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"Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."—PSALM xli. 1.

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*Supplied by*

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 HIS is found in connection with the Lord’s lowly path of service in humiliation, presented in Psalm xl. There He says in the Spirit, “But I am poor and “needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” How touching is this! as also, “Mine ears hast thou “digged”! Exodus xxi. supplies the interpretation of this; where the Hebrew servant, refusing to go out free, has his ear bored with an awl in token of perpetual servitude. “A body hast “Thou prepared me,” is how this same scripture is rendered in Hebrew x.—the same great and blessed truth as is expressed in Philippians ii., “He took upon Him the form of a servant”; “A “body hast Thou prepared *me*”; and, “*Who* being “in the form of God . . . emptied *Himself*, and “took upon *Him* the form of a servant,” tells us Who He is in humiliation, for in taking this place

He never ceased to be He who did it.\* The great and blessed fact of Incarnation is also presented in "The word became flesh, and dwelt among us." This must not be reasoned on or explained,† but the soul needs to dwell with holy reverence on these statements about Incarnation to get under the effect of this **"grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes He being rich became poor in order that ye by His‡ poverty might be enriched"** (2 Cor. viii. 9), remembering too that **"no man knoweth the Son, but the Father."** It is real gain to the soul to be brought under the power of this, without which the Son Incarnate is not apprehended in faith. Man, because of creature capacity, is debarred from knowing the mystery of His Person, just as "a bone of Him shall not

\* "His taken place in humiliation. Freely to take it is a divine title and action. Creatures have to keep their own (place); though when not kept by God, none have done so." —*Practical Reflections on the Psalms.*

† "When God is in the world His ways and actions have, and must have, a meaning, because He is God, which a mere man's cannot have. If a Jew had ridden into Jerusalem on an ass, what would it have been? Nothing. If the Lord did, the history of the world turned on it as a public testimony. It was a moment that made the Lord weep. Nothing more absurd than the thought that the Lord's words and works are to be taken just as another's and so understood. It is a folly, a horror, a senselessness, no term can reach to compare the movings and speakings of God walking in love in this world with the writings and actings of other men."—J. N. D.

‡ The "His" is emphatic: *ἐκείνου*, "of that one," such a one as he.

“be broken” marks the exact limit put to man’s treatment of Him; also in Exodus xii. 46, “Thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh “abroad out of the house.” They were to *feed* on the lamb. The preciousness of this is to be known *at home*. To drag this subject into the arena of public discussion is to desecrate it. Then let us beware, lest we attempt to fathom this mystery, *i.e.*, to reduce the Infinite within the scope of man’s power of thought; for such an attempt is sure to lower Him, for man cannot rise above himself, or by searching find out God. Such statements as these found in Philippians ii., Hebrews x., and John i. present no difficulty to faith, nor do they need explanation; but the soul, bowed in the presence of such lowly grace, rests in finding and meeting God as He has revealed Himself. Where faith is absent, it is otherwise, of course, as appears with the young ruler in Luke xviii., who has only a human estimate of Him, though that a high estimate, *viz.*, “*Good Master.*” This the Lord disclaims, saying, “**Why callest thou me “good? none is good but one, God,**” while at the same time His reply exposes the falseness of the young ruler’s unworthy thought of His Person. He is not here asserting the rights and status of Deity, although He had never ceased to be Himself, “Christ, who is over all, God blessed “for ever. Amen.” (Romans ix. 5.) Far from

it. He here maintains His taken place, and maintains *rightly*, according to Psalm xvi. 2, what the ruler estimated *wrongly*. Let us beware lest, while He has come so low, we, like the ruler, should only give Him this taken place; for if God empties Himself, and takes the form of a servant, He still is God.\* "O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee. And unto the saints that are on the earth (have I said), These are the noble, in whom is all my delight." (Marginal reading.)

How soul-subduing is this lowly grace! "Thou hast said to Jehovah, Thou art my Lord." His taken place in subserviency to Jehovah, and also having His delight in the saints, "the excellent of the earth." These He associates Himself with at His baptism by John, and again says, "Blessed are ye poor" (Luke xi.), though now, since redemption is accomplished, actually brought into this place. How blessed this association, and so to be delivered from the spirit of the world, where pride prevails—the very features of the devil (see Ezekiel xxviii. 17), the extreme opposite of the spirit of the "poor." In Psalm xvi. we find Christ presented in this

\* Indeed, we are apt to forget that the cross, as one before now has said, is something deeper than the glory, because it is God's moral nature glorified where sin is, and there will be nothing in heaven in its moral nature which has not been brought down here in Christ on earth. Let us learn, too, from Luke vii. 35, that it is Wisdom's children alone who justify Wisdom's ways.

way, and saying in spirit, "Jehovah is the portion  
"of mine inheritance and of my cup. Thou  
"maintainest my lot." This blessed portion of  
His inheritance, which by-and-by includes "all  
"things," was all He had then present—*Jehovah  
Himself*; and this marks the soul's proper  
portion, as brought to God, now.

Now the effect of a soul knowing and con-  
sidering the Lord in this taken place is found in,  
"The Lord shall deliver him in time of trouble."  
To accomplish deliverance for His people is  
what brought Him to the cross, and this having  
been absolutely accomplished there, and faith  
maintaining this in our path through this scene,  
the soul experiences deliverance, which is found  
to be practical in time of trouble, the trial being  
turned into a means of blessing.

The anticipation of the cross was deep trouble  
for Him, and in this we see His piety, in feeling  
infinitely what His having come to do the will of  
God would entail. "Now is my soul troubled,  
"and what shall I say? Father, save me  
"from this hour." He does not allow His  
filial title to be saved from that hour, to stand  
in the way of His obedience being perfected,  
saying, "But for this cause came I unto this  
"hour. Father, glorify Thy name." What  
devotedness! What surrender for the glory of  
the Father's name! What maintenance too of  
His having taken the place of a servant! In

Hebrews v. we read, "He was heard for His piety"; as another has said, "He had a moral title to be heard that we have not. He needed no intercession as we do"; and again, in Psalm xxii., "Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns." This is after having gone through all in the three hours of darkness, and completed propitiation. He was heard on the cross, where His saying "Father" tells us the abandonment and infinite distance was past that sin bearing entailed, when He was in that place—Himself "without sin"—a distance no mere creature could be in and subsist, but *He* does, giving God there an answer to all His moral attributes. Then resurrection was needed as God's testimony to His own appreciation of His Son, who had so glorified Him, but, as one has written, "resurrection was needed for others, but He could say, 'Father.'"

If we have not simply in our faith who He is in this His deep humiliation, all He has there accomplished is lost to the soul, and pressing the one side, viz., His exaltation—risen and glorified—has not its true place, unless seen to be based on and the counterpart to the humiliation. "He that descended *is the same* also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." These are two parts of one whole; the effect of the humiliation being to win the soul, seeing the display of love above

all the evil and hatred of man ; the effect of the exaltation being to satisfy the soul, its deep need being met at the cross, and righteousness not *required* from man as at mount Sinai, but *ministered* from the glory and seen in Him at God's right hand. This vast whole may be seen as God come down in love, man gone up in righteousness. The "all things from the lower "parts of the earth" to "far above all heavens" filled with His Redemption glory. But however blessed to consider Him in the victim-character of His death, where He accomplished the great deliverance needed for His people, in this He is no example for us, for as the victim He was alone there. See, when taken to be led away by the soldiers, how His association with His people is interrupted, "**If ye seek me, let these go their way.**" This He says after they had gone "backwards, and fell to the ground," marking who He was, according to Psalm xxvii. 2, "When the wicked, even mine enemies "and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, "they stumbled and fell." But in the martyr-character of His death He is an example. This is found in Phil. ii., where, immediately after the presentation of His obedience unto death, we read : "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have "always obeyed, not as in my presence only, "but now much more in my absence, work out "your own salvation with fear and trembling."

So that, in considering "the poor," we get imbued with the same spirit of obedience, according to the exhortation of verse 5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and so are delivered in time of trouble, as we give thanks for the trials, for then the devil is defeated. Obedience *in* circumstances, however trying, is superiority over them without getting out of them; for God, who is thus owned, is above all circumstances; and deliverance in the time of trouble, we giving thanks for the trial is greater than deliverance out of trouble, giving thanks for the comfort, while in God's own time this also ensues.

In the obedience of Christ, to which the believer is elected and sanctified, there is delight in God's will, the will of the old man or of the flesh in us being passive, while "dead with Christ" is maintained in faith.

Now there is a teaching abroad that, alas! in effect casts discredit upon Christ's humiliation, in apparently, at least, not giving prominence to the truth of *who He was* in humiliation.

There is no wonder in that God's wisdom, or His counsels concerning His Son in Incarnation, should baffle all fallen human wisdom; and there is no wonder in that the poor man's wisdom is despised, for thus it is that God has made foolish the wisdom of this world. (1 Cor. i. 20-31.) Man too is left without excuse, for

this wisdom has been “seen under the sun.” Happy he who can add, “And it seemed great unto me.” (Eccles. ix.)

The exposure of the teaching which assumes this form of wisdom has been already abundant; but it may not be out of place to point out from a pamphlet in print\* merely one part of it; viz., what the author teaches on Col. i. 19 and ii. 9, and this not with the effort of proving “heresy,” or proving some one to be a “heretic,” for doctrine carries with it its own stamp of truth or falsehood, and hence carries with it conviction to the soul taught of God of its truth or falsehood, and needs no other proof; and the responsibility resting on each one who is confronted with this doctrine is “to prove all things”; *i.e., for himself*. The cry, “If there is this evil doctrine, why don’t you prove it?” is to ignore or shirk this responsibility. Another might point it out, as is attempted now, but each must prove it for himself.

There is still, alas! need, just as a danger signal is raised, to point it out, and this for the sake of beloved brethren, and that we may look carefully and see, lest by any means we might be identified with false doctrine, which is only too easy, if we are found off our guard by not holding “fast the right” (1 Thess. v. 21, New Trans.), and so not having a true standard whereby to “prove all things.”

\* *Lectures on Colossians.*

In the author's teaching on these two verses, viz., Col. i. 19 and ii. 9, he at least throws into the shade, if he does not ignore, who Christ was in humiliation. The former, "It was pleasing that in Him should all fulness dwell," he refers to what Christ was when in the form of God, and before Incarnation. The latter, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," he refers to Christ as "*risen and glorified*," and neither of these does he explicitly refer to Christ in His humiliation.\*

\* In speaking of Philippians, his words are (p. 13), "I find what He was; that He existed in the form of God, and that He emptied Himself and took a servant's form, and became in the likeness of men. But in general . . . the epistles . . . present Him to us according to what He is now, and they tell us what is true in Him now. For instance, in the next chapter, 'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' The fulness of the Godhead dwelt there eternally; but the fulness of the Godhead did not dwell in Him bodily until He became a man. Now that He has become Man, and is as man in glory, what we are told is, that in Him dwells all the completeness of the Godhead bodily. John speaks also of what He is now—Jesus Christ 'the true God and eternal life,' that is what He is now as man risen and glorified."<sup>1</sup>

Again (p. 18), "In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell. . . ." Here we get a careful statement in order to show us

<sup>1</sup> His Son Jesus Christ, He is the true God and eternal life. To say of this, "As the risen glorified Man, He is said to be the true God and eternal life," is to confound Paul's line with John's; and there is no evidence that the apostle John here touches on the line of the apostle Paul, as is asserted in this new teaching. "*Jesus Christ*" is the Person in Incarnation, whether in humiliation or the glorified state; *i.e.*, to neither one more than the other does the name apply, and "He" (that Person) "is the true God and eternal life." "*Christ Jesus*," used by Paul and never by John, is Christ in the position "risen and glorified." "He is the true God and eternal life" is *true* of Him as risen and glorified; but to say it is "said" of Him "as" in this condition, *i.e.*, thus to limit the revelation, is false doctrine.

The author speaks of “His own proper dignity and glory as the Eternal Son, equal with the Father. . . . The essential deity of Christ. . . . The glory of His person,” *but not in connection with His humiliation.\**

Is it true that Col. i. 19 speaks of what He the essential deity of Christ. “In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell. I do not know when—that is not the point [but that it is the point let the reader judge]; and it does not say here ‘bodily.’ This verse tells us what *was*.<sup>1</sup> . . . In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell. It is not what is peculiar to the Son, it is only maintaining His essential deity, because all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in the Father, and so too in the Holy Ghost. But the point is this, that the Son having become man, the Spirit of God is careful to maintain the glory of His Person.”

But is this carefulness directed only towards “what He was,” *i.e.*, before Incarnation, or towards “what He is now as risen and glorified”? See how careful the Holy Ghost is to give the truth of who He is, as “man,” in Zech. xiii. 7—“the man, *my fellow*,” and “as according to flesh the Christ, who is over all, *God blessed for ever. Amen.*”

\* Some might say, “But he does not deny this.” Even if this is true, would this satisfy any for his not giving any of these in his teaching on these two verses, from which he rather seems carefully to exclude essential deity in humiliation? The way the author uses and emphasizes “*now*” and “*was*” gives the impression that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him, according to chap. i. 19, in a way no different to that of the Father and the Holy Ghost; and according to chap. ii. 9, “as” in a certain condition, and not *personally in humiliation*. Some, too, might say, “But he does not mean that” (which all would heartily hope is true); but this argument might tend to give license to one uttering every sort of false doctrine so long as he does not mean it. Besides, the point must be adhered to of what *he says*, not what he *means*, and where there is concern for Christ this will be adhered to.

<sup>1</sup> Italics in the pamphlet.

"was," *i.e.*, before Incarnation? Is it true that Col. i. 19 is "not what is peculiar to the Son," "it is only maintaining His essential deity," "because all the fulness of the Godhead dwells "in the Father, and so too in the Holy Ghost"? And is Col. ii. 9 said only of Him "as man "in glory"? Or is it true of Him personally in Incarnation, and so in humiliation, as well as in glory? The reader is left to answer before God.

It is plain thus, from what the author says on these two verses, Col. i. 19 and ii. 9, that, if we accept his teaching, there is a wide difference between them. The first referring to what Christ was, and the other referring to what He is now. The first, too, "not what is peculiar to the Son," the second *is*, for of course he would not say the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in the Father, or in the Holy Ghost "bodily."

The following quotations give the teaching of another on these verses, which we must not take as authority, but use according to 1 Thess. v. 20, 21: "Do not lightly esteem prophecies, but "prove all things; hold fast the right." (New Trans.) It bears a strong contrast to this new teaching on these two verses in question. Many have thought the teacher who gave these lectures teaches nothing different from J. N. D. Let the reader judge.

"He \* must have this resurrection glory, this

\* Synopsis on Colossians, p. 15.

“universal pre-eminence and superiority also, as  
 “being man, for all the fulness (namely, of the  
 “Godhead, see chapter ii. 9) was pleased to  
 “dwell in Him. . . .”

“If the Son wrought miracles on earth, He  
 “cast out devils by the Spirit; and the Father  
 “who dwells in Him (Christ) did the works.  
 “Also it must be remembered that that which is  
 “said, is said when He was manifested in the  
 “flesh of His complete person, *man upon earth*.\*  
 “Not that we do not in our minds separate  
 “between the divinity and the humanity; but  
 “even in separating them we think of the One  
 “Person, with regard to whom we do so. We  
 “say Christ is God, Christ is man; but it is  
 “Christ who is the two. I do not say this  
 “theologically, but to draw the reader’s atten-  
 “tion to the remarkable expression, ‘All the  
 “fulness was pleased to dwell in Him. . . .’

. . . “Here Paul sets forth, by the word of God,  
 “the whole fulness of the divinity of Christ. . . .

. . . “‘All the fulness itself dwelt in Him.’  
 “Glorious truth with regard to the person of the  
 “Lord our Saviour! . . .

“We know indeed the Father, but revealed  
 “by Him. We possess indeed the Spirit, but  
 “the fulness of the Spirit was in *Him*, and  
 “because having accomplished our redemption  
 “and our purification, He then received that

\* The italics are mine.—W. J. C.

"Spirit for us. And God Himself in all His fulness was revealed, without any reservation, in the person of Christ. . . .

. . . "It is not only the Son revealing the Father, sweet and precious as that fact is; it is the fulness of the Godhead as such that is revealed and shewn forth in Christ. It was the good pleasure of the fulness to dwell *there*."

All the passages just quoted are found in connection with chapter i. 19. The following is found (p. 27) on chapter ii. 9. "And first all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. Instead of the misty speculations of men and fantastic æons, we have the fulness of God bodily, in a real human body, and thus efficaciously for us, in the person of Jesus Christ. . . .

"God in His perfect fulness in Christ as man. . . .

"We are in Him, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells as to His person; in Him, who is above all principality as to His position and His rights as Christ, man exalted on high."

These quotations need no comment. It is plain, both verses—chap. i. 19 and ii. 9—J. N. D. refers to what Christ is *personally* in incarnation; and in humiliation He is personally Who (not merely *what*) He ever was in the past eternity, which His having become flesh does not deprive Him of.

Then in *Collected Writings*, Doc. ix., p. 328, instead of there being the greatest difference between these two verses, J. N. D. holds there is none, excepting that chap. i. 19 speaks of purpose, and chapter ii. 9 speaks of fact. Here it says, “For all the fulness was pleased in Him to “‘dwell.’ If you look at verse 9 of next “chapter you will see the fact. ‘For in Him “‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead “‘bodily.’ Here you get the purpose; that “is all the difference.”

It is really no pleasure exposing false doctrine, but sorrow, as affecting the author of it and his supporters. The attempt to do so too is testing, needing possession oneself of the positive truth, needing also tender consideration towards those in doctrinal error, along with firm refusal of the error itself, besides the need of “humility of “mind” to treat such a subject. The positive truth is what souls need to be established in in a very special way for the present moment. How unmistakable is God’s voice to us all at this time, in showing us how this is lacking with us! Hence the need of this great test He has allowed to search us, that we might see where we are. The Christ-rejecting spirit of the world was stealing on us, and Christ had lost His place with souls; but God in His own faithfulness towards His people, and jealousy for the glory of His Son, would purge us of this now.

Alas! more grave error in these lectures and all belonging to the same system, might be easily pointed out on "the new man." But enough of error for the present. Rather let us "judge and approve the things which are excellent," and see in the person of Christ as here in humiliation God manifested in flesh—the soul's true and abiding portion.

Let us take heed to the exhortation, "**Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if any praise, think on these things.**" (Phil. iv. 8.)

And again, "I would have you wise unto **that which is good, simple concerning evil**"—principles that contain the secret of getting through this scene without distraction, the secret, too, of waiting for Christ, and never more needed than "now."

What room for humiliation there is because of failure and Christ's name dishonoured! Still it is a sense of God's grace, that is superior to all the evil at present, while not sanctioning it, that alone really humbles the soul; for grace is the manifestation and activity of what God is—LOVE; and this, while drawing us to Him, detects the innate pride of the heart.

"The Word became flesh, and dwelt among

"us." Let us have this truth deep down in our hearts, and not have it there merely on the surface.

"If we are unfaithful, He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. ii.)

Where God's faithfulness is known by a soul, while there will be lowliness (for this knowledge, when real, is not likely to awaken pride in us, but the reverse), there will be encouragement to go on according to the principle given prominence to in Habakkuk ii. 4—"The just shall live by his faith." This principle survives the greatest ruin, and just because "God is faithful." "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Rest above the evil is thus known.

"Yet" (see end of Habakkuk). What a word is this for "*to-day*"! See, too, "Nevertheless" (2 Tim. ii. 19). Also see something analogous to this in Ps. xi. 4, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven." The answer to "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" "The temple" and "the throne" stand unmoved by all the power of evil. In these scriptures we find God's

faithfulness the unfailing resource. Whatever the state we find the Church in, let us see, through grace, we do not stop short of God and His faithfulness. For such a day as the present Paul says, "I commit you to God, and to the "word of His grace."

While we should be humbled to the dust by it, in God's faithfulness we have a strong tower to hide ourselves in from the present abounding corruption, which we each and all have to say to more or less!

If the gloom resting on this scene is felt, there is "the bright morning star" for faith—Christ known in His personal and heavenly glory, connected with His coming for His Church. "*In your hearts*" (2 Peter i. 19) is where this arises now, before the actual event of the rapture, an event quite distinct from the kingdom being established, when "the Sun of "righteousness arises with healing in His wings."

"Teach me, O God, to fix mine eyes  
On Christ, the spotless Lamb,  
So shall I love Thy precious will,  
And glorify His name.

"In heaven the blood for ever speaks  
In God's omniscient ear ;  
The saints, as jewels on His heart,  
Jesus doth ever bear."

W. J. C.