter ii. 9, the Melchizedek priests of this present age, the kings and priests of Rev. i. 6—the saints of this dispensation. This thousand-year period, known popularly as "the Millennium," is that age which succeeds the present, and in which "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Our Lord Jesus Christ has many different titles. Two of these, those by which He is most frequently described, are "Son of God" and "Son of Man."

As the Son of God He belongs to Heaven, to the Father's house that is His home from eternity. As Son of God His divine authority is eternal and universal. As Son of God He is the quickener of the dead, and as such will descend from Heaven to quicken the sleeping saints, change the living, and take all to His Father's home. His work as Son of God is all grace; pure, sovereign grace. There is

no judgment upon foes connected with the taking of the saints to Heaven ; it is unsullied grace.

But the title "Son of Man" is very different. As such His right is the dominion of the world. This title connects Him with humanity, with earth, with judgment, with the Kingdom.

This distinction is made clear in John v. 25-27. There as Son of God He has life and is the bestower of life, but in verse 27 the Father "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also BECAUSE HE IS THE SON OF MAN. It is as Man that He is to judge the world. See Acts xvii. 31. Consequently wherever His coming again is spoken of as the coming of the Son of Man, it is not His coming for the heavenly saints that is referred to, but His coming *with the saints in judgment*, His coming in manifested power and glory to reign, to take possession of His Kingdom as the Second Man and to establish His authority in the earth.

This aspect of His coming is as clearly foretold in the book of Daniel as in the book of Revelation.

There (chapter vii. 13) "one like unto the Son of Man" comes with the clouds of heaven and is brought near before "the Ancient of days." To Him is given an universal Kingdom and to the saints of the Most High, and "the saints possess the Kingdom."

A commonly received thought is that the Kingdom will be established through the preaching of the Gospel. It is supposed that silently as leaven permeates the meal so the Gospel is to leaven the world, and thus shall the dominion of Christ be established in the hearts of a regenerated world.

The conception is pleasing ; but where is it in Scripture ? Is it not plain in Dan. ii. and vii., in Matt. xiii., and in Rev. xix. and xx. that a passage of judgment unparalleled must purge the earth from its corruptors, before the Kingdom can be established ? His coming will be in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God and obey not the Gospel.

Even that most exquisite of all descriptions of the blessedness of the Kingdom in Isaiah x. 5-9 is preceded by the announcement, "He

shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

Again in Isaiah xxxii. we read that "a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall decree judgment"—it is here Christ and His saints, as we have seen. Then in verse 17, "The work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Righteousness must have its way in judgment before peace can spread its wings over this sin-broken world. Men would gladly welcome peace; but what they want is peace at the expense of righteousness. Such is not the peace of God. "The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN.

That which is known in Scripture as "the world" (*cosmos*) is a sphere of organised rebellion against God, devised by Satanic skill and maintained by Satanic influences. That it so largely takes a religious form, assuming even the name of Christianity, makes it none the less evil: this, also, is from

the "depths" of Satan, and in order more effectually to counteract the operations of God's grace. Christianised flesh is the flesh still. Into this scene of revolt and defilement grace enters, bringing salvation to all; but a salvation that delivers out of it and separates from it, leaving it to run on its ungodly course as before.

Grace proposes no means for turning the mighty current of iniquity or altering the character of the world. Morally, the rejection of the proffered grace leaves it worse than before: harder and less accessible to divine influences.

The revelation of the glory of God is reserved for a future age; but glory cannot be displayed in this scene until the way is prepared for it by judgment. That coming age is what we call the Millennium. The grace of God has appeared (Titus ii. 11). We await the appearing of the glory of God (verse 13). Creation groans for it:

"The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans viii. 19).

The Christ who suffered, and His own

who have suffered with Him during this period of grace, will then be manifested in glory; but in preparation for that august display judgment must first enter the scene, casting out the enemy and gathering out all things that offend.

To that coming judgment John the Baptist bears testimony in Matthew iii. 11, 12 :

"Whose fan is in His hand, and He shall thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into His garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Of the same period the Lord speaks in Matthew xiii. 40-43 :

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The same is referred to in Matthew xxv. 31-46: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory"—that fixes the period when this judgment will take place—"before Him will be gathered all nations;" not the dead

—there is no mention here of resurrection. It is the living nations that are here judged. Then follows the separation of the sheep from the goats—the entrance of the righteous into the blessedness of the Kingdom: the going away of the wicked into everlasting punishment.

Jude speaks of the same. Verses 14, 15:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Also Paul in 2 Thess. i. 6-9 and ii. 7-12; and the Book of Revelation, from chapter vi. to xix., is a detailed prophecy of judgment. Seals, trumpets, vials all tell of wrath poured out upon men after the "acceptable year" has closed. In chapter xviii., under the figure of a woman and a city, apostate Christendom is judged, and in chapter xix. the beast and the false prophet and their armies are destroyed. These are the final corruptors of the earth.

In Matthew xxiv. 22 we read :

"Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

To us whose calling is heavenly, salvation in the flesh is not our hope. Our salvation in its entirety is in resurrection, or through a change equivalent thereto though instantaneous. It is an earthly people for whose sakes the days shall be shortened, in order that their proper hope and expectation of entering into the millennial kingdom upon earth, with all its predicted blessedness, may be fulfilled to them.

Thus the "acceptable year," so long lengthened out, God, as it were, lingering over the work of grace, gives place to the "day of vengeance." A short work will God make of it when He arises to judge.

The way for the display of the glory of God being thus prepared, the Lord "will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down " (Acts xv. 16). His first thought is a dwelling-place in the midst of His chosen people Israel. Jehovah in the midst was ever their glory and their

defence, until their iniquities had driven away the symbol of His presence. (See Ezekiel ix. 3, x. 4, and xi. 23.)

The temple being rebuilt, or, in the words of Acts xv., the tabernacle of David being set up, the Shekinah glory will return.

"And, behold, the glory of the Lord of Israel came from the way of the east; and His voice was like a noise of many waters; and the earth shined with His glory. . . . And the glory of the Lord came into the house. . . . and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house" (Ezek. xliii. 2-5).

From that day the name of the city is "Jehovah Shammah"—"the Lord is there." This is what characterises it. This is its glory, its attraction, its security, its sanctification! (Ezek. xxxvii. 28).

Jerusalem, no longer forsaken but now the city of the Great King, shall be the metropolis of the world. Isaiah ii. 2-4:

"The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge

among the nations ; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

In Isaiah iv. 5 (R.v.) there is a further description of the glory of that delightful land :

" And the Lord will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night ; for over all the glory shall be spread a canopy."

The Revisers have given help in this verse, but they have failed to express by the word " canopy " the true sense of the word rendered in the Authorised Version—" a defence." It occurs only in other two places—Psalm xix. 5 and Joel ii. 16. In the former, the chamber of a bridegroom ; in the latter, the closet of a bride. Is it not a foretelling of that which must have been a mystery until read in the light of Rev. xxi. ? Above all the earthly glory of the Kingdom will be seen the heavenly glory of the Bride—a city resplendent with the glory of God, the dwelling place of the heavenly saints, the home of the Bridegroom and the Bride. The

nations of the saved shall walk in the light of it, and bring their glory into it; for in that day heaven shall no longer be shut out from earth as now by an impenetrable vail. The vision of Jacob shall be realised as spoken by the Lord to Nathanael: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Nor will the heavenly messengers be those angelic beings as now (Heb. i. 14), for "unto the angels hath He not put unto subjection the age to come." The intimation that to the saints this ministry of blessing will be entrusted is not obscure in 1 Peter iii. 9 if properly understood. The exhortation is to be the bestowers of blessing, and not cursing, now; because that is the character of our inheritance in the age to come: "Knowing that hereunto were ye called that ye should inherit (not *a blessing*, but) *blessing*"—*i.e.*, the bestowment of blessing. Wherever our "inheritance" is spoken of, it refers necessarily to the future.

As the Kingdom of God is a Theocracy, therefore the centre of worship and of government are one. Psalm xlviii. 1. 3:

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge."

Isaiah ix. 7:

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

In Zechariah xiv. many details are given as to the government, the worship, and the judgment of that day of glory.

Revelation xx. 1-3 tells of the casting out of the adversary. Satan is chained, and shut up in the abyss, that he may deceive the nations no more during the thousand years.

The effect of this can only be estimated by what we learn in the Scriptures of the power exercised by Satan during this age, during which he is of this world the god and prince. He is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2). He raised the whirlwind and the thunderstorm that destroyed the family

of Job. He instigated the attack of the Sabeans and Chaldeans upon the servants and property of Job. He smote the body of Job with disease. In Rev. xii. he is seen as the deceiver, the accuser, the persecutor, and the blasphemer. In the Gospels he is shown to be directly the author of many diseases (Luke xiii. 16; compare Acts x. 38).

Paul's thorn in the flesh was "the messenger of Satan to buffet him" (2 Cor. xii. 7). He is the author of tribulation and persecution (Rev. ii. 10; 1 Peter v. 8, 9); and the destructive heresies that abound on all hands are largely from him, being "doctrines of demons" devised in order to seduce from the truth. What a change it will be when the world is delivered from so mighty a power for evil!

Isaiah lxv. 17-25 tells of the extension of human life, so that God's elect may long enjoy the fruit of their labours.

Isaiah lv. 13 and Amos ix. 13 tell of the marvellous fruitfulness of the land, and Isaiah xxx. 26 of the increased brightness of the sun, and yet the cloud of Jehovah's presence will yield a grateful shade.

Time and space alike forbid to enumerate the details of "the glory of the terrestrial," as displayed in that Millennial reign. And yet the "glory of the celestial" is the excelling glory, and that is our portion as "partakers of the heavenly calling."

May the Holy Spirit unfold to us the things that He has made known in the Scriptures, that we may be blinded to all the tinsel of earth's present grandeur, and wait with eager hearts for the glory that is to be revealed !
