

THE GOD OF GLORY

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"O Thou eternal One! Whose presence bright
All space doth occupy, all motion guide;
Unchanged through time's all-devastating flight;
Thou only God! There is no God beside;
Being above all beings! Mighty One!
Whom none can comprehend and none explore;
Who fill'st existence with **Thyself** alone;
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er,—
Being Whom we call God, and know no more!"

DERZHAVIN.

PART ONE.

THIS is the language of man in nature, and holy scripture bears witness to it. "O that I knew where I might find Him!" was the language of the Patriarch of old (Job 23. 3). "He doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." "Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in His anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. . . Lo, He goeth by me, and I perceive Him not" (Job 9. 5-11). "O Lord my God Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as a gar-

ment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; Who layeth the beams of His (upper) Chambers in the waters; Who maketh the clouds His chariots; and walketh upon the wings of the wind" (Psalm 104. 1-2). "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. . . Such knowledge is too high for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Psalm 139. 4-6). "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings 8. 27). "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou are there. If I take wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalm 139. 8-10).

Such passages antedate the fulness of divine revelation in the Son as given to us to-day, and shew the thoughts and feelings of the creature in relation to his Creator: nor could it be otherwise while Jehovah remained behind the veil. He asserted His Majesty in manifold ways, both in relation to His rightful claims in the trial of man, and in view of the coming down of the Son, in Whom He has now shone forth in the full glory of His Being and Nature as God. There is a large class of texts proclaiming the Majesty of God, such as Judges 5. 4-5; Psalm 18. 7-17; Habakkuk 3. 3-10; with many others, but we will cite further only one or two expressions from the lips of Jehovah Himself.

"Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretchest out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (Isa. 40. 21-23). "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18. 14). "Am I a God at hand. . . and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23. 23-24).

We can well understand the wisdom of God in speaking thus to His creature, and also the feelings of awe produced in the hearts of those that heard it. It was necessary in view of correction, guidance, and the establishing of divine authority over fallen man, in relation to God's moral government in the earth. The majesty of God must ever fill the fallen creature with terror, but, if so, it will connect itself with the different states and position of men in relation to the moral rule of God. To the deeply degraded, terror and dread can be felt only in proportion to the capability of their moral sensibilities for alarm. The enlightened Gentile—like the Jew, who, although under culture, was insensible to the claims of Jehovah,—could only hear such expressions of God with unmixed terror; while the pious, those in whom there was a work of God, had a feeling of godly fear, combined with a sense of divine mercy. This raises the question of the place of the time-ways of God, in relation to His eternal purpose, and shews the difference of the saints of past days, as compared to the fulness of light and blessing we are brought into to-day.

The Old Testament begins with time, and the time-ways of God, and goes right forward to the full revelation of the Godhead in the New. The New Testament, while linking up with this, goes back beyond time to eternity, and links time, at the Incarnation of the Son, with the thoughts, plans, purposes and activities of the Holy Godhead in the eternal past. It is thus that we have the full revelation of God, in which is brought to us what never was, nor could be, known before; but it is done in a way that links up the progressive revelation of the Old Testament with itself, shewing that what began in the one, reaches its proper climax in the other. This gives a peculiarly rich character to the New Testament, as unfolding to us the revelation of God in Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in those counsels which were eternally wrapped up within the Godhead, and which, as being expressive of the moral Being of God, were the cause of all His wondrous works. It shews, also, the importance of the Old Testament, as recording those ways of God that led up to the necessity for

the coming of the Son, and the full revelation. The progressive revelation, in the Old Testament, came out in such a way, as not only to anticipate the full result in the New Testament, but to create a position that the Incarnation of the Son alone could meet.

It may be thought best, in looking into these things, to begin with the Old Testament, and come forward. This way is the more proper. It is impossible for those, who live in the light of the full revelation of God, to put themselves in the position of the saints of past days. Not only is God fully revealed, but man, in the Person of Christ, is gone into the presence of God, as the complete answer to all that has been revealed. As united to Christ in Glory by the Spirit, the believer is brought into a new state and relationship, in which he is fitted to stand in the presence of the glory. This no Old Testament saint could do. God was then dealing with man, on the ground of His Creator rights, on the footing of the creature's responsibility, and was hid behind the vail; which accounts for the constant expression of His authority as moral Governor; all His rights have been settled for ever in the Cross, and now He is free to come out towards man, in the fulness of His love and glory, in all that He is, as God. The believer to-day, as taught of God, can, humbly and adoringly, stand before God in His Majesty and Glory—the glory of Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence; His Immensity, Immutability, and Infinite Splendour of Glory and Majesty. All this is, thank God, a blessed reality to him, and made possible because he knows God, as revealed in His nature and Being, in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we come to speak of God, there are certain paradoxical statements which at first perplex, but as we have seen elsewhere, when speaking of our Lord, such statements are to be expected. "No man hath seen God at any time." In another place, "They saw God and did eat and drink." "Whom no man hath seen nor can see." "Holiness, without which no man shall see the

Lord'' (1 Tim. 6. 16; Heb. 12. 14). He is unapproachable, yet brings us before Himself in love. He fills all space, yet dwells in a movable Tent to be approached and served in an intimacy of filial delight: Infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible, yet revealed to be known, loved, and adored (1 Tim. 6. 18; Eph. 1. 4; Exodus 25. 8; Isa. 66. 1).

Needless to say, both lines are called for, and the explanation lies in the distinction between what Deity is, in its own essential and impersonal excellence, and what it is as revealed in the holy intimacies of triune delight, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the former, it is the veiled Majesty of essential Godhead, to which attaches the great awe-inspiring attributes of eternity, Omnipotence, etc., which stand in relation to creation, time and space. In the latter, it is the deeper features of Holiness and Justice, which embrace all His dealings with the moral order of creation, and which are descriptive of the character of God. The former of these have been termed the natural, and the latter the moral, attributes of God. The one connects with Deity in its unrevealed excellence, and does not necessarily raise a moral question; the other with the honour and integrity of Godhead, which spreads itself out over every part of Its activity in the moral creation. It shews the Holy Trinity at work, each glorious Person distinct as to willing and working, yet all in the one will of Godhead,—the Persons distinct, and distinguishable from each other, but the attributes the same, as characteristic of one God.

Keeping this distinction before us, we can see Godhead coming forth, as it were, from the dimness of a past eternity, as an intelligent first cause, and creating a universe of endless variety—but receding from us in Its Own veiled glory. In this way, we seem to touch, as it were, the fringe of the infinite and eternal in its own native being and glory, and since all this connects with His Nature it supplies for us the link between the revealed and unrevealed in the great and glorious Godhead.

As confirmatory of all this, attention may be drawn to the Seraphic and Cherubic figures presented in Scripture as the characteristic agencies of divine activity in the creation, and the expression of the activity of the throne, and the glorious majesty of God. In this we pass from the physical to the animal creation, and pass on from the creature of instinct to the intelligent in the face of a man.

The four faces were that of man, lion, ox and eagle, indicating apparently the outstanding heads of creation in intelligence, power, stability and rapidity, but all under the power of God, as seen in the eyes within and without, and the Spirit who was the power of control. It is thus that the activities of that Throne are marked as expressive of the character and activity of Him, whose Throne it is. That there was a Man above, and upon the Throne, shews at this time of judgment a beautiful connection with the richest and deepest thoughts of divine revelation, but these are things which must be left for the moment, as going beyond our present point. It is thus that Creation, while expressive of divine omnipotence, becomes serviceable in the hand of the Creator, relative to His moral nature in His gracious activities among moral agents, and while these figures are expressive of God's power in the creation, the eyes, wheels and wings speak of that which is more directly the divine side, bringing in not merely heaven and earth, but the all-pervading intelligence, power, stability and rapidity of the action of Him who is the moral Governor of it all. Need we wonder when we hear one say, "O Lord my God, **Thou art very great**, Thou art clothed with honour and majesty" (Ps. 104. 1). But now a word on these glorious attributes of God.

God is called the Father of eternity, and the eternal God. He is said, too, to inhabit eternity. The word must be taken in its full unlimited bearing, as shewing the infinity of Deity in regard to what we call time. We are lost when we attempt to think of eternity. Time, to us, is what comes in between events which our minds

can take account of, as space is what we conceive as the distance between bodies. There is no time with Him who is the First and the Last, who is, was, and is to come, nor are there measurements of space with Him who fills heaven and earth. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."

Omnipotence is unlimited power. Like God's eternity it is both mysterious and incomprehensible to our minds. "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Rev. 19. 6; Dan. 4. 35). We cannot have an act without an actor, an effect without a cause, and in the same way a creation without a creator. But how the Creation came into existence, no creature can tell. An article may be made if the material to make it is supplied, but how the universe sprang into being out of nothingness, we cannot know. The wonders of creation may be examined by the microscope, as well as by the telescope, but greatness and littleness, or immensity and intensity, are both alike to omnipotence. The power that creates is the same that upholds, for He upholds all things by the word of His power. However great the thoughts and language of men of science, scripture alone can describe the omnipotence of God. Here again we turn to Isaiah, where Jehovah, when dealing with the responsible creature, speaks of His creatorial power and glory. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (Isaiah 40. 12). Nor is only creating—for the same power is seen at work upholding all. "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah" (Psalm 75. 3). A most comprehensive lesson on this is put before us in Job, chapters 38-42, where God meets His

servant, and solves every question in the moral problems of that book, by pointing him to His power and wisdom as seen in the creation.

In omnipresence there is the presence of God in every place. If it be heaven, He is there; it is His abode. And earth; "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jer. 23-24). "Hell is naked before Him" (Job 26. 6; Psalm 139. 8). God is everywhere: He fills all places at all times. He fills space, earth, sea, and land. He fills our homes, with Him there can be no in and out, nor above and beneath. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." "The whole earth is full of His glory" (Zech. 4. 10; Isaiah 6. 3). How deeply blessed to be able to contemplate this glorious attribute in our Lord Jesus Christ! In fact, each of these wondrous features may be seen in Him in His ministry. Could there be anything to surpass this amazing mystery of grace:—a Man here, who is in every way suited, as to His body, for the place He had taken, yet, at the same moment of time, in consubstantial union with the Father and Spirit filling all in heaven and earth?

Coming to omniscience, it is noticeable how the word infinite covers all these glorious attributes of God. Limitless as to time, power, and space, He is the same as to knowledge. There is a close link between omniscience and omnipotence, for, to compass the ages, and foretell what will come to pass in dim and distant times, God must have the hearts of all men under His direct control. Known unto God are all His ways from the beginning, and as we trace these ways, and see how He makes both sin and Satan to serve Him, we can understand how He works out His purposes of eternity in connection with the failure of the creature. This is a matter worthy of our deepest thought, concerning, as it does, His marvellous grace, in relation to us in all our helplessness and ruin. The great outstanding proof of this is the Cross, where our God has taken account of Man's darkest and worst crime in crucifying His Son, to bring in, for man, His own richest thoughts

of blessing. He both knows and fore-knows; Prescience and omniscience are His, because He is GOD. "Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isaiah 42. 9). "For the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28. 9). (See, for its action in our Lord, John 2. 24-25; and compare Jer. 17. 10). This wonderful feature of the divine majesty fills the heart with holy awe, and is productive of richest praise. The Bible is full of the all-knowing, all-pervading marks of the eternal God, and, when we reach the holy Gospels, we are filled with wonder, love, and praise, as we behold every characteristic feature of Godhead coming out in a Man—our Lord Jesus Christ.

PART TWO.

Coming now to the attributes more directly connected with the moral nature of God, we meet with holiness and justice, out of which necessarily arise all those rich elements, which come out in His moral government. In His activities among men, we see sovereignty, goodness, truth, mercy and compassion, but all characterised by the moral purity of His holiness, and the rectitude of His justice. Holiness is His intrinsic moral purity. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1. 13). It has been defined as God's perfect satisfaction with Himself in the power of all-satisfying good; and may be said to inhere in His nature. Justice or righteousness is more external, as being characteristic of God in all He says and does. It is His perfect consistency with Himself in both word and act. It brings us to the great scope of His moral government. Holiness may be said to be the standard to which all must be brought, and justice the mode of action which leads to that standard.

The holiness of God, in the very nature of things, is bound to call forth punishment for sin. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 29). "Who among us shall

dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hand from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil" (Isa. 33. 14-15). See the attitude and language of the Seraphim as they stand round the Throne of the majesty representative of creation. "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6. 3). In His mercy sinners are forgiven, but sin is not condoned. "Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God, Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy!" (Psalm 99. 8-9).

The justice of God is that which characterises Him in all His ways; it shews Him to be the perfect guarantee of order, stability, and security, in the whole created sphere. It displays the perfect equality of His every movement in creation, providence, and government, and is brought out fully in the New Testament in relation to redemption.

The attributes of holiness and justice are necessarily linked up in the being of God with those other great awe-inspiring features we have looked at, but are more directly connected with His nature as in relation to the moral order of creation. If His omnipotence is called into action, as at the Red Sea, or the Jordan, it is controlled by moral motives, that is, in behalf of His people. Being a God of order, as seen in His wisdom, goodness, and beneficence, we could not think of Him acting in a mere capricious or arbitrary way. Controlled, in all that He does, by His love, which is His nature, everything is marked by unerring wisdom in the inflexible holiness of that nature, and the unimpeachable justice of His being, for the good of all. He is infinite in power, but that is used only according to the dictates of His love. The word of God is that which guarantees stability to the whole physical creation, while His justice, which is the law of the moral order, secures

stability there. Whatever be the difficulties or disorder in the moral creation as a result of the presence of sin, or the problems which are beyond the capability of the creature to solve, there are no difficult problems with God. All are met and solved, and the eternal supremacy of God established in and through the Son, as we shall see, in the redemption sphere. His word is expressive of His goodness, and links with His natural government in providential goodness, whereby He obligates Himself to meet the needs of all. By His justice, He controls the whole moral order as keeping evil in check. Apart from His control of nature, the whole cosmos would be turned to chaos, and but for His complete control of the moral order, this world, as under the domination of Satan, would have destroyed itself long ago.

It appears from Scripture that the action of the Throne in holy government came into operation before man came into being. For the entrance of sin, and its continued presence, one of only two reasons can be given. It is permitted for wise reasons on the part of Him who is Sovereign Ruler, or else it is there in defiance of Him, and at His expense. The latter is unthinkable, as we conclude, for all Scripture, and indeed all nature, proves that sin is permitted as serving the great Creator's end. We know not when sin first came in, but we know by whom it came. It certainly was known to God, as an abstract conception, from eternity, but it had its origin in the creature. "The devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3. 8). This beginning of sin, which Scripture defines to be lawlessness, called into action that Throne of which justice and judgment are said to be the character (Ps. 89. 14). "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2. 4). Man's departure from God into sin transferred these operations of moral government into the race of God's predilection. It is remarkable how the later parts of divine revelation refer to

these activities of God in moral government from the very earliest of His ways. The outstanding instances of holy government are recorded for us in 2 Peter 2. 4-6. Against fallen angels first, then the deluge in the days of Noah, and further the destruction of the ungodly in the fires of Sodom and Gomorrha.

It is well for suffering saints to know that God holds the reins. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38. 11). In the working out of His ways, He may change the times and the seasons and remove kings and set up kings (Dan. 2. 21). He may even go back upon what we speak of as the laws of nature, but never for one moment has He changed His word. "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name" (Psalm 138. 2). In the material realm iron has been made to swim, the Jordan while in spate was made to divide and go backwards, the sea to divide and made a path for the redeemed of the Lord, and the sun to go back in his course—but never once has He gone back upon His word. From this He never has, never will, nor ever can depart. While it is clear there can be no limit to His power, we know He is governed by His love, and, in the region of moral verities, there are certain things He cannot do. "He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2. 13). "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1. 13). "God is not unrighteous" (Heb. 6. 10). "For Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with Thee" (Psalm 5. 4). From these, and other passages, we learn that God is so governed by His nature, that He cannot do anything that is opposed to justice. It is not that He obligates Himself to use His almighty power in accord with the principle of Justice, but that justice so inheres in His moral nature that He cannot act otherwise. Think for a moment of the grace of the Almighty stooping down to tell us this, that we may be able to stay ourselves upon Himself.

The justice of God, then, is the complete guarantee of order, security, and stability in the universe. All this does not rest on the will of an arbitrary Being who de-

cides to act in certain way. No, His nature is such, that He cannot act otherwise. This is proved by His way of acting in the physical as contrasted with what He does in the moral sphere. He may, as is well known, continue to act in the sphere of nature in the normal way, or He may depart from it. The miraculous display of power above referred to, and hundreds of other cases shew this. In deviating from His ordinary law of working, in the sphere of nature, He shews His resource in working for the good of His people in beneficent goodness, in conformity with the justice of His being, but when it is a question of His word, there can, in no sense, be any possible deviation. He cannot,—we say it with deepest reverence—depart from His word. His justice, the unimpeachable justice of His being, controls Him that He cannot act otherwise. “By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water” (2 Peter 3. 5). See also Psalm 33. 6. Then it is said He upholds “all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1. 3). The word of God can in no way be impugned. “I will worship towards Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy loving kindness and for Thy truth: for Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name” (Psalm 138. 2). See this perfectly expressed in a Man. Mark 13. 31, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”

Justice then or righteousness is that feature in God in which He is consistent with Himself in all He says and does. His word, which is the expression of His justice, is the guarantee of stability in all. If, for example, the law of gravitation ceased to act for one moment, the whole structure of the heavens and earth would immediately collapse, and fly to destruction. Moreover, if God ceased for an instant to honour His word, the whole moral structure of society would crumble up. The divinely ordered barriers between good and evil give way; the conflict between good and evil cease, and evil alone prevail, and chaos, moral darkness, cover all, to the everlasting defeat of God. How good and blessed it is to know, in a scene where evil is permitted, and

often flourishes at the expense of the good, and where the innocent are often seen to suffer, that the God who for His own wise purposes permits all this for a moment, is Himself the sure and steadfast proof that all wrongs must be righted, and that evils must be punished, and what is of good prevail to the glory of His name, and the security and blessing of all that is of Himself. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18. 25).

In connection with the above, there is a point which cannot well be passed over, because of its connection with the honour of God and the well-being of His people. It will be remembered that the godless in Israel dared to challenge the consistency of God's ways, in His dealings with the people. He took account of this, and graciously came down to reason with them, at a time when their ways had got so bad, as to cause Him to depart from His own Sanctuary. (Ezek. 8. 6). In such a state of things we hear Jehovah saying: "Yet saith the house of Israel, the way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. 18. 29-30). This condescension of the Lord is most telling in the light of Deut. 32. 4: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: all His ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He."

But there was something still more perplexing, for there were times in the lives of the most honoured servants and saints, when they were suffering, and being made to pass through the deepest trials when the wicked were prospering, and at their ease. This was, to the righteous, most baffling. The patriarch Job, who was perhaps the greatest sufferer in the Old Testament—but there were many others (James 5. 10-11)—had to say: "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. . . ." (See Job 21. 7-13). So also with David

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree" (Psalm 37. 35). Such things these men could not reconcile with the justice of God's moral government. In His revealed will, the order seemed to be joy and happiness for the good, but sorrow and suffering for the evil. The law had laid this down very fully and clearly, and it had been said, "He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Peter 3. 10-11; also Psalm 34. 12). Yet those who sought to live according to this were kept in suffering. Think of a man like Job of whom Jehovah could say to Satan, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth," yet his suffering were prodigious. It is just at this point that we may learn the wonders of God's wisdom, and see the richest and choicest of His dealings with His children in the world. The wicked may prosper for a brief season, as we have seen, but in a moment their candle goes out, and then for them it is the blackness of darkness for eternity. The righteous may suffer in a world where sin and death are permitted, but, this, in the hand of a Father, is educative in view of forming the character, and making them morally Christ-like in view of future glory.

The standard of God's holy government is fixed and sure, and can never be lowered. What a man sows, that shall he reap, and punishment for sin is judicially and divinely certain, but to limit God in His dealings with His children to that is to dishonour Him, and to miss the richest and choicest of His designs. In point of fact, it displaces Him, leading to the conception of Him as an arbitrary Being, as the book of Job shews, and, coming to men, it turns the moral order of society upside down, and is accountable for the cruellest sufferings inflicted by men upon their fellows. In Job we have a man whose sufferings might well melt the hardest heart: yet, his friends (and they were men of a very high standard of life), through missing this important link in the chain of God's dealings with His

servant, were turned into the cruellest and bitterest of foes. Why? Because, by limiting God's dealings to the punishment of sin, and missing the educative and promotive character of the sufferings, they could only conclude that such a great sufferer must have been a great sinner. What a solemn position these good men were found in. Condemning Job, by attempting ignorantly to justify God, instead of sympathising with the needy, they fixed upon him the cruellest charges. The position became a kind of deadlock, and those who came to help were found to hurt. The basis of their argument was wrong, their premises were false, and making a wrong start, both as to God and to Job, instead of the good that the circumstances called for, the very worst that was in them came out. It was doubtless thoughts like these that led the poet to write that "Man was made to mourn," for indeed "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Like the ecclesiastical tyranny of the dark ages of so-called "Church History," these men belied their messages, and were turned into despots of the inquisition. Thinking they were serving God by treating an unbroken sinner in faithfulness, they went all the length to recover him, and like many to-day, who conclude that **THEY** are the testimony, with hearts steeled against every human and tender feeling, persecute to the death those who may be like Job in the crucible of suffering, but, like him also, may be more in the thoughts and sympathies of heaven than themselves.

Yes, God in infinite and tender goodness can, and does, bring His children through sorrow and suffering. He did it with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David and others, and He is doing it to-day. He may chasten for sin, as **corrective**, or He may discipline the soul as seeing danger ahead, which surely is **preventive**, and, as in the case of Job, He may put us through a good deal of trial, that we may learn ourselves, and enter better into the knowledge of Him—which is surely **promotive**.

PART THREE.

From this digression we turn to the connection of the holy governmental dealing of God with His providential goodness. These are linked together very closely in His control over the whole range of nature. If in goodness He meets and supplies the needs of all His creatures, by the skilful manipulation of the forces of nature, it will readily be seen how easily He may deal with the sins of men and nations, by so ordering the working of these forces, that the supplies might be curtailed. This is made to work out in such a way as to leave unbelieving men without excuse. For the living God, which made heaven and earth, and sea, and all things that are therein, "left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14. 15-17). We may recall how rain was withheld at the prayer of Elijah in the day of Israel's apostasy. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5. 45). "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith" (Matt. 6. 30). These scriptures and many more, shew the God that we have to do with. "He giveth to all life and breath, and all things" (Acts 17. 25). All this covers the animal creation as well, for He opens His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. "The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God" (Psalm 104. 21; see also verse 27). The Lord says: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt. 6. 26). All this shews that it is not merely a question of the earth, set under certain laws, to bring forth its annual supply, but that the hand of God is daily at work in it, in relation to His holy government for the good of all. How often has it been seen, that storms and earthquakes, with pestilence and famine following, were but the variations of His control of nature for the correction of moral

agents on the earth. "Fire and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy winds fulfilling His word" (Psalm 148. 8). It is thus we get the connection between God's providence, and His natural and moral government. In the six days of Genesis 1, He was arranging the physical and material in relation to the moral and spiritual,—preparing for man, the subject of His counsel, with regard to his natural constitution on the earth.

Behind all this there lay the question of man's spirit-being, which constituted him a responsible moral agent. As such, he comes immediately under obligation and fails. In that act he touched the question of good and evil already raging in the creation, and, becoming a sinner, brought himself immediately amenable to the holy government of God. The rights of God are attacked, and His supreme majesty trampled in the dust by the presence of sin. For its presence one of two reasons may be given. It is either permitted for some wise purpose on the part of God, or it is there at His expense, and in defiance of His authority. The latter is unthinkable, as it would dethrone God and bring in eternal chaos. It is inconceivable that God could be frustrated in His creation; hence we may see that sin is permitted for His own wise ends. It serves God; all things must indeed serve Him, as all scripture entitles us to say. Satan, sin, death and hell must obey Him. The Almighty One is supreme and there cannot be two supremes. All nature, history, experience, our life, existence upon the earth, the interventions of God in the race,—and above all the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ,—all prove the supremacy, the glorious and eternal supremacy, of our God.

While permitting sin, and indeed allowing its reign, God keeps it in check. "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." It merits His condemnation, and must be punished, both in the unit, and in the aggregate. In the former "Thou are weighed in the balances and art found wanting," and in the latter, "Thy kingdom is divided, and

given to the Medes and Persians." "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, etc." (Dan. 5. 25-31). In the individual dealings, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap:"—In the national, the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. Pharaoh and his host were destroyed at the Red Sea; Assyria fell before Babylon, they in turn before Persia, who had to give way to Alexander, and so on, till Rome, under whom our Lord was crucified. God may use men in these governmental judgments, or Nature herself may serve His purpose. The Assyrian was "the rod of His anger" (Isa. 10. 5); the king of Babylon His servant (Jer. 25. 9), and Cyrus His shepherd and anointed. (Isa. 44. 28; 45.1); while Israel is His battle axe (Jer. 51. 20). In His use of nature, He may deluge the earth with rain, or withhold it. He may use fire, as in the case of Sodom, or He may cause the earth to open and swallow men up, as in the case of certain in Israel (Numb. 16. 31-33). Israel were the people of God's choice, and their sin was in the presence of much greater light, and consequently the government had to be borne in greater severity, for with God there can be no respect of persons. "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. . . . and fell in one day three and twenty thousand" (1 Cor. 10. 7-8). "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2. 9). Nor is it different with the individual. Jacob deceived his father, and was deceived by his sons; David passes sentence on the offender, saying that he would have to pay four-fold, and had to suffer the loss of four of his sons. Adoni-bezek cut off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten, and then found himself under the same suffering (Judges 1. 6-7).

"Of thirty Roman emperors, governors of provinces, and others high in office, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and bitterness in persecuting the early Christians, one became speedily deranged after some atrocious cruelty, one was slain by his own son, one became blind, the eyes of one started out of his head,

one was drowned, one was strangled, one died in a miserable captivity, one fell dead in a manner that will not bear recital, one died of so loathsome a disease that several of his physicians were put to death, because they could not abide the stench that filled his room, two committed suicide, a third attempted it, but had to call for help to finish the work, five were assassinated by their own people or servants, five others died the most miserable excruciating deaths, several of them having an untold complication of diseases, and eight were killed in battle, or after being taken prisoner. Among these was Julian the apostate. In the days of his prosperity he is said to have pointed his dagger to heaven defying the Son of God, whom he commonly called the Galilean. But when he was wounded in battle, "he saw that all was over with him, and he gathered up his clotted blood, and threw it into the air, exclaiming, etc." We dare not stain the page with the blasphemy of this dying man. (William S. Plumer, cited from "The Treasury of David." p.p. 17-18. Vol. 1).

Sin must be punished; God is insulted by it; an affront to Him in the very nature of things spells defeat. Malevolence cannot be met by benevolence merely; active open enmity cannot be reconciled. Sin is never either forgiven nor condoned, it is condemned. Hence the Cross, and the lake of fire, with the complete triumph of God — Father, Son and Spirit, over sin, Satan, death, and hell, the public vindication of the character of God in righteousness and holiness of eternity. In the Cross a way has been made for salvation to the penitent, and millions have been saved and blest, to come eternally into all the good and joy of the heart of God, where all that He is, in love and glory, shall be known and enjoyed, while the lost will remain for ever a witness to His holy government and supreme majesty.

The character of God has been so perfectly met and vindicated in the Cross, that we might pass on to it at once, but the working out of His time-ways, as linked with eternal purpose, calls for a word on the giving of

the Law. What led up to this was the taking of Abraham and his seed and separating them from the rest of the nations, that He might deal with them as representative of the whole. It was in Israel that all the great leading thoughts of God and His testimony came out. The thoughts of His kingdom, covenant and dwelling-place, with the things proper to these,—all came out in connection with the tabernacle, temple and the land, and many of the leading thoughts of His purpose in Christ shone out with these.

In connection with all this came the Law. It is comparatively easy to see that the march of God's ways, from Adam, had Christ in view as their goal and resting place. In the marvellous device of love, God continued to deal with the fallen race, while maintaining, before all the intelligences, the majesty of His Throne. Twenty-five centuries had passed in His grace and patience, when the time came for the giving of the Law. This set forth His creatorial claims upon the creatures. Israel while under grace chose to be on the ground of righteousness, and engaged themselves to obey all that the Lord had said (Exod. 19. 8). Of the ten commandments, the very first tells where man was. The command of the Creator that the creature should love Him showed that things were out of gear, and indeed the whole transaction showed how far man had gone from God. By promising to obey, the people took themselves out of the hand that had delivered them, and from the One Who had carried them as on eagle's wings, and brought them to Himself. They forsook the ground of mercy, and accepted that of righteousness, and by so doing compelled the thunders and lightnings, and the blackness and darkness of Sinai. The occasion necessarily brought to light the tremendous moral distance between God and the fallen creature. "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light: He had horns (or "rays"—New Translation) from His hand: and there was the hiding of His power. Before Him went the pestilence,

and burning coals went forth at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; and beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting" (Hab. 3. 3-6). "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them. He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: From His right hand went a fiery law for them" (Deut. 33. 1). "Then the earth shook and trembled: the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down. . . yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place: His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the sky" (Psalm 18. 7-11).

We would commend to the reader's careful attention these passages; they should be read for their glorious impressions of God along with Exodus 19 and 20, Deuteronomy 5, and Hebrews 12. 18-21, "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." Let the whole passage be read:—Exodus 19. 16-25.

These manifestations of Jehovah, which shew the work of the Holy Trinity in grace and patience, yet faithfulness to His name and character, fit us for understanding a little the awful yet necessary declaration of the divine Majesty and Glory at the Cross. Before the law could come into the camp, Israel had made a golden calf, and began to dance around it. "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." This brought down upon them the judgment of God and many were slain. But the relationship was broken and all was lost. Jehovah fell back upon His own eternal resource of grace, and made a new covenant with the Mediator,—a covenant in which both law and grace marked the history, till we reach the greatest breach of all between God and the world at the Cross.

The Person of the Son in Manhood completed the progressive revelation which had been going on all through the past ages. In Him the past ways of God meet, and combine with the whole scheme of eternal counsel. He, the Word, was the first Speaker (compare Genesis 1. with John 1. 3), and He must of necessity be the last. The first three Gospels take us back, each in its own way to certain past dealings, but in John we are taken back to eternity. "In the beginning was the Word." That which came out on the banks of the Jordan is here linked with eternity past, that the Son is seen to be the Centre of all. Every type, shadow, promise and prophecy is seen to centre in the One Who is come to carry out all the before-time purposes of God. The view of nature in the twilight may be beautiful, but it is restricted; whatever light there is comes from a hidden sun. Seas, rivers, mountains and valleys are there, but are partially seen. Let the sun arise, and everything is seen as it is. Not only are existing objects seen in a new way, but the source of light is itself seen as the centre of all. All the beautiful lines of truth in the Old Testament were but in shadow, since God was behind the veil: but in the New Testament everything is seen in the full light of God. The Son has come out from the Father to make God known, and, while we behold Him the Centre of eternal purpose, He is, at the same time, the filling-up and fulfiller of all the divine activities, which had come out in testimony before.

Three outstanding events in the Gospels seem to shew these things, and serve to bring us to the point where all that God is shone out at the Cross,—namely, the Baptism, Temptation and Transfiguration of our Lord. It was at His baptism that the first formal revelation of the Trinity came out. The Son on earth is claimed by the Father, and the Spirit is seen to rest upon Him. The trinity is complete, and we seem, as it were, to hear a voice from the eternal world saying: "Behold, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me. . . to do Thy good pleasure. . . My God is My delight, yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm 40. 5-8; Heb. 10. 7).

At the temptation, the moral perfections of the Man Christ Jesus shone out, relative to the divine ways, as taking man's place, and living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8. 3). The Transfiguration gave a pledge of fullest glory. It linked with the past ways of God, as reflected in the kingdom, and also with the Cross, as the securing, in His Person, of all the glory. The transfiguration was the answer to His path of devoted service and a pledge of future glory. This pledge necessitated that He should descend from that Mount down to the Cross. The presence of Moses and Elias called for Redemption, and this is confirmed in the subject of their converse. They spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.

PART FOUR.

To attempt a few words on the Cross in the light of the complete glorification of God in His nature, character, and being, in relation to the whole sin question, and the solution of all moral questions for all time, right down into eternity, is no light matter. A sense of the majesty, mystery, and magnitude of the atoning work of the Son of God is almost overwhelming, and yet there is that in it that attracts, yea, and draws us on with such magnetic power, as to engross the whole being, laying us at the feet of Him who hung there in a state which no words can describe. We can only approach such a theme with unshod feet, for the God of Sinai (with its thunder and blackness) has come out of His place to judge, once and for ever, the whole sin question. There may have been some mitigation and forbearance in the days of Moses (see Exodus 34), but there can be no mitigation now. Judgment must come, in all its relentless force, in the light of the offended majesty of God, but it is to be done in a love that no creature measure can ever fathom; it is to be done in the Son of His bosom, the Lamb of His own providing. Well might we say "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts," and "Great and wonderful are Thy works, Lord God Almighty," and with the same breath: "To

Him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood. . . to Him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen."

In the solemn hour of Calvary when the opposing forces of good and evil met, success seemed to be with the powers of evil. This we shall see lies deeply in the nature of things, for God was judging sin in the Person of One Who was at the same moment the target of all the combined forces of evil. The very sin that rose on that solemn occasion to its worst and most rebellious form was being judged by divine holiness in the Son of His bosom, the Holy One of God. It is this that forms the holy mystery of Calvary. The sinless, stainless, Son of God suffers at the hand of evil, from the accumulated masses of rebellious forces in hatred's most hateful form, when there could be no help for Him in God. Having become the Victim to meet the claims of justice, there could be no help for Him in God.

In that amazing hurricane of apostate malevolence, we may descry Judas Iscariot, the Sanhedrin, Caiaphas and Annas, then Pilate and Herod with Pilate again and the Roman soldiers. In the figurative language of Psalm 22 there were bulls, strong bulls of Bashan, dogs, the assembly of the wicked and the lion, a ravening and a roaring lion; none to pity. But what of His friends? He was forsaken by His disciples; one betrayed, another denied, and all fled and left Him alone. This was the end, the end of man's moral history; the murder of the Son of God filled up the cup of man's guilt, and the end of his responsibility is reached. Could a creature, a moral intelligent being, who is responsible to God, have done more to turn God against him than this? Could he have done more to make the lake of fire his eternal abode? Yet it was the act of the class that God had taken up to cultivate, to give them His law, His house and sanctuary, and in whose hands were the Oracles of God, and who had the privilege of carrying on the service of God. That which is flesh is flesh, and, cultivate it as you may, it turns against God.

But Nature, what of it, in that day of days? Serving Him in His teaching, accommodating Him in His errands of mercy, and obeying in His work of compassion; what of the whole vast machinery of creation then? All is affected, and in sympathy with the transaction of the time. The sun was hid, and darkness prevailed, while the earth shook, and the rocks were rent. Psalm 18, with 114, should be read here. Both look back to the deliverance from Egypt, but the highly figurative language may apply to the Cross. "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundation also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth (Psalm 18. 7. See the whole passage). "The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back, The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob" (Psalm 114. 3-7).

But deeper and yet more solemn things develop in that awful hour, for the Holy One must suffer from His God. Extremes meet, but oh how different the motives! The forces of evil would not stop short of His death, but the glory of God necessitated it. The counsels of heaven, the need of the creature, and the whole defiled creation, called for His atoning death and He had come from heaven to die. The character of God demanded such a sacrifice; it was the stern necessity of Him, who is moral Governor of Creation, and must be met. He, the Son, submits in holy obedience and becomes the sin-offering, but, on the other hand, He offered Himself voluntarily without spot to God, as this was a sweet savour as the burnt-offering. It is a peculiar scene, for the One Who is Himself holy, righteous and obedient, is abandoned of God, heing unheard of in the history of God's moral creation. He, the Son offers Himself to glorify God, in all the claims of His being, and all the dread consequences come upon His blessed head.

God must punish sin. We have seen how the angels that fell were cast down, how the world was judged by

the flood, and Sodom by fire. These judgments and others were the necessary result of divine holiness, for judgments upon earth; this was wrath from heaven, and sin cannot go unpunished; they were governmental judgments upon earth; this was wrath from heaven, and the glory of God, in the whole structure of the Universe, is based upon it for eternity. God was taking up the sin question in the Person of His Son, (the only One capable), in a public way, in the creation. This presents our Lord as the sin-offering, and, being such, there could be no sweet savour; but, for the full value of atonement, the burnt-offering is necessary, as shewing God's gracious acceptance of that glorious sacrifice, which went up as a sweet savour to Him. The combined value of these two sacrifices was such as to give full scope to the outflow of God's mercy, so that sinners, however sinful, might be brought to God to be before Himself without spot and dwell in love with Him.

The offerings and their laws are given in Leviticus 1-7, as pointing forward to Him in Whom they all meet. They fall into two classes, namely, the voluntary and the compulsory. To offer a sacrifice for sin could never be voluntary, since justice demanded it. This is that aspect of the Cross which shews the obedience of our Lord to all the rights of God against sin, but, in the burnt-offering, there was something more. In that character He freely offered Himself, and the fire could but find the holy excellence of His Person. As sin-offering He was bearing judgment, and there could be no sweet savour there. What was called for was One that could meet the unmitigated claims of the Judge. This He did perfectly, for, unlike the type which was consumed by the fire, He exhausted the judgment, but we are led far beyond this, and here, in thought, we pass to the burnt-offering character of His death, where the moral excellence of the Sacrifice went far beyond the claims of the Judge to delight His heart with its own innate excellence.

Whilst both these sacrifices had sin in view, judgment was more directly connected with the sin-offering. The

day of atonement (Leviticus 16) prefigures the work of the Cross, as meeting God, concerning sin, in the whole creation, from the moment of its entrance, till its final relegation to the lake of fire for eternity. There the sin-offering was most in evidence. The blood was shed at the altar of burnt-offering, and carried inside, and sprinkled upon the Throne, but the carcase was taken outside the camp. With the exception of the fat, which was to be burnt on the altar (Lev. 16. 25), all was to be burnt outside the camp. With the burnt-offering neither was the blood carried in, nor the carcase carried out. As sin-offering our Lord Jesus Christ was passive. "He was made sin." "He was bruised for our iniquities." "His soul was made a trespass-offering."

All this was the holy subjection of One Who was led as a Lamb to the slaughter. With Him as burnt-offering all was different. He gave Himself. He offered Himself without spot to God. He said, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." And, "Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God." All here is His own doing, and all is a delight to the heart of His God. "Even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (See Isa. 53, Ps. 40, Heb. 10, and Eph. 5). The perfection of our Lord combines beautifully with the Spirit's presentation of Him. If He delighted to do the will of God, and went on in it right to death itself, He could not delight in the unmingled sorrow of being forsaken of His God in that dark hour. That was the cup He had to drink in all its bitterness, and that was what drew the cry of anguish from His holy lips, the meaning of which no creature shall ever fathom.

Linger a moment here. Could anything enhance the glory of the Cross like this? There was the judgment of God against sin, in all its stern necessity and terrific force; a judgment which only a sacrifice of infinite worth could meet. Sin had deluged God's fair creation with suffering, sorrow, and woe; it was antagonistic,

rebellious, and set to dethrone God. (Isa. 14). It must be punished, yea, judicially met, and God's holy wrath appeased. Christ the Son of God becomes the Victim and God in all His claims is perfectly met. But—and here we reach the greatness of His glory—the payment exceeded the demand, so that when wrath is borne and Justice satisfied, there yet remains an excess which is the eternal guarantee of glory. In holy submission He had become the willing Victim, and met every claim, but, in the same transaction, He offered Himself without spot to God, and, being accepted, was so morally excellent as to fill God's heart with delight. If that Sin-Offering met the obligation—that which meant everlasting condemnation to the sinner—the same act as Burnt-Offering brought such a revenue of glory to God as to supply a basis for filling creation with that same glory, in a condition of everlasting bliss. It glorified God, it added lustre to all His time-ways, shewing their necessity, their perfection and their place in the whole scheme of divine dealings, while at the same time it radiated both backwards and forwards to eternity. It opened heaven with all its resources to men, supplied the key to open up the secrets of revelation, the power to deal with moral questions and unravel every tangle, solve every problem and explain all mysteries. It supplies the position for the elucidation of all Scripture, putting everything in proper moral order: it is the Centre of the dispensations, and, by it, chaos is turned to cosmos, and creation in all its departments glorified.

But, having glorified God, it is beyond all this. It has displayed Him to the Spirit-taught heart, as a God who is Love. While it maintained His character in majesty, integrity, and honour, in the condemnation of sin, it made room for the sinner, so that God might have His creature in right relations with Himself, in a condition beyond the possibility of breakdown. It made the God of glory more glorious. Needless to say, our God is ever glorious, but since sin had invaded His glorious realm, the work that put sin away brought in another glory; something, indeed, infinitely greater than the original state of sinlessness could have been. It has

filled the heart of God with delight, covering His Name, throne, majesty, character and being with a lustre, which never could have been conceived, and which supplies the motive in creation for universal and never-ending praise. Oh the depth of it, the wonder of it, the magnitude and the grandeur of it! Speechless, fathomless, and measureless; standing in a dignity all its own; time cannot tarnish it, nor evil diminish. Passing creature capacity, yet supplying a continual theme for meditation and an endless cause for praise, God alone can comprehend its worth, and, by it, He works out all the counsel of His will. Jesus, Jesus, Holy Lord, what can we say? We worship and adore. We see Thee there, the centre of ignominy and shame, the target for all the accumulated malice of apostate creation; we see Thee beyond that a suffering Victim bearing God's judgment. We worship, we wonder, we gaze, and adore. But beyond all that we see Thee in Thine excellence exhausting the judgment, and clearing the ground of everything offensive that Thou mightest fill all things, yea fill all things with God. It amazes, it entrances, and we are left in motionless and speechless adoration of the wonders of Thy death. It is beyond us, beyond all creatures, but in measureless grace, Thou dost give us to share with Thee in its results. It has put us—yea, the whole creation—under a debt, which never shall be paid. "We triumph Lord, Thy joys our deepest joys afford."

What shall it be to Thee to see creation's answer to Thine atoning death?—When Thou shall have Thine own with Thee as the TRAVAIL of Thy soul, when Thou shalt see and hear circle upon circle of intelligencies, and family beyond family of redeemed ones filling the universe with Thy praise, when through creation's vaults Thy name, Thy fame, Thy worth, and splendour shall echo, and re-echo, till eternity itself can find room for nothing more? Then not only moral intelligencies, but the mute and inanimate, shall join harmoniously to swell the strain and give to Thee Thy rightful place. It reminds us of nature's sympathy in

the hour of Thy distress, when the sun was hid at mid-day, and the rocks were rent, when creation, so to speak, adorned itself in sackcloth as befitting the solemnity of the hour. But now, sorrow has given place to joy, distress and mourning to delight and ecstasy, and instead of groaning, creation basks in the sunshine of eternal love. Then, blessed Lord, Thou shalt have a worthy answer to all Thy deep distress. We long to see it, and to join the grand Hallelujah of that day, but here again there is that for Thee which passes infinitely beyond it all, namely; the joy of Thy blessed heart in the perfect accomplishment of Thy Father's will. "Looking steadfastly on Jesus the Leader and completer of faith: **Who, in view of the Joy lying before Him**, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12. 2). That joy, the inner personal joy of carrying out the will of Thy Father, in the full accomplishment of His counsels of love, none can ever fully know. It is Thine, and Thine alone, and we delight to own it, and blessed Lord, in virtue of that death, we shall dwell with Thee to behold Thee in the joy of it for evermore.

PART FIVE.

First let us notice the bearing of redemption on the creation at large. The view of the Cross as set forth in the sin and burnt offerings gives the great objective declaration of God for all. Its far-reaching effect is doubtless seen in the fact of His being lifted up between heaven and earth. We may gather from Scripture—though it is not put before us in detail—that creation is separated into different departments, all of which come under the effects of the Cross for eternity. These may be hinted at in the distinct classes mentioned as angels, principalities, powers, lordships, dominions and authorities. While the vast hierarchy of unfallen agencies come under the anointed Man into the scheme of reconciliation, fallen hosts, who stand irreconcilable in the conflict between good and evil, come into eternal condemnation by subjugation.

With man and this earth, it is different. Whatever part it may have in the vast system of creation, it is manifest that morally it is the centre in relation to divine revelation, and the place where the eyes of all created intelligencies turn. Man being the creature upon whom the counsels were set, in the fulness of time, the Son became a Man. This necessarily connects the activities of the Godhead with the earth and man, and leads to the thought that all the other and higher classes of the creation are mentioned in scripture, because of their relation to what was before God in His dealings in the creation.

What more directly concerns us, then, is the position created by the death of our Lord with regard to man and the world. Every link was broken, and man in his responsibility left without excuse. The state was such, that it may be said while our Lord lay in the tomb, the end of all flesh had come before God. On the side of God's purpose the view was different. A way was made, by that death, for the outflow of His love, and the accomplishment of all that He had in His heart for man's blessing. Oh, that the children of God laid firm hold of this!

Since the Cross, this world is a scene of guilt and condemnation but it is God's world still. Though guilty and condemned, men are God's creatures, and in virtue of the death of His Son, God provides the very best saying, "Come for all things are ready." It were much for God to glorify Himself in His Son, where we had dishonoured Him—but to do so, and, by the same act, include in the blessing of it the creature who had crucified His Son—who could conceive? To be received back, on the ground of sin put away, would be much, but it stirs the heart deeply to know that we are brought back in the acceptance of Him Who fills the heart of God with delight. The Gospel begins from an ascended Christ, shewing that revelation and approach are joined together in the Person of our ascended Lord. He, the Son, came out to reveal, and having done that He shews the grandeur of God's Gospel, beyond words, in a living

Person in the glory of God. It shews that God has not only certain thoughts of blessing put forth in words, but He has the grand truth personified, so that we can read His thought for us in our Lord Jesus, the glorified Man at His own right hand in heaven. This brings in the Holy Spirit, in whose hand is the subjective work, and who dwells in us to form us intelligently in the new state into which eternal life and sonship bring us.

This leads to the typical significance of the Peace Offering. If **judgment** was connected with the sin-offering, **acceptance** with the burnt-offering, **communion** is connected with the peace-offering. This offering is given in Leviticus 3, and its law with certain supplementary instructions in chapter 7. Its proper place in the ritual is seen in Chapter 8, at the consecration of the priests. There, we learn how God can have a company separated to Himself for His service in the Sanctuary. In the sacrificial work of the day, the sin and burnt offerings came first, as shewing how Christ had borne the judgment due to us, and that we now can be before God in His acceptance. The third offering was the ram of consecration, which, like the peace-offering, speaks of communion and is the food of all. Here, we see, in type, how God graciously deigns to share with the redeemed His appreciation of His Son in devotedness to death, in so far as they are able to take it in. His own portion which is composed of the excellencies and energies of the sacrifice, is put upon the altar, having been waved first before Him, by priestly hands. Christ Himself is seen in His own delight, as partaking of the wave breast, seat of the affections. This is foreshewn in Moses the mediator. Then, in the eating of the flesh by the priestly company, we have the completion of the scene where God and man—the creature that was at a distance from God—are brought together in holy communion, rejoicing together in Him who has by His death brought it all about. We see here how God has made a feast in His own House, for His own, and at His own expense, and how He would have us in our spiritual constitution so nourished with Christ that holy worship would flow . . . That Christ might be so digested, by the Spirit,

into the life of our moral being, that His graces and perfections might be flowing out from us for God the Father's delight.

In this way, we are permitted to visualise, on the principle of faith, a company in the good of reconciliation and sonship, which means nearness to God in the complacency and delight of His nature (Eph. 1. 4). He is the blessed or happy God, and out of the darkness and ruin of the race, as seen at Calvary, He has brought back to Himself those whom He has fitted to take part in the celebrations of joy in His own House. See how the Lord puts this before us in the parable of Luke 15. The sinner is brought back from distance to nearness and clothed in the "best robe"—God's very best,—which really means to be before God in Christ; he is able to take part in the holy festivity of the place. The fatted calf speaks, in parable, of the same blessed One as the peace-offering does in type, and the whole picture describes the scene and state into which returning sinners are brought for the pleasure of God, and for their own measureless blessing.

The connection of it all with the Lord's Supper is clear, for there heaven's richest and best is spread out before our adoring hearts. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It is at the Supper, sacred and holy, the bearing of that death is seen in measure in its varied aspects for God and for the creation, we partake of the symbols and contemplate God revealed in all that He is, in nature and character, and in triumph over every opposing element. It is thus we seek the link-up of the ways of God with His eternal purpose, and as brought into a large place we worship and adore. We remember Him in His going into death for us; that death which is the divinely appointed outlet from all our ruined condition, and we shew forth that death, till He comes again, in the world that cast Him out. The state was such that nothing in the way of culture, education, or reformation, could meet it, hence the necessity for

New Creation by death and resurrection, and the work of the Spirit. The Lord Himself had said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24). The wisdom and glory of God are demonstrated before all as to fore-knowledge, resource, precision, and power, with regard to all His ways. He has triumphed over everything, bringing those, who were enemies in their mind by wicked works, into the place and state of friends, and into all the delight of obedience to His holy will.

So far, we have had the display of God as seen in the Christian position and blessing, as given through St. Paul in the light of the typical system sketched out in the Old Testament. There is still that which passes beyond type and shadow, which calls for notice, because of its wealth of communications in relation to the nature and character of God. It carries us beyond type into the inner intimacies of divine relationships, tastes, feelings, and joys as reflected in the counsels of eternal love.

It is clear that, while hating sin, God loves the sinner. All is simply demonstrated in the Cross, and is the result of who He is (Hab. 1. 13, John 3. 16, 1 John 4. 10). "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. 33. 14). "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12. 29). "If I whet my glittering sword and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render recompense to mine enemies" (Deut. 32. 41). Such scriptures describe a God of holiness, before whom the sinner may well tremble. But in His resource that same God has devised a way, whereby the sinner may not only be recovered, but be brought to dwell with Himself in a nature and state suited to Himself—to dwell indeed with everlasting burnings.

Believers are brought to God. They are made His children, formed in His nature, and graced in His life.

They are constituted righteous as He is righteous. They know God, and they know that they know Him by keeping His commandments. They are in God, and they know that also by keeping His word. These things are not merely by stated communications, although they have it on the authority of holy scripture. Such communications are received in a new nature, and by the Spirit of God, and bring a certainty beyond anything in the sphere of nature. For man in nature such words could have no meaning, but for those brought to God in Christ, they are spirit and life. To man at his best the Lord had to say, "Ye must be born again," and later it was said to the saints, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 28). By this mysterious work of the Spirit in the soul of man, there is planted a new nature which gives a capacity to know and love God, the One who has thus acted from His own side, and from Whom all the blessing comes. In this new nature we come into the relationship of children of God, from which we can know the blessedness of holding communion with Him, and "at-homedness" with divine Persons, in all the sweetness of the home of everlasting love.

Does anyone think that such things are too great for such poor things as we are? Anything at all would be too much for those who forfeited even life itself, and were under judgment, but they are not too great for the Father to bestow. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." And this is not all, for although we are now children of God it is not yet manifest **what we shall be**. We know, says the scripture "that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 1, 2).

May we not say that, to understand these scriptures, holy and refined sensibilities are called for? As children of God. it is our inalienable right to be at home

with the Father and Son, where there can be no reserve, to enter into the thoughts, feelings, and interests of the Father's love. The illustration fails, however, for there can never be familiarity there, and even in our innocent and unsophisticated condition of childhood, sin is there. We are in the realm of love here, the domain of the Spirit, the sphere of life eternal, where it can be said, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." How else could it be said, "As He is so are we in this world"? (1 John 4. 16, 17). It is clear that this work of grace in the soul is entirely outside the previous sin-condition, and, in its own abstract power of moral purity, is proof against sin. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (practise) sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3. 9).

Such are the life and relationships we are now brought into, in the fulness of divine revelation. It is the result of the Father's purpose, the atoning death of the Son, and the indwelling of the Spirit with His subjective operations in us, in relation to the Father's will. He it is Who takes the subjective side to make good in us the mind of God in relation to the work of the Son. It is this that brings about the intelligent transition in us from the previous sin-state, as in Adam, that we may be in the sober sense of a new order of life apart from mere imagination. How much harm may be done by appropriating the statements of scripture, as true of oneself, and speaking on the richest and deepest parts of truth, when the state we are in is a plain contradiction. It should be clearly understood that all these precious statements of truth, indeed the whole scheme of New Testament doctrine, is a divine description of a new divine order, and the way we come into it, which has been established for God in virtue of the Cross, in the risen glorified Man at His right hand in heaven. He takes account of us as in Christ at all times, yet we have not left the flesh and blood condition; that indeed constitutes the complex condition (and fits for this gracious schooling),

to which attaches infirmities and weaknesses, which often degenerate and lead us into sin. This very scripture, which shows the wealth of blessing into which we are brought, reminds us of these very things. (1 John 1. 6-10, 2. 1-2, and compare Heb. 4. 14-16: 9. 24).

These remarks, which seemed necessary, will not hinder the devout heart from seeking to learn more and more the new place and state, into which we are now brought. As sons of God we have the nature of the Son, and are associated with Him before the Father in acceptance and calling, but, while that is true, we are still in the place where He was rejected. His coming back is now at hand,—may we not look for a ministry, that will enable His own to speak a word of bringing back the King? At such a time, may we not expect a ministry that will produce bridal effections, and awaken the cry, “Come, Lord Jesus!”?

PART SIX.

We are now in a position to view the present economy of grace, which we call Christianity, in its moral connections. Let us recapitulate a little before drawing our meditation to a close. We have seen the distinction between Deity, in its unveiled Majesty as unseeable and unapproachable, and the glorious Self-revelation of God in Trinity, and moral fulness, in and by the Son. While subsisting in its own essential and impersonal grandeur, in all the intrinsic bliss which is both native and proper to Itself, and gathering up within Itself the great features of Eternity, Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence, there abides the grand fact of Three glorious Persons within that Circle of Deity, a holy Triad which abides in love eternal. These, in the nature of things, are Co-eternal, Co-existent and Co-equal—a great reality, which hangs on the Truth that God is ONE, and God all THREE. The revelation of God springs from all this, but connects directly with the moral nature of God, which is love, and is necessarily the Source of the display of God in the creation, while the unveiled remains beyond us for ever

This creates no difficulty for faith; we have already seen that paradoxical statements are bound to come in from the very nature of the theme. We can thankfully leave what is beyond us in limitless power, presence, and prescience, and rest peacefully in the knowledge that at the centre of the whole vast structure of creation, and all the ranges of created intelligencies, there is a heart of love, which holds and controls, in view of moral rectitude, order, and purity.

This love is that alone which is eternally active; it proceeded from God and could only have an end if He had. It was there in full activity as the motive, spring, and life of the Holy Trinity, before the power that created was called into action. It neither began to be nor commenced to be active, nor shall it cease to exist and be active. It is inherent in and native to Godhead; it flows from Each to Each within the Holy Trinity, and spreads itself over all that God is and does. "Love is of God." "God is Love." Love is behind all that God does, whether in creation, providence, or government, and is seen in fullest lustre in its own sphere, namely Redemption. Righteousness and holiness were called into action by their opposites; love cannot be dormant. Hence the beautiful moral suitability, as all thoughtful minds have felt, of plurality within the blessed Godhead. The activity and reciprocity of love within the Godhead is instinctively felt, as we learn that love is the nature of God, but we have the truth itself stated by the Son: "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17. 24).

The eternal activity of divine love pre-supposes two important things, namely,—divine relationships and divine counsels. The first is within, while the second has creation in view. In the former, there is the internal and eternal reciprocation of that which is native to Deity, in the self-existent and self-satisfying delight of God—in the latter, namely, the counsels of grace, we have that which necessitated the creation of the universe, and the whole vast mediatorial system in which Each glorious One takes a place, in relation to the Others, for the glory of ALL.

Care is called for here, lest, when speaking of the place of subordination taken by the Son, in relation to the Father and Spirit, or of the place the Spirit takes in relation to the Father and Son, we might lose the balance and allow that which might militate against the unity of the Godhead. Whatever be the place taken by Each, whether of Authority or Subordination, eternal with the Co-equality remains the same. While Scripture connects purpose with the Father, it is ever the purpose of the Godhead. That is to say, the whole scheme is from Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In its working out, the Father represents supreme authority, the Son by Incarnation takes a place of subordination, while ever remaining God, to glorify God, and the Spirit comes down from the glorified Lord to carry out the will of the Father and Son. A parallel to this may be seen by comparing the work of creation. While creation is the act of Elohim, namely the Godhead (Genesis 1. 1), yet when it is imputed to one Person of the Holy Trinity, it is either the Son or the Spirit, never the Father. Note the place Each ONE takes in working out the divine plan.

(1) In the scheme of purpose leading to the mediatorial system, all is seen to hang upon the will of the Father. He it is Who sets forth supreme authority. He constituted the Son heir of all things, gave the heirs of purpose to Him. (Heb. 1. 2; John 17. 6); and purposed them for blessing before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1. 4). He is the Father from Whom every family in the heavens and earth is named (Eph. 3. 15). He purposed the assembly for the Son, in His glorified humanity, as His body and Bride, a part of truth long spoken of as the masterpiece of God. Above all, He marked out for Him the Cross, in all its depth of woe, as it is said; "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God" (Acts 2. 23). For this He sealed, sanctified, and sent the Son, when the fulness of time had come. It is in this way we understand the words, "To us there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things and we for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things,

and we by Him" (1 Cor. 8. 6). While co-equality in the unity of the Godhead ever remains, it can be said: "One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4. 6). While the Son took a place in the creation to carry out the will of the Father in obedience, the Father remains in His own abstract Godhead as representing the Deity from Whom all things come, and to Whom all must eventually be in subjection eternally.

(2) If possible, more wonderful is the place the Son has taken. Remaining eternally One with the Father and Spirit, He became Man to make God known. To declare God, the Godhead in the creation, He, the Absolute, became relative, and lived by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He was sent by the Father to do His works, speak His words, and obey His commandments, right down to the Cross. All this shews the passive place of our Lord Jesus, but parallel with it come out the gracious activities and sovereign rights of God the Son. He took the body prepared for Him, and in it declared God, laid it down at the Cross, took it up again in resurrection, and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty in glorified humanity; He is known there now, the great **Anthropos**, standing at the centre of all that is revealed, as Head, Lord and Priest, in administrative supremacy to fill, rule, and order the universe for the glory of God.

(3) The place of the Holy Spirit is different, but of equal import. He fills all things, yet comes forth in relation to divine counsels and the mediatorial system, to dwell in believers form the House of God, and the Body of Christ. His is the subjective work; by operating in man's soul He effects the New Birth, which for us is the beginning of new creation. He seals, sanctifies, and anoints the believer, and is the earnest of all future blessing and glory. He presents Himself under such figures as wind, fire (Acts 2), water (John 4), and oil (Matt. 25. 3-4), and is seen resting upon our Lord, as a dove. He is Life, Truth, Comforter and Guide; the Spirit of God, of the Father, of the Son and of Christ. His personality is shewn in John 14. 16-17. His

sovereignty in 1 Cor. 12. 11, and in the last book of Scripture He is seen in relation to grace (Rev. 4. 2), glory (21. 10), and government (1. 4). By Him comes to us the Holy Scriptures, in fulness of plenary inspiration. There He gives us the full record of all that God is, and does, as revealed in the Son. He gives a perfect record, in fulness of variety, of history, prophecy, and dispensational truth, combined with promise, type, shadow, and symbol. It is by Him we are capacitated to receive divine thoughts, and it is He Who has put these thoughts on record. Whoever may be the vessel, in all the different personalities used to give us the Holy Scripture, He is the Author of all, and so important is its accuracy, that He Himself has selected the very words that are used. To God the Eternal Spirit we are indebted, not only for the revelation, but for the power to take it in.

It should be remembered that these distinctions in no way trench upon the Co-Eternal, Co-Essential and Co-Equal relations in the Godhead, and that, having been taken, scripture seems to shew that they shall not be laid aside. The Son we are told abides Man for eternity, and in that condition is said to be subject, and the Spirit, Who has been the inner controlling power of the whole mediatorial order, will not cease to influence, and illuminate, the whole sphere of bliss in eternity.

One more point may call for a word. The question is raised whether the counsels of God are eternal, or did there come a point, or time, in that timeless scene, when these counsels were formulated. The scheme of divine purpose is designated eternal, which should settle the point, but as the word is sometimes used in a sense not strictly absolute as in, for example, "Eternal salvation", "Eternal inheritance", it might be thought to be limited, in regard to purpose. A conference between divine Persons has been supposed, when it was asserted that One of the Holy Trinity would come into the creation, by becoming Man, and in that act would become Son to Another, Who would at the same time become Father.

This seems to militate against the essential unity of the Godhead. We cannot think of the Holy Trinity as we speak of three individuals, and suppose an agreement by arrangement. There is but one will, plan and purpose, within the Godhead. The thought seems to do violence to the inspired assertion that God is One. Moreover it seems to assume that He is arbitrary, and that all the glorious revelation of God is the result of an arbitrary agreement. In the very nature of things, an agreement reached always supposes the possibility of a different result. By adopting such theories, men may unconsciously belittle and humanise the God of glory.

But if carried out to its logical conclusion, this theory seems to deny the Omniscience of God. If there was a point, or time, in Eternity (speaking as a creature), when the counsels of God were formulated, then the counsels of eternity must have been as of yesterday, comparatively; since an endless eternity had been running on before that arrangement was made. These counsels pre-suppose creation, the fall and the whole range of divine dealings up to, and including the Cross, and all that follows, right on to eternity. Can we suppose that all this was unknown to God, until a certain arrangement was come to about it all? Is it not to assume that redemption is an afterthought? To assume that there was an eternity, before the Incarnation and Death of the Son were arranged, seems a very serious thing; but it does seem needed, along with other theories, to support the denials (a) of the relationships of Father and Son in eternity (b) that the Son is the eternal Word, and (c) that His eternal dwelling place is the Father's bosom.

How blessed beyond all thought is the knowledge of God! Revealed in His moral nature in the counsels of eternity, we can go back by the Spirit, and dwell with delight upon the love, life and activities of that eternal scene, in the reciprocation of all that is native and proper to God. The Son loved by the Father was there constituted Heir of all things, and the heirs of promise given to Him, while for them redemption, life and

glory, were the purpose. With respect to our daily needs, we are to know and trust the Father; He cares for us; we are of more value than many sparrows; and He numbers the hairs of our heads. We are to be like Him in our ways, and to go into our closets and pray to Him, Who sees in secret. Then the Holy Spirit is here in the interests of the Father and Son, so that we can be kept in the blessed illumination of all that God is as revealed. "O the depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counsellor? Or who has given to Him and it shall be rendered to Him? For of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen."

*Thou glorious God of majesty supreme,
Great in Thy being, holiness unstained;
Unknown, to men eternally unseen,
Dwelling in light to which none can attain.*

*Thou the eternal, uncreate, alone,
Whose glorious presence everywhere doth
shine
Which speaks of light peculiarly Thine own,
Intrinsic Godhead which is ever Thine.*

*But, were this all, my heart dare not intrude,
Nor find relief for all its creature need,
Greatness alone might humble but exclude
Creatures like me from Thee and all that's
good.*

*Impersonal Essence, far beyond all ken,
Unknown to all in searchless Majesty,
But yet revealed in Love's divinest form,
To Thee my soul draws night in ecstasy.*

*Within Thyself, mysterious and grand,
With attributes which could but terrify,
Dwells holy love, which counsels and
commands;*

Thee, great and good, my soul doth magnify.

*Within Thyself, Love's everlasting state,
God, Thou art Love, how wonderful to tell!
Love that controls Thine attributes so great;
Love that in spite of sin o'er all excels.*

*O God of gods, Thy holy nature, Love,
Brought Thee down here in Son to take my
place—*

*To suffer, Lord, O thought all thoughts above,
Worship is mine and praise before Thy face.*

*Eternal love Thy purposes enshrine,
Sacred and rich in Godhead's secret plan,
Secrets eternal, glorious and profound,
Godhead in Trinity made known in Man.*

*The Son, eternal; wondrous to relate,
Heir and Completer of all that glorious
scheme,
Which brought Thee down in manhood's low
estate,
To Calvary's darkness that Thou might'st
redeem.*

*Lord, LORD, Thy Love my inmost soul's
delight,—*

*Thy Father's bosom Thine eternal home—
Yet Thou would'st bow in sorrow's darkest
night,
Engulfed in judgment by Thyself alone.*

*Thy death, blest Lord, has met God's every
claim,*

*Has brought to Him a victory e'en divine,
Thy love's resource has covered both the Name
And Throne of God, with glory all sublime.*

*Worship and homage mark yon heavenly host;
Earth's ransomed myriads laud Him and
adore,*

*Father and Son, and e'en the Holy Ghost,
Eternal gladness, praise for evermore.*

J. McBroom.

