

MEDITATIONS

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

THIS volume, originally published in two series by the Newport Depot, contains the papers written and dictated by the beloved Author from March 28th, 1896, to April 29th, 1897, two days before his departure to be with Christ. They comprise those published in "*A Voice to the Faithful*," as well as those issued in leaflet form from the Newport Depot.

The reader has the whole of the papers issued by J. B. S. during his long illness, and they will be valued as the conclusion of his many years' service to the church.

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MEDITATIONS.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

I HAVE been very much helped lately, though through much conflict, in judging myself as to whether it was that I had faith in the Lord's love for me, or faith in His power: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me power." (Phil. iv.) Naturally speaking, you could have more reliance on a friend that has means, than on a friend that has no means; but the friend that has no means, if he has love, is a better friend. Therefore if I know that the Lord loves me personally, the more I study that love the more I see, not what He could *give*, but what *He could be to me*; and when His love to you begins to be attractive, you are surprised to find where it will lead you, and what it will open out to you.

Every Christian has learned Him as a Saviour, but the first real beginning in the soul of this attachment is your discovery that He loves you. As He said to Peter (Luke v.), "Fear not," I will advance you from a mere fisherman to be a fisher of men; for Peter

had said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is not only that He is the object of my heart, but I find that the One I love has made me an object to His heart! A great day for the soul! People are ready to say how they love Him, but how far can they say that they are conscious of His love to them? that they so prize it, that it is the greatest secret of their heart? When the Lord's love is before you, you find this love is drawing you from darkness to light. He begins by shewing His desire for your spiritual advancement, and not by advancing you in earthly position. It is beautiful to see that the work of true love is to set aside darkness, or whatever would interfere with association; and therefore it is not esteemed as it ought to be, because we are looking for something on the earth, and the tendency is to judge of His love by earthly gifts or favours down here.

The bride in the Canticles (chap. i. 4) began rightly when she said, "Draw me, and we will run after thee." The unfailing mark of true affection, if I know He loves me, is that I seek His company, and therefore plainly, if you keep your first love, you will seek to have company with Him. The Ephesians had given up their heavenly position when they lost their first love. If you are thus

true in heart to Him, you can follow out what you get in chapter ii. : "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." It is very plain that company is dearer to the heart than any gift, and in the end you find "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love."

But alas ! like the bride, though one knows the peculiar sweetness of sitting under His shadow with great delight, yet the tendency is to think of oneself and one's own interests here, to drop down into selfish engrossment, and sleep like the bride in Canticles v. Sleeping is not doing anything actually wrong, but it is making oneself happy without the Lord, a state of inactivity with regard to Him. It often follows a very happy time ; but then you feel you have had an irreparable loss, and you want to return to your first love. This we see in chapter v. brings out great exercise, and the peculiar exercise connected with it is that which is always fruitful in occupying you with Himself personally, so that when you reach Him again you are nearer to Him : "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." I would not dwell so long on this point, only that I see it is where the weakness of Christians lies : they do not expect the Lord to draw them out of this

place, to make it an unrestful place; on the contrary, they are looking to find rest here.

Surely Mary Magdalene, when in the agony of her heart she could not find the Lord, was indifferent about everything here; but He, true to His love for her, and not merely seeking to relieve her present distress, tells her not to touch Him, but to tell His disciples that He is going away, a great practical lesson. A deep, dark disappointment it must have been to her, but it was the Lord's love which could not conceal from her that the only way henceforth of reaching Him was outside of everything here, which, in the long run, the true heart gladly accepts: that we can be where He is fully accepted, and be clear of the place where He is refused, as she found before the close of that day, when she met Him again on resurrection ground—an unequalled moment to her soul! This prepared her for the great history of those who belong to the rejected Christ, set free from everything in the purity and perfection of His work, so that she could say: "As he is, so are we in this world," and that, consequently, she is part of the consecrated company; and relieved of every human pressure she can enter the holiest to share before God in all the fragrance and acceptance of Christ, of which we

have no type. The fulness and magnitude of it are only made known by the Spirit of God ; it is not detailed in scripture. She is united to Him, made a member of His body, and therefore shares in all His interests and all His power, and can come forth to act here unhindered according to His own pleasure ; and it is then only that the greatness of worship on God's side is fully known.

Now we see how the love of Christ conducts one all along to His own company, to be in unclouded communion with the Father and with Himself. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" ; we cannot get any higher than that—a most amazing height ; and yet it is from that height, where all things are of God, that we must look down if anything tries us here, instead of trying to scramble out of the trouble here by one palliation or another.

I trust you will see very fully how blessedly one is conducted by His love to a scene where everything is solved, and where your heart is assured that the love that has brought you to the top will order for you all along the road below. But if you understand it, you would look at it, not as being in the trouble, but as living with Him out of it, marking His gracious way of freeing from it.

FEET-WASHING AND PART WITH CHRIST.

(JOHN XIII.)

WHEN Christ had risen and the Holy Ghost was given, one might have supposed that everything would now be on the new line as it is with God: the Man in glory, the accepted Man, and the Holy Ghost the power and the bond with Him: "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."

But because the necessity of the feet-washing is not seen, even by those who accept this truth in a broad way, there is much confusion and weakness in the saints everywhere. So that it becomes a question of great moment, What is neglected? The secret of it is that the necessity of the feet being washed is overlooked. The Lord is risen indeed, and the Holy Ghost has descended. These are established facts; but where the great deception and loss prevail, is in ignoring the solemn fact that you cannot now have part with Christ (though you admit that the Holy Ghost has come) while there is a shade of distance between you and Him. The distance on God's side has been removed on the cross; you are reconciled by His accomplished work; but you cannot have part with Christ or

conscious association with Him on the new ground on which He has entered, unless you know His present service in removing from you practically what is unsuitable to Himself on the new ground.

In John xiii. the Lord opens out to His disciples the new ground, and how He gathers them to Himself on the ground that they are to share with Him where He is. When sitting at the supper table He rises and pours water into a basin, and begins "to wash the disciples' feet." We learn from this scripture the all-importance of the washing, the removal of that which causes any shade between us and Christ. If this shade or distance, which is caused by the feet not being washed, did not occur, there could not be the confusion and weakness which now prevail. The Lord has entered on resurrection ground, and He would conduct His disciples to this same ground. But though they had known Him in an earthly way, they could not share with Him on this new ground while they were soiled by connection with the corruption which He had put away in His death and resurrection. Hence it is deeply interesting to note that He introduced the water as a *necessity* to insure conscious maintenance on the new ground; He had been intimate with them here on earth, the place of their sin, but now they are conducted

outside of everything that once barred them from Him.

It is a deception of the worst kind to suppose that I can have part with Him in the scene where He is, while I am in a scene where everything defiled by sin has been removed by His death, except as I am free from it by the washing of the water, which is emblematic of His death. In Christ's death that which caused the distance, or any sense of it, was removed before God. This is brought home to the soul through the word, and is what is so little practically accepted. It is not that the scriptures are not read, and in Christendom gospel work is insisted on, but there is no sense that, in association with Christ, we belong to a new place now, which we cannot enjoy while we are in any wise tainted with the things of this world, so that even in our daily life we should always be bearing about in our bodies the dying of Jesus.

It is of the deepest importance to see how the church began on earth. Though the Lord knew His disciples in the greatest nearness here, as we learn from chapter x. 14, 15, yet now that He was going to be with the Father they could not enjoy Him there but as they were in the moral benefits of the cross. Hence the church, which began in communion with Himself, is now one great mass of world-

liness. Great truths are not denied, but mere professors assume the most prominent places. How differently the church on earth would be seen if we were morally true to the virtue of His work !

He surrounds Himself with us on this ground : every element which might be brought in from the world which would cause distance or reserve He provides for the removal of in washing the feet.

It is very simple if you look at their place of nearness to Him here on earth : " While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name." It was necessary when He gathered them round Himself, in view of the new ground that He was about to enter on, that they should be perfectly clear of that which would cause any sense of reserve. Hence He poured water into a basin to wash their feet. No one is troubled by a sense of distance or reserve who has not known the intimacy of love. If each one of a company surrounding Him were exercised as to the removal of anything that would cause a shade of distance, how blessed it would be ! Who can conceive what a different state the church would be in if every member lived in the sense of his susceptibility to contract defilement in the scene we are passing through, and that we thus require the present service

of Christ, which is expressed by washing the feet, the entire removal of any sense of distance, before we can enjoy to our hearts' delight the intimacy of His love. The fact is that there could be no sense of distance unless there had been a sense of nearness. The exercise indicates simple truthfulness of heart that will not go on with any interruption of the sense of nearness.

The feet-washing is the Lord's own doing, not ours. We often know that there is distance, but do not know the cause of it. If every one was in the solemn consciousness that only the washing of his feet could remove that which causes the distance, there would be more intimacy with Christ in the joy of the Holy Ghost. How different the whole church would be! If every one realised what it is to be cleared by His present service from what is unsuitable to Him, what joy it would be to Him, and what unspeakable gain to us! He in His grace fits us for the enjoyment of Himself. If we are not with Him where He is, we cannot be for Him where He is not. We must be inside the veil to be outside the camp. Instead of the church being on this ground—association with Him in His own sphere—it has become a great system, with orderly appearance, and satisfied with character among men.

OUR MANNER OF LIFE HERE.

A CHRISTIAN'S life on earth is the most peculiar one. He is the object of the love of God, that from its immensity and power can secure everything good to its object, while on the other hand, a Christian is exposed to the most trying circumstances here. Until we distinctly understand that we are born of God, and also born of the flesh, we shall never understand this great contrariety.

If a Christian would begin here, as simply a child of God, looking for nothing but what came from God, he would find how thoroughly he is the object of His infinite love.

As a rule, Christians want God to minister to the man in the flesh; they judge of His love by their circumstances. For instance, if he is poor, he would like God to make him rich; but if he turns to God, He makes him happy in his poverty. If he cannot sleep, thoughts of God come with such freshness to his soul that he is better off than if he were asleep. Thus, born of God and poor, you may be supremely happy; whereas, if you are seeking to be rich or to make yourself comfortable, it is not the love of God you are looking to, but that He should minister to your own selfish desires. If a man is very

poor he has more occasion to look to God, whereas if he has means he has what may divert him from dependence on God.

The one thing for a Christian is to find out the clear path in which to do God's pleasure. It is not whether he has the means, but whether it is God's pleasure for him to *use* the means. It is not our wants that cause our trials, but our using earthly means to alleviate our wants, instead of the heart turning to God for alleviation. It may be asked, Why does God give means to some and not to others? I always find that means are a test to every Christian. If you have the means in your hand, of course you are at liberty to use them; but the secret is whether you use them according to God's purpose for you, or according to your own tastes and desires. As a rule, I believe that any Christian who judges himself will find, if he studies the course of things carefully, that it was his use of means that had got him into every trouble and disappointment, and in the end it was God that had to get him out of the trouble, as much as if he had not had the means to use.

I have found, after a lengthened experience, that the very thing one has most desired, if attained by human means, actually ends in bringing about the very sorrow which one

desired to avoid, and which one would probably not have had if one had not had the power to gratify one's desires. Hence I see that the use of means is the test as to whether one is cast on God or on human methods.

You have to begin with the fact that you are an object with God. If you do not begin with this, you become an object to yourself, and I believe the great value of having means in this world is to shew how one can waive present gratification in order to serve others, and thus to secure a reward hereafter. According to Luke xvi., the steward had all the property under his control, but he expended it, not on himself, but for the benefit of others, and he had accordingly a future reward.

Judging of God by what He is, I should say a man dependent on Him without means would, in the long run, be as well cared for as a man with plenty of means. I believe there is no happier path for a man than to be dependent on the Lord from day to day for support through his daily work. It is right for him to have daily labour, and it is happy for him to be satisfied with it in dependence on the Lord. It is better than having private means, or being dependent on any one but God. A missionary who could work with his own hands "the thing which is good"

in dependence on the Lord would, I believe, have a happier time than one who was dependent on the gifts of others.

The "work of the evangelist" might be your duty, and you could look to the Lord for your remuneration; the whole secret is whether you are *doing your duty*: "If any man does not like to work, neither let him eat." (New Trans.) The question is whether it is to the Lord you are looking for support and supply. Your daily labour may be your duty, but if the demands of the Lord's service call for it, you certainly must give up daily labour; yet that man will surely come to sorrow who does not work as hard in the Lord's service as he would in his secular calling.

A CHRISTIAN.

I KNOW that in Christendom every one who bears a christian profession is called a Christian; but I desire to present the traits of one who is led by the Spirit of Christ ("If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his"), and thus to expose that which assumes to be what it is not.

The first step in the soul after new birth has two parts, one, believing in the work of

the cross, and the other, believing in Christ risen from the dead and now in glory (having borne the judgment of God upon man); and the Spirit is received, who assures him of God's reception in Christ. And next, by another action of the Spirit he knows that he is in Christ, and that he is as to himself free of the flesh that cannot please God. There are many who believe in the work of Christ who do not know that they have received the Spirit of God, though through the grace of God they are perfectly safe; but they have no power until they have learned the twofold action of the Spirit of God in them. They have not consciously a bond with Christ personally. The one who has known this twofold action of the Spirit can truly say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me." Until this is known and realised there is no true knowledge of Christ in you or power for walk. When you know that Christ is your life He is endeared to you in a new and peculiar way; already He is endeared to you by His work, but now by His life, and this is made known to you by the Spirit of God.

Now the light breaks in upon you that He who is everything to you is not here, and therefore the world is a wilderness to you; He has been refused in this world and has

been called of God to His right hand. If you accept Him as your life, you must follow Him to where He is, and you will have the sense, because you have His life, that He is rejected here, but that you can enjoy Him where He is in His present exaltation.

In the first step you see that man has gone in the cross, and that you are in Christ before God, and clear in yourself as to the old man. In the second step (accepting Him as your life) you find that your place is determined by Christ's place, for *He is your life*. Now, if every believer knew these two steps, what a peculiar character they would present, how different would be the order and manner of their life down here, how different they would be to other men! But many who believe in the work of Christ have not consciously received the Spirit of Christ, and therefore have not practically accepted the crucifixion of the old man, and consequently they do not see that the earth is the place of Christ's rejection, and heaven His place at present. Believers who have not consciously drunk the living water do not know the power of the Spirit. They may know that by the work of Christ they are clear before God, they have assurance, but they are really not in peace; they have not the sense of the absolute removal to the glory of God of the

offender.* They do not rest in the fact that the old man is crucified with Christ in the sight of God, so that they are before Him in love, and that by another action of the Spirit of God they are in Christ, delivered from the flesh which could not please God. Therefore not knowing that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death," and that they have Christ for their life, they adopt the law for the rule of life here. All the systems are based upon the law for a rule of life, and every effort of devoted souls in system is to honour Christ on earth and to ignore His rejection from this world. With this idea they build churches and chapels.†

To me it is inconceivable that a godly man with the Bible in his hand can fail to see that Christ is rejected here, and consequently that He is in the highest exaltation in heaven. Ignore the one, and you ignore the other. If He is not rejected there is liberty for every one to assert his rights on the earth. A politician, for instance, who believes in Christ's work, insists upon the rights of his country and his own rights where Christ who is his

* If they return to it again, God judges them for that to which they have returned.

† Here the Romish ecclesiastic grasps every divine right on the earth, which will lead eventually to the usurpation of the earth by Antichrist.

life is rejected, which is quite inconsistent. It is plain that it is not only faith in the work of Christ to the saving of the soul that constitutes a Christian: to be a Christian you must be a part of Christ, as a branch is part of a tree. You are not characteristic of Him unless you are in His life by the power of the Holy Ghost. If you have not the Spirit of Christ you are none of His.

Thirdly, when the Christian knows that Christ is his life and that his life is not here, he comes to Him as the Living Stone in the assembly, where he finds Him in His divine greatness in the holiest of all, above all the power of evil here. There, in that exclusive place, he learns His mind, and His present interest, and is enabled to "shew forth the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Now the believer who has not advanced beyond the knowledge of Christ's work on the cross, though he is saved, has not found his place in the assembly, and consequently he has no knowledge of Christ's present mind and interests on the earth, but he is occupied with the official rule of the visible church. The more devoted any one in system is, the more he seeks to maintain due order in the house of God from the bishop down to the curate; but you will remark that he has to do with

office and not with gift. Gifts must come direct from the Head by the Spirit.

Finally, in the fourth step, which is knowing Christ in the assembly, you are led by Him into association with Himself into the highest scene, the holiest of all. Thus you rise above the wilderness and are across the Jordan in the sphere of His life; for there you know Him first as Head, and then that you are united to Him, so that you can carry out His pleasure here according to His will.

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS THERE
WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO.

I HAVE been struck lately that, as far as I can judge, saints are not aware how much they lose by being diverted from the place where Christ is. One is very ready to say that Christ is one's treasure, but there is a positive proof that it is so, namely, that our heart is in the place where He is.

I desire to call attention to the importance of *the place*. It is not that the Christian has no duties or engagements here, but when he is attracted by the natural beauties here his heart is diverted from Christ's place. One slowly learns this. If we look at ourselves historically, we are in the place where He is

not, where He came to His own and His own refused Him. Now we all know that He has gone to another place, and while many a heart is fixed in turning to Him there, there is often great loss because it is attracted by some of the things in this present scene.

I see it is of great importance to get definitely before you, that if your heart is much taken up with an object, the heart does not content itself with its affection merely, but it desires to be in the place where its object is. Ruth says, "Intreat me not to leave thee." We are in the place where Christ is not, and He who is our life is not here, and the more we realise that He is our life the more we enjoy Him when drawn to Him where He is. Hence, practically this was the teaching of the wilderness. Nothing was to be found here to satisfy the heart, and thus the end of the wilderness is Jordan. You have accepted it as a privilege to be dead with Him to everything here—a blessed day for the heart! because then it travels to the place where its treasure is. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." And now, in the sphere of His life, you know Him as Head, but I would that every one would practically exercise himself as to this.

Any one who truly judges himself when he is interested with fields or flowers must feel that he has been diverted from the place where his treasure is. If he has a garden he has to attend to it, but *attention* is a very different thing to *attraction*. One is a duty, but the other is the drawing away of the heart. Surely it is plain to every one that if we were more occupied with the place where Christ is, we should be more weaned from the influence of present things. I have long insisted on heaven being our place, but I find now that you must get attraction there, and if He be your treasure, your heart will be there also. One cannot help remarking that as a rule those we meet with speak of something nice and to be admired here, instead of being able to refer to something where He is, as if their interests were here and not there.

I need hardly add more, but one thing in conclusion I must press, that union with Christ is only realised as you are led by the Spirit to Him where He is, and also that growth depends on your looking on the things that are not seen. Our inward man is renewed day by day, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

ENTRANCE INTO THE ASSEMBLY.

I DESIRE to trace the way the work of grace is known. The work is the fruit of God's love, and therefore ever remains, but it is only in parts that we know it in the power of the Spirit.

First, after new birth we believe on Him and His death on the cross ; then we believe on Him raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Now a new day is opened to us, the Spirit of God assures us of God's reception, the Father's kiss to the prodigal. Next, we learn that there is no good in us, but "that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

Often a very long time may elapse, perhaps the forty years in the wilderness, between these two—acceptance and deliverance. The one, how God receives me in Christ ; the other, how I can joy in God, set free from the flesh by the power of the Spirit. Now I know that Christ is my life, and the more I enjoy Him the more I find that He is not here, and this makes the world a wilderness to me. And now the question arises, Where is He. as to this world? We are taught in figure the true answer in Matthew xiv., where He walks on the water. If He is known here He

is known in an entirely new way, as supreme above all the power of evil. He was always superior to it, but now He is supreme above it all, and He teaches Peter in the step from the ship to Himself to take a place where His own life alone could maintain him, and thus John vi. and Matthew xiv. occurred at the same time. He does not appear in the world again as He was here, but He that was here is made known in the world as He is now, Son of God over His own house. And Peter, though a stone already, has to come to the Living Stone, the Son of God, to be built in, and to realise what it is to be with Him in the holiest of all, and from thence to come out to shew forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

OUR WALK AND SERVICE.

THERE are three great eras in our walk on earth. First, we are brought to God. Secondly, the Holy Ghost is given, so that we not only know the acceptance of Christ, but our own deliverance. Then it is that our walk properly begins, and the end is to be here for Christ: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." That

is the start, and that is the fruit of deliverance ; the heart's settlement from that day on is, Where is Christ? Not I, but Christ, that He should be magnified in my body whether by life or by death. Christ is the man to be manifested here. It is not a question whether a thing is good or pleasing, but is it Christ? "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." This simple rule, which is the sum of everything for walk, and necessarily most pleasing to the heart that is true, would not only make a reformation in all our ways, but would work in us a new way of doing everything here for God's pleasure, and serving Christ according to His mind. The constant tendency is to try to improve the manner of one's life here below by adopting christian principles, whereas you will never arrive at it unless you start from "crucified with Christ." Then it is not thinking of what *I* am, but of what *He* is: "Christ liveth in me."

The more you are in the power and ways of Christ, the more pleasing you are to God here on earth, and now you find your place in the assembly—God's house. There is no position which is so easily assumed *in name* as to be in the assembly, but none which it is of deeper importance for any one, true to Christ and desiring to be here for Him on earth,

to be in by the Holy Ghost. There are certain great marks of His grace which cannot be known except in this new position: any one conducted by Christ into this new position finds himself in a new scene, and the first effect of it is, that he is absorbed with Christ. No one is really there who is not absorbed with Himself risen. Hence if you see any one in the assembly who is trifling or unsubdued, he is not morally in the new position. Saints coming into the room really drawing near the Lord, individually absorbed with Himself, would have a beautiful time. This is the first mark. If one thus individually absorbed offered a remark, it would be characterised by the place from which he comes. That which is of God must impress us. No one can be in this new position without being characterised by the things that are there, because you find them nowhere else. You come into the scene of Christ's joy, a scene of marvellous light (1 Peter ii. 9), to a scene where He has been rejected and refused, and it must give a character to your deportment which nothing else could.

When we remember that we are here for Christ, on the earth where He has been rejected, it is an immense favour that we should form part of the habitation of God by the Spirit, and that there we should see Him who

is rejected here, acknowledged by God as outside of man and above all the winds and waves, above all the power here. What satisfaction this must give to any true heart that seeks to walk or to stand for Him. Not only have you part with Christ on the new ground, but you learn in company with Him what are His thoughts and interests in the church; what He is to you in it, and how He enables you to be for God through His effectual teaching there, so that each one is gifted according to His pleasure, and is able to serve souls according to His mind. He has given gifts for this purpose, and the nearer any one is to Christ the better he understands his gift, and the better he can exercise it for the benefit of souls in the true knowledge of their need. If a servant is thoroughly set to live Christ, the assembly becomes the especial interest of his heart, and the service of Christ necessarily follows. Possessions or earthly influence are no help to a servant. The more he is attached to the Lord, the more he relies on His grace alone.

It is very helpful to see that when the Lord rose from the dead He gave gifts unto men. Now a gift, as far as I see, is some special impression of Himself to you, and the nearer you are to Him, the more you know Him, and the better you are able to minister of

Him. We find prayer and ministry of the word go together. It is not by reading or study that you acquire a gift. A gift is from Himself. If it is a gift of the gospel, you receive it from Him. He gives you an impression of Himself, as He said to Saul of Tarsus, "Thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard": so with Moses in the burning bush. You have always before you, through grace, the impression He has given you of Himself as a basis for your service.

The third era is conscious union with Him. The one who has learned to be as Christ here, whose heart is set on being here as Christ, comes to the third era, that is, being united to Him in heaven, being led like Rebekah to Isaac, ready in heart and ways for this union before it can be enjoyed. No one can appreciate union who does not know that the fullest place of blessing is the nearest association with Himself. This is the reason why so few know it. If one has not reached the first step—crucified with Christ—he will make no progress on the road to reach the third. No one can appreciate union until he is in suitability for it.

Consequent on union the great scope of Christ's interest and power here can be manifested. Many think they are doing great

service, and in a way they are, but they have not come to that absolute attachment to Christ that would part with everything that is not of Christ, and therefore they are not competent to come out in everything for Christ.

When He comes to reign all will be under His own hands.

PRAYER.

THE inestimable grace of praying is the peculiar privilege of the church on earth.

We see in the beginning of the new company (Luke x. 39 ; xi. 1) the first trait: the word of God and prayer—literally what God says to us, and what we say to Him. The disciples say, “Lord, teach us to pray” in chapter xi., and the Lord figuratively sets forth in the man who went to his friend at midnight how prayer begins, with the sense that my friend has what I want. It is not so much a question of what the want is, but I know my friend has what I want, and that he is my friend ; and I repair to him to relieve me of my want, without taking into account the various things which might intervene. One thing is fixed in my mind—that he has what I want, and that I have nowhere else to get it. This

is the first great sense of prayer—absolute dependence on God, and His infinite ability to meet what I require.

The sense so peculiar to real prayer is that the greater our need, and the more we need, the nearer we seek to get to Him, as if the only chance and the only hope of relief is our being with Him. The circumstances we are in generally impart a character to our prayers. So you will find that if you begin with the troubles about you, and keep on praying, you are getting more free of the trouble, and really getting more occupied with Himself; just as in the parable in Luke xi., the man succeeds at last, and gets more than he asked for, an intimation of what the Lord says in the end, “how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

If we were to hear the prayers which are uttered, we should have an idea of the circumstances which gave rise to them; but the nearer we get to the Lord, the more we feel dependent on Him, and the more we get occupied with Him, instead of with the circumstances.

. We get an interesting illustration of this in 1 Corinthians xiv. 14—the man praying with his spirit. Though he does not know what he is praying for, he is in spirit impressed.

by the association he is found in ; in spirit he speaks mysteries (1 Cor. xiv. 2) because of his nearness to the Lord. The nearer we come to the Lord, the more spiritual our desires are ; we can account for prayers which take in our circumstances, being suggested by the circumstances, and not by our association with the Lord. Here we learn a truth of deep importance (where many, wishing to be spiritual, have failed, not having entered into the magnitude of the truth), that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and we cannot be in both at the same time. If you are in the Spirit you (by the Spirit) mortify the deeds of the body ; you are not only preserved from the deeds, but you are dead to the desires of the flesh. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Hence we see the great advance in the character of prayer ; the more you are apart from the flesh and from the natural man, the more you are occupied exclusively with and derive from Christ Himself. Any one may notice in a prayer meeting the difference between the two. The prayer that is occupied with *things* suits the mass ; but it is a happy day when one learns that the nearer he is to Christ, the less he wants anything but Christ ; that though still in human circumstances, he can

thank God that he is not only free from the man that is contrary to God, but that he is in the Spirit, and as he walks in the Spirit he is absolutely free from the old man. When Paul was severed from Jerusalem he had to learn in the ship (Acts xxvii.) that he was not to be directed by any providence or human influence, but by God Himself, outside everything here.

Another thing has to be noted, that when prayer reaches to this, your dependence on Christ becomes more and more necessary to you, like the infant that cannot bear to leave its mother, not only because its *wants* are met, but she is the *source* of its supply. Now He so absorbs your heart that it is true of you that to God you are beside yourself, and, like the queen of Sheba in the presence of Solomon, you have no more spirit left in you; and as to prayer, you have the double blessing—the peace of God in coming to Him as touching things here, as we read in Philippians iv. 7; and you have also what we get in I John v. 14, the sense of what His present will is—the sense of His will, as one in constant intimacy with a friend gets his mind without being directly instructed in it. This necessarily gives a peculiar and intense spirituality, and as union is realised it deepens, so that the one great desire of the soul is the

prayer in Ephesians iii. Like Rebekah, your one desire is that you might be a comfort to Him who has brought you to Himself.

I cannot conceive anything greater to a heart that knows union with Christ than to be ever seeking to be in keeping with His pleasure; and though occupied with His glory on the earth, you rise, as you see in Habakkuk iii., from "Shigionoth" (variable notes) to "Neginoth" (stringed instruments).

RELIEF FROM PRESSURE.

BEFORE Christ came, God as the righteous Judge was dealing in governmental mercy; after He came there was a Man here who could remove every pressure upon man; a time which the faithful before His day had looked for, as we see from the Psalms, and elsewhere in scripture.

In the Old Testament relief came through simply trusting in God: He in His mercy relieved the faithful according as they turned to Him, as we see in Job.

Job was tried in the whole circle of affliction: in his family, in his circumstances, and in his health; and evidently he was relieved *in all*, what he had lost was all restored.

Now in our Lord's day it was still more marked, because a Man had come who had power to relieve man of every grievance, even death. But now that He is risen, He relieves all who seek Him by drawing them to His side, to a place which is His place, where there is no pressure. In the case of Job, he is relieved of the pressure in the place where the pressure is, and he had a great sense of the goodness of God. He waited on Him and was not disappointed; but the removal of the pressure only made him more contented with the place where the pressure was. Now with us in the present day, we are removed from the place where the pressure is to Christ, so that it is His interest in us, sharing all He has with us, and our learning what His heart is towards us, that really relieves us. We are drawn away from the place where the pressure is, and He is endeared to us in the place where no pressure is. If your heart clings to this world you find this is where the pressure is, and you must look for relief in it as Job did. And you can speak of the wonderful effect of being simply cast on God in a day of trial, how it has moulded you, and how it has corrected you—"Before I was afflicted I went astray"—but when you turn to the Lord you are drawn away to Him. Everything here remains as it was, but you

find yourself introduced through Christ's sympathy into a new order of things where all is of God, and where there is no pressure, and your sorrows are all lost sight of. If you are in Job's case you are looking for improvement in the place where you are. In *present grace* you are drawn away to Christ, who is rejected from this world, and you taste of His love in the scene of His exaltation. In the one you are never detached from this world, in the other you are drawn away entirely from it without any regret. May you insist more on the fact that your heart being where Christ is, proves that He is your treasure; nothing in this world connects you with Him. (Col. iii. 1, 2.)

It is a great comfort to me that there is a Man in the glory, and that His Spirit is down here connecting my soul with Him up there!

The whole work of the servant now is not to reform people, but to offer them salvation. The responsible man is not recognised before God now, he is gone in judgment on the cross, and every one embracing Christ knows that he is clear before God from the responsible man.

STATE BEFORE POSITION.

I HAVE been greatly interested, and I hope helped, by seeing the imperfect way we learn truth; not that the truth is imperfect, but we have learned it imperfectly.

Some of us have been more occupied with seeing that we get the truth accurately as revealed in the word of God, than we have been with understanding the state that is necessary in ourselves to our apprehension of what is revealed. Many have been satisfied to see the purpose of God's grace, but I find there is a great deal more said about our state to enable us to receive it. For instance, the prayer in Ephesians i. to give you "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" before you have the truth; that is, that you must have got the mind of God in its breadth before you can understand the mind of God. We have been too much satisfied with clear expositions of truth and have contented ourselves that we had the truth, because we understood the exposition of it, instead of seeing that we require a divine state to enable us to apprehend the truth—the "best robe" is given to enjoy the "great supper." This is most important as shewing how necessary the subjective is for the apprehension of the

objective. Generally the former has been put after the latter; but if we study the ways of God we shall find that He prepares us for the truth by giving us a state which can appreciate the truth, before He enunciates the truth to us.

We have thought everything of getting a clear idea of truth, whereas getting a state that can appreciate the truth is the great grace of God. We get a striking example of this in the parable of the sower—the same seed to each heart had a very different effect; the state of the heart gave effect to the seed. It enhances God's grace to us very much, when we see that when He makes known His grace He gives a state that can appreciate His grace.

I am sure I have sought to bring heaven before souls, but I find I have too much overlooked the journey to heaven. Though Christ is the object there, we must remember that there is no way to heaven but through the wilderness and over Jordan. We have thought we got there because our faith was in Christ who is there, but the real proof that we have reached any truth is that we have the state that fits us for it. The state for one risen with Christ is, "having put on the new man." No one knows what it is to be in heaven with Christ until he knows what it is to be

severed from every link here—with Christ to walk through Jordan. He may resume links here, but he can never lose the state which fitted him for being in heaven; and then it is not what he has lost which occupies him, but the immensity of the gain where-with he has been entranced!

I think a great defect in souls is that they have not crossed the Jordan, and have not realised what it is to have died with Christ, and to be thereby severed from everything in this world; and if not in heart and experience practically over Jordan, you do not know the Lord as Head.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

I BELIEVE the great hindrance to divine joy in the soul arises from the imperfect way the crucifixion of the old man is apprehended. The believer at first, for full peace, believes that God has raised from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore the judgment which lay on Him, so that the man that was under judgment is really gone from the eye of God in judgment. The believer is now before God, not in the man who was under judgment, but in the Man who has glorified God in bearing the judgment; and, consequently,

there is not a cloud between his soul and God, because the man who caused the distance has been removed in judgment.

Often a believer, though tasting of peace with God, when he finds the working of sin in him tries to correct it, as if he could alter himself, overlooking the great and stupendous fact that God Himself has removed the man in judgment in the death of His own Son. He has laid help upon One that is mighty—His own arm brought salvation—and if a believer is really at peace with God, it is because his old man has been crucified with Christ, and altogether set aside in judgment on the cross. If he were clear as to the fact of our old man being crucified with Christ, instead of trying to correct himself, he would look to Christ to set him free from the intrusion of the flesh: “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” What becomes us now is to have Christ before us, and not the correction of the old man. The snare of trying to improve oneself is very common, and it is important to see that however well-meaning it may be, it is really a denial that our old man has been crucified, and a revival of that which has been set aside in the cross. It is plain that if you are clear of the old man you can have no man be-

fore you but Christ. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin"; and the more sensible you are of how ready the flesh is to intrude, the more you are cast upon Him.

It is inconceivable that one could have any just apprehension of God's grace, and yet continue to expect anything from the flesh or in any way to deal with it. It shews how little the revelation of His grace is really accepted in its greatness; because if I know that God Himself has in the cross removed the man who offended, how gladly should I accept His grace! What fruitless sorrow has one known for months and years in the attempt to improve oneself, until wearied out we cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then we find there is only one relief, and that is found where we ought to have sought it at first: "I thank God through *Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Nothing can be more certain for the believer than that one man is gone in judgment, and that Christ alone remains. When I have put on Christ—the best robe—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Not only does the blessed God see me on this ground—one from which He can never change or be diverted—but *I* now

by the Spirit of God see myself on that ground, and I can say, not only "our old man is crucified," but "*I* am crucified with Christ"; and if I am crucified how can I refer to myself in any sense? If we observe the history of Christians, we see them trying to improve themselves—their tempers and their evil tendencies—plainly shewing that they do not believe in the absolute and simple revelation that "our old man is crucified with him."

Nothing is of deeper importance at the commencement of our christian history than that we should accept, with some apprehension of its greatness, that the man that was under judgment is removed from the eye of God in judgment. We have to ponder, in order to realise the magnitude of it, and when we do believe it as a truth, another thing of equal importance is made known to us—that not only is the old man completely removed from the eye of God, but that by the Holy Ghost we are in Christ a new creation by the power of God. If we keep these two together we have a great start; one man is gone and another is brought in, and this is established to us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Now we enter on our new history. Properly, we are not occupied with the flesh; though the flesh is still in us, "we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit"; and our attention is largely

given to walking in the Spirit. We have now a new exercise, even to sow to the Spirit and of the Spirit to reap life everlasting. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." This shews us how intent our eye must be on Christ. We have nothing to do with the man that is gone, and the more we realise this the happier we are—judicially freed of the one, and by the Spirit of God established in Christ. Everything we do now is done with reference to Christ; and not only is the body the Lord's, but "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." We have to act according to His pleasure in the very management of the body, just as a slave would use his body according to the wishes of his owner.

It is remarkable that Romans xii. 2 refers to the body: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . be not conformed to this world: but be ye *transformed* by the renewing of your mind." But in 2 Corinthians iii. 18 we all, beholding the glory of the Lord, are *transformed*; it is the same word, "transformed," as in Romans xii., and is only used twice in scripture in reference to *us*, once as to the body, and secondly as to what is imparted to us—what is received from Christ—we are "transformed into the same image." This I might call the exercise of our daily life.

Our history here is not merely seeking to glorify Him in our bodies, but we should be growing in moral correspondence to Himself, and that by association with Himself. So that the two great truths we started with would be confirmed to us more and more every day—the old man gone from the eye of God completely and for ever, and we established in Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.

DEAD AND RISEN WITH CHRIST.

I BEGIN by stating that no one is in power for Christ here who does not come from Him at the other side of Jordan.

I do not mean that each one really knows all that is involved in having crossed over, that is, that they have so fully entered into what it is to have died with Christ experimentally, that they are severed from everything in this scene by His death ; but I say that when we are established in grace, and are not only in peace with God but in deliverance, knowing that we are in Christ before Him, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” making me “free from the law of sin and death,” we begin to realise that this world is a wilderness and that our life is not here.

Now this is a great moment in our history. Nothing here can conduce to our life in Christ ; it is only by the Spirit we can enjoy it, or enjoy Him where He is. I admit it is very faintly and feebly we do so as a rule, but if it is so precious and valuable when we know it even a little, how much more so when we know it in its fulness! At any rate, I think it is of deep moment that each of us should experience that we have died to things here and that we are alive to His things in His life. There is no other road to heaven but through the wilderness, and when we have learned by the Spirit of God dwelling in us that He is our life in the sphere where He now is, it is our joy and strength to taste even a little that things here are closed to us. But being severed by association with Himself from a scene where He is not, we enter a scene where everything is according to Him, and though we have to resume the links here, we do so as knowing something of the scene beyond, which is properly ours through His grace.

First, as is typified in the Red Sea, we are freed from the judgment of God on us, and rejoice in the Saviour raised from the dead. Then we begin our journey according to God's appointment. There is nothing for us in the wilderness but Marah and manna ; Marah—bitter water. We are free of the judgment of

death, but we have to accept death. We are still in the mortal body, the body of death, and we have to learn in our connection with this world that we have no living link with it. But death becomes sweet to us because Christ has gone through it, and as we are dependent on Him, we receive of His grace and walk here according to His pleasure. But often it is a long and painful exercise before we learn, as in Numbers xxi., that all is ruin here and in us also, but that as risen with Christ our life is with Him outside of it all, and the Holy Ghost is in us. Then the one thought is not how to get on in the world which has become to us the wilderness, *but how to live with Christ outside it.* We learn, as in the Epistle to the Colossians, that we have died "with Christ from the rudiments of the world," the reproach of Egypt is rolled off "in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ"; then as risen with Him we are over Jordan, and a new scene, the sphere of His life, opens before us. It is then we know Him as Head, and are able to carry out His pleasure in relation to His interests here. We do not enjoy union till we know Him as Head, hence, as I said at the beginning, no one is in power until he knows that he is over Jordan with Christ. He has to return here, for he has to work here,

but he gets his support and his direction from the Lord where He is.

Now, as we are in service for the Lord, we find it is only as we walk practically, "bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," that the life of Jesus is manifested here. God in His discipline allows trials to help to cut us off from attractions here, that we might be efficient servants for Him. "We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." This is more our daily path here; our enjoyment with Christ over Jōrdan is in the Spirit; the former is more connected with our walk.

The Lord give us all to realise more the blessedness of being with Him where He is! We lose nothing by being severed from present things, which only the mortal man could enjoy, for we are brought into the things which Christ enjoys, which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

THE NEW MAN.

IN seeking light from the Lord on this important subject, we must first be absolutely clear of the thought which is so general in Christendom, that God's Son became a man in order to repair and rehabilitate the first man—the Adam race. Many years ago it was said that man was broken china, but that Christ was like perfect china. This was absolutely denied by the most godly man of the day. "Christ was not china at all," but unique, a man of His own order, and in His death the first man is clean set aside in judgment, and the new man is therefore according to God. Consequently we must not be deceived by thinking that the human mind can form an idea of any trait of the new man, or that it can imitate Christ, though many read the gospels with this object. Thus we start on this inquiry, looking entirely to God in order to understand the Man of His pleasure: "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"—"the express image of his person"—"the beginning of the creation of God." As another has said, the difference between Him and us is that with Christ all His springs were in God, whereas our springs are in ourselves.

We know from the types that in the meat

offering the fine flour was not only anointed with oil, but it was mingled with oil—the Spirit of God—for Christ, the One typified, was conceived by the Holy Ghost. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death.” He bore the judgment due to the first man, and righteously removed him from the eye of God, so that it is not in Adam that the believer appears before God, but in Christ.

Now our inquiry is: What is the new man? We have seen what it is *not*; we have already seen that it cannot be learned by any effort of the human mind, that its structure and nature are entirely beyond the conception of man, and the next question is: How do we learn it? I believe it is not by reading or by the mere study of scripture that we learn it, but by association with Christ, by beholding the Lord’s glory, and being “changed into the same image.” You could not explain what you get, but you get that which corresponds with Him; as you are with Him you acquire it. “That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. iv. 24) is addressed to a believer who is in conscious union with Christ, seated in the heavenlies in

Him. Now he comes out here in a new way, beginning with the mind, "renewed in the spirit of your mind"; not making works prominent, but in the renewed mind which is able to judge of the works that suit Christ. As we read in 1 Corinthians ii. 16, "We have the mind [νοῦς] of Christ," we "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth." A believer realises the tastes of the new man by association with Christ. It is important to see that we derive from Him, we are in Him and He lives in us, He is altogether of His own order (*sui generis*), and it is only by association with Him that His nature and mind become experimentally known to us. It is so little known because association is so little sought.

Yet sure, if in Thy presence
 My soul still constant were,
 Mine eye would, more familiar,
 Its brighter glories bear.

And thus, Thy deep perfections
 Much better should I know,
 And with adoring fervour
 In this Thy nature grow.

We get an idea of what His grace is in what He says to the church of Laodicea; He offers association with Himself for restoration: "Behold, I stand at the door, and

knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." No one can tell what he acquires by association ; but he knows that he has acquired a taste for the company of Christ, and that when not in His company he has not that which suits his new taste. He finds it very partially here among His own and he is glad to return to His presence, and he knows the benefit of it.

This draws the great line of difference between mere students of the word and those who enjoy His presence, beholding His glory ; the latter can form a conception of what suits Him which the former cannot. We see from Colossians iii. 10 ("and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him") that we cannot be with Him without getting enlightened ; the word comes with more definiteness to our souls ; we are "renewed into full knowledge," etc. Thus we see that as we become like Him by being with Him, we also get more intelligent in His mind, we know Him as Head and put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind," etc.

The Lord give us to seek His presence more. Moses could say in a comparatively dark day, after he had seen all the mighty works of the Lord : "Shew me thy glory."

May our hearts have the rich enjoyment of being in spirit with Him in glory. Every one likes to think of Him as known in His great works, but how blessed the consummation of being partakers with Him in His glory!

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD.

It is a great favour of the blessed God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that we should each be individually a light in the world where we have been darkness and contributing to it: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8), and this independently of the candlestick, which is the corporate light. Now, when the candlestick is removed, our responsibility is, if anything, greater, that we should answer individually to the grace which He has given us.

Light is a remarkable quality; it sets forth everything in its true colour according to God. It begins with each of us personally. "If thine eye be single," set on Christ, that is, if Christ is your object, having no part dark, the body is light; you come out personally in quite a new way. It is not merely what you say, but what you are. A man who has received light, by degrees finds out how little he has seen things according to God.

As he walks in the light the things that he could admit of at one time he cannot admit now.

The first great action of the light, as we see in John ix, is to separate us from man's ideas about God, until in the solitude of light we enjoy the Lord Himself as the Source of it. Thus the first mark of light is in relation to God, and how we are here suitable to Him. We have to learn that mere religious associations which are not in the Spirit do not suit Him, and are not according to light. This is the first great action of the light—separation from everything that does not suit God in our approach to Him; and as this is arrived at, we come out in a new way in our natural and home circle. Things are avoided and separated from that at one time seemed harmless and allowable, but the more we understand the new position we are in, the greater the sense of our responsibility to maintain the distinctness of this great favour; and this we are encouraged to do in dependence on the Lord, that we may be according to the mind of God, not only in the assembly, but also in our own private circle. It is as we are true in the latter that we influence those around us.

It is remarkable how a person looking for light will be attracted by a person that has

light ; but the more he is attracted to him who has the light, the more he will scrutinise all his ways and everything about him in order to see if he is walking up to his light. Many years ago, after speaking on Acts xvi., a near friend of mine said to me afterwards : "The address was liked ; but," it was added, "I wonder what sort of man he is at home ? "

What I may call the third circle is that of the servant. If in any of his ways he indicates the corrupt tastes of the world, he is like a waster in a candle, he spoils the light and invalidates his influence, because he has a dark part—that is, a natural taste which he has not overcome in himself ; it hinders him being an exponent of the light. This dark part is the real test to every Christian, and is not removed by introspection, which is inspecting the old man and betrays ignorance of the beginning of the work of Christ. How can you inspect that which is removed from the eye of God ? The dark part, the working of the flesh, is not removed by introspection, but by sowing to the Spirit. We all know what sowing to the flesh is : looking for some harvest to come from it. But it is important to bear in mind that souls as they are set for the light seek it ; as we see, if we look around, that where there is light there is the separation that begins with God. I

have heard a preacher say, who had a chapel of his own :. "My converts do not stay with me more than a year or two, they go elsewhere to look for more light." The Lord is pleased to give the light, and the light is here, and those who value it find it out, no matter how retired or unknown the person is.

The great characteristic of a servant who has light from God is that he insists on positive truth; not that he overlooks the negative, but his great aim and object is the positive. For instance, he not only insists that the old man is removed from the eye of God, but he insists also on our acceptance with God, and that we are able to enjoy it by the Spirit. We are in Christ by the Spirit, able to enjoy our acceptance, as we see in the parable of the prodigal son.

It has to be borne in mind that it is not so much what a servant says as what he is; because if there is a dark part in him it is sure to affect him, and to weaken his ministry: "having *no* part dark." No man's word is effective beyond the effect it has on himself; his own life testifies to the truth of what he ministers. A convert takes his colour from his spiritual father. A man might enunciate the truth from mere study, but one who is ruled by the truth himself becomes necessarily an effectual exponent of it; and if the light

is opposed and refused, the resistance to it is always greatest where there is most need for it: "He that doeth evil hateth the light."

It is true that one might assume to have the light when he has it not. The true and divine way of correcting him is not by merely opposing him, but by setting forth from scripture what is the light, and this exposes his misapprehension, as Abel exposed Cain.

It is easy to say to another, "You are wrong," but it is a great thing to shew him what is right, and you cannot substantiate it unless you are light yourself. Let us rejoice that the Lord is the light, and that if we love the brethren we walk in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in us. We shall be as "the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." (I Chron. xii. 32.) "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

ATONEMENT AND RECONCILIATION.

It is important to understand the scriptural meaning of these two words. Every believer has, in some measure, apprehended the meaning of atonement; but very few, as far as I know,

have entered into the light and fulness of reconciliation.

Adam sinned and came under the judgment of God, with all his race. Cain thought he could be in favour with God by means of an offering unto God—as we might say, by “religious services”; while Abel was so sensible of the judgment that he knew there must be atonement, that he must be sheltered from the eye of God by the blood of the victim. Now this we see all through the Old Testament. Exodus xii. gives us a very good illustration of it. Israel were all sheltered under the blood of the lamb, typical of that blood whose virtue is everlasting, and the smallest faith in the atonement now finds that the benefit is complete and everlasting. But apart from reconciliation there is no present enjoyment of the benefit; no service for Christ down here. Atonement does not go beyond shelter; as has been said by another, “If you atone for a thing, you keep it.”

All through the Old Testament we see that the man of faith was sheltered by the blood of atonement; but until we come to Christ, who terminated the man who offended in bearing his judgment on the cross, and in it glorified God where man had dishonoured Him, so that He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, reconciliation

had not fully come in. The word reconciliation is used in the Old Testament incorrectly, whereas the word "atonement"* is never really used in the New Testament. Now many Christians never get beyond the atonement. They have faith in the blood of Christ, and are thus sheltered in the eye of God, and all the benefits of Christ's work are secured to them hereafter, that work has made their title sure to all the grace that has been secured by Him ; but if they do not know reconciliation, they do not come out upon this earth in an entirely new way for Him. They may rejoice in their shelter, but like Israel in Egypt they are still morally there, and they do not see that the power of death has been destroyed ; they have not begun here on earth the heavenly journey across the wilderness to Christ in glory. Sheltered by the blood you are safe eternally ; but unless you know reconciliation you cannot serve the Lord, and unless you serve Him here, there is no reward in the kingdom.

Now reconciliation is based on the fact that the man who dishonoured God is removed ; but the Man who honoured Him in bearing the judgment of death has been raised from the dead to God's right hand in glory. If you only know atonement, you do not get

* Romans v. 11 should be "reconciliation."

beyond Romans iii. ; but when you see Christ risen from the dead, you have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." This grace is summed up in verse II: "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." The scope of reconciliation is detailed very distinctly in 2 Corinthians v. 14-17: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ it is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Not a vestige remains before the eye of God of the one who has offended Him; but the One who has glorified Him fills the whole scene, and every believer in Him knows that God's heart is toward him, as we see illustrated in the prodigal. The father runs and falls on his neck and kisses him—he is reconciled. And then as he enters into and enjoys this reconcilia-

tion, he begins to joy in God, he knows that he is in Christ before God, in the power and grace of Christ, as son of God and joint heir with Christ. There is not a cloud between him and God, and finally he learns that the Father loves him as He loves Christ.

I may add now, in conclusion, that no one will enter into the fulness of reconciliation who does not understand the gospel of the glory as set forth in 2 Corinthians iii. There we find the contrast between Mount Sinai and what we have at the present time: one is a demand for righteousness from the glory of God, the other is the ministration of righteousness from the glory of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; so that the nearer we approach to the glory, the more we are assured of His righteousness in having us there. We get a good illustration of this in the dream of an old divine when he was learning the gospel. He dreamed that he went to the gate of a palace and was so well received that he went in, and as he passed through each succeeding suite of rooms, he was still better received, until he reached the presence-chamber of the sovereign, where he was received with acclamation! So the nearer we approach, the more assured we are of welcome. *We* are not repelled by the glory like Isaiah (Isa. vi), but on the contrary, "looking on the

glory of the Lord . . . are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory." Now, when we are in the enjoyment of this wonderful grace, it is very blessed to perceive that not only is all the distance removed, but the nearer we approach, the more we know how righteously God can accept us, for righteousness is the bulwark of love.

Hence it is an immense satisfaction that we, through His grace, are formed and adapted by new creation to this new and great position. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ"; and the more we enter into the perfection of His love ("perfect love casteth out fear") the more we are assured that "as Christ is, so are we in this world." Blessed and happy portion! May our hearts enjoy it more.

THE PRESENT PURPOSE OF GOD.

GOD had a purpose for His own from the flood. Man, though he accepted the purpose of God, became entirely diverted from it by making himself paramount, thinking of himself and of his own benefit. Thus it led to his ruin instead of his blessing, as we see in

the prodigal (Luke xv.), who accepted the goods from his father, but went into the far country to enjoy himself.

God gave Noah power to rule: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth . . . into your hand are they delivered." (Gen. ix. 2.) But he could not rule himself; he used his power for his own gratification; and eventually we see in Babel that man used his power to build a tower to be independent of God. When God called Abram out, under the distinct condition that he was not to have as much as his foot would stand on of the land which he should hereafter inherit, we find Lot accepting, and remaining in the place, and seeking possession in it. And even Jacob, returning after twenty years to the land, as soon as he is settled in it buys a parcel of ground, from whence he is driven by the discipline of God.

Again, when Israel was brought with a high hand into the land, the simple condition which they were bound to fulfil was to cleave to Jehovah, and to drive out all the inhabitants of the land. This condition, which entailed incomparable blessing, they failed to fulfil; on the contrary, they made a league with the inhabitants. Thus they betrayed that their heart was more set upon the land, the gift

of God, than on the blessed Giver Himself, which is always an evidence of alienation from God. Their moral condition was truly described by "Bochim": "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim." (Judges ii. 1-5.)

Also in Joshua xxiii. 12, 13 we read: "Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in

your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you." They were bound to cleave to Jehovah and to drive out all the inhabitants of the land. Instead of that they did the very contrary, made terms with them, so that instead of a thousand fleeing before one of them, they became a snare to them. It is important to bear in mind that the moment we separate the word of God from the light of His presence, whence it comes, man's mind interprets it in absolute contravention of God's purpose, making *himself* the exclusive object of it. Thus Israel, corrupted by the inhabitants of the land, and eventually carried captive into Babylon, were under the Roman yoke when Christ came.

Now when Christ came, the purpose of God was opposed from the very outset. The nearer God comes to man, the more man shews his antagonism; and eventually he says, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." Man wants the earth without God. But here I must add the blessed fact, so fully corroborated in our Lord's time, that any one who follows out the purpose of God according to God's mind is manifestly supported by Him, as we see from Abram down, be it a Gideon or a

Samuel, Elijah or Ezra. And how manifestly more so now: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John i. 12.)

Now when Christ's rejection was impending, He propounded the parable of the sower, setting forth the effect during His absence of the sowing of His word here on earth. (Matt. xiii.) Six similitudes are used. In the first there was only the true thing; it was spoiled by profession. The second, the mustard tree, is man's interpretation of the purpose, something conspicuous to the eye of man—a huge ecclesiastical system to disguise the rejection of the Lord. In the third, the leaven, all that is good is corrupted.

Now the last three similitudes are given inside with the Lord, He "sent the multitude away, and went into the house" (ver. 36), and you cannot learn them unless you are inside with Him, apart from the influence of men. No passage in scripture has been so misunderstood or misinterpreted as these last three similitudes. The first is what the word is to effect according to His mind and the purpose of God—to form a treasure here in the world for Him. It was not conspicuous to the eye of man, like the imposing structures that we see now all over the kingdom, but it

was hid as our life is hid with Christ in God. But He sells all that He has and buys the field because His treasure is in it ; that is what the church is to Christ.

The second simile is the pearl ; that is, what is apparent and beautiful for those who have an eye to see, like the gates of the New Jerusalem. Thirdly, the net, the import of which is altogether misunderstood. Many evangelists think that it is *catching* the fish, but the great object of the net is to bring them to shore to make selection, to select the good, those who are to form the treasure of Christ.

Now we learn from John xvii. that His own have to come out as Himself here in this world, characterised by unity, altogether apart, separate from the world, waiting for His glory, learning down here the love of the Father, loved by the Father as Christ is loved. When John was beheaded (Matt. xiv. 10), the Lord's rejection being at hand, He went into "a desert place," apart from the haunts of men ; the poor of the flock seek Him there and He feeds them there as He does this day. Then He sends His disciples in the ship across the sea, to see how they can bear up in the storm, typically the power of evil in an earthly system, while He Himself takes a new position. He is not only superior to the power of

evil, as He always was, but now He is *supreme*, He is above it, and when thus seen by His disciples, Peter desires to join Him. The only place where the saint can join Him now is on the other side of death. Peter learns his own weakness in coming to Him, but the hand of Christ draws him to Himself. This indicates how we are to join Christ now while we are in the world. This way is not visible to man; but coming to Him as the living Stone, we also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house for Him. (1 Peter ii. 4, 5.)

We find the disciples came together in the opening of Acts, but they had no idea yet of the purpose of God, not even when the Holy Ghost was given in chapter ii. It was the fulfilment of the day of Pentecost when the wave loaves were presented to God (Lev. xxiii. 17), but they knew nothing yet of His purpose; and many, even enlightened Christians, never get beyond Acts ii., never get to the purpose of God. Now when the gospel was extended to the utmost parts, as in the case of the eunuch (Acts viii.), God caused the light of His glory to shine out of heaven and to arrest the greatest opposer of the day. (Chap. ix.) To him, Saul, is first revealed the present purpose of God in the few words: "Why persecutest thou me?"—the saints and He are one. This is the first intimation of

the mystery which was kept secret from the foundation of the world. As far as I see, it does not come out any more in Acts. There is faith in Christ, they are zealous for the law and expecting the Lord to return to reign, but they have no thought of the purpose of God, and many earnest men go no farther than that now. Evidently they knew it in Romans xii., and we get in the closing verses of Romans a distinct declaration of it, but we have to know Christ outside this world, as in Hebrews, before we can enter practically into the purpose of God.

We must begin, as in Hebrews ii., with "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are all of one.*" This is the most essential step, for until you enter into the reality of this you never advance; you cannot come *to* Him but as *of Him*. To this Abraham's steward was sworn. You must come in an entirely new order, and then you find, like Peter on the water, that though you meet trials on the road, He bears you up and carries you to His own side, and finally you have boldness to enter into the holiest, and are in company with Him in that bright scene in the presence of God. Now your heart being drawn away from the earth to Him personally in heaven, you are ready for the truth of Colossians—dead and risen with Him. You

know Him as Head in the sphere of His life, and you find, as in Ephesians i., the purpose of God can be made known to you; but you begin with "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" in order to comprehend it. The prayer in Ephesians i. expresses the purpose of God, and you find out now that the church is the complement of Christ; not that we can add anything to Him, but we derive from Him, as Eve did from Adam. It is almost impossible to conceive how each member does in some measure express Him, and in the prayer of chapter iii. we learn how we are endowed in order to be for the glory of God, in fellowship with, and by the Spirit as sent from the Father. (John xv. 26.)

Then we come out as in Ephesians vi. in heavenly power to confront the whole force of the enemy in Christ's superiority. According to John xvi., the prince of this world is judged, so that His interests here are fully maintained.

In conclusion, the church left its first love, like Israel caring more for God's blessings than to be in accordance with His pleasure. Love always degenerates when more occupied with the gift than with the giver. If I were really devoted to the Lord, I could not enjoy any gifts of His without Himself being paramount. The church, from association with

unbelievers, had become a great house with vessels to dishonour, so that the first absolute duty was to separate from vessels to dishonour, following righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. When all was failure around, the Lord was the resource of every true heart; therefore Paul's teaching was necessary for the servants in order to draw their hearts into the purpose of God, to be here on the earth as members of the body of Christ. Hence we find in Revelation iii. 7 they who cleave simply to the Lord will find how He will undertake for them, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name," so that in the closing hour (chap. xxii.) we find there is a remnant, like the wise virgins going forth to meet the bridegroom with oil in their vessels, which is the Spirit of God, not merely speaking of the coming of the Lord as many do, but declaring plainly in their own life and ways that *they* are going forth to meet the Bridegroom, as the Object of their hearts.

Now we find that those who are set upon Christ as the coming light, the bright and morning star, are of the bride who with the Spirit say to Him, "Come," and finally we

have in chapter xxi. the bride coming down from heaven having the glory of God, and the purpose of God is fulfilled in the New Jerusalem. This is inconceivably blessed to ponder upon!

The Lord set our hearts more upon the blessed purpose of the blessed God, for His name's sake.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE LOVE OF THE FATHER. -

THE love of God and the love of the Father are from the same blessed One. The love of God comes down to us in all our ruin, but the love of the Father connects us with Himself in all His own divine perfection. It is not easy at first to see the difference. The manna, that is, the grace in which Christ walked on earth, and the old corn of the land, that is, as He lives in heaven, are in a way an illustration of the difference. In the one case He was in a scene where all was incongruous to Him: nothing here was in accordance with Him, and He could say, "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." But the old corn of the land is that which is

indigenous to heaven, and is in a scene where all is in perfect accordance with Himself.

Now in the Old Testament the name of Father was not revealed. He was known as God Almighty and as Jehovah. His love for His people was unbounded. He says, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye." Then the love came down to man in his low estate while man was under trial, and the judgment of death which was on him had not been removed. There was nothing then about drawing the believer to Himself as a son to a father.

Now when Christ came, God commended His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He came down to us in our low estate and removed in the cross the judgment that lay upon us, and until we know what the love of God has effected, and that He can receive us in love, as the parable of the prodigal prefigures, there can be no knowledge of the Father's love. It is only when we know Him as sons, as brought to the Father in Christ, that we can enjoy the Father's love. He, as the eternal Son in the bosom of the Father, has declared Him.

We must learn fully the love of God as come down to us before we can rise to Him. The prodigal had not entered into the great-

ness of the reconciliation until he was fitted to enjoy his new relation to his father, as we read in Romans v. 11, "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [or reconciliation]."

I see in John's gospel that we do not come to the Father until our distance from God has been removed by the operation of His love. There is nothing about the Father in chapter iii., nor in chapter iv., till you come to worship. All that is required for our own relief from the ruin we are in is spoken of before there is any reference made to the Father. The Father comes out prominently in chapter v. ; there resurrection is the great subject ; all the distance is removed, and we are seen in an entirely new condition before Him.

We get no allusion to the Father in the Epistle to the Romans till we come to chapter viii., then every shade of distance has been removed ; all that descending love could accomplish we enjoy. Then we come to the great fact that, led by the Spirit of God, we are the sons of God ; we are now in a new relationship to Him, it is in the Spirit of the Son we can say, "Abba Father." Many have supposed from the sermon on the mount, and other references to the "Father in heaven,"

that that is the relation in which He is to us as to things down here, but it is only brought out there to shew what ought to characterise us as belonging to God in His own place.

Our blessed Lord's great work was to declare the Father, not only to relieve man according to his own sense of want, but according to the fulness of the Father's heart. My need was not the measure of His grace ; in all things His love superabounded, therefore His love is properly the measure of His grace. Until you know where His grace has set you, you cannot enjoy your new relationship, nor ascend to the love of the Father. You learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the name of Father does not occur, that Christ's own were drawn away from the earth to be in association with Himself in the holiest of all, outside of everything here ; and there we know that by Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Unless "his love is perfected with us," and we know that "as he is so are we in this world," we cannot be consciously as Christ before the Father, nor can we know the Father's love, as Christ says, "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me."

There is nothing about the Father in the addresses to the seven churches (Rev. ii., iii.), nor is the Father spoken of in the New Jeru-

salem, because it is God coming down to man. In order to enjoy the love of the Father you must be in the place where He is. The Father is spoken of in the first three gospels in connection with His own place: "your Father in heaven"; Christ was making Him known down here; and in the Gospel of John He says, "I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it."

John xvii. opens out how we are led into the knowledge of the Father's love, not only by what has been declared when Christ was down here, but by what He declares of the Father from the glory: "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Eternal life is the start, and you are in the sphere of that life, as John says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (I John i. 3.) Their fellowship was with the Father and the Son; they are characterised by unity here, sanctified by the word of the Father, kept apart from the evil here, therefore practically in the unity of the Spirit, as the Apostle Paul says, "That ye all speak the same thing . . . that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Cor. i. 10.)

Christ Himself is sanctified and set apart from this world, that they also might be sanctified by the truth. Thus they are in the place where they can know the love of the Father.

No one can enjoy love but in the place where the person is. You can enjoy service when not near, but you must be near the person to enjoy love. Hence young men can be strong, the word of God abiding in them, they have overcome the wicked one ; yet they might love the world and the things that are in the world ; but if they do, the love of the Father is not in them.

It is a great cheer and solace to the heart when, in company with Christ, we are brought into such nearness to the Father that we can know His love. The Lord lead our hearts into it more and more. When we are in this nearness, we are not thinking of anything down here ; our hearts are drawn away in the blessedness of being loved by Him. There is no higher enjoyment than the sense of being loved by One inconceivably worthy. May we all know more of this !

BELIEVERS' MEETINGS AND THE CHURCH OF GOD.

A "believers' meeting" is a company of believers who rejoice in their salvation, and they come together without the intervention of any ordained ministry to praise the Lord for His grace to *themselves*. They neither expect nor think of the presence of the Lord in their midst; they are not gathered to His name.

Now while I admit that they are earnest and true, yet they do not rise much above the pious in Christendom who go to a place of worship to record their thanks to God for their salvation; they do not get beyond their own blessing, and their love for the Lord does not go beyond the knowledge of His work. They are not drawn to Him personally. If they were, nothing could satisfy them but to get near Himself. Hence they are not really as far on in soul as a devoted saint under the old dispensation, before the grace of God that brings salvation had appeared, for in those times we find one saying: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." (Psa. xxvii. 4.) How much

more should it be so now that we are brought into such nearness as reconciled to God! Nothing could satisfy the heart which knows the love of Christ personally but the sense of His presence. Therefore He says when leaving His own: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John xvi. 22.) This was fulfilled in John xx.: "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord," and there (ver. 19) we get the pattern of the church in its chief characteristics.

Now I turn to the church of God, and I see that what devoted hearts under the law desired, and which could then only be known in the cloud of glory (see Psa. lxiii. 2; cxxxii.), is now through the Spirit known by the realised presence of a Person—the presence of the Lord Himself, for He says: "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to *you*." It is there we learn our full nearness to Christ Himself: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv. 18–20.)

Now the question is, how do we get to know His presence? In 1 Peter ii. I see that the one who has had a taste of His grace ("If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious") comes to Him as the living Stone, disallowed of men, and is thus a component

part of the structure where He is found. "Yourselves also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Now in Matthew xiv. we find in pattern how the step—coming to Him as the living Stone—is taken. Peter in leaving the ship and walking on the water to go to Jesus is taught the step by which we can reach the Lord at the other side of death; and this is really coming to Him as the living Stone. What we get in John vi. occurred at the same time as that in Matthew xiv., shewing the power by which this step is taken. To be with Him on the other side of death we must be in His life, as we see in John xx., and for this we appropriate His death as in John vi.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Christ is presented as the greater than Moses and the greater than Aaron, we are not only drawn away from the earth to Him because of His sympathy with our own infirmities, but we have boldness to enter into the holiest, and to be there in company with Him in all the blessedness of His own perfection in the presence of God. It is there we learn that He is greater than Moses and greater than Aaron, and then He declares the Father, as He says in chapter ii. 12: "I will declare thy name

unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee," so that we learn that the church is not merely the place to celebrate our own enjoyment, but it is the place where we know His present mind and His interest here on earth, as He is pleased to make them known to hearts delighting in His presence ; and we are practically brought into moral correspondence with His mind because of nearness to Himself. This is the greatest favour which love can confer, as well as the proof of His confidence.

Matthew xviii. 20 shews how the Lord would vouchsafe His presence with even two or three who *belong to the church* (He says in ver. 19, "If two of *you*") if gathered to His name: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." His presence could not be known without transforming you into His mind. So that we see the truth of the church is not realised in a meeting of believers come together merely to record their own blessings, for the church is the house of God where God's present mind is to be known, as we see from the days of the tabernacle in the wilderness, where His presence was known in a cloud of glory ; but how much more manifestly now by the Holy Ghost who glorifies the Lord.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

THERE are three lines of instruction connected with the past, present, and the future as they affect the believer, and to be occupied with one of these to the exclusion of the others must be a loss and privation; as we might say of three of our senses—seeing, hearing, and feeling, all of which should be in use.

The past is that which we learn first, and can never lose sight of. It refers to the expression of God's grace towards us, consequent now on the finished work of Christ. We find all through scripture, from the beginning, that the man who turned to God was the object of His love and care. We see this in the case of Abel, Enoch, Noah, and so on all along the line of faith until the fulness of grace came in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, when God's love shone out in all its magnitude on the returning sinner, and His righteousness in His past dealings of grace was fully declared. It is in this line that the believer is first deeply occupied, and it is most attractive and enjoyable; yet if we stop there, there is no progress in the soul. As long as we dwell exclusively on the fact of being an object with God, blessed as that is, we are more occupied with His lovingkindness towards us in our own circumstances than

with the love that is in His own heart ; so that in a measure we judge of His love by His gifts, instead of seeing that no gift could be the measure of His love.

When His love is really before us, we are not thinking of what His love has done or will do for us, but He Himself is our Object. We learn that "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." And it is undeniable that while we are occupied with what love can do for us, Christ Himself, who is the full expression of God's love, is not before us as the Object of our hearts ; we have not come to what we read of in Luke v. 11 : "They forsook all, and followed him." This was after they had received a remarkable manifestation of His favour in the great multitude of fishes. They were not occupied with the greatness of the mercy, but with Him who conferred it, for "When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."

There is a moment in the history of a soul that is progressing when Christ becomes its paramount Object, and when the one thought is, like that of the two disciples in John i., "Where dwellest thou ?" or like that of Mary Magdalene : *Where is He ?* "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow

me." He is then more to us than any of His services, great and precious as they are. The still small voice was more to Elijah than the special care shewn for him in feeding him by the ravens. Jerusalem, though a waste, was more to Daniel than the fear of the lions' den. When Stephen beheld Jesus at "the right hand of God," he did not think of deliverance or of receiving any earthly favour from Him, he was absorbed with Himself and the testimony concerning Him. Paul was consoled before the Roman tribunal not by any gift, but by the Lord Himself who stood with him and strengthened him.

God could, as we have seen, shew such consideration for His own while the responsible man was still before His eye; so that an Enoch could walk with Him; or a Noah be set up here in favour and power; or Melchizedek could meet Abram when returning from the slaughter of the kings, and refresh him with bread and wine; or Moses could be forty days in the mount to receive the pattern of things in the heavens; or Israel be conducted from Egypt, the oppressor's power having been so broken that he has to relinquish his grasp, and a way be opened for them through the Red Sea, so that they passed with a high hand out of Egypt, the house of bondage, and all their enemies sank like lead

in the mighty waters. They can then sing : "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." God's interests have become their interests, as expressed in Moses' song, and they look to be brought to His holy habitation ; and eventually they were brought through the wilderness in a remarkable way, so that their foot did not swell, nor their garments wear out, until they were led across the Jordan into the land of Canaan. In the Psalms again we see how God met the need of individuals at the moment, and at the same time provided for what concerned His own name and glory. If all this could be done for His own before the responsible man was removed from His eye, what will He not do when that man who offended *is* removed ; when reconciliation is brought in, and when His own are before Him in all the acceptance of His blessed Son, who not only bore the judgment that rested upon man, but perfectly glorified God in bearing and removing it !

We find Christ, the Man of His pleasure, manifested in the gospels, and that He could not only remove all the pressure that lay upon man, but that He could turn the sufferer to Himself. (See Mark v. 18.) Finally, in His death He terminated judicially the old man before God, so that each of His own might be in His own acceptance with God ; and

that to every one believing that Christ is raised from the dead, the Holy Ghost might be given, by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

What I have called the past, namely, what God has done for those who had faith from Abel down, finishes historically with the termination of Christ's life on the earth. He was here the blessed revelation of God's love, and we are thus assured of His boundless interest in us, and that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

A new day opens with the Lord's resurrection and the present begins, being characterised by the coming of the Holy Ghost; and while we cannot lose sight of the past, there are many who from not rejoicing in the gift of the Holy Ghost, are occupied with the past alone and do not know what it is to be in the Lord's present confidence. The moment we receive the Holy Ghost from Christ glorified, we have the One who can make known to us all that God's heart desires for the present. Many have the Spirit who are not in deliverance, and until they know that they are in Christ, and that the Spirit is in them, the things of Christ are not their chief joy.

If with Israel there was a manifestation palpable to the human senses of how God delivered them from the power of the enemy,

and conducted them through the Red Sea to the joy of deliverance from all their enemies, eventually to plant them in Canaan on new ground, how much more now, when this wonderful type has been fulfilled by the work of Christ, and a deliverance, not now visible to human senses, has been made known by the Spirit of God dwelling in us. A new day is opened to the soul when the Spirit is given to remain with the believer for ever. Thus we know the present. First, the believer has to learn the past in what Christ has wrought for him and in the fulness of the grace of God towards him ; but having received the Spirit, a new range of truth is opened out to him, namely, that which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (I Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

We see from Matthew xiv. 10, when John the Baptist was beheaded, that the Lord accepted it as an intimation of His own rejection, and retired into the desert. There He fed the multitude who followed Him ; but now He has taken a new place which He has set forth in figure by walking on the water above all the power of evil on the earth ;

He has opened out the way to Himself where no one could join Him but by the Spirit. The Lord set forth this in figure when He attracted Peter to join Him ; He said to him, "Come," and Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus. Thus in pattern the Lord prepared Peter for the new structure, the only spot where now He can be found on earth, the house of God, the church of the living God. Hence in John xiv. the disciples, inside with Himself, were first taught how they would be furnished by the Spirit with the knowledge of what Christ had been here on earth ; they are then set up in His own peace to come forth for Him on the earth, receiving all supply from Him, as the branch would from the vine. This is a new divine path, one which the vulture's eye hath not seen. It is not then merely what is past that occupies us, but what is present, the Lord's present mind and interests, so that not only are there special gifts given by the Spirit to the servants for ministry, but as each one knows Christ as Head on the other side of death, he knows Him in His own sphere of life as the source of everything, and that He directs each for the *present* moment ; and every one who seeks Him and beholds His glory is transformed into the same image, according to His present mind, and is therefore enabled to "shew forth

the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Finally, the Spirit of God, according to John xv. 26, sent from Himself in heaven, demonstrates (chap. xvi. 8) what the world is in its true moral character: "Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Secondly, He was to guide them into all truth and to shew them things to come. Thirdly, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He was to bring out to them heavenly things. This is the highest point of your present, because you come from Him in heaven, as united to Him there, to represent Him on the earth at the *present* moment in the church, and in your own social circle.

No one can be in communion with Him without knowing how the church has been leavened by professors, so that it has become a "great house," where there are vessels to honour and to dishonour; and when any one gets near Him he will first purge himself from vessels to dishonour, and then follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. If he walks in the Spirit he is in concert with the Lord's present mind, so that Paul's teaching, which

refers to our union with Christ in heaven, is the great truth for the servant to present in the last days, and is the aim and end of his ministry to the saints. Thus he is led by the Lord to understand how the truth in John's gospel can alone awaken souls from the dead and formal state into which they have fallen, and revive the truth of union with Christ, so that they are prepared for the future by being in present concert with the Lord.

The one who is in concert with the Lord would also know that His attitude towards the professing church is, that He is walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks in judgment, and that in the last days those who cleave to Him, though they have but a little power, keep His word and do not deny His name. They are sustained and succoured by Him in a remarkable way, though apostasy will advance, and culminate in Babylon—which is man surrounded with all the luxuries of this world, but perfectly independent of God. Amidst all the confusion and darkness here, the future is lighted up by the fact that you know Him as He is in the present, and that you are here for Him when He comes. So that at the close we find the Spirit and the bride inviting Him to come and take His rightful place on the earth; then the bride will be here for Him as the New Jerusalem.

Now it is to be noted that while those are interesting who speak of the Lord's walk and ways upon the earth as shewing what He was in our circumstances, they do not get to the present until they know that they are in Christ, and that the Spirit is in them, so that they have full deliverance from themselves; and then, while it is still interesting to look at Him in connection with our circumstances, we have to do with a much greater thing, namely, with Himself in His own circumstances.

One remark more: the snare of those who are satisfied with the knowledge of what Christ has done for them and of God's favour towards them, is to become occupied with the future in the line of prophecy, and they are thus diverted from the great controlling interest of being in company with the Lord in His present mind and purpose.

The Lord give us grace to apprehend our true place with Him now. The more we dwell upon the immense range of truth that belongs to the present, the more edified we shall be, and the more will He Himself personally be the enjoyment of our hearts, because we shall be in concert with Him; and the more truly we walk in the Spirit in the present, the more we enjoy the past and are prepared for the

future, occupied for Him, while watching and waiting for Him to come.

To sum up : if you dwell on the past, historically fulfilled in Christ's life on earth, your heart will be filled with the goodness of God, manifested in what He has effected for us in Christ, and with the greatness of His interest in His own for ever. But when, having received the Spirit, you know that you are united to Christ in present grace, you realise the prayer in Ephesians iii., you know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God. Then Christ's interests are your interests. No matter how dark the day, you know that you are in His confidence and that He is unchanging, and He will instruct you as to how the dead and formal are to be aroused out of their slumbers; and if you are here when He comes, you are of the bride to welcome Him, and to rejoice in the brightness of His presence.

THE EFFECT OF WORLDLY COMPANY.

THE end of God's discipline is "that we might be partakers of his holiness"; to make us as separate from everything of this world as He is. As born of God, we are sanctified by

the truth. The Lord says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth"—which sanctification (as has been said) is immeasurable. We are called to a new and singular position, not known or understood by men. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

When you are established in grace you are called to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Now as born of God your tastes are divine, and as the body is the Lord's it is subject to Him for direction in everything (as a horse would be subject to its owner). We are bought with a price, therefore there is a lack of integrity if we swerve in any degree from this; our simple duty is to glorify God in our body, which is His. If it be His will for us to have employment or relationships or any such claims here, we have to glorify Him in them. ✠

Now nothing diverts us from the perfection of our calling so much as the influence of

unspiritual company. It is not only that a worldly or foolish idea is suggested to yourself, but you see it confirmed by another. Thus from childhood to old age we are affected by the company we keep; as the old saying goes, "Tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you what you are." It is only as we keep fresh and vigorous in the position in which we are set by grace, that we are able to detect the harm that comes to us from our own company. One might say, But I have to do business with men. True, but in business you are not seeking company, and if you keep separate socially, though you may be regarded as silent and austere, you are genuine, and you will be respected in the consciences of those with whom you have to do. There is most danger for us with our relatives, because we are less on our guard with them; but if we are truly on our guard with them, they will have confidence in us, and will turn to us when in any serious difficulty.

The first thing is to get distinctly before us the danger of being soiled, and thus losing the devotedness which is in itself so enjoyable, and so honoured of God. Nothing can be more enjoyable than absolute devotedness to One whose goodness, love and worth command your whole heart. As the Nazarite lost his

separation by the touch of a dead bone, so in the sense of such a loss can we appreciate the better the Lord's present service in washing our feet, to keep us fit for His own holy presence.

We see all through scripture how the man of God is separate from man's thoughts and ways. Abel is not influenced by Cain; he takes a new and distinct path, because he has faith in God. Faith makes God your Object; man makes himself his object. The more man can understand his fellows, the more dangerous is the influence. When man at Babel betrayed his desire to be independent of God, confusion of tongues was sent as a check to man's confederacy.

Now when God called out Abram, His word to him was, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." No doubt he was detained in Charran by his father's influence, for we read in Acts vii., "When his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell." Lot, his brother's son, went with him, but subsequently on his return from Egypt, he determined to be separate from Lot; and "after Lot was separated from him," the Lord said to him: "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward,

and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." (Gen. xiii. 14, 15.)

Our subject is to see how we are influenced by those with whom we associate. Isaac was influenced by Esau "because he did eat of his venison" (even very small attentions can influence one), and he sought to confer on Esau the blessing which was for Jacob. He did not lose the truth, but under injurious influence he would misappropriate it; as has been said: "We do not lose the truth, but when out of communion we misapply it."

Jacob, after his return to the land, swerves from the path of faith, for he buys a parcel of a field from Shechem. (Gen. xxxiii. 18.) No doubt he had bad influence at home, for Rachel had idols (Gen. xxxi. 19), and his altar (as is always the case) shewed his true state, for he called it El-elohe-Israel; he was an object to God, but he had no sense of what was due to God. Hence in chapter xxxv., when God tells him to go up to Bethel, he remembers the holiness of God's presence (see chap. xxviii. 17), though it was twenty years since he was there, and he says to his household: "Put away the strange gods that are among you; and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to

Bethel." In responding to God's call he got a sense of the exacting nature of God's presence.

I need hardly multiply examples for you. Moses is taught that it is a perilous thing to undertake the Lord's service without a pure conscience. God sought to slay him because he had not circumcised his sons, all through the influence, no doubt, of his Midianitish wife. (Exo. iv. 24-26.) Solomon, the wisest of men, the most highly favoured of God, is turned to false worship by the influence of his wives. (I Kings xi. 1-5.) Alas that the man who dedicated the temple of God should disclose such alienation of heart from God!

Israel is warned not to allow any of the inhabitants of the land to remain lest they should become influenced by them (Exo. xxxiv. 12-16); but instead of driving them out, they made a compromise with them (Judges ii. 2, etc.), and learned their ways and eventually fell under their influence.

When Balaam was not allowed to curse the children of Israel, he taught Balak to "cast a stumblingblock before them" (Rev. ii. 14); that was, to mingle with them, and thus to corrupt them. It is remarkable that of all the varied forms of Satan's opposition—Pharaoh, Amalek, Balaam, and the seven nations—we are not warned against any of them in the addresses to the seven churches,

except Balaam's, which sets forth the baneful influence of company, and was the one which was most successful in corrupting the church.

In the foregoing scriptures we are distinctly taught the baneful influence of worldly company. I do not mean having to do with men in business ; company is when there is interchange of thought and social intercourse. If the saint does not at once refuse it, he is influenced by it and sinks to the level of his company, whatever that level may be ; and the first evidence of it is, he loses his freshness and vigour, like a tree losing its top shoot. The first result of Israel's declension was that they had no rain. (Deut. xi. 16, 17.)

It may be helpful to trace a little the serious nature of this snare, and the insidious way in which this device of Satan works. For instance, a Christian marries and furnishes his house with the intention of declining the visits of his worldly relatives and acquaintances ; this is his intention ; but often while the front door is closed to them, they find admittance (so to speak) by the side entrance, and he is eventually swamped imperceptibly to himself by the worldly element, especially if he has means. The blessedness of the injunction to the bride in Psalm xlv. is lost sight of, not only to *leave*, but to "*forget* also thine own people, and thy father's

house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

Those who know anything of the blessedness of communion with Christ will soon detect that they have lost ground when they lend their ear to the worldly element in their company; talking of their relations and the like they are liable to fall into the snare of the enemy, and they will become unhappy like the bride in Canticles v. until their feet are washed and they are again in communion with the Lord.

It is right to think of our relations, but when we talk of their progress or their interests the worldly element is uppermost. Many a one is turned aside by adopting a relation or undertaking a responsibility to which God has not appointed him. It is just the difference between a river and a canal. A river has its natural bed, while a canal is of man's construction and often has a dry dock. Whenever we see the worldly element in any of our company, especially in a Christian, unless we immediately judge it in ourselves, we are sure to become leavened by it.

Many a one goes on happily for years until his family is grown up, and then he gets so interested in their progress and advancement that he is leavened by it, and his worldly

prepossession seems to have revived. Barnabas would not have separated from Paul (Acts xv. 39), and would not have been carried away by the Jewish element in Peter (Gal. ii. 13) if he had judged it in himself.

When you are true to what is new,
 You grow in beauteous grace ;
 When you decline, and drink old wine,
 The fool is in your face.

“A fool . . . saith to every one that he is a fool.” (Eccles. x. 3.)

“No man having drunk old wine also straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.” (Luke v. 39.)

But the Corinthians are a warning to us: they not only lost sight of what was due to God in His own house, but they were a reproach in every circle, both at home and abroad. That highly gifted church became so diverted through association with unbelievers that the apostle has to say to them, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as

God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vi. 14-18 ; vii. 1.)

THE RELATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE CHURCH.

It is important for every Christian to understand the relation between the gospel and the church.

Paul at his conversion was given the first intimation of the mystery of God, which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. It is expressed in the words : "Why persecutest thou *me* ?" So that not only is a believer saved by the work of Christ, but every Christian is a part of Christ. Hence the first thing known must be the gospel ; if the gospel is not clearly known, the mystery of the gospel cannot be known. We do not

hear much in the New Testament of evangelists, but the gospel is referred to over sixty times in the epistles, from which we gather the grave importance of the subject, and the responsibility of the preacher who presents it.

Nowadays, when many earnest men give up their secular callings to preach the gospel, it is of deep importance that they should not only know the scope of the gospel, but that they should enter into the reality of what it is to be sent by Christ, *the Head of the church*. For "how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 15.) From what one hears of evangelists generally, one is forced to conclude that they do not know more than forgiveness of sins, and, while their zeal and devotedness must be greatly commended, the desire and prayer of us all should be that they may be fitted for their work.

As far as I see, an evangelist ought not only to know his own acceptance with God, but he ought to so realise what it is to be "in Christ" that he can say: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made *me free* from the law of sin and death." I daresay that, as a rule, all who have acceptance with God by faith would say that they were in Christ according to the word of God, but deliverance is only realised by the Spirit

dwelling in you. The evangelist ought to know what his place is in the church as a member of the body of Christ before he can be assured that he is gifted by the Lord and sent forth to fulfil the service of an evangelist, to which he is commended by his spiritual elders, signified (when the church was in order) by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. In Christendom (no doubt from giving a natural meaning to the spiritual idea) every one is supposed to prepare for the ministry—to study for orders, as they say. It is evidently the mind of the Lord that His servant should learn of Him in the assembly, not only that he has received a gift and is assured of it, but that as qualified he is sent by the Lord ; as we read in John xx. 21 : “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

It is unaccountable that while most earnest men seek to be evangelists, so few devote themselves to the care of souls : an unseen but most profitable service. Certainly there is even a greater want of pastors and teachers than there is of evangelists. I believe if every one was quietly and devotedly occupied with Christ's interests in the assembly, the Lord would before long make known to each what his gift was.

I think we ought all to take it to heart that if the gospel is imperfectly presented

there cannot be fruit according to the mind of Christ. If your beginning is imperfect you cannot reach to the finish. If you do not know God's gospel you cannot reach God's purpose. The Apostle Paul can say: I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified—a living Person in glory, and that Person *crucified here*. He expected his converts to be according to his preaching. He could say afterwards: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

As a rule, as far as I know, the evangelists faithfully present the value of the blood, but I question whether many of them have the gospel that was preached by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians—the living Person in glory, crucified here. I learn from 1 Corinthians i. 23 that Christ crucified is "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Many would be glad to listen to atonement by the blood of Christ who are not ready to hear that man has been set aside in the cross: so that to a Jew who looked to the law the cross was a stumbling-block, for how could he keep the law if the man was set aside, and to the Gentile it was foolishness, for if man is set aside, where is there a place for human wisdom? Thus the apostle adds: "I was with you in weak-

ness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Cor. ii. 3, 4.) Whereas in our days very often the more eloquent and stirring the preaching the more it acts on human feelings, the more it is approved, and the greater number of those who profess to be converted, because by faith in the blood they are assured of eternal safety, can go on in natural things here, with the law as a rule of life. The burden of the evangelist's message is that God has Himself removed the distance between Him and man, and that He receives the believer in all the nearness and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that Paul could say to the Philippian jailer in his distress: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and we find him that very night rejoicing in God with all his house. Such a convert would be able to say: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

No one can read the early chapters of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians i. and ii. without being struck with the grave and solemn responsibility of the evangelist, both as to himself and as to the tidings he announced, and the results were characterised by the

tidings. But when we look at things in the present day, there is little of that solemn sense of divine responsibility as sent by the Lord to present the gospel in a given place. Earnest men are satisfied if they can by any means, or anywhere, collect a crowd, and deliver to them an impassioned appeal as to faith in the blood of Christ, and often seem to forget that God converts the soul; it is their duty to deliver the message of His grace. Consequently while there are many conversions, how seldom do we hear of one who breaks from the world, and honestly avows: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." As far as I can see, converts are characteristically like those who preach to them. Apollos was blessed in his work though he preached an imperfect gospel; and when we hear of him again he is fully on the Lord's side, but not as an evangelist; he refreshed the saints, he "watered" them.

I may add in corroboration of what I have advanced, that no servant can be on the earth for the Lord, as in John xv., who has not come from the Lord inside, as in John xiv.*

* It is interesting to note that in John xiii. and xiv. we learn the Lord as with Him in divine seclusion—what He is to us. But in Hebrews we are drawn to Him,

It is inside with Him that the servant is prepared and furnished ; then he comes forth to be His disciple, to bring forth fruit, to be so in concert with His mind in the power of the Holy Ghost sent from Himself in heaven, that he is a witness for Him here. No servant can be in His confidence or in His power who does not abide in Him. We see that the hindrance in Colossians ii. is the twofold working of the flesh, and these come out in I Corinthians i., where the gospel is refused. Christ crucified is to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the nations foolishness. These are the two great hindrances to the reception of the gospel ; the Corinthians suffered from the one, the Galatians from the other ; but with the Colossians the two combined to hinder the servant of Christ ; we find these two snares full blown in Christendom under the names of rationalism and ritualism. But no servant is free from this combined evil in some shape or form who has not entered into death with Christ, "*from the rudiments of the world.*" If you be risen with Him, you are in the power of His life, you are under His

as Peter when sinking was drawn to Him. We turn to Him in our infirmities ; He does not remove them, but He draws us away from the place where trouble is to His own side, and eventually we find ourselves in the holiest, in company with Him, where we learn Himself.

direction as Head ; then you truly abide in Him and you are His disciple.

I am afraid the tendency is to enter on the service of Christ very little apprehending the solemnity and blessedness of the calling. If you are not His disciple you cannot be His friend. It is only as you realise your union with Him in heaven that you are in His confidence. You then can come out here in heavenly power to glorify Him according to His pleasure, because you realise the power which wrought in Christ ; that power is to us-ward who believe, according to the counsel of God. You know that you are raised up and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ, and then you begin to learn the prayer in Ephesians iii., "that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Many confound this with their own state, instead of seeing that it is His interests that now control your affections, so that you come out here from Him, according to John xvi., to find the prince of this world is judged, and that you are made superior to all the power of evil ; and it is then truly that you enter into the great fact that your gift is from the glorified Man. When Christ had overcome everything here, when He had

“ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” It is plain that although the servant may be blessed in the exercise of his gift, he is not in full power with regard to it until he enjoys union with Christ in heaven; and this is not only that we look for the portion of the church as the bride of Christ *hereafter*, but being so in His confidence *now*, and so enjoying His place and His power, that as Rebecca was a comfort to Isaac when his mother died, so now when His earthly people are set aside, we are to be to the satisfaction of Christ’s heart in the darkest day here.

Finally, I would add that while our progress depends on the measure of the gospel we *begin* with, the aim and perfection of all ministry is to lead souls into present enjoyment and the purpose of God; this is the finish of His grace. We see from Ephesians iv. that the Spirit of God looks at the saints in their true calling, their normal place for Christ here, that is, in union with Him. But, alas! we know that few of those servants who are most before the public really know it for themselves, and if they have not reached it for themselves, how can they minister the truth which would lead others to it? While, on the other hand, no one can know the gospel of the glory of Christ, and his nearness to

Him in glory as Paul preached it, without entering into the reality of union with Him. Then it would be the natural outflow of his heart to preach it; such an one could truly say: "I believed and therefore have I spoken."

Thus two things ought to be before the evangelist: first, the greatness of the subject of the gospel itself; and secondly, that it is by the gospel souls are prepared for the purpose of God; for as a rule every one is detained or hindered by the imperfect gospel he has received, so that instead of realised union with Christ being the normal state of souls, it is a very rare exception when it is known.

May we all be more interested in the Lord's servants. We have no right to dictate to them how they preach, but we ought to feel responsible for what they know. May we take it more to heart that it is unworthy of a servant of Christ to undertake to declare the good tidings of God of which he is himself imperfectly informed.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“THE promise of the Spirit through faith” is the blessing now given in Jesus Christ to us Gentiles in answer to the faith of Abraham, as we gather from Galatians iii. 14. First we learn the greatness of this blessing, given to crown and to perpetuate all that had been wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ. “The Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John vii. 39.) When God had been fully glorified here by a Man—the Man Christ Jesus—that Man was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father: “Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” (Acts ii. 33.) There is a day coming when, as we read, “I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh” (Joel ii. 28). That day has not come yet, but the promise of the Father *has* come, according to Christ’s request in John xiv., that the Father would give to His own another Comforter, who should remain here and dwell in them. It is important to bear in mind the difference between the word “*on*” which will be fulfilled in the future day, and the word “*in*” which belongs to the church period. “*On*” signifies more an influence, like wind

upon a sail. Many do not see the Spirit to be more than an influence, whereas the word "*in*" implies identification. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. viii. 26.) I see that the first sense the soul has of the gift of the Spirit is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. This is illustrated by the father kissing the returning prodigal. (Luke xv. 20.) As far as I see, we do not know experimentally the power of the Spirit of God, until, according to Romans vii. 25, we can say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." As we see in the prodigal, he had to have the best robe put on him before he could make merry in his father's presence: so, as in Romans viii. 2, we then know that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." This is the great day to the believer, and you have not truly entered on your christian history until you know that you yourself are *in Christ*. It is not merely that you are not thinking of the flesh, but you are rejoicing that you are *in Christ*, and thus you meet every intrusion of the flesh. Here properly John iv. begins to

be known. When Isaac gets his place, Ishmael has no place. You have a new personal identity when Christ is acknowledged in His true place, according to His rights; you are conscious of power, and you can "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." It is not that Ishmael or the flesh is not there, but you are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you." And now you learn the great truth as to the old man being crucified with Christ, so that you can say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Once you have acknowledged that Christ has the right to your whole being, you lose a good conscience if you do not walk accordingly; and here it is that even after having had the sense of liberty and the power of the Spirit, if you give way to some influence of the flesh, and thus grieve the Spirit of God, you are not only powerless, but you are like a bird with a wounded wing, you are depressed with a sense of loss, and in sowing to the flesh you have only reaped corruption; whereas if you walk in the Spirit, you daily enjoy more and more the wonderful nature of your new position, as set free from the religion and the desires of the flesh.

It is important to bear in mind that a snare

often commences with something that seems simple and harmless; a snare may not be anything morally wrong, but is generally that which you naturally like best. When it becomes a ruling desire so that discontent ensues if you do not possess it, as with Eve, the carnal mischief has begun, you begin to "thirst"; and though you do not lose the assurance of God's grace in your soul, you are really asleep, that is, inactive, and you will not be happy or in power until you have judged the desire which led you captive, and have turned to the Lord with a deeper sense of His love; for when Christ is in His right place the snare is broken and you are delivered; you are filled with thankfulness at the completeness of your deliverance, and the ease with which it was effected.

You are delivered from the snares of the mind in quite another way. We learn that the Corinthians were ensnared by human wisdom; the apostle addressed them as carnal, as babes in Christ; and having exposed their failure in the first epistle, he presses upon them in the second how he had presented Christ to them. From the law there was a ministration of condemnation, while from Christ there was a ministration of righteousness from the glory: We all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed accordingly to

the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit."

The Galatians had to learn the power of the Spirit for deliverance, and to them the apostle shews that the flesh with all its pretensions is to be supplanted by Christ Himself, the true Isaac. The Corinthians had to learn in the gospel of the glory of Christ their acceptance with God. When this is learned His wisdom and the rule of it become the joy of your heart; like the queen of Sheba you are beside yourself under the sense of His wisdom; you not only see it in Him, but you are made through grace to share in it, so that you come from His presence controlled by His wisdom; your own mind is silenced, and you learn that you have the mind of Christ.

It must be borne in mind that the Spirit of God is occupied with each of us individually before He conducts us to the portion that is common to us as belonging to the bride of Christ. After a soul is settled as to his acceptance and deliverance, the next step is to know Christ in communion with His own in the assembly. Each individual has to be conducted like Peter to the Lord's side, and thus having come to the Living Stone is a component part of His assembly, where His present mind and interest on the earth are to be known. I see

many take this their true position without being in the reality of it, and this accounts for the want of concert there is in those who take part in the meetings, for we cannot truly be competent to enter into Christ's mind if we are not at rest as to our own state. If there had been no apostle to correct the Corinthians and Galatians, into what a fearful state of confusion they would have fallen. That is very much what we find generally in Christendom now, and what we are all prone to unless there be real guides, like Timothy, who know the path to lead in.

It is an era of great blessing to a soul when he realises that he has come to the presence of Christ as the Living Stone. The Spirit then leads him into the present interest of Christ. Surely if, as we find in the temple of old, God could be learned in any measure when there was only a cloud of glory, how much more now when we are in the presence of the Lord of glory, and the Spirit unhindered in glorifying Him to us. In the Colossians we find a devoted company commended for their faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints, but they did not know the mystery of God; they had not learned that they had died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, and so they could not be free from the two evil forces which now prevail in Christen-

dom—then in the bud, but now full blown—rationalism and ritualism. The apostle shews them that if risen with Christ they are in the sphere of His life, and the Spirit can then unhinderedly make known the Lord's pleasure to each. I refer to this because though the Spirit has come down to us, His great aim is to carry us up to heavenly things, to make known to us the things of God: "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

No one is truly built in who has not come to the Living Stone and known the Lord at the other side of death. I believe that one might enjoy this grace for a time in the assembly, and yet not have entered experimentally into the momentous fact of having crossed the Jordan, and of being in the sphere of Christ's life. There the Spirit of God is in His own sphere, and He conducts you to Christ as Eliezer conducted Rebekah to Isaac, and you enter into the knowledge of union with Christ, and thus is fulfilled to you what we read of in John xvi.: "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Thus we become acquainted with things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath re-

vealed them unto us by his Spirit." You are then, so to speak, within the region where the Spirit is at home, and where you can drink of the fountain of living water (John vii.), and out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water, according to the measure of Christ's will.

In conclusion, I may add a word as to the leading of the Spirit in the assembly. Every Christian who is at peace with God desires to break bread in remembrance of Christ in His death, though few know at first the solemnity of having communion with His death; but as each one is drawn to Him, and feeds on His death, by the Spirit, he is awakened to desire the Lord's presence, and to know what the disciples knew when that word was fulfilled to them: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"—"Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." This can only be known by the Spirit, for Christ is only to be known at the other side of death, and when you know Him thus you have come to the Living Stone. A new day is opened to you when you find yourself in His presence, and enter into the reality of what is typified in Leviticus viii. Having remembered Him in death, you are of the consecrated company feeding on the blessedness of His acceptance

in the presence of God, where He is known as the One greater than Moses; where not only you find your own rest, but where He, according to John xiv., fits you for Himself in divine seclusion, so that you can come forth abiding in Him to bear fruit; and so answering to His mind, you learn that you are His friend. The Holy Spirit from Himself in heaven makes you superior to all the power of evil here, and at the same time makes known to you what eye hath not seen. You come to the range of His own delights.

One word more in the way of caution. Though the Spirit does not leave us, yet when we grieve Him by sowing to the flesh, indulging in our own thoughts or tastes, He does not help us to the next step until the evil is judged. It is then failure occurs, because the Spirit does not help; He makes us sensible that we have lost His support; so that in praying we have no assurance of being near the Lord. I say this because it is often an occasion of much loss to suppose that a good, well-expressed prayer is really praying. You can have no sense of God or of having come to Him, or of His presence but by the Spirit of God; and if the Spirit is grieved you have not the sense of nearness to Him. Many derive a certain satisfaction from listening to prayers, because

their wishes are expressed, but this is not really praying. When you pray you know that you have come to God, you know that you have *told Him*, made known to Him your requests, as in Philippians iv., and the proof is, that though you may not get answers to your petitions, you get His peace which passeth all understanding. But also we have this confidence that if we ask anything according to His will we know that He hears us, and whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him. But this can only be known by the Spirit. If the Spirit is grieved, you really do not pray, though you may utter words and express yourself well.

The Lord lead us to walk before Him with the Spirit ungrieved, our only bond to Him now and for ever.

A GUIDE: A SERVANT OF THE LORD IN DIFFICULT TIMES.

A SERVANT of the Lord does not know the true character of his service until he is so near the Lord that his heart has been deeply affected with the fact that the Lord is not here, that He is rejected by man, and that He is sitting down at the right hand of God.

Thus while the servant has to do with the Lord outside of everything here, his service is addressed to those of His own who are here. So he begins with learning the Lord where He is in glory, and then conveying His mind with all diligence to His people down here. This is the servant's preparation for his work.

Next, the more he surveys and knows the state of the church, the more he is awakened to a sense of its grievous departure from the Lord, though his heart rejoices in finding here and there those who really are attached to Christ ; the more also he is filled with zeal of heart to be a true help to His weak ones scattered amid the confusion. Like Nehemiah, he not merely sees the deplorable ruin, but he sets himself to strengthen the things that remain—to feed the sheep and the lambs. In order to be equipped for his work, the servant's resources must be all in Christ ; he must be like Elisha when Elijah was taken away ; he must act as if everything depended on himself. The first thing is to be "strong in the Lord" and "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" ; not looking for any one to support him, but so helped by the Lord that his one thought is to care for the sheep and lambs of the flock.

Though the Gentile power has cut off even the apostle, the servant for difficult times

feels responsible to maintain what the apostle communicated, and as he maintains it he is of real help and use. Among men, if a great general is cut off in battle every loyal soldier would be zealous in making up for the loss ; but with the soldier of Christ, the Timothy, it is not only that he feels charged with the communications of the apostle, but he has this amazing comfort, that the Lord will give him "understanding in all things." (2 Tim. ii.) Many are careful students of the word who are not effective in their ministry because they trust more to their knowledge of the word than to the present help of the Lord, giving them "understanding in all things." It is a fact that those who are great students of the word often depend so much on their knowledge of it, that they have not the mind of the Lord for the time. Though the study of the word and the knowledge of it are most necessary, yet it is not the knowledge of the word that makes the servant a true help to the sheep, but the Lord Himself giving him the "understanding." Many are satisfied with the knowledge of the word, and unintentionally make it a substitute for the direction which can only come from the Head.

The guide then is not only strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, but he is independent of all human resources ; and in main-

taining God's word and counsel for His own to the end, he receives direct light from the Lord Himself as to what suits them for the time. The servant is called to war; he is in conflict with all the things around, therefore he must not be entangled with the affairs of this life, "that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier," but he has to go through severe drill before he *is* a soldier. His first conflict is with the world; I do not refer here to the conflict in his own soul before he has learned deliverance, because he cannot enter on the duty of a soldier *at all* until he is established in grace; hence his first public conflict is with the world as such, and his usefulness much depends on the completeness of his victory. Like Moses, he esteems "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"; his heart is so deeply affected by the fact of Christ's rejection here that possessions or prospects have lost their hold upon him; he may not be called on to surrender his possessions, but he does not use them to maintain a position here.

His second great conflict is with the *religious* world, amidst all the systems and denominations for which religious men assume to have authority from scripture. To investigate each

would be profitless ; the simplest duty of the servant is to stand clear of them all, and to wait on the Lord for guidance as to the path. It is quite possible to quote scripture in support of a human opinion which claims to be derived from scripture ; and this, backed up by the sayings and writings of pious men, has very general acceptance, whereas a spiritual judgment can only be apprehended by the spiritual, because while the human mind can take in a human opinion, the spiritual mind alone can understand the things of the Spirit of God, or form a spiritual judgment. "Which also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means." (1 Cor. ii. 13, New Trans.)

No soul with any sense of nearness to God could survey the fellowship of religious meetings around us without being pained by the little sense there is of the holiness which belongs to the house of God—how, as we see in the Old Testament, that even touching a dead body defiled the tabernacle of God. In the sects, though people are not received into fellowship unless agreed on certain points, yet there is little or no discipline to keep the house of God even up to the light of a pious Jew ; hence the first result of enlightenment in a soul true to the Lord is to purge himself

from the vessels to dishonour, and to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." The scripture intimates that such are to be found. It is not to set up some new thing, but to follow righteousness, etc., with them who have already separated from the unholy mixture in the church.

Next, the servant or guide must be unfettered in his own house. If his wife is heart and soul with him, she is no hindrance but a help and solace to him. When she is not quite up to him, but is silent and prayerful, watching diligently that nothing in the house should disturb or hinder him, he is free for the Lord's concerns. When she is not in concert with him, he must stand firm and uninfluenced, though in all tenderness and consideration, giving honour unto her as unto the weaker vessel. It is when she assumes to be in concert with him, but without real exercise of heart before the Lord, that she breaks down in an emergency. But the great snare is when the wife has an ascendancy over her husband, and, like the much loved Rachel, who secretly pursued her own ways, she so leavens him, that though he does not give up the calling of God, yet he is powerless and without faith in it. Like Jacob (Gen. xxxiii.) his altar, El-elohe-Israel, as is always the case,

indicates the state of his soul with God; he can get no further than that he himself is an object with God. So there are many now who can speak much of the goodness of God to *themselves*, yet know very little of the blessedness of *Himself*. At length the voice of the Lord recalls the servant to His presence, and then he becomes clear of the leaven, and says to his household, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments." (Gen. xxxv. 1-3.)

As to his children, the servant's simple duty is to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There is no entanglement while they are young; the danger is when they are grown up and start for themselves: then he is sure to be entangled if he is either patron or partner in their interests. When he is so, he returns in heart to the world he had renounced, and his separation to God is more or less compromised. It has been said, "You can refuse the world for yourself, but not for your children."

Now that you are a soldier, you must "strive lawfully," and you must fulfil every relation of life according to the will of God; there is nothing eccentric or extreme about you, you should be known as incomparable in your relationships as husband, father, and master. Finally, you have to labour as

the husbandman before you can partake of the fruits. "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Cor. ix. 6.) "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psa. cxxvi. 5, 6.)

Now that you are fitted to fulfil the responsibility of a guide, your beginning is of the greatest importance, hence the apostle writes : "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." The risen Christ in glory is the only source of blessing to the Jew as well as to the Gentile; hence it is most necessary that a servant who would lead on souls should see that they have begun according to God, that they are not only assured of their forgiveness and acceptance with God, but are so delivered from the old man that as "in Christ," the "best robe," they can joy in God. No soul is established in grace until he knows that he is received by God in Christ risen from the dead, and that in himself he is in practical deliverance, by the Spirit made free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. viii. 2.)

A guide is very dependent on the evangelist who has preceded him, for if souls are not established in acceptance with God and in

deliverance the guide must do the work of an evangelist ; he can make no advance until this is effected.

I need not pursue the gradual way in which souls are led on, but I close with one remark : that while every true-hearted Christian desires to partake of the Lord's supper in remembrance of Christ's death, very few are led into the gravity of fellowship with His death. If your heart really enters into the fact that the One who is so endeared to you has died out of this scene, what a sense of desolation must press upon your heart as to everything in this world ! The dearest one here may be removed, but no desolation can be so great as that of having fellowship with the Lord in His death here. Your sorrow would not be less because of the wrench death may make in your circle, because the one who knows the deepest sorrow is the one who feels every successive sorrow the most deeply.

I need not add more ; thank God there are many devoted ones who can help a little, and though all cannot take the place of guides, yet every true-hearted man or woman *can* help, and it is a great thing to be able to contribute to those who are most in advance, and great responsibility attaches to him who is a guide or leader not to make a false step. "Give heed to thyself and to the teaching ;

continue in them ; for, doing this, thou shalt save both thyself and those that hear thee.”
(1 Tim. iv. 16, New Trans.)

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES ACCORDING TO THE MIND OF GOD.

THE blessed God in His goodness and love has given to us the holy scriptures that we may know His mind in relation to His people. Now, while acknowledging this great favour, the question which should deeply occupy our hearts is, Do *we* truly understand His mind? It is evident, even with regard to human things, that you may have much knowledge without the ability to use it; and this is also the case in divine things. The greatest departure from the truth has been the result of a mere human knowledge of the scriptures. Thus Rome, in carnal wisdom and fearing any interpretation of the Bible not authorised by the so-called church, has interdicted the reading of it.

Now the scriptures are, as we may say, in two volumes: the Old Testament, which reaches from Adam to Christ; the New Testament, which is from Christ's birth to His coming in glory. As far as I see, the Old Testament is for the individual saint, while in the

New you are connected with the assembly. As to the Old Testament scriptures, Timothy is told that they are able to make him "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Now though he read and re-read them and might have a correct knowledge of what is recorded in them, yet if he had not faith in Christ Jesus, he is not made wise by them. We see in Hebrews xi., from Abel until the walls of Jericho fell down, the history of a soul walking in faith; and every believer now can ascertain the stage he has arrived at in that history. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is specially characterised by faith, so that it is not merely knowledge of the Lord's words that is sufficient, but having faith in Himself. Cain had the knowledge of His word, but he had not faith. Lot had the knowledge of His word, but he had not faith. The spies had the knowledge of His word, but only two of them had faith. Saul had the knowledge of His word, but he had not faith. Israel had the knowledge of His word, rehearsed over and over by the prophets, and yet they had not faith; so that eventually they made the word of God of none effect through their tradition, and used the law of God to crucify the Lord of glory.

I press this because from the first the tendency of every one is to be satisfied with

the gift, without any exercise of soul as to whether he can turn the gift to right account. It betrays the ignorance and the littleness of the human mind to suppose that the blessed God could give to man, the object of His love, such a gift as the revelation of Himself, even the words of His mouth, which must be beyond the comprehension of the human mind, without giving him the ability to enjoy it fully. Even natural things, such as light and air, are beyond the comprehension of man, and yet the youngest child can fully enjoy them.

When the grace of God is made known to a soul, the work of God begins. When through the greatness of the work that has been done for him on the cross, that soul is assured by the Holy Spirit of his acceptance with God, he has not only the enjoyment of being on terms with God, but he is given a condition by the Spirit of God to enjoy the greatness of God's gift. It is impossible for the God of all goodness to place the prodigal in happy relations with Himself without giving him the fitness to be near Himself. He would not give him a position without the condition to enjoy it, so he gets the best robe. The delay in souls is in entering on the new condition to enjoy this new position. We are unwilling to put off the old man. It is not God's side

of the grace that is ever deficient, the deficiency is with us, in our slowness to accept the condition to enjoy the grace. The man who came to the marriage without a wedding garment was not asked why he came there, but why he had not on a garment suited to the place. (Matt. xxii.)

I have been led into this digression in order to shew the perversity of the human mind, which assumes to understand the word of God without the divinely given ability to enter into it. No natural man would give his child a watch without being assured that he had ability to appreciate and use it properly.

We have seen that the word of God, however plainly declared, is ineffectual without faith. Faith is as much the gift of God as the word itself. The soul that is more occupied with God than with any of His gifts finds that he receives faith from Him with regard to His gifts, for without faith it is impossible to please God. The one who has faith in God for one thing, has faith in Him for everything which His grace bestows. We see the history of faith in Hebrews xi. ; we begin with the true sacrifice to God set forth by Abel and go on to possession of the land by the mighty power of God. And now, as the man with the drawn sword indicates (Josh. v. 13),

we know that Christ is the Leader and Completer of faith, so that any one in Christ has now the whole course open to him. Thus he can be wise indeed unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) So much for the individual path.

Now we turn to the New Testament, where we shall find the Man of God's pleasure fulfilling all His will. He is the Head of the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all. God is manifest in flesh, "made of a woman, made under the law." (Gal. iv. 4.) Up to this, every trait of grace in a man from Adam down was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. When man had failed under every trial, He is born into the world. He begins at the weakest point—a babe, as presented to the shepherds, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. He who made man has Himself become a Man. He does not begin at maturity like Adam; He begins at the lowest point of infancy. The Creator who gave man all the attributes and qualities which God desired for man is now a Man Himself, to encounter all the trials and diffi-

culties which would affect a man in the weakness of humanity. His was a wonderful path ; no trial, no vicissitude, no want, no opposition, nor the adverse circumstances to which man was reduced by his departure from God, ever diverted Him from His holy dependence on God or evoked a thought of self-consideration, He was always the Holy One of God—a Nazarite from His birth. He never sought human pleasures, and maintained this wonderful, unique path, with His resources only in God. He never was tinged with the smallest shade of human frailty. He was the spotless One, as He must be, to atone for fallen man. When of mature age, a voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight." Every contrariety which He encountered was only an opportunity to disclose His perfection, and the beauty of the grace of depending on God. He is led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, forty days without food or any succour on the human side ; He utterly confounds Satan, and now He enters upon an entirely new course. He had shewn out the beauty of grace in the weakness of humanity ; He had maintained everything that was due to God from a man under the law ; now He turns round to declare God to men : "the only begotten Son, who is

in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him"! (John i. 18.)

Eventually, when refused and rejected of man, He laid down His life according to the will of God. "He suffered . . . the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit. All the divine beauty which shone out in Him in the feebleness of humanity, though no longer expressed in the flesh, *remains in Him*, "the second man"—the Man "out of heaven." (See 1 Cor. xv. 49.) And now the secret of God is divulged; the collective company, the church, is the body of Christ. Every Christian is a member of the body of Christ, so that all the grace which was displayed by Him here might be perpetuated for ever in the members of His body.

When He was exalted to God's right hand, He received for the church the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and on the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost descended to His own who were gathered together. Then the firstfruits unto God began. We are all baptised by one Spirit into one body, and now, what was not known before Christ came is true for every believer; all the light and truth one gets from Christ is not for oneself alone, as in Old Testament times, but for the benefit

of others ; “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (I Cor. xii. 7.) : So that everything one gets from the world has now a new responsibility connected with it—it is for the profit of all ; as the bee that finds the honey miles off, carries it back to the hive. It is important to bear in mind that every member of the body affects us, and we affect them. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. It is not enough for a person to receive light from the Lord, to enjoy it himself ; unless he has to do with Christ as Head, outside of everything here, he is not directed as to the effectual use of it for the saints.

Thus there is a peculiar interest now in knowing the scriptures. The man who has received his knowledge from the Lord feels it incumbent on him to share it with his fellows. But however plainly truth is unfolded in words, we must ever bear in mind the saying of the Lord : “Why do ye not know my speech ? Because ye cannot hear my word.” (John viii. 43.) Hence in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the truth of the mystery is plainly revealed in words, the apostle prays that they may have “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.” Although they had the words, they required the Spirit of God in full power to make them

acquainted with the mind of God. We find that many are well acquainted with the letter of Ephesians who have not apprehended the greatness of the mystery.

The church had not long shone out in beauty and power before the whole force of the enemy was directed against it. Paul falls into the hands of the Romans ; he writes to Timothy before his martyrdom, that all in Asia had turned away from him ; and the church had become like a great house with vessels to honour and to dishonour. In the Book of Revelation we find the Lord walking in judgment in the midst of the churches, and He first censures Ephesus, which was so bright, as having left her first love. He tells of the downfall of the church which He had brought so close to Himself ; and eventually there are those in Laodicea who could boast that they were rich and had need of nothing, while He Himself was outside. That is the last phase, when all the light and truth which the church could boast of was practically ineffectual. When there was no repentance the church was spued out of His mouth as no longer a vessel of testimony. That which in its calling was nearest to Him, is so estranged from Him that it is called the harlot ; and the beast, the power of the world, carries her. Nothing has helped to civilise

the world like the Bible ; no moral code propounded by man was ever equal to it, and the result of it is that the church, set as the pillar and ground of the truth, but having become apostate, is used by the power of the world to bring about a condition of things called Babylon, which can say, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 7.)

I need not add more. My desire has been to shew how the word without the Spirit of God can be perverted and so used for man's benefit, that his one thought is to be independent of God, which is what Babylon expresses. If on the one hand the word of God leads us into the heights and blessedness of the Father's presence, and into the knowledge of Himself by the Spirit of God, on the other hand we see the depth of degradation and distance, which a knowledge of the word without the teaching of God leads to.

A VIEW OF THE REVELATION.

GLORY is the goal and climax of everything. The glory righteously displays itself. In the history of this world good and evil began together : good has overcome the evil in such

a way that the glory is displayed, and the glory is the climax. God's purpose in the saints necessarily runs along that line, and if they are set for the glory they must be in the purpose, and if they are set for the purpose, they are sure to be in the glory, which is the righteous display, or the display righteously, of all God's attributes, so that the good has obtained the victory. If this were more known it would work wonderful advancement in the progress of souls and in the testimony down here.

In 2 Corinthians iii. you have the gospel of the glory ; glory has come in ; every one who believes is to be conformed to it. Now you have to look for the history of the glorified Man ; that is, the purpose of God. There are two classes, the Man in the glory, and the man not in the glory. Stephen's testimony is refused as to the Man gone up into glory, and the Lord now sets up His church on the earth as being *of* that glorious Man, as you see in Revelation i. and ii.

CHAPTER I.

The Lord is walking through the churches in judgment.

CHAPTERS II., III.

The history of the church. He has an establishment on the earth. But the glorified Man

is not accepted on earth ; there is an outward acknowledgment given to Him by the Latin kingdom, but it is not genuine ; therefore, instead of being according to Revelation ii., this acknowledgment becomes the "mustard tree" of Matthew xiii. The candlestick is taken away from the church. The candlestick is that which had the character of the glorified Man.

CHAPTERS IV., V.

He is acknowledged in heaven (chap. iv. 3) as the One entitled to the kingdom. In Revelation we get Him in three positions. First, He is seen walking among the candlesticks. Secondly, the candlesticks are put out, and He is acknowledged as the glorified Man in heaven. Thirdly, He is in heaven now ready to come for us. Satan was put out by the new Man on the cross. Now what follows is, that Satan is trying to put out what is of the glorified Man on earth.

CHAPTERS VI., VII.

The great company of believers, Jews and Gentiles on the earth. There will be an immense company.

CHAPTER VIII.

You now read of wars, and then comes the history of the Revelation—Satan trying to

supersede the Man in glory. It begins with the Latin kingdom, that is, the Roman Empire, which had received Him nominally. Where the glorified Man is acknowledged, the effort is to set Him aside by another. The first man is set aside by Christ; the effort of Satan now is to bring in Antichrist.

CHAPTER IX.

The countries outside the Latin kingdom are drawn in to help the Latin kingdom in its object.

CHAPTERS X., XI.

The Jew is involved: the history closes.

CHAPTER XII.

The man child is now seen as caught up (the rapture), and the glorified Man is completely refused; the intent is to destroy what is of Him on earth; no place for the glorified Man on earth, no acknowledgment of Him except in heaven.

CHAPTER XIII.

Brings in Antichrist. Now transpires Satan's object, namely, to make the man of the earth come out in great magnificence to monopolise the rights of the Man in glory. Antichrist is brought in to surpass Christ in the eyes of men.

CHAPTER XIV.

Warnings of the coming judgment.

CHAPTER XV.

The shout of victory—of God's salvation.

CHAPTERS XVI.—XVIII.

Man is set up in earthly magnificence to displace Christ, and to deny His rights, Babylon is destroyed, and the King, the Lord of glory, comes.

CHAPTERS XIX., XX., XXI. 8, 9.

The marriage of the Lamb, and all those who are in heaven preparing to come to earth, with the history of saints up to the final state.

CHAPTERS XXI. 9-27; XXII. 1-5.

The holy city, New Jerusalem, on earth.

It is very striking to notice the difference between the present state, even of a Philadelphian saint, and the bridal state. In the former you have a "little power," have kept His word, and not denied His name, etc. But, as the bride, you come forth having the glory of God and a light most precious; that is her appearance; it is one of the marks of the bride. She is all glorious without and within. "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious,

even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." There is also moral superiority, holy exclusiveness, gates and high walls, no defilement can enter. Then streets of gold; your walk is in divine righteousness, and the gates for the admission of those who are entitled to enter. "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it"; that suits the saints on earth in heavenly light. It is not the heavenly circle *as such*, but the heavenly circle in relation to earth, that is described here; and therefore she is above everything that was offered to her here; she comes out in beautiful contrast to anything that had ever preceded on earth; no natural light, for the Lamb is the "lamp," the same word as in chapters i., ii. The last characteristic is the Holy Ghost—the river in the midst—the wonderful *power* that is to come in on the earth, a beautiful contrast to even a Philadelphian saint, she appears in glory, clad in light.

CHAPTER XXII. 6-21.

The Spirit and the bride bid Him come to reign, and He comes quickly!

THE WAY TO UNION—SEVEN STEPS.

I HAVE been pondering many hours on Colossians, and reproaching myself as to how little I have led others into the truth of union. The main point in Christianity is union with Christ, yet how little it is known.

I see seven steps in it :

(1) You are cleared of the old thing (chap. i. 13) as in Romans viii.

(2) You get the new thing "Christ in you." (Ver. 27.)

(3) *You use it.* "Set your affections on things above." (Col. iii.) Many are cleared of the old thing who do not see that they have got the new thing, and then *that they have to use it.* You are not conscious that it is your own, or that you have it, *till you use it.* It is not here exactly the place—but if united to Himself, His place must be your place.

(4) His works, tastes, and interests must be yours—and this you begin to enter on when you know Him.

(5) You know Him as Head, and the more you are with Him who is your Head, the more you get to understand what is His will and pleasure.

(6) The nearer you are to Him, the more you know His love. You do not know His

love unless you are near Him (Eph. iii. 18, 19), and that is the way you are "filled unto the fulness of God."

(7) You are above the power of Satan. (Eph. vi. 11, etc.)

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

IN John's gospel comes in distinctly the new order of the glorious Man.

In chapter ii. we find the utter ruin of the first man.

Chapter iii. He has to be born again, to be of a new order.

Chapter iv. He gets a new power upon earth apart from, above and beyond anything that is on earth, he is made practically independent of everything on earth. "Shall never thirst." There is the new order, new line of things, and starting with the new power.

Chapter v. He has passed out of death into another life.

Chapter vi. He feeds upon the living bread, the bread that came down from heaven.

Chapter vii. He receives the Spirit of God from the glorified Man. "The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified"—until there was a glorified Man.

Chapter viii. The law supposed a certain

amount of good in man. You cannot talk of good now ; the new order is absolutely distinct from the old. The great thing to insist upon is the entire newness of it, no improvement of the old, though a man still. (This is a sort of preface to chapter viii.) Now in chapter viii. light draws the line, discloses what is of God, and exposes what is merely of man, a very beautiful line. Light discloses that there is a new kind of man, a glorified man, not a fallen man. (Chap. vii. 39.) The fallen man is shut out and a new order of man brought in. The great point of the gospel is that the offending man is cleared away, not even improved ; and a Man after a new order is now before God.

In chapter ix. you find that you cannot know light except in the solitude of light ; the blind man is outside everything that is recognised by man on earth, and it is there he makes acquaintance with the Light ; he is morally in a place outside of everything with the Light—the Son of God ; and it is there he is made to understand the new place for the sheep, which chapter x. opens out ; so that what comes out is, that the same character of intimacy that exists between the Father and the Son is to be known by the sheep. (Chap. x. 14, 15.) It is a wonderful thought, that this is the common portion of

all the sheep of the one flock, looking at them here on earth. Though we have not yet a glorified body we are in association with Him who is the glorious One. In association with Him you appropriate the taste for glory, so that you would do a thing according to that taste even in the smallest duty down here. *You* are not improved, but your taste is altered. You like a thing that is according to the glorified Man *better than* the thing that is according to the most reformed or the best cultivated man. It is the difference between keeping the law and getting into the company of the glorious One; you imbibe the taste for what suits Him. (This prepares for chapter xiii., our new place with Him.) I want to shew the gain of glory for the present moment—it is from it we derive. As we look at it we are transformed into the same image; you first see that you belong to glory, the Spirit of God connects you with glory, and then you get the taste, and you act in correspondence with your tastes, which are new, and in one sense inconceivable. You ought to do everything according to the glorified Man—not that the old man is improved, but because you have the Spirit of God.

Chapter xi. The Son of God is glorified. Resurrection has come in. Lazarus is raised from the dead.

Chapter xii. He receives all the glory which is given to man—King of Israel and Son of man anticipatively, as the One raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. (Ver. 28.)

Chapters xiii. to xvii. anticipate that He is gone to glory, and that He administrates everything here through His own—from glory through the church.

Chapter xx. The first day of the week, the beginning of the new creation, He appears in the assembly ; and in chapter xxi. He comes Himself.

THE TRUE SERVANT.

I HAVE been thinking a good deal of what sort of person the servant would be if he were really here for Christ.

A solemn place the servant is called to ; he is to stand for God first, and then to act towards men. It is not so much what he does, as what he is. "Be a model of the believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. iv. 12.) Like a star in the sky—*he is here for God*. He may have his peculiar mission besides, may help people ; but what is the calling and portion of every servant of Christ—of one called out for His service on the earth where He has been

refused, and where He has sent the Holy Ghost? His beginning is to stand for Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost in the place where Christ has been rejected.

The first great lesson he has to learn is what Christ is Himself in His own sphere. Hence he learns in the gospel of the glory that in Christ Himself are set forth all the attributes of God in a Man, that He is a Man in glory. It is there that the servant begins his acquaintance with Him, and as his acquaintance advances, the servant enters into the greatness of His purpose; not only about everything of man, and this world, but to establish the glory of God everywhere. The Lord leads His servant not only apart from this scene, where Christ is not, which is the wilderness, but he is made sensible of His absence, so that the world becomes a wilderness to him. Then the servant is conducted through Jordan into Christ's own sphere.

Now in Christ's own sphere he seeks the things above, and an entirely new day as Christ's servant opens before him. He not only knows Him in His own sphere, but the power and perfection of His grace are given to him from the Head of the church. The true servant is to express Christ here—to *be* the expression of his absent Lord.

When a man is first called out, he is often

very earnest, but too often it is more for the truth than for the Lord Himself. This is where the weakness in all service has come in. The exposition of the subject of the grace of God, or of some truth, has been the aim, rather than the Person, and the consequence is that practically the servant is looking for supporters in his work, and counting his success by his followers, instead of having his heart as full as when he had only the Lord, and could say, No one stood with me, but I am standing here for Christ. When the servant has to do with people, he is affected by them in his private circumstances, etc.; he is not able to say he has "set his face as a flint." The true servant ought to be able to stand alone, like Paul in the storm (Acts xxvii. 21), and say, "Ye should have hearkened unto me."

For a servant to be here for Christ fully, he must be a man *come from heaven*; he must come from Christ; he cannot be above the power of Satan otherwise (see Eph. vi.), and he is not fully for the Lord till then. "Stand therefore." (Ver. 14.) You may say how few there are of such! There is plenty of excitement about praying for the work, and as to setting the gospel before souls, but this is not the *Person*, nor is it the ability to stand for the Lord in a crisis.

When you see a man occupied with his preaching, it is the effect of his preaching he is thinking of, instead of seeing whether he has presented Christ *so that souls should be absorbed with Christ*. In order to do this he must be in the power of the heavenly Man, and free from what affects a man naturally ; he must come from Christ, and have Christ before him. Christ must be his Object if he is to present Him here ; he cannot go beyond what he knows of Him ; the servant can only express Christ as he knows Him, and he can only know Him as he is with Him.

As the church declined many sought place and power in the church. Then those who had learning, and who commended themselves to man, were appointed by man, and the one or two sent of God, the really devoted ones, were not recognised, but lost sight of. Thus the church became the huge system which we now see prevails. But the true servant is sent of God ; it is not place nor position that he seeks, but to do Christ's work ; and therefore while the mass of appointed ministers have only the safety of souls before them, none of them are set for the purpose of God.

This accounts for the solemn fact that what ought to be the great aim of every servant is so little known. The servant himself is not in full power to set forth the heavenly Man

until he is himself in the purpose of God for every believer ; that is, until he knows that he is united to Christ.

Then he can stand for Christ above the whole force of this evil world ; then he is practically a witness of Him, because he is superior to the power of the wicked one in the world.

The root of all failure in ministry is in overlooking the fact that you cannot set forth Christ but as you *come from Him*. The servant cannot express Him but as he knows Him, on the principle of "What have ye that ye have not received?" You may know the words of the Bible and put them together well, but that is not the present ministry of Christ ; it is not the real ministry of one who has come from Him. Putting thoughts together, making nice sermons, may be very instructive, but setting forth Christ is a different thing. To set forth the Person, as knowing His present mind, you must come from Him, you must know not only what He *was*, but what He *is*. This is the reason that so much ministry wants definiteness. There is no aim, no line in it, because it has not been received as distinct instruction from Himself. A servant might explain a course of study of the word, or of doctrine, or of conduct—his own apprehension of the

subject—and yet it might not be under the immediate direction of the Lord.

If a man comes from Christ he communicates something of Christ to the saints ; any attempt at ministry apart from Himself only betrays that the servant does not know the great end of ministry—namely, God's purpose for every believer, that he should know that he is united to Christ. Therefore the great work of a servant is to lead souls into that. Until the soul realises that it is united to Christ, the servant's work is not done. Like Abraham's steward, he has to bring Rebekah to *Isaac* ; then the believer moves about as a part of Christ down here, in His power and for His pleasure.

It is very beautiful to me that as He is endeared to you, and as you know Him, and are drawn nearer to Him, you value union with Him, and you find out that you are united to Him.

It is not His greatness putting you at a distance, but the more you know of it and the better you know Him, the more you are drawn to Him.

The servant who enunciates truth may instruct souls, but it is quite a different service so to present the Person of Christ to you, that He is endeared to you ; so that you rejoice to be united to Him. The servant's

work is not done till then, nor is he accomplishing the purpose of God in his service, which is to bring Christ Himself more distinctly and effectively before the souls of His people, who thus become practically part of the bride, which with the Spirit calls upon Him to "COME" and reign here!

THE WAY TO THE ASSEMBLY.

MANY truly desire to be in the assembly, but they have not found the only way to it.

The great work of God of late in the revival of truth, has been to lead souls into a knowledge of acceptance with God—the greatness of God's acceptance of the believer. In fact, most Christians of the present day do not get beyond assurance, and they who have found acceptance see that now they must be led by the Spirit and not by man; this has caused the separation from system in this century, and many think because they are separate from system that they are in the assembly; but this is very deceptive.

The first step for those who have reached acceptance is that they seek to enjoy it, and the more they do so, the more they find that they cannot, unless they know deliverance, for it is realised in the Spirit. Now deliverance

is very little known ; when deliverance is known you realise that you are in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. Christ is your life and you find that He is not here, that you are in a scene where He has been refused ; this discovery makes quite a new era in the soul, because as He is your life, the more you seek Him the more you discover that He is not only *not here*, but that He is totally rejected and refused in this world. No one can explain what it is to a soul to realise fully that he is in a scene where the One who is his life is rejected ; he must shrink from the place and everything connected with it.

The whole effort of the pretentious organisation figured in the mustard tree is to give the impression that Christ is honoured here ; this only makes the scene more trying to the true heart. In ordinary life the absence of one in your circle on whom you are dependent is deeply felt, but if he is violently refused a place how different the whole order of things here must become to you !

How must it affect you at every turn to see that the Lord who is your life is rejected from this world, and now you cannot make anything of yourself in a place where He is unrighteously disowned ; everything opens out to you in a new and forbidding way as He who is your life—eternal life—is not only refused

here, but He has gone to another place, sat down at God's right hand in heaven.

Now you begin to look for the assembly ; then the assembly becomes a wonderful relief to the heart, to find He has a place here, not of the world or of its order ; and being come to Him as the Living Stone, you are built up as a stone in God's assembly. You have not only found a spot in divine *contrast* to all the contrariety and to all the assumption here, but a spot also apart from all here, and you spiritually are across the water on the other side of death and judgment.

Now you begin to know what the assembly is, and finally you learn what is only learned in the assembly as you form part of it—that you are of it ; you form a constituent part of it, as a stone from the quarry formed part of Solomon's temple. There is no other way to the assembly.

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA.

(REV. III. 19.)

It must strike every careful reader that the Laodiceans are addressed as if they did not know the gospel. They are very boastful of their great acquisitions. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need

of nothing," but when they come to be inspected, they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Now where the gospel is truly known a man has "joy unspeakable and filled with the glory," *he* is not "wretched and miserable." It is very remarkable that of the last church it should be insisted on how little they had learned the gospel truly; for they are "miserable and poor," and Christ is outside! The gospel is that the man under judgment has been removed in judgment in the death of Christ, while He, the Man of God's pleasure, is "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father"; so it is clear that if you know the gospel you are out of the man in the flesh, and in Christ: "all things are become new." This is the first great point with Laodicea, they have not known the gospel, they have not changed the man in the flesh for the Man in the glory; Christ is not formed in them: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"; there is no new creation.

It is deeply affecting that it is to the last of the churches the painful fact is divulged that after all the church is not established in the gospel! While assuming to have all the blessings bestowed on the church, it comes out that the source of all their blessing is not

in their midst: He is outside the door! It is deplorable to see the assumption to which man can come in the church of God, to aspire to the highest position, and at the same time not to know the beginning and foundation of all, namely, the gospel of the glory of Christ.

In testimony he is lukewarm, no apparent vitality in his manner of life; on the contrary, to the eye of God, they were "wretched and miserable." With all their boast of their great possessions they have nothing, they are not happy, their inside condition is "miserable"; their outside condition is that they are "blind," they cannot see what an ordinary Christian sees; "and naked"—their blemishes and defects are conspicuous to those who can see. There could not be a more lamentable company assuming to be the church of God. But no one could know his place in the church who had not Christ formed in him. If Christ be formed in you He lives in you. Evidently this company does not know what it is to have Christ formed in them. If Christ be in me, it is not I but Christ; I know that Christ lives in me. It is a very different thing to know that Christ liveth in you and for Him to be outside, knocking at the door. It is really inconceivable the degree of incongruity to which the human mind can run, to suppose that such a company can be a part of Christ.

In the first place they do not need Him, they are lukewarm in action, as those not interested about Him; and in the second place they have not a single trait of Him! Those who speak the most of the greatness of their possessions have none of the energy or vigour of those who really possess.

The remedy the Lord proposes to them shews where they are; they must BUY, they have nothing to give for it except themselves. It is plain they have not done so. There is no bargain made to give up oneself for another, no exchange; they have not sought the righteousness of God through conflict, "gold tried in the fire." In every way they disclose that they have never changed from Adam to Christ; they are not in the Spirit; they are in the flesh.

Those who say that everything is pure grace, limiting God's grace to all that He has done *for us*, and who overlook the working of His grace *in us*, correspond in a way to the Laodicean state; and they disclose the characteristic of men walking in the flesh, and not in the Spirit. You notice this very strikingly in what is called the objective school; they are very conscious of the greatness of their possessions, but they never give you the idea of being possessed by them.

Early in this century in a very special way

the Lord revived the knowledge of His grace, and exposed the folly and ignorance of the Arminian school; but those who are exclusively wedded to objective truth, betray that they do not understand the work of the Spirit in them. No one could be in company with either of these schools without seeing how each has suffered loss; but it is worse for a man to assume to have great possessions while having none of the virtues of them, which is to be too objective, than for one to be wishing for them, as if he by his own assiduity could acquire them, which is to be too subjective.

The Lord's remedy is most gracious, embracing the whole moral destitution in a way beyond all conception. He knocks, and if any man open the door He comes in to him to sup and he with Him. So that the reform of Laodicea is new in every particular, a reflex of the life and manner of the Lord Jesus Christ—He is inside with them. Wonderful change from the greatest moral distance to the greatest social nearness. The Church of the Laodiceans describes the full blown and worst state of the apostasy—profession without principle—while those delivered from it are made, by association with Christ, an epitome of Himself: a beautiful triumph of the grace that "worketh in you."

COMMUNION.

It is evident that you must be with Christ in His place before you can have communion with Him, and many miss the blessing because they are looking for it apart from being with Him where He is.

If we realise that He is not here, in no way could we reach Him now but by the Spirit, leaving this place and going to His place. This is where the defect in saints is. People are ready to change from one place to another in this world if they can secure an improvement, but there is a great reluctance, even in saints, to leave it altogether for another region. The idea in Christendom, founded on the supposition that Christ is here, is, that in going from one chapel or place of worship to another, you can get nearer to Him, whereas the fact is that He is *not here*, and you can only get to Him by the Spirit of God. It is on the principle of "If any man thirst, let him come unto *me*, and drink." This is not going from meeting to meeting, but going to *Him* in the place where He is, to which the Spirit of God always leads you. It is only where He is that you can behold His personal glory, and it is there you are transformed into the same image. There you have communion with Him. It is easy to see what a change it

would make to us all if we realised that we can only reach Him in His own place by the Spirit. When He comes into our midst it is from His own place to administer to us, not to remain in this place with us. It is a great thing to ascertain what is before the heart. Is it the desire to find something, or is it simply the desire to reach the Person from whom everything comes? It is a new day to your soul when you realise that Christ is the Source of everything, and that it is from Himself you must draw, and not from ministry about Him. Many can explain scripture and even apply it, who are not under the power of it themselves. They have not come *from* Him, and are not themselves imbued with that which they are trying to convey. There is much wise counsel and good teaching which is not applicable to the moment. It does not effect what is the Lord's desire as the end of ministry, which is to lead the soul to *Himself*, because it is not spoken in communion with Himself. You must first get to where He is, and then you are brought into concert with the scene where He is.

The first thought of every true heart ought to be that Christ is not here, and no record of what He has said satisfies the one who wants to be in possession of His mind at *this moment*. We hear varied opinions about a given matter. If you really felt that the Lord

is not here you would not venture to give an opinion until you had gone to Him. You might look at the Bible or go to the Synopsis to see how a thing ought to be done, but that is not getting under the influence and impress of His own presence. Doubtless He would send you to the scripture. You might go to it without His sending you, but then you would not be under the same impression, and you would miss the vigour and fervour of His presence. This is an immense cheer to me. In general we read scripture, not looking for communion with Him, but looking to understand what He communicates. We are not looking to see how He entered on what He communicates, and what it was to *Himself*.

After this preface we may look at the subject as a whole. There are two kinds of communion: the one has to do with the circumstances in which Christ is, and the other with what His mind is in those circumstances. One is *of* Him, the other *with* Him.

Now there are three distinct orders of communion—the individual, the personal, and the general. I mean by individual, having Christ the Centre of everything, His own individual connection with any given thing. We understand individual communion with the Lord when we are occupied with Him in some individual work. Moses is an example of it.

when he was forty days with Him getting the pattern of the tabernacle. Secondly, communion is *personal* when *Himself* is the great Object. It is all *Himself*—what He personally is when He comes to me, as in John xiii., xiv.; and the *general* is, what is open to the whole company, open to all through eternal life. It is evident the third includes the first two, and you could not know His mind fully, unless you know the whole three.

We will now look at communion with God in His works from the beginning. The more any one contemplates the Lord's mind at the beginning in the garden of Eden, and the final issue of it all, the more fully will he apprehend the greatness of God's counsel at the commencement. It would not be only taking a superficial glance at the great intention at Eden, but if he apprehended the greatness of God's counsel, he would be a living exponent of the solemnity of it. If a person were able to impart to another his acquaintance with realities which are beyond human vision, what a wonderful effect it would have! It would impart a weight which no human learning could supply.

Now if we go on from Eden to the deluge, we are introduced to another range of thought. Man had become so intolerably bad that there was no remedy for him. How little a passing

reader, however minutely he reads and studies it, can conceive the immense range that is opened out before the soul in the history of the deluge! Man made in the image of God is become so corrupt that there is no remedy for him, so God removes him, and then He brings in One who is able to bear the judgment resting on man and to rise out of it, so that God can not only remove the judgment resting on man, but He supplants him by Another! In removing the man that has offended, God substitutes the Man who has done His pleasure in everything.

If one thinks of what it is for a man to be made in the image of God, it is no wonder that he should be elated at the greatness of his origin; and therefore, man's intense unwillingness to part with the man of the first order. No one heartily parts with the first man—with *himself*, until he makes the painful discovery that in his flesh dwells no good thing; and that the Man who died for him is the One who has borne the judgment for him, and is the spotless Son of God. So that not only is the offending man brought to an end in the cross, but every believer has a new beginning of the order of Him who is risen from among the dead, and who is the Man of God's pleasure. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made

alive.” After man is typically removed in the deluge, Noah is set up in favour and in power (in consequence of the offering up of the burnt offering) on the same earth, where after the old order man is intolerable. Who can take in, or be in company in any measure with the mind of the Lord in this great work and not take his place here on earth as one so deeply affected by it, that he looks at and regards everything in a divine light? He cannot be thoughtless or trivial in his connection with this world. No one could be in communion with God as to the scene of man’s fall, and the greatness of his redemption out of it, who would not be affected in his life and conversation beyond what any learning could give. To be in communion with Him would give a light and intelligence beyond all creative knowledge, for it would be divine. We see in the final issue that those who are not redeemed will endeavour to seize upon the earth in simple usurpation, just as it was after the deluge, when Noah’s descendants began to build a tower which was to reach to heaven, hoping to be in pure independence of God.

Up to this we have only looked at the effect of being in company with the Lord in the greatness of His *works*. We have not spoken yet of being in communion with His mind.

When we come to see the work fulfilled on the cross, where our old man is crucified with Christ, and we, being born of God, live in the Spirit and not in the flesh, we are conducted into the circle of His mind and purpose which affect ourselves. We have received the Holy Ghost and are united to Him who has effected this redemption. The more we are in communion with the Lord touching these infirmities, the more we are absorbed with Him, and no exposition of the truth could have the same effect. When I am listening to the exposition of *my* part in this great purpose, I am occupied with the part, instead of with the *whole range* in the new creation, where all is of God, and where Christ's great activity is displayed in life—eternal life, which is knowing the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. (John xvii. 3.) That is eternal life. Christ's authority is displayed in giving it. When you get into the element of life you get into a region in which there never was any corruption. It is almost too wonderful to take in, that none of the old order is even to be *feared* when there. It is an element where not a shadow of impurity could enter; and therefore it is a contrast between one receiving the grace of life *here*, and being in the element of life—knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

whom He has sent. Life is in its proper function, as it were, and thoroughly exclusive. It is not only that we are saved and are happy, but we have eternal life in its proper activity—to “know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” And this in the sphere of the most *profound holiness*. No extent of intimacy or sense of affection could awaken a shade of natural feeling; for we are in the divine element where we are above anything natural, or morally selfish. We are in the element where “of” and “with” are both fulfilled, and where there can be no departure from the purity of love.

Once we get to understand the nature of communion, how it expresses the mind of the Lord, we see what an immense gain it is to us spiritually. The greatest thing is to have communion with the Father. The Son is always in communion with the Father, and as we get into communion with Him, we then share in His communion with the Father. We learn communion with the Father through the Son. Consequently we rise from our own distance to His height, and are not in communion until we are at that height. It is not a work, but the happy outflow of nearness. We may know many fine things, but we are not in communion with the Father until then.

If I were near you, and we had a subject

of common interest, I should soon know if we had communion one with another, but in divine communion Christ is the centre. He is always in communion with the Father, and as we get into communion with Him, we advance into communion with the Father. It is not so much the greatness of the things we know in communion, as the fact that we are in concert with Him. It is *this*, and not the knowledge that is prominent with us. Not seeing this is the beginning of the mistakes so often made about communion. "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT, OR GOD'S ORDER FOR THIS TIME.

THERE are seven dispensations:—

(1) Man left to himself, culminating in the deluge.

(2) Man in Noah set up afresh upon the earth, culminating in Babel.

(3) Abram called out—election—walk by faith—culminating in Israel carried down into Egypt. The time of promises.

(4) Israel led by Moses and Joshua into Canaan. David given in sovereign grace to be their king, ending in their subjection to the Gentile (Roman) power. The time of law.

(5) Christ the Son of God come to earth, or the grace of God for us; man refused Him and hanged Him on the tree. The times of the Gentiles.

(6) The Holy Ghost sent down as the witness of the rejected Christ now exalted to God's right hand, or the work of grace in us.

(7) The kingdom—the reign of Christ.

A dispensation is God's order for man at the time; the dispensation of the Spirit is God's order for this time, and you have no power to act for God on the earth, if you do not apprehend the dispensation you are placed in.

The first thing is to receive the Holy Ghost after you have believed. It is important to note that there may be a long interval between these two. The apostle said to the Ephesian disciples, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The Holy Ghost was not given until Christ was glorified, and no one receives the Holy Ghost till he believes on Christ, who has been raised up into glory. "In whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed." The first effect of the Holy Ghost being received is that you can look up to God in confidence, even though you may be still unsettled about your state and other things, yet you feel you can turn to Him.

This is a new sense in your soul; but as

far as I see, many who really believe in Christ risen and have thus received the Spirit of God, do not use Him except for relief for their own souls, and are slow to get established in Christ. Every person who is true to his own history knows how long he has been able to turn to God with confidence, while he is still much distressed about his own state, and the working of sin in him. Thus it is I account for the readiness to preach the gospel in so many young converts; they are glad to propound what they enjoy themselves. There is often a long and painful history between the beginning of Romans v. and viii. When you get to chapter viii. you have the sense of the Holy Ghost being the paramount power in your soul. In chapter vii. it is "what I would, that do I not," there is no power there. If the Spirit were there as a paramount power you would do what He approves. I believe there is a known moment in the soul's history when the Spirit gets His place in you, and then you make some decided step which you may never have thought of before. The more I enjoy the fact that I am in Christ before God, the more I rejoice that the Spirit of God is in me, and that I can say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." If I do not get to this I necessarily am like the

Galatians, who, having begun in the Spirit, were trying to be made perfect in the flesh. The law is for the man who had departed from God; *that* man has been removed from God's sight in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I rejoice that now by the law of the Spirit of life I am free from the law of sin and death, so that I am not in the flesh—though the flesh is in me—but if I, “through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body,” I shall live.

Hence the only remedy for the Galatians was to put Christ in His right place. Ishmael must be cast out, and Isaac left master of the field. It is a great day in the soul when it can truly acknowledge that *all of me* is of Christ. The Lord has entire right to me and to direct everything in me. It is not only that He has accomplished my acceptance with God, but that He owns me; therefore now my great exercise is to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. My first step in the Christian walk is that “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”; this is when Christ has got His true place. We can see from the case of the Galatians that a believer may have received the Spirit, and yet may not be walking in the Spirit; therefore it is of the deepest impor-

tance that we not only live in the Spirit, but that we walk in the Spirit, to have the clear consciousness that we are transferred by grace from Adam to Christ; and even in natural things here, the body is for the Lord; we are His bondsmen, under His rule, and this is the hourly exercise of every true heart. It can only be happily known when Christ is the sole object of our hearts. I see the more a man walks in the Spirit, the more he knows that he is under the government of Christ, and the more he realises his new place; he "that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

It is a great warning to us that such as the Corinthians and Galatians could have received the Spirit, and yet did not walk in the Spirit either at home or in the church. It is almost impossible to conceive such a gift as the Holy Ghost being possessed, and that one could walk in indifference to Him. But so it is; hence the apostle says to the Corinthians, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

Thus we can understand how the spiritual have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil; for it is a solemn fact that if you are not spiritual you are carnal. In the commonest detail of life here, you are ruled

either by Christ or by your own will ; but once you have begun the christian walk, and know the blessedness of it, you are not trying to correct yourself, for you know that all is removed from the eye of God ; and you insist on the fact that it is gone in the cross of Christ, and that Christ is your life. Now you have started on the christian walk. It is to be borne in mind that the old man is crucified, and you cannot reform him, he is removed from the eye of God, and all the attempts of amiable people to reform him are only denying the fact that he has been removed in judgment. The responsible man is not before God now. It is now the day of grace. Every one who receives His grace is set free from the man under judgment. The appeal to man now is not to *do*, but to *look*.

This is the first distinct assurance of the soul entering on the christian walk, "I am crucified with Christ." There may be a long time between receiving the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. When walking in the Spirit we are not trying to improve our manners ; our manners and ways altogether are altered by the power and ways of acting of divine grace, not by any studied attempt of amiability. Now that Christ is formed in you, you enter on the christian path, and having learned what it is to walk in the Spirit, you

begin to apprehend the wonderful place the Spirit has in you. He is interested in all that concerns you, making intercession for you "with groanings which cannot be uttered." Now you are a man for God here, not ruled by your own will, but directed by the Spirit of God in every detail of your life according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the manna—"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Now as you walk in the Spirit you are according to the dispensation, that is, God's rule for this day, and anything outside it is not His rule and He does not support it.

The seventh dispensation is, Christ reigns.

THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE.

THE above terms involve much in divine things; the first describes God's grace, what God has done for us; the second the work of grace in us, how we answer to His purpose. There is a tendency in us all to be occupied with either of them to the exclusion of the other, and this is a cause of great moral defect.

There are two systems of doctrine prevalent in Christendom: the one taken from the objective side is called Calvinistic, the other

taken from the subjective, called Arminian. It is of deep importance for us to understand how the objective and subjective are maintained together.

In Old Testament times we see certain blessings given by God to man. After the deluge man was set up in a new way on the earth, in favour and in power, and instead of using his power for God, his independence of God culminated in Babel. There was no answer in the heart of man to God's grace; the subjective was ignored.

When God gave promises to faith, while there was the obedience of faith, there was answer to the promise, so that the subjective state became the proof that the promise was of God, as we see remarkably in Abraham's case. He "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3), and he proved experimentally his faith in God forty years afterwards when he offered up Isaac, a remarkable evidence of his dependence upon God, and of his obedience of faith. See James ii. 21-23: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him

for righteousness," etc. He not only believed that the promise came from God, but he gave a most wonderful evidence of his faith in the God of promise by the experimental obedience in which he proved it. When Israel had lost faith, there was no answer in them to the promise of God. They had been carried down into Egypt (figuratively the world), and there became bondsmen. But God delivered Israel out of Egypt. Moses fully responded to His grace; he conducted the people through the wilderness, and Joshua brought them into Canaan. There God looked for the obedience of faith; and He gave them a king after His own heart, so that the power to rule which God had given to man was now with Israel. But they forsook the Lord; there was no subjective answer to God's grace; and they were carried into Babylon, and eventually power was transferred to the Gentile, and Israel came under the rule of Rome.

We see all through how God was for them, which is the objective; on the other hand, we see how few answered to His grace with experimental ability to enjoy it, which is the subjective. It may be reasoned here that man had not then received the Spirit, and therefore was not able to answer to God's purpose; still we see very plainly how God expected a practical course corresponding to

His grace. If we study the prophets we see how Israel failed to answer to the grace of God; the objective was perfect, and continued, though at times there was no subjective, no answer to it in the people. The great plaint in the prophet Isaiah was, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" (Chap. v. 4.) Again, in Jeremiah, the Lord says, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Chap. ii. 13.)

When Christ came, both had their perfect place with Him. He knew the full purpose of God's heart, and He completely answered to it, so that He combined the two in Himself. He could say, "I do always those things that please him." Now by the grace of God every believer is saved by what God has wrought; in this the believer has no hand nor part, all is of God's pure grace. When in faith His grace is accepted, having believed on Him who raised Christ from the dead, you receive the Spirit of God, that you may not only know that God is for you, but that you may have the nature and ability to be a witness of His grace through His Spirit dwelling in

you; so that it is not by any attempt of your own, or by introspection, that you answer to His grace, but by His Spirit who makes it true to you, that it is, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." The objective and the subjective should be combined in every believer, and thus he would be an imitator of God as a dear child of His. (Eph. v. 1.)

But Christendom has departed from the purpose of God, and having no true idea of His grace, there has been the attempt to be subjective according to human ideas, adopting the law as a rule of life; for where the objective is lost, the subjective must be imperfect. Hence we see the varied attempts in the godly to recover lost ground ending in confusion and extremes; the one contenting themselves that all is done by God, and thus losing sight of the work of the Spirit in us—the subjective effect on our side; the other ignoring or limiting the objective, or God's purpose for us, and thinking that by persistent doing and religious exercises we may arrive at what will please God. Not knowing in themselves that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death, they try to improve themselves—to make themselves more fit for the eye of God, instead of seeing that they are before Him "in Christ."

When Christendom departed from the truth that the grace of God had conferred all on us, and had become leavened by Judaism, some had zeal, though not according to knowledge, in attempting to establish their own righteousness, but did not submit to the righteousness of God; hence the objective being little known (which is true of Christendom to this day), the subjective must be unknown or imperfect.

But I must add that when the knowledge of the objective—the fulness of God's purpose in grace—was restored to the church during this century, many received it gladly; but the effect on some was that because God had done all for them, there was no claim that they were to be in moral correspondence to it; the purpose of God in grace was accepted, but the work of the Spirit in them to enable them to answer to that purpose was overlooked; consequently instead of commending the greatness of God's grace which they knew objectively, they accepted this knowledge of His grace, without the experimental state that could enjoy it. This could only result in earthly-mindedness, and in union with Christ not being known and realised, so as to come from Him and so to maintain His name in heavenly power on the earth.

No one can read the epistles and John's

gospel in the light of the Spirit, without seeing that the great burden of them is that Christ should be formed in the saints, so that they might be able to enter experimentally into God's grace. If we look at the objective we have everything in Christ, but there is no fruit unless we abide in Him. In John's epistles the great point is, "Now, little children, abide in him." This has nothing to do with looking in on yourself, because the first experience on Christ being formed in you is that "our old man is crucified with Christ." "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness . . . but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." This is all experimental, bringing us into personal acquaintance with the life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Souls are deceived by separating the subjective from the objective. God bestows the gift of His grace, and by His Spirit He fits every believer for the enjoyment of His grace. It is impossible for a person walking in the Spirit not to be in a divine state to enjoy the grace given, just as the prodigal received the best robe, Christ, in order to enjoy the great supper.

No one can experimentally reach Christ where He is until he is conducted by the Spirit over Jordan to the sphere of Christ's

life ; there He is known as Head, and there union is realised. I have never seen any one who *confined* himself to the objective (though he may be very clear as to what God has wrought) who seemed to have any acquaintance with Him as over Jordan, or of being in association with Christ in heaven. Each of us must remember that we are in presence of the Laodicean phase of the church's history, where they boast of their christian privileges and great acquisitions, without Christ, and without any practical benefit from them.

THE GRACE AND BLESSING VOUCH- SAFED IN THE ASSEMBLY.

No one can read the Old Testament with any attention without being struck with the remarkable place given to the tabernacle and the temple where the glory rests. (Exo. xl. 35 ; 2 Chron. v. 14.) If the type was so important and conferred so much blessing, how greatly is this surpassed in the assembly, where now the Lord of glory is found ! Believers at peace with God, rejoicing in the risen Christ, feel that it is their first duty and privilege to come together in one place to break bread. When they know that they have come to Him, the Living Stone, it is

not only that they know that the Son of man *is* the Son of God, but they know Him *as* the Son of God, Jesus crowned with glory and honour. Then they are in their place as living stones of His building, a heavenly company; hence when they break bread, they necessarily, as has been said, turn back to the earth where Christ died, because in breaking of bread they have "the communion of the blood of Christ," fellowship with His death. No one has entered into the solemn blessedness of the breaking of bread who has not truly fellowship with Christ in His death; he is pledged to it by the fact of breaking bread; so that once the light of this has entered into his soul, everything on the earth has a new aspect for him. Christ's death has occurred here, and this gives a character to everything where man is; *here* the golden bowl is broken, the silver cord is loosed, all the daughters of music are brought low. Though you know Him and rejoice in Him beyond death as Son over God's house, it is not merely the benefit of His death that is before your soul, but the moral effect of it on you as to everything in this place where He died. Man's day is over and there is no hope for him but in the death of Christ.

Israel were idolaters because they could sit down "to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

in the absence of Moses ; how much worse for those who have professed communion with Christ's death, to be in levity, or seeking honour in the scene where He died ! It is incongruous to the last degree for any one to come to remember the Lord in His death while assuming or maintaining worldly position ; and after partaking of the Lord's supper, to return to it is unbelieving and heartless, or to come from it conversing together, as if they came from a feast instead of from the Lord's supper. Henceforth the true heart must say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." All that is of man here is a vain show, a shadow that passes away, and the death of the Lord is man's only hope and only glory.

Christendom loses sight of the chief point in scripture as to the remembrance of Christ in His death, because it adds, "Take, eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee." That is perfectly true ; we have the remembrance that He died for us, but the prominent thought before us is, not that He died for us, but the affecting remembrance *of the One who died for us*. "As risen and associated with Him in glory we look back to that blessed work of love and His love in it, which gives us a place there. . . . It is the remembrance

of Christ Himself. . . . Impossible to find two words, the bringing together of which has so important a meaning, the *death* of the *Lord*. How many things are comprised in that He who is called the Lord has died! What love! what purposes! what efficacy! what results! The Lord gave Himself up for us. We celebrate His death. At the same time it is the end of God's relations with the world on the ground of man's responsibility—except the judgment. This death has broken every link—has proved the impossibility of any. . . . The object of the Spirit of God here (I Cor. xi.) is to set before us, not the efficacy of the death of Christ, but that which attaches the heart to Him in remembering His death, and the meaning of the ordinance itself. . . . The shed blood of the Saviour claimed the affections of their hearts for Him. . . . The Lord Himself fixed our thoughts there in this ordinance, and in the most affecting way, at the very moment of His betrayal." *

We get it truly presented in the consecration offering. (Lev. viii.) The work of salvation is not only presented in the sin offering and the burnt offering, but the second ram, to all intents and purposes, is equal to the first ram. Christ gave Himself a sacrifice that we might

* See Synopsis Vol. iv., p. 235. I Corinthians xi.

pass from the altar, where the remembrance of His death and the virtue of it were before our hearts, in company with Himself in the sanctuary, where we are in all the blessedness of His own acceptance before God.

As has been said, in the Lord's supper there is allusion to John vi., in that the way into life is through His death. But this, Christendom has reduced to the grossest fiction, namely, that eating a bit of bread at the hands of a priest could convey the deep spiritual meaning of "eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood." (John vi. 56.) It is not my intention here to expose error, but to insist upon the truth of God. Now, being in the blessed sense of His presence, in the greatness of His acceptance, a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, we have come to the highest and brightest place, to joy in God, as companions of Him who is greater than Aaron, who has fulfilled all that was foreshadowed in the holiest of all. But we still have to learn from Him who is greater than Moses, like the disciples in divine seclusion with the Lord. (John xiii., xiv.) He drew them around Himself, and prepared them for all the trouble and trial in their midst; and concurrently opened out to them the vastness of the resources in Himself; so that not only was He in their midst, but He

furnished the disciples with the ability to serve Him. The Holy Ghost was to come in His name to "bring all things to their remembrance." This was special to the apostles, but we come in on their foundation. This is the great groundwork in the soul, which we now learn from the four gospels, but it is only in His presence that the light of them becomes available to our souls. We have been set in His presence to the satisfaction of our hearts, and now in seclusion with Himself we are fitted for His service; we are in the sense that we are not left "orphans," for we are in His presence, and we are learning that "in that day"—the Spirit's day—He is in the Father, we in Him, and He in us. (John xiv. 20.) We are now at the oracle, where our hearts are instructed as well as delighted: "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee." We are arrived at the blessedness of the consecration. In the presence of the Son of God, Son over God's house, we receive instruction from Himself, for He says: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren."

It is not so much what we have to give out as what we receive in His presence. It is only as we abide in Him that we bring forth much fruit; and our paramount interest is always with His own, "This is my command-

ment, 'That ye love one another, as I have loved you.'

It is only with the impression of this fresh upon our hearts that we are of any help in the assembly; and the nearer we are to Him, known where He is in glory, the better qualified we are by the power of the Spirit to be His witness here, both in the church and in our own house, and against all the force of the enemy.

Now, if any one speaks or takes a part in the assembly he turns to the company, he comes fresh from the Lord. Each one ought to have faith that it is from the Lord he acts. The one who gives out a hymn is not thinking of what suits himself, but of that which is an expression of the heart of the company to the Lord. The one who prays should truly express the leading desires of the company; the one who speaks should come in confidence of heart that the Lord will support him in propounding His mind for the moment to his fellows.

In conclusion, I would add that in a day of ruin and declension, the one great object of each one gathered together is exclusively the Lord Himself. When the church was in power and freshness there were gifts of healing, gifts of tongues, to give the church a marked place among men, and the true ones were

like the disciples at the beginning; but now, as has been said, we are like the Lord Himself when He was upon earth, not in power, but in weakness, and in unbounded faithfulness to God; so that those who follow the Lord to the close are not seeking to revive the candlestick, or to make an impression, or an appearance, to obtain a place among men; but the Lord says to them: "Thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." They are not dwelling on the greatness of God's grace to themselves, of that they are assured, but they are set on following the Lord: "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii. 22.) They seek to recover that which the church first lost, namely, "*first love*," and like the disciples at the beginning, their one thought is the Lord Himself, and to have His company, which alone can satisfy true love. To this end they edify one another.

The Lord grant it may be true of each of us, more and more till He comes.

IN ADAM, OR IN CHRIST?

A WORD TO ALL CHRISTIANS.

DEAR FELLOW-CHRISTIAN,

Let me ask you in true brotherly love, do you understand that by the grace of God there is in the gospel the setting aside of one man, Adam and all his race, and the bringing in of another Man, Jesus Christ the Son of God, risen from the dead.

“In Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor. xv. 22.) The man who was under the judgment of God, the first man, was removed in judgment in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the believer in Christ is, to his ineffable joy, through God’s grace and consistently with His righteousness, no longer in Adam before God, but in Christ; and on your side the Holy Ghost has been given as an indwelling Spirit, to make real to you that which is already true to God, that is, that you are not in Adam but in Christ, that you have been turned from the old man, the wretched, fallen man—that is *yourself*, to the risen Man, Jesus Christ. So that in Christ there is now no condemnation. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. viii. 1, 2.)

The light of God's grace is often obstructed in souls, from reluctance to accept this truth of the change of man before God, and to see that the work of Christ was not to improve the first man, but to set him aside in judgment, to bring in a man of a new order—that is, Himself, the second Man out of heaven. (See 1 Cor. xv. 47.) The believer is of Him; both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. (Heb. ii. 11.) They are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. (Eph. v. 30.) We are thus wholly His—our bodies are the Lord's, and are to be presented a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, our intelligent service. (Rom. xii. 1.)

In Leviticus xvi. we get the earthly or millennial family represented by the congregation of Israel, for whom the two goats were offered (ver. 8), and the heavenly family, the church, by Aaron and his sons, whose offering was a bullock. (Vers. 6–14.) In the one case, that of the earthly or millennial family, the law will be written in their hearts (see Jer. xxxi. 33), the inclination to do evil will be superseded. In the other family, the heavenly, that is, Christians, *Christ* is written in their hearts by the Spirit of God; evidently a great and important distinction, and indi-

cating that the christian blessings are in association with Christ who has gone within the veil.

THE JOURNEY OF FAITH ;

OR

THE EFFECT OF TRUTH KNOWN IN POWER.

DIVINE power necessarily transforms man to a new condition. If this be ceded, and it cannot be denied, we can understand the force of the apostle's words, "I will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." Any condition or manner of life is easily adopted, when there is not only power for it, but when it is according to the ruling desire. A young bird enjoys flying, though it is new to him and carries him to new scenes, because besides having the power to fly it is according to his taste to fly. Now an imitation is an imposition at once irksome and rigid, and always gives the impression that it is not according to your taste, because you discontinue it when you are in private or off your guard.

When a man is converted it is very evident that a new power has begun to rule him ; he separates from his old associates, and seeks

solitude in order to find God. This is the first step in the history of faith; the light of the gospel shines into his soul, and he knows that the God he seeks can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Like Abel, he knows that Christ bore the judgment due to him. One not chargeable with the offence has borne the judgment of the offence; thus he obtains witness that he is righteous, and shall not come into judgment; and as far as I see in the history of faith, we must connect Enoch with Abel; for though every one does not enjoy walking with God, it is there the work of Christ places you. You learn that you have passed out of death into life. No one can have truly entered on this first step without taking a very distinct path here, a path very different in life and manner, especially marked by the company such an one keeps (see Psa. i.), and by the way in which he breaks away from his old associations; so that his walk is in keeping with his ruling desire. "His delight is in the law of the Lord."

The second step in faith, as I may say, is how a man accepted of God is set up on the earth. This is typified by Noah in the ark. God says, "The end of all flesh is come before me"—not only this, but all the earth, "having its subsistence out of water and in water . . .

deluged with water, perished." (2 Peter iii. 5, 6.) Noah and his house are saved in the ark, saved from the judgment; and after being there more than a whole year, Noah is placed on the earth, and in offering a burnt offering he finds that he is not only out of judgment, but that he is in the favour of God; so that through God's goodness he is here on the earth in favour, where once he was under judgment and the curse of God. He is now assured (Gen. viii. 22) of the continuance of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, etc., and further, he is given power to subdue everything here for his own benefit. But he cannot control himself, and is carried away by excess; and the descendants of the man so highly favoured, set on earth in such new and gracious terms, eventually conspired together to build Babel, and thus betray the inward corruption of the heart in independence of God.

Thus we see that the true place for every one brought to God is to be here morally in the death of Christ, as set forth in the ark, which prefigured baptism. Many pious people think that because they have accepted the form of baptism, they are in the condition of it, but the condition can only be by the Spirit. It is by the Spirit of God alone that we can be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God.

in Christ Jesus. We all know how prone we are to seek and to rest in possessions here. Though we do not join the world in their Babel-combination, yet we like the feeling of independence, and often avail ourselves of the opportunities or resources which God's providence affords, to become so, instead of using them in dependence on Him. In the secret of man's heart he likes independence of God.

The manner of life of every Christian should be characterised by being out of death through Christ's death, and in His life in Christ risen. Then by the power of the Spirit of God he can use God's gracious provision for man on the earth without being carried away by excess. He learns how much better it is to be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but to be filled with the Spirit. While the world is seeking in one form or another to be independent of God, the Christian's happy course is simple and continued dependence on Him.

This leads to the next step, a life of faith on the earth. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." This is set forth in the history of Abraham; it is said to him: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." And he went forth without

a guide, depending on God. What a remarkable separation the call of God effects! He went forth not knowing whither he went; he broke every link with the place he left and sought a place appointed by God. To act or walk in faith you must have to do directly with God; neither providence nor the wisest man can direct you. We get an example of this in Acts xxvii. The master and the owner of the ship and the majority of the passengers gave advice contrary to Paul's; providence was in their favour; the south wind blew softly, but faith counted on God.

The history of Abraham gives us an example of the blessing of faith, and the trials and temptations connected with it. He had a happy assurance of being in the right way at the altar (Gen. xii.) when the Lord appeared unto him. Thus if we are walking in faith we are sure to get confirmation of our faith. Lot went with him; he represents those who imitate faith. Soon the test comes—a famine in the land—and Abraham gives up faith for Egypt; he drops from faith to man's resources, and there he is exposed to the danger of losing her who is nearest to him, and only escapes through God's gracious intervention. And now he returns to the path of faith, and then finds it absolutely necessary to separate from one who imitates faith.

Lot soon betrays that he has not faith, for he seeks what suits him as a man—the green fields of Sodom.

Abraham's faith is still further assured after he had separated from Lot. God tells him to "Look . . . northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Gen. xiii. 14–17.) Before very long Lot, with all his property, is carried away in worldly contention. Abraham, the man of faith, cares for the people of God, and suffers on their account; he puts his life in his hand, goes out by night and rescues Lot and his property. He receives no reward from the world, but has manifold more in this present time; for Melchizedek, king of Salem, meets him with bread and wine, and "he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand." So that Abraham can say to the king of Sodom: "I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet . . . lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." (Gen. xiv. 18–23.)

Now the time has come for the Lord to make known to Abraham, who was the great impersonation of faith, the great multitude which shall be his children—the children of faith: “Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” (Gal. iii. 7.) For he believed God when as yet he had no child, and it was counted to him for righteousness. But no sooner does he believe God than the flesh begins to work, in the attempt by Sarah to obtain a family after the natural order. “These are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.”

Eventually Isaac, the promised seed, is born, by the mighty power of God, and now the man of faith has to cleave wholly to Isaac; for when he was weaned he made a great feast for him: every one in the house honoured him, except Ishmael, who mocked; and as we read in Galatians iv. 29: “As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.” Then the word is: “Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” The word of the Lord to the man of faith was: “Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and

because of thy bondwoman . . . for in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Gen. xxi. 12.)

It was about forty years from the time when Abraham had believed that his family should be as the stars, that his faith is tested again and he is told to offer up Isaac on mount Moriah—a wonderful test of faith. He must with his own hand remove that which was dearest to his heart (all his natural hopes), trusting in God who raiseth the dead. Who can understand the deeply anxious moments of that three days' journey!—a journey by us often extended over a period of years before we are really ready to part with everything that the heart cherishes here, trusting in God. But faith triumphs, and Isaac is restored: "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." (Heb. xi. 19.) Abraham calls the place Jehovah-jireh; and now he is blessed with the assurance that his seed shall be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea, but all flowing from the risen one.

Next comes the death of Sarah. In figure the hopes of Israel after the flesh are at an end; then we arrive at the consummation or crown of faith. Eliezer is sent to get a bride for Isaac, and Isaac loved her and brought her to his home and was comforted after his

mother's death—a wonderful thing that the solace of the Lord for the loss of Israel is the church, His bride. The effect of Abraham's faith was that he lived as a stranger and pilgrim, looking for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Lastly, we have to look at the faith that is seen in the history of Moses, which surmounts all the difficulties and opposition on our own side. We have been looking at faith as set forth in Abraham, which rises up to the height of God's purpose; now we have to learn in the history of Moses how faith can surmount every obstruction on our side. Hence we see that Moses who personates this faith meets with opposition from his birth. By faith he is concealed from the hand of Pharaoh, and in the providence of God Pharaoh's daughter takes him in charge. He is thoroughly instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. (Acts vii. 22, 23.) "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. . . . esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." (Heb. xi. 24-26.) The first great obstruction to be surmounted is the greatness of the world.

After this is overcome, a man must take an entirely new course on the earth. But Moses, like many another, thought he could deliver the people in his own strength; and after forty years in Midian, he learned at the burning bush what it was to have the power of God in the midst of weakness, so that eventually he could forsake Egypt "not fearing the wrath of the king."

The people of God are sheltered from the judgment on Egypt by the blood of the lamb. "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." By faith they passed through the Red Sea, figuratively the death and the resurrection of Christ. The song of faith first celebrates the greatness of His victory (Exo. xv.), "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." Secondly, God has become your object of interest. You are so clear of yourself that you prepare Him an habitation (ver. 2), and thirdly, you know that He will bring you to His own dwelling-place. (Ver. 17.)

We hear no more of Moses in the journey of faith in Hebrews xi., but we know from other scriptures that a new and wonderful path is opened to the believer. According to God's appointment there is nothing here for us but Marah, the water of the Red Sea, the water of

death, which Christ having passed through makes sweet to us. Then there is manna and the smitten rock. But the heart of man is exposed; he will not accept this appointed path; consequently the law is given to disclose his contrariety, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Rom. vii. 9.) But in the unaccountable goodness of God, after He had given the law to make man conscious of the evil that was in him, He calls Moses up to be forty days in the mount, receiving the patterns of things in the heavens; the tabernacle of God is set up, intimating that at the very time when all our evil comes out in the wilderness journey, we learn the goodness of His grace and the love of His heart, that He would make a way to approach Him, His presence being set forth in the cloud of glory filling the tabernacle.

Now when the generation that had murmured had died off, Israel begins to move onward, and Numbers xxi. discloses the irremediable enmity of the heart to God: "The people spake against God, and against Moses . . . and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people." There is no improvement in man from the first; they return to their beginning and find that the

serpent's power is undiminished. Then God tells Moses to put a brazen serpent upon a pole; and all who looked upon it lived. This is figurative of Christ made sin for us; "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." And we find in John iii. 14 that every one believing in Christ lifted up lives. "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is not a question of salvation in this passage, but of life, not so much what is done for us as the effect of power in us. Many preach the gospel from this passage as if it were the work done for us instead of the work done in us.

Then outside the wilderness Israel comes to the well of God, where the word is, "I will give them water." This was in figure what we get in John iv. 14: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Now set up after a new way, they move onward to Canaan, to the realisation of what faith had reached to in their song in Exodus xv. God comes in to help them, as we see in Psalms cxxxv. and cxxxvi., to remove the kings, the powers that would obstruct the way onward, until finally the waters of Jordan are dried up,

and they are across, and in the land. The walls of Jericho fall down and they are in possession, in the presence of the man with the drawn sword in his hand, figuratively the Lord of glory.

Thus we, having come to the place where Christ is, seated together in heavenly places in Him, are in company with the greater than Isaac, there to realise our new relationship to Him, now to come out as heavenly ones, in the church and in our own house by the power of the Spirit, to testify to Him in the face of all the opposition and evil here. The answer of faith to all God's grace is not complete till then; faith is then perfected. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James ii. 22.)

Nothing is more painfully untrue and dishonouring to the Lord, than for a man to be able to speak of the highest range of blessing to which God has called us, and at the same time not to be in any way descriptive in himself of a heavenly man. The human mind has reached the acme of alienation from God when it can suppose and propound that God could bestow the highest divine blessing upon a man to bring him near Himself, and yet that the man should not of necessity answer to it in his life and ways; and this

not by introspection, but by the power of the Spirit. It has been said in public, "If I am chided for not being over Jordan, I say, Christ is over Jordan." But I retort, "So much the greater loss to you that you are not over, for you are not where Christ is."

God surely makes good His grace to every believer, in rest and eternal happiness; but it is as we walk in answer to His grace now, and are in association with Him now that our place with Him in the kingdom will be determined. If you are not in association with Him now you do not know Him as Head and you are not His confidential servant. The great work of the Spirit now is, "Till we are all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." So that Paul labours to present every man full grown in Christ Jesus. He commended Epaphras for labouring fervently in prayer that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12.)

One word more, nothing can be so divinely beautiful on earth as a man so transformed by the mighty power of God, that he is in heavenly manners here on earth; so that he does not in any of his ways deny the Lord Jesus Christ; but in the most trying hour

of his history upon earth the Lord can say of him, "Thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

THE REMOVAL OF SIN.

EVERY believer knows something of the forgiveness of sins, but not many apprehend, in spiritual power, the great difference in scripture between sin and sins. The latter is the fruit, the former the *root*. Every believer knows that his sins are forgiven through faith in the blood of Christ, but sin is not put away by being forgiven, but by being condemned.

When Adam was set in the garden, he was without sin, and all the things in the earth were given to him to enjoy; when he fell, all that he had fell with him; he became the servant of sin. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John viii. 34.) "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." (Rom. vi. 16.) And thus "the creature was made subject to vanity." (Rom. viii. 20.) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. v. 12.) And we find "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." All

died, and death is the judgment upon man because of sin. "In Adam all die." A child is born in sin; death is upon the child before he has committed any sins. It is important thus to keep the idea of sin and death together, "the wages of sin is death"; sin is the sting of death.

Now, in the offerings of the Old Testament, we find that there was no sin offering until the law came. Abel's offering was acceptable to God; God testified of his gifts; it is more the burnt offering; he obtained witness that he was righteous; death was necessarily connected with it, "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

It is important to see that souls learn the grace of God under the shelter of the blood, which His righteousness required as with Israel at the passover, and yet there was not the knowledge of sin put away. Now when we come to the offerings in Leviticus, we find that all those offerings which bring the offerer into present acceptance with God are spoken of before the sin offering is presented; and when the sin offering is mentioned it is to be burned with fire. (Lev. vi. 23.)

We find it more distinctly detailed in Leviticus xvi. 27, where the carcass of the sin offering, both that of the goat and of the bullock, is

wholly burned without the camp. This is in type the absolute judicial condemnation of the state to which sin attached. It is interesting to note that while all the offerings for acceptance were connected with the death of the sacrifice (the fire of God consumed it on the altar, and it went up to God for a sweet savour), in the sin offering alone there was the burning of the sacrifice without the camp. The apostle refers to this in Hebrews xiii. 12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Then it was that the veil was rent.

Now in the case of leprosy, which is a figure of innate sin, or sin in the flesh, the leper must be separated from his fellows (Lev. xiii.); it was contaminating; and when he was healed (chap. xiv.) he was not only atoned for, but the bird, let loose in the open field, was the testimony that he was cleansed; he had to wash his flesh in water (Lev. xiv. 8, 9), which implies that the leper was absolutely removed; he was no longer the leper, for the type sets forth figuratively the old man removed from the eye of God, not merely atoned for or improved, but the washing implies the entire removal of the leprous man. This is seen in pattern in the gospel (Luke xvii.), where one of the ten lepers who

were healed by the Lord's own word returns to give glory to God, and fell down at His feet giving Him thanks ; he has left himself for the Lord. This greatly helps us to understand the removal of sin.

Again in Numbers xix., the ashes of the sacrifice of purification for sin were put in a vessel with running water, for a water of separation to be sprinkled on the unclean. This is a figure of the Spirit of God, calling to remembrance not only your sin, but the judgment of sin. So also in John iii. we read that not only must a man be born again to see the kingdom of God, but he must be born of water as well as of the Spirit. This shews that, connected with new birth, there is a divine separation from every taint of man. This is carried out practically in John xiii., where the Lord washes His disciples' feet, not merely for offences, but for separation from all the taint and distance of fallen man, as we see in Hebrews x. 22 ; when we draw nigh to Him in the holiest, not only must the heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience, but also the body washed with pure water, that is purification by death.

And finally we learn in I John v. 8 that there are three witnesses to the knowledge of eternal life : the Spirit, the water, and the blood. There must be purification by death

in order to enjoy eternal life. No one can enjoy eternal life who has not the testimony of the water, the divine way of separation from the old man, every taint of sin removed. All this depends on the one statement—“But now once . . . hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of *himself*.”

Every diligent student of the passages I have brought forward will see that the work of Christ is not only for the forgiveness of sins, but that He Himself bore the judgment of God for the sinner. He did not die, as has been said, “the death of a hero”; the three hours on the cross was the terrible moment when He bore the judgment of sin, and which our Lord designates as “your hour, and the power of darkness,” and the anticipation of this made His sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. When He had borne the judgment, He gave up His life. In everything, even unto death, He was the perfect offering for sweet savour to God; but in death He bore the judgment on man, and took the distant place. There He bruised the serpent’s head, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Heb. ii. 14.) “In that he died, he died unto sin once” (Rom. vi. 10); there He knew what it was to be forsaken of God, but He maintained what was due to God, and God’s right-

eousness was established by Him in bearing the judgment due to man, and there He glorified God. Thus the righteousness of God was declared (Rom. iii. 26), so that God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Many Christians are assured that their sins are forgiven, and even have the sense that they are justified by God's grace, but if they do not see that God has removed in judgment the man that was under judgment, they are liable to be distressed when sin works in them. When they truly apprehend that the man is gone in judgment, they know that He is just and the Justifier, and that even though sin works in them, it is all gone from God's eye in the judicial termination of the life to which sin attached. Thus far with regard to our acceptance.

Next, as we see in Romans vi., in order to have deliverance, we are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, of which baptism is the form. This was indicated at the deluge when God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me," and Noah and his house were saved by water. There can be no sense of deliverance, however assured you may be of your acceptance with God, unless you know by the Spirit in yourself, not only that you are forgiven your

sins, but that you are delivered from sin, so that "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. viii. 10.) In the paschal lamb Israel was sheltered by the blood, but in the Red Sea (in figure the death and resurrection of Christ), all their enemies were destroyed.

The soul is made conscious of having passed through His death on to new ground, a solemn moment for every soul! Jonah in the whale's belly was a type of this; and Paul in the three days when he neither ate nor drank was in the experience of it. Thus you learn, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ is formed in you; Isaac is in possession, and Ishmael is cast out. The distress of a believer (what makes a "wretched man," Rom. vii. 24) is when he finds sin working in him; and if sin is not removed he cannot know deliverance from sin; but it has been removed, and "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Thus only can you understand that you cannot have part with Christ (John xiii. 8), unless you are in this divine separation from all that which is at the root of alienation from God. And again, when you draw near to the Lord as one of the consecrated com-

pany, not only is your heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, that is, you have no sense of wrong-doing, but your body is washed with pure water; there is absolute purification by death.

Finally, you are in the enjoyment of eternal life; the Spirit of God is witness to you, not only of the blood which puts your sins away, but to your inexpressible satisfaction, the testimony of the water is purification by death, so that untold is the blessing one knows as one enters into the solid blessed fact, not only of sins forgiven through His blood, but of sin put away by the sacrifice of Himself. Thus we are morally separated from every taint or tinge of the life to which sin is attached. And we see the necessity and blessedness of being dead with Christ, and of knowing Him as Head in the sphere of life. Thence He directs us according to His pleasure, leading our hearts into the fulness of God's purpose for us.

WHEN ETERNAL LIFE IS KNOWN AND THE EFFECTS WHICH FOLLOW.

THE first work in the soul is new birth. It is altogether *from* God and *of* God. Then the light of His grace shines in, and, as there is

faith in the blood of Christ, there is relief. God has set Him forth "a propitiation [mercy seat] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins . . . to declare . . . his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) It is important to see that it is all from God, and as we rest in the fact that He is just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, we are assured of His grace; as Israel under the shelter of the blood in Exodus xii.

Next, when we believe that God has raised Christ from the dead, we know that not only is the power of death overcome, but the judgment that lay upon us has been removed. We pass in figure through the Red Sea, the death and resurrection of Christ, we are justified by faith; now we have peace with God, and can sing unto the Lord, "for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Great and glorious as His grace is up to this—the first great delight known to the heart, and which many are satisfied to stop in, the joy of their own salvation—there is still much more.

As we see in the type (Exo. xv. 22), there was no water for Israel in the wilderness but Marah; so it is with us, this world is a scene

of death. But God gave manna and the smitten rock. Now manna is the life of Jesus, the way in which He walked down here, encountering every difficulty where everything was unsuited to Him; and we cannot feed on manna or appropriate His grace to go through the wilderness until we know this life in its own sphere, where everything ministers to it and suits it. In order to be in the wilderness according to the mind of God, we must know that we are in the life of Christ in its own sphere; we first know we are in Christ's life when we have deliverance; there is no sense of life till then.

Many suppose that because by faith they see they are clear in the sight of God, and by the reckoning of faith are also clear in their own conscience, that they have deliverance, but this is spurious and misleading; they are not truly in deliverance from "the body of this death" (Rom. vii. 24)—the wretched man—until they know by the Spirit that they are in Christ, and that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

It is now that the subject of life comes in. (John iii.) You are not in deliverance until you are in life. The work of Christ gives you peace with God; that is, His work *for* us; this is the joy of salvation; but it is the work

of the Spirit *in* us that sets us in deliverance ; this sets us consciously in life, and there is no step in the Christian's history so slowly entered upon as this, but when it is entered on, Christ's life is known and wonderful effects follow.

Every believer is entitled to it by the grace of God, but every believer does not enjoy it, it is when he enjoys it that the effects follow. When a Christian knows he is not in the flesh but in the Spirit, he walks here in a new state and a new manner of life. This is deliverance. When there is not deliverance, there is occupation with our tempers and failings, and a constant effort to correct them instead of seeing that we are clear of the flesh in which those tempers and failings are, and we are in Christ with new tempers and manners.* When Christ is formed in us, the old man is crucified, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

If I know His salvation, I am bound to Him as Jonathan was to David, and I surrender for Him ; but when I enjoy His life, I know His love, and nothing can separate me from it. (Rom. viii. 39.) The abounding

* It is quite right to judge our tempers as part of the old man which God has set aside in judgment.

of grace over sin is not reached otherwise. Where sin abounded grace superabounded, in order that even as sin has reigned unto death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. v. 21.) Thus also we are clear from human wisdom by beholding the Lord's glory, and a marvellous effect is produced; we are brought into moral correspondence with Himself, first as to our own individual affairs, and collectively as to His interests down here; a matter surely for our wonder and praise, that being in the life of Christ can so affect us. Then it behoves us to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." While the old man is never altered, however it may be suppressed, it is a new day for the heart and conscience when we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; then we can "worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

It is plain from scripture that when you enjoy the life of Christ, you have believed in Him as the Son of God, and also that the old man has been set aside: "In that the law was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” When we know that sin has been condemned and believe in the Son of God, we enjoy life in Him; He lives in us.

Now, when we are really at rest about ourselves, not only rejoicing in our salvation, but in the love of Him who saved us, we necessarily seek Him in His assembly, we learn like Peter to leave the ship that was made for water, to join Him in the new place above all the power of evil, and as we come to Him there we are living stones “built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” We can only be there in His life, as we find in John vi., which is the divine side of it, while Matthew xiv. is the way we reach it.

The effect of knowing the Lord in the assembly as Son over God’s house is very marked. You come from it with your heart set upon His interests here. This is well illustrated by the two disciples going to Emmaus; their hearts burned within them at the wonderful unfolding of scripture, but they were not diverted from their own interests to His until they had seen Himself.

Here I may remark that many are greatly moved by a word in spiritual power, and get, as I may say, a glimpse of the truth, but

they are not rooted and grounded in it. Nothing can establish you but the word of God formed in you, as we read: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Thus we grow up to Him in all things who is the Head.

But to resume; the more you are occupied with Christ's interests here, the more sensible you will be of the opposition of the world, and how opposed it is to His things; thus you are prepared for entering upon the great blessedness of being dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. A wonderful new day opens to you as you realise that you have died with Him from the things here, and are risen with Him, so that you can seek the things that are above where He sits at the right hand of God. Then the new and heavenly home is become known to you, and you realise that you have put off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ. Bear in mind that this circumcision cannot be known save as you have died to the world, and thus, as in the type, have crossed the Jordan. Then you are in the sphere of Christ's life; you know Him as Head, so that you get counsel and direction from Him in relation to His interests here; and you fulfil the relative duties in a divine way when you can glory that you are not of the world;

you are crucified to the world and the world to you. Its interests, plans, and ways cease to be of interest to you, for you belong to a new world; you have the incomparable enjoyment of having come to the dwelling-place of God in company with Christ.

Now we begin to realise Ephesians i. 19. It is deeply affecting to see that when we know Christ as Head we are in the home above. We know Him there, and when we realise the power of the Spirit working in us, we know that we are raised up and "made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is not only that we get there, but that we know that we are united to Him there, and our home is where He is. It is here the grace of God culminates. Then we turn to the earth in quite a new way; we come out in divine power as heavenly men to carry out Christ's pleasure in the circle of His people and in our family circle, enabled to stand against all the wiles of the enemy as witnesses for Christ in the scene of Satan's power. We are in the power and testimony of John xvi. But who can describe these wonderful effects!

The Lord lead our hearts to realise our union with Christ, that we may be in the power and blessedness of it, walking in heavenly beauty in the scene of His rejection, for His name's sake.

“TAKE HEED WHAT YE HEAR” :
 “TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR.”

(MARK. IV. 24, 25 ; LUKE VIII. 18.)

It is inconceivably gracious of the blessed God that He should so freely and fully give us His word, that we may understand His mind. On the other hand, it is deplorable to see the levity with which this great favour is accepted ; and yet it is as we “hear” that we receive. “For he that hath, to him shall be given.” The more fully and freely God has made known His mind, as we see in our own day, the more it is perverted by the ignorant and unbelieving, and even when truly accepted, it is by many so qualified and humanised that it has neither edge nor weight in the soul.

In former days Aaron was “spokesman unto the people” (Exo. iv. 16), and propounded the word of God at the dictation of Moses ; yet we find, so little did it rule him, that while Moses was in the mount with God, Aaron was making a calf for the people.

If we look around us in Christendom we see that man’s imitation of divine work is that every candidate for the ministry must be prepared and ordained for that sacred service. I refer to this only to shew that

religious man has a sense of the gravity of being a servant of God. Now, where there is more reality, and even true zeal, there is often a great lack of gravity in entering on the Lord's service. A young man of piety and zeal tries how he can preach, and if he can arrest souls, satisfies himself that he is called of God; but he may have no real idea of being “sent,” or of the message, “How shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. x. 15.)

There are, as far as I can see, three classes of preachers: the first class like Ahimaaz (2 Sam. xviii. 22) are neither sure of being sent, nor of the message. In general the gospel of this class does not go beyond the superiority of Christ as a sacrifice to the paschal lamb, or to any of the offerings under the law. Therefore the chief point of their preaching is pressing on the sinner the necessity of having Christ as a sacrifice for his sins before God; there is seldom any light as to how God has wrought from Himself. There is an idea of the atonement in the blood of Christ, but no idea of reconciliation. Reconciliation is not taught in the Old Testament and the word atonement does not occur in the New Testament. Though souls get *assurance* of salvation from this preaching they do not get *acceptance*; it cannot lead them beyond trusting in the blood; they try to live conscientiously, but

they have not full peace ; if they have seasons of joy, they have also seasons of depression, and this often goes on to the end of their lives without their making any advance. With the preachers themselves there is seldom advance, for the measure they mete is measured to themselves ; and instead of their path being as "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," they seem to grow darker, and with really less enjoyment at the end.

With the second class of preachers the main point is pressing on their hearers the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. These know justification—they preach Christ risen as the receipt for the debt paid—that He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) Many of their converts being justified by faith and having received the Spirit, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. They rightly press the work of God's grace, that it is all His own work. This is objective truth, and most important in its place. It is what we must begin with, but many do not get beyond it, and if they do not, they do not enjoy the deliverance which the Spirit of God would effect in their souls, if they truly sought it. But instead of seeking true deliverance they assume to have it by

the reckoning of faith, and that because God sees them clear from the old man in the cross, that they are clear from him themselves. Thus by this delusion they lose practically the work of the Spirit in them, and unless awakened from it, they do not advance beyond the fact that God clears them by His own mighty grace, which is, of course, the beginning of all blessing. They read the word and find that all is theirs because they belong to Christ, but they are not in the power and enjoyment of it; they see all the purposes of God's sovereign grace, and speak of them in that way; but as far as I know they are not in the enjoyment of the condition which His grace bestows. There is consistency in this, because if they have refused the first work of the Spirit, which is deliverance, by assuming that they have it already, they cannot advance in the work of the Spirit. They may cultivate everything that is good, and benevolent, and be very demonstrative in brotherly love, but they do not seem to increase in the enjoyment of the purpose of God for them. To know Christ as Head is made a matter of knowledge and doctrine, instead of association with Him; and likewise the truth of union is spoken of as something to be learned, instead of being realised as led by the Spirit into union with Christ.

Thus, though the start was good, they do not seem to advance ; there is really no enjoyment beyond the gospel, because of the imperfect way they have apprehended the truth.

The third class begin from God : Christ, as we see in all the gospels, is the prominent object. In Luke we find, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In John's gospel John the Baptist proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. . . . The same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." He not only removes all that is contrary to God, but He brings in everything according to God.

We see beautifully exemplified in the thief on the cross (though there was no preacher), that he has to do not only with the work, but with the One who did the work, and he is to be in company with Him in paradise. The Apostle Paul could say to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

We find afterwards when he explained himself that this was the gospel of the glory of Christ which was especially committed to him. The nearer you are to Him in glory the more you are assured of the righteousness

that is ministered from glory. You are not only justified by faith and have peace with God, but you joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. “In whom ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is all through the sovereign goodness of God to you, when you appropriate it in faith; He has accepted you in the Beloved. But now you have to learn that not only has God removed everything from His own eye, but by the power of His Spirit He delivers you from the old man, and that you are in Christ, and that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” makes you “free from the law of sin and death.” You have begun life in Christ, and you can say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) If you are established in this grace you know that Christ is formed in you, and you are then ready to apprehend the great range of His grace for you. Except as you are free of the old man, you are not in the life of Christ, and never could know Him now as the Living Stone, nor as Head, nor realise your union with Him in heaven.

The great difference between this last class and the other two is that not only is the work prominent, but Christ Himself is prominent.

It is very plain that if Christ personally is before you, there must be an endless range for your heart, for you never can come to the end of Him. One portion of His grace could not satisfy ; *Himself alone* can satisfy the heart. . If you dwell on a passage of scripture only, you get only a partial apprehension of the truth, for Christ Himself is the truth ; and according as Christ Himself is apprehended by the soul, so you impart to others ; then it is true that "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you."

In our own day when God vouchsafed to give a restoration of the knowledge of His full purpose in grace, it was seen that the first part, the certainty of our salvation, was to be appropriated by faith, which is blessedly true ; it was apprehended that God in His grace transferred a believer from Adam to Christ. But subsequently it was taught, and insisted on, that not only the first part, but all the purpose of His grace for us, could be appropriated and realised by faith, which is an imperfect apprehension of the truth. The truth is that our salvation must be appropriated by faith, but as the believer is on new ground in Christ, it is only by the Holy Ghost that we can appropriate and enjoy the range of God's purpose and grow up into the Head ; the Spirit only can lead us into it. Thus by

the craft of the enemy, the great goodness of God to us in this latter day has been in a great measure lost sight of, and some are asserting that they know all the purpose of God in grace without having the great blessing which would result from being practically in each step. Surely this is enough to make the Lord's warning very emphatic to us in this day, "Take heed therefore how ye hear."

In conclusion I press the great contrast between the two latter classes. They both begin aright. They believe that the whole range of God's purpose is to be first apprehended by faith, and that the first step, our salvation, is appropriated by faith; that salvation is that God in His grace transfers the believer from Adam to Christ; but the former class do not see that all the rest of the purpose of God is only known as you are in Christ by the Spirit of God. Their mistake is that they think that because salvation is appropriated by faith, all the other parts of His grace can be likewise appropriated. For example, they assert that you get deliverance by the reckoning of faith, and do not see that you start on new ground, and therefore that your deliverance can only be in the life of Christ, and if you do not take the first step you cannot enjoy any of the rest. Hence while those who say that all can be appro-

priated by faith are zealous as to doctrine, they are really not in the power and blessing of what is true for them. They believe in separation to God for all the children of God, and they gather together in the name of Christ, looking for His presence, refusing human ministry, and are correct in detail according to the letter of the word, but they have not got it vitally, they have not really learned Matthew xiv. ; they have not crossed over to where Christ is, and they have not come to Him as the Living Stone. They could not, because they are not practically in the life of Christ. They can speak clearly and interestingly of the Lord's presence in the assembly ; of His being Head of the church and of our union with Him, but they are not in the enjoyment of this great position.

Now, on the other hand, those who believe that there is no deliverance, except in the life of Christ, have the unspeakable joy of being free from the law of sin and death. They can leave everything here to join Him in the assembly ; they know Him as Son over God's house, in the holiest of all ; untold blessing is theirs. When they learn what it is to be dead with Him from the rudiments of the world, they are with Him in His own home, where He directs and counsels them,

and finally they are led by the Spirit of God to realise their union with Him in heaven ; so that they come forth in full concert with His mind, and in the greatness of His power, to act for Him here in the church and in their own house. Thus we plainly see the importance of "Take heed therefore how ye hear."

DEVOTEDNESS TO THE LORD.

DEVOTEDNESS to the Lord begins when you know His love. It is more than the knowledge of His work ; you must be near Him to know His love, and as His love is known, He not only claims your heart, but the more you are drawn to Him the more you feel that He is worthy of all the devotion of your heart. Thus He becomes the one controlling object of your life, reaching upward and onward until you know His love "which passeth knowledge."

The believer is first occupied with the greatness of His work, as Jonathan with David, or as the woman in the Pharisee's house (Luke vii.), and the effect of knowing His work is that, like them, you openly and publicly honour Him. But Jonathan never fully followed David ; David was not the exclusive object of his heart. The disciples, as we see

in Luke v., were very ready to wait on the Lord, and they had received a remarkable instance of divine favour in the abundant haul of fishes, but it was His word to them, "Fear not," which so touched their hearts as expressing His love for them, that when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed Him. Devotedness had begun, but devotedness to the Lord has to encounter many a difficulty, and it receives no succour from anything or any one around.

As far as I see, the two women, Martha and Mary, at the end of Luke x., set forth in miniature the two classes of the new company which is described from chapter xi. to chapter xviii. 30. Martha desires to minister to Him, but Mary is devoted to Him, and wants to be in the secret of His mind.

The first great exercise of the devoted heart is when the light of God leads to the discovery that Christ is rejected on the earth. Though you believe on Him risen and glorified, yet it is slowly that you realise that He is never seen again upon the earth as He was, and that He is refused here. When you see that, you can enter into the desolation of Mary Magdalene (John xx.) ; in her agony she says, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

It has been remarked that a woman brought

in sin, and it was given to a woman to announce the blessed tidings, not only of Christ's ascension, but that He identifies us with Himself in His new position : "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Now when this is realised by the heart devoted to Christ, its language is that of Ruth to Naomi : "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee." It was not only that Ruth had affection for her mother-in-law, as Orpah had who "kissed her," but "Ruth clave unto her." No place can suit her but the place where Naomi is. She says : "Whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried." The devoted one may have had many things to interest him in the old country, in his native soil, but the object of his heart is gone to another place, and company is the only thing which satisfies love ; it is no effort to follow our object.

Now let us look at some of the exercises to which the devoted heart is subjected. The first, as to moral magnitude, is when divine light shews you that Christ is rejected on the earth. This is in contradiction to the aim and effort of Christendom which, in every

circle of government, from the throne to the cemetery, is to persuade men that He is accepted and honoured; so that as a rule every one, with few exceptions, from men of the highest morality, intellect, and position down to the unlearned peasant, is persuaded that He is acknowledged in His rightful place, and consequently that they can accept any honour in this place. This is a huge delusion! The exercise of the heart devoted to Christ is to refuse this, and to accept the place where He is accepted instead of the place where He is refused.

It is not easy to describe the immensity of the change, when in heart you leave your own place here for His place, the place which He has prepared for you. (John xiv. 3.) Things here, naturally beautiful and attractive, are surprisingly eclipsed, and you are a pilgrim here, not because of the troubles and trials of this place, but because your heart's object is in another place.

The next exercise is as to the world. The more you seek to serve it, the less you are liked by it; you might be living on the best of terms with your neighbour, but when you make use of an opportunity to speak to him about his soul, he becomes distant and reserved, as if you had grievously offended him; so you have to learn that for your love you have

hatred, and we are reminded of the Lord's words: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." (John xv. 18.) This comes as a surprise and pain to you, for you are estranged even from your nearest relatives if you are faithful to them, and not ashamed of Christ and of His words: and however kind they may be naturally, you are made conscious that there is a great distance between you and them. Though you seem to do them little good, you feel that their influence with you is injurious; they have the power, which those who are less intimate with you have not, to revive old tastes and old impressions. Thus you are taught that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. x. 36), and your heart is not at ease until you are in practical isolation from them, and till it answers to the word: "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." (Psa. xlv. 10, 11.) At the same time you ever cultivate great readiness to render them any service, indeed as it becomes us, to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 10.)

Now you come to another exercise, your home and surroundings. If your heart has deeply entered into the two former exercises,

it is evident that your own home must bear the marks of it. On the one hand you cannot accept place or position where Christ is rejected, and on the other you cannot keep the society of your fellow-men when you know that they are adverse to that which is nearest to your heart. The more retired and simple your home is, according to your spiritual taste, the more unnoticed you are, the more you commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If your means are small and only equal to your wants, you have less temptation to enlarge, or to indulge yourself or your family; but when your means are ample, if your heart is not kept truly devoted to the Lord, there is a temptation to surround yourself with the natural advantages of the earth.

It is humbling to see how many are not afraid to go forth to serve the Lord, like Gideon's army, who when tested by the water (the benefits of this life) fail in full devotedness, so that, as in that day, only a few, comparatively, remain to follow the Lord fully. These could accept the benefit, or earthly mercy, without being detained by it.

A sudden accession of property is always a test as to whether Christ is fully the object of the heart. One may wonder why God in His providence allows increase of earthly

means to those who seek to follow the Lord fully. He does so, not only for a test, but to give an opportunity of serving His own, and this at a loss and cost to yourself. Shall I offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing? The danger is that any one should desire to be rich, and so "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts" (1 Tim. vi. 9); and then you are unable to take the highest place of service, as our blessed Lord could say: "I am among you as one that serveth." If we were more devoted, we should find a way of escape from the various things that tempt us.

Having said so much as to the exercises on our own side, I now turn to the exercise of a devoted heart with reference to the Lord. The chief desire of a heart devoted to Christ is to join Him in His new place on the earth, that is, in His assembly. We learn, like Peter, what it is to leave the ship to walk on the water to go to Jesus, where He is supreme above all the power of evil here. It is in this journey that one who is really set upon reaching the Lord, who is not here, finds how his own infirmity casts him upon Christ; and he learns, as in Hebrews iv., that "we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Thus the one who is seeking Christ outside of every-

thing here finds that his own infirmities distress and distract him; but like Peter, who in the sense of his weakness cried out to the Lord to save him, so now with us; every infirmity casts us more upon the Lord, and while we really seek Him in order to be near Him, we also find that the only way we can be relieved of the pressure of our infirmities is by His present sympathy. This sympathy is not to remove the circumstances which cause the affliction, but to draw us into His own company; as Mary of Bethany learned when Jesus walked with her to the resurrection, and then (John xii.) she could sacrifice what contributed to her own position naturally—she *buried it with Him!*

Thus in a double way you are drawn to Him, and the heart delighted in coming to Him, the Living Stone, you find you are a component part of His assembly. To the one who is truly affected by the great fact of Christ's rejection from the earth, it is incomparable joy to find Him in His own assembly. It is not only that He draws you into His company in the holiest in all the blessedness of His acceptance with God, but there you learn His pleasure as to His interests here on earth.

There is another exercise peculiar to the present state of things, when the church has

become a great house in which there are not only vessels to honour but to dishonour: your desire is to separate from every one who is unsuited to His presence. This is paramount to the devoted one, and he purges himself from the vessels to dishonour, that he may be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 21.)

The next exercise is as to the state of those who are following the Lord. The more your heart is devoted to Him, the more you will care for the advancement and blessing of His own. If you do not shew this care for those near you, with whom you are walking in fellowship, you will not do so for those who are unknown to you; not that you would not shew coldness and reserve to one who is walking unfaithfully—"Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed"—but you would not cease to care for him. There is no real service without suffering: "We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake."

Lastly, there is a deep and continued exercise as to the way the saints are waiting for His coming. It has a very peculiar effect on you when you realise that the Lord has bought the field for the treasure in it. While naturally you would look at the beauties of it for your

own pleasure, it now presents itself to you in a new aspect. As you are devoted to Him, His treasure is your paramount interest here, and your great aim will then be to reach that which was lost when the ruin began—first love. The Lord says to Ephesus: “Thou hast left thy first love,” and necessarily that is to leave the place where the Lord is. Paul has to say: “All they which are in Asia be turned away from me.” You cannot enjoy His love if you are not in company with Him, and to be in company with Him is what your heart is set on if you are devoted to Him. Thus practically you have a little power, you keep His word, and do not deny His name; you are in heart the bride, whose affections are set upon Him as the bright and morning star, and the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”

The Lord give each of us to be more thoroughly devoted to Him, that we may know the exceeding blessedness of it, and be in the path of the just which is “as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. iv. 18.)

TRANSFORMED.

THE word "transformed" occurs twice with reference to Christians: Romans xii. 2; 2 Corinthians iii. 18.

Every believer tries to be reformed, but, as far as I know, very few have apprehended the great moral difference between reformation and transformation. Believers as a rule rejoice that they are saved, and aim to be up to the language of Micah vi. 8: "To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." There are many who have accepted the truth, that by the grace of God the believer is transferred from Adam to Christ, and that they are clear of the old man in the sight of God, who do not think that they should give up their innocent pleasures and their natural interests; they have no true idea of what it is to be transformed. If you analyse the two words, the meaning of each is plain enough. Reformation is improvement, and refers to what already exists; but transformation means a change of being. This, as far as I see, is little known.

In Romans xii. 2 we are exhorted not to be "conformed to this world," but to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind." This means a new mind, something thoroughly new; so that you are not to behave in the

sight of men according to the world, but according to the mind of Christ. Hence, at the end of his exhortation the apostle says: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Chap. xiii. 14.) It is not a question as to whether the order of this world is good or not, but you are not to be conformed to it any more; you are to be transformed according to a new mind, and thus be able to prove "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." You begin with your fellow Christians, and as detailed in chapter xiii., behave yourself among men in a new way.

It would take too much time to go fully into it; all I desire is to awaken souls to the solemn fact that transformation is not accepting the good and refusing the evil only, but it is coming out in quite a new way on the earth. Every one who knows anything of his own heart must know that he has tastes and desires connected with this earthly scene, and the more they are gratified, the stronger they become; but as he walks in the Spirit he finds that what he likes most in the natural order of things is the very thing he must most avoid: "No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better."

It will not do to say, as Saul said of

Amalek (1 Sam. xv.), that the vile and refuse he utterly destroyed. We have to treat the old man as if we had *done* with him, as "crucified with Christ," and therefore what would awaken our ambition, or our natural desires, we must most dread. Very slowly do we learn to be altogether nonconformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind. I have heard a devoted servant of Christ, who had long been in His service, say, that what he allowed himself last year he would not allow himself this year.

There are two lines to which the natural man cleaves with the greatest tenacity; the one is his individual rights, and the other his station in life, whether great or small. Both of these were provided for and insisted on under the law, and every civilised nation in great measure maintains them; but these are just what we have to relinquish. We see an instance in Acts xvi., of how Paul at Philippi surrendered his rights as a Roman and he received manifold more, and was most highly honoured of God; but in Jerusalem (Acts xxii.), where he stood up for his rights as a Roman, it was only by human means that he was delivered. Natural men form clubs and societies to secure their rights; the natural man's resource is combination with his fellows, exemplified in Babel, culminating in the moral

Babylon, which sets forth man enjoying himself in entire independence of God. Now as to station in life, every one according to his ability jealously maintains it, whether he has acquired it, or whether it is his by birth ; those who have acquired it, regard the position they have obtained as a testimonial to their personal ability, and hence they seek to preserve it scrupulously. But this is the world, and it is plain from John xvi. that you cannot be a witness for Christ if you do not come out in the power of God's Spirit, *apart from and beyond all that is of the world*. The Spirit from Christ in heaven testifies not only that the world is sin, but that there is no righteousness here ; therefore the witness for Christ cannot accept any position or distinction conferred by the world. He is here to glorify Christ ; and Christ's things, which are the things of the Father, are made known to him by the Spirit. (John xvi.) Literally he comes out here as a new man, to stand for Christ according to Ephesians iv., unhindered, because he finds that the prince of this world is judged ; and according to Ephesians vi. he can withstand all the power of the enemy, and having done all he stands.

So far we have looked at the transforming of Romans. Now as to the transforming in 2 Corinthians iii. 18, the blessedness of it is,

that it is by beholding the Lord's glory with unveiled face that we are transformed into the same image; that is, we are brought into moral correspondence with Himself. It is not merely a new course outside and apart from the world, as in Romans, but here we are in conscious connection with Himself. In Romans we begin with being established in grace; chapter xii. is properly connected with the end of chapter vi. : "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness." This transforming begins with the gospel, but in 2 Corinthians iii. the contrast is between the demand for righteousness and the ministration of righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ, having accomplished righteousness, is raised from the dead and received up into glory. In Him now every attribute of God is expressed to God's entire satisfaction. What could not be shewn to Moses (Exo. xxxiii. 20) is now the light of the gospel to every one turned to God, as Saul of Tarsus found. He had seen the light and he had heard the voice of the Lord, and after three days he knows he has a Saviour in glory, and he receives the Holy Ghost.

It is true that every convert does not enjoy the light of His glory, because many are dwelling more upon the work than upon the

Person who did the work. The fact is, the nearer you are to Him in glory, the more assured you are of being in the righteousness of God, and that you are there without a cloud; and it is as you behold the Lord there that you are transformed into moral correspondence to Himself. Many have been misled by thinking that by reading the Bible they get like Christ—transformed; but you will find diligent students of the word, who may never say anything incorrect in doctrine yet who never seem to act in spiritual power “He that is spiritual judgeth all things”; he can distinguish between two points in which there is the least difference. I may illustrate study and spirituality by two classes of hounds; the greyhound hunts by sight, the foxhound by scent. The former sees, and is correct while he sees, but the latter scents; he goes through all kinds of difficulties to reach his object. It is not only a great thing to see what is stated in scripture, but to have a divine susceptibility to know what suits Christ. It is like the difference between reading a biography and personal acquaintance. Transformation takes place by simply beholding the Lord’s glory. On Him rests the glory of God, and in beholding it you are transformed. You have no presentiment as to what the effect on you will be; but whether it is be-

holding Him in the assembly as to His things on the earth, or as to your individual concerns, you are transformed into a line that you never thought of ; you come from Him into your circumstances here, with the impression made on you by Himself.

In Psalm lxxiii. we are instructed as to how a man of God was impressed when he came into the sanctuary, even though the Lord's presence was there only known in a cloud of glory. This typifies something much greater for us. It sets forth how you can individually, in your own room, come into the presence of Christ ; but it is only by the Spirit of God that you can come into His presence, and if you are led by the Spirit you are apart from the flesh ; you are practically in deliverance for the time being, and thus you get a sense of what deliverance is, though you are not fully in deliverance here until you know that you are delivered from this "wretched man," and that you are in Christ by the Spirit ; this you must know before you can "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." I say this because I can quite understand a person being so in the Spirit for the moment that he is free to enjoy the Lord ; and yet when he returns to his circumstances here, he does not enjoy deliverance because he has not learned it experimentally.

But to return to Psalm lxxiii. The first great impression made upon the Psalmist is that of the presence of God. He had been looking at things around him with reference to himself, and judging of them; but when he goes into the sanctuary, the presence of God absorbs him, and he sees how God is above everything, and he himself is a dissolving view. Thirdly, he never was so sure of his place with God: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Fourthly, he can say: "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." And he winds up with, "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

It is very interesting to find how each of us can be influenced individually by drawing near to the Lord. I know the case of a young man in college bent on going to the bar. He was suddenly taken ill, and when the servant left the room to go to the doctor, because he was fainting, he lay on his bed thinking within himself that he was going to Jesus. In a little while he revived, but he was completely transformed as to all his worldly aspirations, and without consulting any one he decided to give up the bar, and with it all his natural

expectations, in order to serve the Lord. I cite this to shew how definitely the Lord transforms you to His own mind when you are really near Him, even for a moment. I remember when I knew but little of praying, saying to a dear man of God, "I find when I am praying for some time I get lost," and he replied, "That is the time to continue praying."

It is very encouraging to know that if you make known all your requests to God, if you are near enough to Him to know that you have told Him—have made them known to Him—though you may get no immediate answer, yet however perturbed you were on account of them before, you come away transformed to the peace of God which passes all understanding. Still more do we see this in the case of Stephen: "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. . . . And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts vii.) If you are suffering for Christ here, the sight of Him in glory will so transform you that you will be like Stephen, who was not occupied with his own sufferings, but with the glory of God, and the blessing of others.

Now when you behold Christ and His glory

in the assembly, you are transformed into moral correspondence with His present mind, like the two disciples in Luke xxiv. when He manifested Himself to them. While going to Emmaus they were greatly interested by His unfolding of the scripture to them, but when their eyes were opened they knew Him; they were transformed, they were diverted from their own interests, and at a late hour they go to Jerusalem to the circle of His interests. Thus one who has sat under His shadow with great delight comes forth from the assembly occupied with His interests. As you behold Him, there is an impression made upon you by the Spirit of God which you never lose. Here, I think, special gifts come in. A gift is some distinct impression made upon the soul by the Spirit of God—what the burning bush was to Moses.

But though you cannot lose what you are given by the Spirit of God, you may sleep. It was after a very happy time that the bride in Canticles retired to seek her own rest. (Chap. v.) "Sleep" is seeking one's own ease—practical inactivity for Christ. It shews how naturally perverse we are, to find that after the brightest season we can be drawn away by reading or company—not to speak of lower things—to seek what suits ourselves. But the Lord is gracious. He awakens us from

the sleep, and draws us nearer to Himself than even we were before. Nothing can convey a deeper impression of what the greatness of His grace is than that we should be not only awakened from our selfishness, but, as we read: "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the *Christ shall shine upon thee*"; we not only return to what we have left, but more is added to us. If a "father" sleeps, he does not awake as a "babe," but as a "father," and with a deeper sense of his place with Christ. Thus it is in association with Him we become morally like Him, and as we advance, we know Him in the sphere of His life; risen with Him we are outside and apart from everything here. And it is not merely that we are in correspondence with Him, but He instructs us as to His will and pleasure with relation to His own, with whom we are conversant; so that when we learn that we are united to Him who is in glory, we can come forth in the new man to express His beauty and grace here on the earth as His witnesses, able to stand against all the wiles of the devil. This is transformation of the highest order.

The Lord lead our hearts to apprehend the great contrast between the natural man, however reformed, and the new man growing up into the likeness of Christ.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT A SNARE.

EVERY one according to his moral sense, if he is true to his conscience, refuses the evil and seeks the good ; but as the conscience becomes enlightened, this is more definitely insisted on. This is the principle of the law ; obedience was enjoined by the law however contrary to the natural man. Now when grace comes in, the believer rejoices in the assurance of his forgiveness, and, as he knows atonement, his conscience constrains him to live to please God ; but this is often taken up on the principle of law, so that self-improvement becomes his great aim, and the law his standard of walk.

Now it is plain to any one who understands the gospel that in the fulness of the grace of God the man who offended against God is judicially terminated in the cross, and the one who believes that God has raised Christ from the dead is justified. Any one who is clear and true as to this first step in the grace of God for us, knows that he is not now in Adam before God but in Christ, and that any attempt which he may make to improve his old man in conduct or in ways is in reality a flagrant, though unintentional, denial of the greatness of God's grace. This is a snare by which many are captured and detained, as by a hostile

power. Almost every believer is more or less caught in this snare, and many, alas! continue in it to the end of their course. The first thought of the one who has received God's grace must of necessity be as to how he stands with God, as we see in the case of the prodigal son; after he was kissed by the father, he was troubled by his own unfitness for him. This is the crucial moment for every believer. Very few learn early in their history what it is to be in Christ, in the best robe, and thus fitted to enjoy God. Until this is known he is necessarily occupied with himself, and he sometimes subjects himself to much self-mortification in the effort to repress or improve the tendencies of the flesh, often losing much time in examining how certain failure came to pass, and longing for an opportunity to redeem his mistakes; and this goes on until the cry is not, Who will *improve* me? but "Who shall *deliver* me from the body of this death?" It is generally a long time before one arrives at this point; days and years are often spent in trying to improve, until one feels that all is hopelessly in vain. Then comes the agonising cry: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

No one looks truly at his own history, who does not know that he thinks he has achieved

a great thing if he can repress an evil tendency or inclination—like a teetotaler—and no one so obdurate or hard to affect, as to his state before God, as a man who has thus improved himself, because he thinks there is some good in himself. Slowly one learns it, like the rich young man whom the Lord loved (Mark x.), and who kept all the law relating to his neighbour ; yet the Lord's word to him was : "Take up the cross [which meant *execution*], and follow me." Beautiful as he was, *he must die !*

When the believer has thus come to the true sense as to himself, that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," he turns to God ; and now after this exercise he learns to say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the first great conflict. But as we see in type from Numbers xxi., Israel was a long time in the wilderness before they were set for going to Canaan. It was in encountering the opposition to their moving onwards that they felt that the manna, typifying the grace of the humbled Christ, was not sufficient for them. I only refer to this to shew that we may go on in the wilderness, regretting Egypt more than seeking Canaan. Now the full enmity of the heart against God is disclosed, and God "sent fiery serpents . . . and they bit the people ; and

much people of Israel died." There can be no improvement in man from the first moment of his fall. In the agony of the serpent's bite they are glad to embrace the message of grace. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Christ was lifted up from the earth; the One who knew no sin made sin for us, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Now, deliverance is really sought; but here we must note what is very sad, and that is, that one of the wiles of the devil is to divert the anxious soul from learning deliverance in the life of Christ, by the teaching that as God sees the believer without sin by the work of Christ, so the believer, by the reckoning of faith, is practically holy. This is a delusion, and has done much harm to souls; and from this has sprung the teaching called "Holiness by faith," which has ensnared many, namely, that as God sees you in Christ without a spot, you can believe yourself to be holy. When you come to examine this teaching, you find that their idea of holiness is, that you do not break the law by any overt act, quite overlooking the workings of the flesh within, and the immense amount of self-pleasing there may be without an open breach of the law. The effort to promote this produces a

constraint like an affected manner. Affectation is the effort to be in manner after an order of things which is not natural to you. It is not the spontaneous expression of your nature, and an effort to imitate the divine nature is indeed hopeless work, and discloses that you have never learned the enormity of your own nature and have never said, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It is very important to see that if a believer is really set for heaven, having a true idea of the character of the world as the wilderness, he must discover the innate enmity of his heart against God. Until this is known, one is liable to be carried away by one deceit or another; but when the cry for deliverance from the body of this death is really uttered, then comes the blessed deliverance: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then you realise that by the Spirit you are in Christ. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Now you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The mind of the Spirit is life and peace. The mind of the flesh is death. It is a new day to your soul when you are in the light and blessing of this great deliverance, and the more you walk in it the more established you are in it. We see that the Corinthians were diverted from it by one

snare, and the Galatians by another ; but for Christ to get His true place was the only way of restoration in both cases. If you are beholding the Lord in glory your own wisdom is in abeyance, Himself is paramount. As in the figure, Isaac is fully acknowledged, Ishmael is cast out. Then Christ is formed in you, and you can say : "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Now a new history is open to you. It is not that you are never troubled by the flesh, but if you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfil the lusts of it. The Spirit is always in conflict with the flesh. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," but the Spirit always gains the day if you have not grieved Him ; when you have, you are like a bird with a wounded wing. If you are walking in the Spirit, Christ is the Object before you ; when you are walking in the flesh, yourself is your object in some shape or form.

Thus the question is, not as to whether you are improved or not, but whether you are in Adam or in Christ ; if in Christ you can say, I have "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," and you not only know that He lives in you, and that thus you are governed by a new Person, but as you behold His glory—

the very beginning of the gospel—you are transformed into His image, and you are the expression of Him here, whether in your individual circumstances, or in the circle of His interests. I need hardly say that any one who is at all sensible of the greatness of Christ's place in him, is always in his conscience watchful not to be diverted from this new and blessed path by any intrusion of the flesh; but this is a very different exercise from self-improvement. Be assured that the natural inclination of the flesh is to be recognised, even apart from Satan; therefore if you sow to the flesh you will of the flesh reap corruption. It is not looking within for improvement, however careful and anxious you may be as to your walk, but your watchfulness and desire to be led by Christ keeps you far more circumspect and separate from everything that would attract or influence the flesh. Therefore though the believer is not watching his steps for improvement, his heart is so turned to the Lord that he shrinks from everything that would divert him from Him. He so longs for His voice that he says: "Be not silent unto me, O my God." He is so conscious of the blank of the Lord's absence that he can truly say with the apostle: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the

world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” From his daily walk and work in his own circumstances, he can come fresh and happy into the Lord’s service ; and the more he walks according to this rule, the more he is drawn to the Lord and attracted to Him by the way He helps him, so that in everything he can do all things through Him who gives the power.

The Lord lead our hearts to see the contrast between self-improvement and growing up unto Him in His beauty and grace, nourished and cherished by Him. Thus instead of being elated at your own improvement, or cast down because you cannot effect it, you are occupied with the grace and beauty in Christ, in which you are made to share.

THE GOSPEL CAN BE ACCEPTED
WHILE THE CHURCH,
“THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL,”
IS ALTOGETHER UNKNOWN.

It must arrest every thoughtful soul in studying the New Testament, that there are two ministries—the ministry of the gospel, and the ministry of the church, which is the “mystery of the gospel” (Eph. vi. 19) ; and as he is

arrested by this fact, he must be deeply affected by the conviction that, however the former may be acknowledged, the latter is unknown in Christendom, and the more he will marvel that devoted men of God can be zealous as to the one, and yet remain quite unawakened as to their entire ignorance of the other. I think of it as the most anomalous and unaccountable state of things.

I do not merely allude to Romanism, where the gospel and the church are both in the bonds of priestcraft, which starts with the idea that the church was founded on Peter, as if he were the Rock. Where this idea prevails there could, of course, be no real idea of the church of God. But it is not of Romanism I speak. I confine my remarks to the Reformed churches and the Nonconformist bodies, and I do not believe that any ministers in either one or the other, however faithful they may be in preaching the gospel as far as they know it, have the least conception of "the mystery of the gospel," which is the church. The best corroboration I can give to this statement is, that if they had any true idea of what the church is, they must take new ground—a ground open and common to every believer.

It will hardly be credited, still the appalling fact remains true, that from the days of the

early fathers in the first century, there is no reference made to “the mystery of the gospel,” nor for centuries after. The first break of day after the long night of darkness was the Reformation, when Luther was led to set forth and insist upon justification by faith and not by works, which produced a separation from the Romish system.

Speaking historically, I do not remember any written or public statement as to the church until God was pleased to give light to a clergyman of the Church of England in this century, to see that there is another ministry besides that of the gospel. This we find in Colossians i. 23-25, and for this Paul says (chap. ii. 1), he had great conflict that the Colossians, who were well founded in the gospel, might know the mystery of God. This clergyman, though not as yet established in his soul as to the gospel, was so arrested by this light from God, that he devoted himself to the study of the subject; and as soon as he was established in grace, he saw clearly this great addition, that Christ is Head of His body, the church: “From which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” And he sought the company of Christians in order to make known to them what had been shewn to him (in

addition to a full salvation—acceptance in Christ risen—so that he could “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement [reconciliation]”), even the mystery, that believers are Christ’s body here on the earth, and that Christ in heaven is the Head ; and as surely as He died for us to effect salvation (which is what we first learn), so surely in the grace of God we have died with Him from the rudiments of the world ; and now we can know Him in spirit, as every believer is privileged to know Him, in His own sphere, the sphere of life outside of death and of the world : typically, the other side of Jordan. Every one who knows Him there, as risen with Him, seeks the things which are above where He sits, and learns what he could not learn elsewhere, that he has put off the body of the flesh (not “the sins of the flesh,” that is an interpolation, but the *body* of the flesh), and then he is instructed by Him how to fulfil His pleasure here in His own circle.

In places remote one from another earnest and devoted men became interested as to this great light which had been given from God. But soon the enemy was at work against it. Concurrently with this a clergyman, contemporary of the one I have referred to, propounded and inculcated the importance of

ritualism as a means of preserving the Established Church as a united body, and to prevent dissent. This was a distinct effort of the enemy to counteract the light which God had given, and which was arresting souls in different directions.

I need not refer to the varied ways in which the truth has been weakened since. It is a painful fact to contemplate, but generally it *was* weakened, and even by those who had at first accepted it. One of the most successful methods of the enemy's opposition was the avowal that it was a far happier and more useful path to preach the gospel than to be occupied as pastors and teachers with edifying the assembly. I note this especially because down to our own day, while gospel work is not avowedly in opposition, still it is often made a set-off, and a pretext for not giving attention to the truth of the church, which is “the mystery of the gospel.” Again, perhaps nothing has tended more to hinder the truth of the mystery being got hold of in power by souls than the clear and logical way in which the doctrine of it has been enunciated by those who have learned it from the letter of scripture, but who have not been in the power and position of it themselves. This teaching, though instructive and interesting, appeals to the natural mind and lacks the

point and force of practical enjoyment. It is more the report of an historian, than of an eye-witness, one who is really in the power of it himself. No one can borrow or acquire the peculiar force with which a person describes an important fact, at once of immense interest to himself and to his hearers. Thus, sad though it be to say it, some of those who have accepted the truth of the mystery have presented it without power and attractiveness to earnest souls, because not themselves the practical exponents of the truth they preached.

I may add that, as far as I know, no company gathered under the leading and supervision of the most devoted evangelist were assured that they were built up a "spiritual house"; not even few of these know what it is to have come to the Living Stone; for if even the few had known it they would have been a support and help to the others. The strongest confirmation I can give of this statement is, that it was taught that every believer was on the Rock; whereas the simple truth in 1 Peter ii. is addressed to believers who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious"; and then, coming to Him, the Living Stone, chosen of God and precious, they, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. They have learned, like Peter in Matthew xiv., to

cross the water by Christ's own hand, to be with Him in His assembly.

Twenty-five years ago there was a great evangelical movement which originated with two preachers in America, who pressed in a very popular way upon every one to accept Christ, as if any one could do so of himself. Of course, where there was a real work of God they were blessed, but many were so attracted and carried away by this movement that their interest in “the mystery of the gospel” ceased, and it became quite overlooked; so much so, that in 1873 I called attention in public to the danger of the church being lost sight of now that the gospel for the benefit of souls was absorbing such exclusive attention, and that the “mystery of the gospel” was ignored. None of those who were carried away by that movement progressed in the line of God's purpose.

Now of late years, doubtless, the most insidious and effectual opposition to souls being led into the greatness of God's purpose has arisen from men of ability and intelligence in the scriptures asserting that the whole range of God's purpose is the gift of His grace, which is true; but while they could speak of the great position to which God has called us, they ignored the subjective work of the Spirit, by which alone souls could be led into

the power and enjoyment of it. It is quite true that all the range of God's purpose, from salvation to union with Christ, is the free gift of His grace, and to be apprehended by faith ; so far, those to whom I refer were right in their statement ; but the truth of God was neutralised and made ineffectual by the denial of the subjective work of the Spirit in the soul of the believer, so that all the great possessions spoken of were unavailable as to *present* appropriation. Now, while it is true that all is *apprehended* by faith, it is only the first link that is *appropriated* by faith ; all the rest are to be appropriated by the Spirit. The first link is that God in His grace has removed the old man in judgment by the cross, and that every one believing in Christ risen is justified, and receives the Holy Ghost to assure him of the love of God. That is to be appropriated by faith ; but the mistake is in supposing that the other links in this great chain can be appropriated and consequently enjoyed by any one (though through grace he has the right to all) except by the work of the Spirit of God in him ; consequently, as he by the Spirit enjoys each new position he is in the power and blessing of it here.

No form of opposition could more effectually deprive the word of its point and virtue than to say that great possessions are given to us

of God, and that, while on earth, to apprehend by faith that they are ours is enough; for if that were the truth we should get no distinct advantage from them now.

In conclusion, I would briefly call attention to the great advantage and blessing accruing to us as we enjoy the purpose of God for us, and the place of power and testimony in which it places us on earth. Every believer in Christ risen is, as we have seen, by God's grace transferred from Adam to Christ, and is assured by faith that he is a member of the body of Christ, even though he has not yet entered into the power and benefit which it confers. The second link is that if he is true to what baptism figuratively sets forth, he is “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ”; he has deliverance from himself, from this “wretched man”; he is in Christ. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” It is a wonderful new day to him when he can walk in superiority, in divine power, above the workings of the flesh.

Next, he not only beholds Christ in glory, but he comes to Him as the Living Stone. All who are thus led are built up a “spiritual house,” a wonderfully blessed time, and one of the deepest enjoyment. As of the consecrated company, companions of Christ, in the

holiest of all, we not only enjoy the fulness of our acceptance with God, but there we learn from the Lord Himself, as the greater than Moses. Every one who knows this finds a new interest upon the earth—Christ's circle of interest is his chief circle—so that while we remember Him in His death here, we are furnished from Himself as to His pleasure to serve His own on the earth; and as we learn the contrariety and antagonism to Him of everything here, the more sensitive we are as to it, the more we shall rejoice in the grace which shews us that we have died with Him from the rudiments of the world, as part of the great calling of God; not only that we should know Him by-and-by, but that we should know that we can have part with Him *now* in the sphere of His life, where we learn that through His death the body of the flesh has been put off, and that we, risen with Him, can seek the things above, where He sitteth at the right hand of God. There we know Him as Head; we put on the new man, and come out in His grace and susceptibility here to fulfil His pleasure in the christian circle, and greatly advance in grace in our own households.

And finally, we come to the consummation, when the mystery in all its magnitude is made known to our hearts. It is not only that we

believe that we are by grace united to Christ, but even now we are brought into the realisation of this marvellous fact ; and for this the apostle prays “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him : the eyes of your heart being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.’ ’ The profoundest human intellect could never form any just idea of the greatness of the mystery ; no reading could impart it to you ; no one can enter into it unless he has the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. Who can conceive this marvellous structure of the church, the body of Christ, formed down here, and composed of every individual believer ? “No man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church : for we are members of his body.’ ’ (Eph. v. 29, 30.)

Now, as we learn the power of the Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, we are by the Spirit brought to His presence in heaven, as Rebekah was brought to Isaac ; then we realise that we are united to Him, and the language of the prayer in Ephesians iii. is our true and blessed portion even now, “That he [the Father] would grant you, according to

the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all the ages, world without end. Amen.” (Eph. iii. 16–21.) No greater or deeper enjoyment could be known. It is not only the greatness of the portion which is given, the breadth, length, depth, and height, but the knowledge of His love, so that we are filled unto the fulness of God. Then we can come out for Him here upon this earth, according to Ephesians vi. and John xvi., able to withstand all the power of the enemy, and to be above all the influences of the world, for we are in heavenly power, and know that the prince of this world is judged. Our one unbroken enjoyment is to glorify Him, and to learn of His things, which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man . . . but God hath revealed them

unto us by his Spirit.” This is a very brief and scanty setting forth of the greatness of our blessing, but surely no one can see the wondrous advantage of knowing the mystery, and how God’s heart is set upon it for us, and what an interest it is to Christ Himself, without saying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.” He can then gladly anticipate the day when, as the New Jerusalem, we shall fully, each one of us, contribute without let or hindrance to His pleasure and glory.

May our hearts enter more into God’s desire and purpose for us, and know the great interest it is to Christ Himself ; that as Rebekah was a comfort to Isaac, so should we be a comfort to Christ *now* in the hour of His rejection ; and may we all heartily enter into the desire of the apostle that to every faithful servant may be given utterance to open his mouth boldly, “to make known the mystery of the gospel.”

“AS IS THE HEAVENLY, SUCH ARE
THEY ALSO THAT ARE HEAVENLY.”

It is current among all Christians that if you are saved you go to heaven when you die ; but that heaven is our place *now*, and the earth where we are is not our place, is little known. “The earth hath he given to the children of men” ; and perhaps there is nothing so difficult to inculcate on the believer as the fact that his title now is to heaven, to an entirely new place. Every one naturally likes a place on the earth, and very often a person, though truly converted, thinks his claim to the earth is stronger because he believes in God, and receives mercies from Him down here ; hence the effect of being destined for an entirely new place is lost sight of, and practically the believer is much advanced in grace before he wholly breaks from the world and the things of it, and accepts the truth that the earth is not his place.

Let us trace the moral journey of the believer from the “far country” to that day when he can say :

“And see, the Spirit’s power
Has ope’d the heavenly door,
Has brought me to that favoured hour
When toil shall all be o’er.”

Every believer has been in the far country—away from God, using his substance, the natural gifts with which he was endowed, to minister to his own pleasure, his mind alienated from God by wicked works. When God by His sovereign grace works in his soul, he is turned to God, and then the light of the gospel is unspeakable relief to him; he learns like Israel in Exodus xii. that because God sees the blood of Christ, he is safe from the judgment which is on the world; and in the exercise of his soul, however little he may know of it doctrinally, he eats of the lamb roast with fire, with loins girded, and staff in hand, ready to leave Egypt.

The grace of God is, that Christ not only gave Himself for our sins, but that He has also delivered us from this present evil age; but many do not for a long time get beyond the assurance of safety, and thus they are still in the presence of the enemy, typified by Pharaoh and all his host. They have not peace with God, and though they move on in a way, there is, as has been said, a large company at Pihahiroth. (Exo. xiv. 2.)

Now when the light of the resurrection of Christ dawns on the believer, he learns that there is a way for him through the death and resurrection of Christ, as typified in the Red Sea, and there all the enemies are sunk like

lead in the mighty waters ; then he can say, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously : the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." He can say, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now he learns that heaven is "the hope of the gospel," as stated in Colossians i. 5, and foreshadowed in the song (Exo. xv. 17), "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in ; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established." In the bright joy of salvation, the believer enters upon his new course in the world. Like Israel, he finds that there is no water to drink but Marah, which is really the water of the Red Sea. He has been filled with divine joy because he has been delivered from the judgment of death, and now his only true place on the earth is, baptised unto Christ's death. Death is our portion here ; of this, baptism was the expression, and we have to accept death here, so that through Him we may walk in newness of life. Generally it is a long time before any one really enters on this divine path. But as the believer is

in fellowship with Christ in His death, as expressed in the breaking of bread, the bitterness of death is removed, and the heart that is truly devoted to Christ in His rejection could not seek to live where He died. The language of the true heart is: “Whither thou goest, I will go . . . where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.”

That is the true beginning of a believer’s walk, but it is slowly entered upon, and as we shall see, all the weakness, and all the failure to advance ensues from not accepting death at the beginning. When the believer can seek to enjoy himself where Christ died he has lost true heart for Christ, he is not really in fellowship with His death; Christ is not his exclusive Object, he has another object before him, he is enjoying himself here in the absence of Christ, and hence he is really an idolater, like Israel, who in the absence of Moses “sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

When the divine path is not accepted, the tendency is either to enjoy oneself like the Corinthians, or to seek to keep the law and to be made perfect in the flesh like the Galatians; hence the wilderness is the test. God gave Israel the law in the wilderness to disclose the evil of man’s heart, for “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” At the same time

He gave Moses a pattern of things in the heavens, to shew the nearness in which He would bring man to Himself. The great falling away in Christendom is, that while they own that there is no salvation but by the blood of Christ, they make the law the rule of life, and the approach to God by carnal ordinances ; so that even by true Christians the Lord's supper is regarded as a means of grace, and of benefit to the soul, in remembering the work done for it, but the idea of fellowship with Christ in His death is wholly lost sight of.

It would be unprofitable, even if I were able, to expose all the effects which have ensued from man's mind attempting to imitate the Jewish ritual, when God and His grace are lost sight of. But to return to the divine path. There is, as I have said, nothing here for the believer but death, which is sweet to him as he has fellowship with Christ in His death. This is the path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and deviation from it leads us into incongruities and moral darkness. Many have been ready to give up the things of the world, and even their position in it, and yet have missed this path because their soul is not anchored where Christ is. You may deviate from the divine path even though you have surrendered the world and worldly things, but then you are more like a monk or a

nun. You are not in fellowship with Christ's death here, and you do not enjoy Him where He is. When the believer is true to this divine path, the more he realises that the earth is the place of Christ's death, the more he longs to know Him where He is. Though he reckons himself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus, yet he has further to realise that he is dead to the law by the body of Christ, or he must face the evil in the flesh. (See Rom. vii.) Here many are a long time troubled, because they find that when they would do good, evil is present with them; they are not delivered from the body of this death, they are not freed from the claims of the law until, by entering into Christ's death, they are free from it, in order to be for another, even Him who is raised from the dead, to bring forth fruit unto God. This is a momentous step in the divine path, and one not entered on until there is purpose of heart to have part with Christ where He is. Hence, though the children of Israel had set out on the direct road to Canaan, they were “discouraged because of the way”; their soul loathed the manna. “The carnal mind is enmity against God,” and there is in it an inveterate reluctance to walk as Christ walked. With Israel in Numbers xxi. the full enmity of their heart was disclosed, and as they felt

the serpent's bite—the wretchedness of their condition—beholding the brazen serpent lifted up, they lived; so now often, as I have said, though being dead with Christ is accepted as descriptive of the true state, yet it is not until the wretchedness of the flesh is really felt that the cry comes: “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Now when deliverance is known, and the believer being in Christ, and by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus free from the law of sin and death, he is not only free from that wherein he was held, but he learns that by Christ there is a change of priesthood, that Christ is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. This we see in Hebrews; and as we seek to reach Him, the Forerunner, we find that not only are we freed from the law by the death of Christ, but by Christ, the Priest, we are raised above all the weakness of humanity; He bears us above it all, and draws us to Himself, as Peter learned in Matthew xiv. It was not there a question of his sins, but of entire superiority to himself, the human vessel, by being drawn to Christ; and as we know Christ at the other side of death, we not only know Him as Son over God's house, but we have boldness to enter into the holiest by Him, where we enjoy His acceptance in the presence of God.

But though the believer is thus in heavenly enjoyment, he still has to do with the difficulties and contrarities of this scene. It is only when he learns the wonderful truth that he has died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, and that he is risen with Christ, and can heartily seek the things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, that he has the sense that “the body of the flesh” has been removed in the death of Christ (Col. ii. 11), so that he can enjoy the sphere of Christ’s life. He has now reached heaven where Christ is, and then he learns of Him to do His pleasure here in His own circle. He is not exactly heavenly yet, but he tastes what heaven is, he has touched heavenly ground, he has crossed the Jordan, and he knows Christ as Head of the church.

Finally, the heart really set on Christ and His place will now realise by the Spirit what it is to be raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Him ; he is in heavenly tastes and heavenly power, and comes out as the new man (Eph. iv.) to be for a witness for Christ here in the power of the Spirit according to John xvi., above all the power of Satan. I need not add more ; the Epistle to the Philippians sets forth the manner of life and the experience of a heavenly man on the earth.

THE POWER PECULIAR TO EACH STEP IN GRACE.

WE read, "All things are yours," and we have to grow up into them. "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." For each step in grace there is a special power given, so that there need be no mistake as to how far one has advanced.

Salvation is the first step, and it is marked with very distinct power; you are turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." (Acts xxvi. 18.) There is often a long time between our being [merely] assured of safety, and our [thus] entering into the joy of acceptance. You enjoy acceptance when you believe that God has raised Christ from the dead; then you have peace with God, and the Holy Ghost is given you to shed abroad in your heart the love of God. It is a never-to-be-forgotten day when you know the power belonging to this step. However alienated and estranged you have been from God, you are now turned to Him who is the strength of your heart and your portion for

ever. The peculiar grace in this step is, that God is the One who is paramount to you. Your own state does not occupy you at first ; it is the greatness of His grace that fills your heart, so that like the thief on the cross, you are absorbed with the blessedness of being with Christ, and your old natural tastes are in abeyance.

The next step is deliverance. The believer who knows the gospel fully is, as I have said, at first so taken up with God's goodness to him, that his own state does not come prominently before him. There is a moral greatness about one who is enjoying the gospel ; so that he necessarily shrinks from what is not of the Spirit of God ; he avoids the company of those who are not led by the Spirit. Now when his own state troubles his conscience, he at first finds great relief in confessing his sins, because he knows that God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins, and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness (1· John i. 9) ; and while he does not look at the law as the rule of life, yet he cultivates everything of which his conscience approves ; so that his manners and bearing are often very attractive. Many earnest souls in their desire after holiness have recourse to prayer meetings and conventions in order to promote it, as the one thing to be desired. But this is not deliverance.

Deliverance is when you are freed in your own conscience from the old man, "the body of this death," as much as you are freed before God, and you know that you are in Christ, and that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made you free from the law of sin and death. You have now quite another object of interest ; it is not your behaviour or answering to your conscience which is before you, but Christ. Isaac, according to the type (Gal. iv. 30), is in his rightful place, and Ishmael is cast out ; and as you walk in the Spirit, it is not what *you* do that you are thinking of, but what *Christ would do* ; you seek to maintain that you are dead to the law by the body of Christ, and He lives in you ; you can say, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There is a spiritual power connected with this step which cannot be known otherwise, and which is so manifest that it is easy to recognise it. To the one who has deliverance and enjoys it, it is incomparable blessing ; he knows that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound : that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 20, 21.) You not only delight in your wonderful acceptance with God, but Christ is

in you; you enjoy nearness to Him, you know that you have joined Him at the other side of death, like Peter in Matthew xiv. When you taste that, not only are you in His life above all the power of evil here, but by His priestly service He bears you above all the weakness of humanity; so that you do not look for any human power to aid you, for you are made conscious that Christ is Himself above all the winds and waves, above all the power of evil here.

Next is communion with Christ: "part with me." When you are in deliverance, you enjoy the love of Christ, as we see in Romans viii., "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and when you do, nothing but company with Him can really satisfy you, like the disciples in Luke v. who forsook all and followed Him. You feel His absence like Mary Magdalene—that He is not here, He is risen—and, like Ruth, your heart says, "Whither thou goest, I will go"; and you prove that His word remains true: "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early *shall find me.*" Your heart rejoices that it can behold Him in glory.

And as there is light there is the blessed step of coming to Him, the Living Stone. You may be breaking bread for long without this being known. But when the believer

knows it, and has come to the Living Stone, he knows that he is part of the spiritual house, the holy priesthood, and the assembly is a great and blessed retreat for his heart. He not only knows Christ then as Son over God's house, but he has boldness to enter the holiest of all in heavenly association with Him ; not only in Christ's acceptance before God, but as empowered by Him to be here for Him, to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. There is first deliverance from all that is on your side, you know Him individually as the joy of your heart, then you are free in heart to seek Him in company with His own in the assembly.

Now when you enter into the true meaning of the Lord's supper, that it is not remembering His death for yourself, but remembering *Him* in His death, you are in blessed freedom from all that is of yourself, you then truly remember Him in His death here, and your heart finds that your only true state in the place where He died is to be in fellowship with His death until He comes. But the more truly you are so, the more you rejoice to know Him in glory, exalted at the right hand of God ; and though this experience may come after your knowing Him as the Living Stone, yet you will find that fellowship

with His death gives everything its true character to you here. And then you can turn undistractedly to Him who is Son of God over His house, and to the place where He is, and not only know the blessedness of your own association with Him as one of the consecrated company, but that in divine seclusion with Himself, with feet washed, separated from all the defilement here, you know what He is to His own on earth, as He sets it forth in John xiv.

Then you can come from Himself to serve Him in the place of His rejection, setting forth what He wrought when here, as is expressed in John xiv. 26, and drawing from Him as the branch from the vine, His own in this world is the one great object of interest to you (the gifts of the Spirit come in here for this purpose). Finally, by the Holy Ghost sent from Himself in glory (John xv. 26), you are a witness for Him on the earth. Then the future is made known to you: "He will shew you things to come" (John xvi. 13), so that service embraces past, present, and future. I need not dwell on this in detail, as my point at present is only to shew the power which is conferred with each definite advance in His grace.

Next, the more true you are to Him in this dark and evil scene, the more you feel the contrariety in it to His mind and pleasure ;

and then the light of the blessed fact that Christ is Head of the church is made known to you, and that in the mystery are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and it is an unspeakable relief to you to know that you are dead with Him from the rudiments of the world, that you are not only clear of everything here, but that the body of the flesh is cut off in Christ's death. So that you are over Jordan, risen with Him, you are in the sphere of His life, and you know Him in His own place; you come forth as fitted by Himself to make known His present mind and interests for His own circle. No one can describe the new and wonderful experience to be here in the scene where everything is contrary to the Lord, and to know that you are so with Him outside it all, that you return to everything in it (however beautiful it may seem naturally) as one in heart dissociated from it all. One must be in this experience to understand anything of the greatness of it, or to apprehend the superiority which you will enjoy when you come forth in the new man, replete with the divine sensibilities of Christ, and the knowledge of His word to His own here, so that you can say He is your life. When He shall appear we shall also appear with Him in glory.

Now you enjoy the Father's love, for you

do not love the world nor the things in the world. (1 John ii. 15.) The great spiritual power that is given with this step is that you have passed in with the Forerunner, not only in hope, but in present enjoyment, to the spot where He is. You not only have an "anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast," but you have passed in company with Himself in there ; you have not only left earth for heaven, but you are clear of every influence here ; the world is thoroughly a wilderness to you ; you have nothing to seek nor to choose, and you return to it as dead to the things of earth to be here unhinderedly for Him.

The next step is one of inconceivable satisfaction, even surpassing the joy of salvation, when by the power which wrought in Christ and raised Him from the dead and set Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, you are conducted to Him in His own place, as Rebekah was conducted to Isaac. Now you realise union with Him ; the spiritual power with which you are endowed is fully detailed in Ephesians iii. : "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which

passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Lastly, you come forth from Him in heaven, to be His witness here on earth, as we learn in Ephesians iv., a new man, to be for Him in the assembly—in His circle; and in your own private circle. It is a moment of blessedness when you are Christ’s witness here, in such superiority to the world that you demonstrate what it is morally, and you can stand for the Lord against all the power of Satan; the prince of this world is judged. Then learning of future things, glorifying Him, your heart rests in the things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, but which God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit. Thus you are properly waiting for the appearing of Christ. The rapture relieves you from this scene of contrariety, that you may take your place in His kingdom.

To sum up, I will just recapitulate briefly the special power conferred in each definite advance in grace. When you enjoy the salvation of God, you are morally like Noah after the flood. You are saved in the place where you were under judgment and the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you.

Next, as you know you are accepted by God in Christ, and that the old man is removed in

judgment on the cross, so now by the Spirit of God you know that you are in Christ for your own comfort ; you belong to Him and you are in liberty, freedom from the flesh, delivered from the old man. It is not yourself that is before you then, not Ishmael, but Isaac : "Christ liveth in me." When I am with Him above all the power of man He satisfies my love by drawing me to His side.

Next I learn what it is to have part with Him, I behold Him in glory ; as I am drawn to Him I find I am in association with Him in the holiest, and the place where He is has now that joy for my heart. There I learn how I belong to Him in the assembly ; and in the breaking of bread I have fellowship with His death, and the more truly I enter into this here, the more I rejoice that I know Him and have part with Him where He now is. From this I come forth to be occupied with His interests on earth.

Next, I learn to my unspeakable relief that I am dead with Him from the rudiments of the world, so that not only am I in the joy of company with Him, but I am in divine seclusion. As risen with Him I can seek the things above where He sits at the right hand of God, and be more efficiently in His service knowing Him as Head, abiding in Him.

Next, I realise union with Him in heaven ;

the immense portion I receive in consequence of this step is detailed in Ephesians iii. It is much more easily conceived than described.

Finally, I am in the inconceivable blessing of being here as His witness in divine power awaiting His appearing.

CAN WORLDLY MEANS BE USED IN CHRIST'S SERVICE?

THE chief point to ascertain is Christ's present relation to this world ; I suppose it would be admitted by all that He was rejected.. The Jew used the law of God to condemn Him, and the Roman used the power which God gave man to crucify the Son of God—to condemn the Holy One and the Just. Hence we read of the fulfilment of Psalm cx., "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." As He said to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Now it is evident to any honest mind that He was rejected by this world: "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." The scripture is fulfilled,

“They hated me without a cause.” The world is in a different relation to God since the rejection of Christ to that in which it was before His rejection. Before, it was lawful for a servant of God to use what was available of the power of the world to carry out the service of God. But, as far as I see, God never used natural things in His own service, except in a miraculous way, such as the ravens feeding the prophet, or the ass speaking with man’s voice to rebuke the madness of the prophet.

The next thing for us to be scripturally assured of, is that Christ has power fully to carry out His own work. Nothing can be more definite than this: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”; and “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age].” (Matt. xxviii. 18–20.) Now if we see that Christ was rejected from this world, and that He can carry on His work by His own power, there is no plea for using worldly things in any way to contribute to His service. We might rest here; but we have to contend with the great attempt in Christendom all around us to shew that Christ is not rejected, but fully owned. One fact, not to speak of others, establishes this statement. The ringing of bells for divine service is evidently an imitation of the trumpets of the Jewish ritual; but to any thoughtful mind what a jargon it

represents! Bells of various denominations calling aloud, in the hearing of every one, on souls to worship God, thus using worldly means for this avowedly good end. This practice has no doubt led many earnest men to make use of public notices, and even at times to resort to the town-crier, avowedly with the good intention of gathering souls to hear the gospel. It is not easy to eradicate this impression from the minds of Christians, because it assumes to be in accordance with God's appointment for Israel.

Now it must be plain to every godly soul that, according to scripture, Christ has been rejected by the world, and that He has power in the fullest degree to maintain what is His own, altogether independent of the world.

Bear in mind that if there is a divine work of God in any soul, that soul is, by the reception of the Spirit, a member of the body of Christ. To this end the Lord commissioned the twelve, who were the foundation of everything, to go forth and "teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It does not say that they were all gifted as preachers, but the preachers came from that company. An evangelist is one of the special gifts which by the Spirit is given to the church.

Now we have to see what is the work of

an evangelist. He is sent to preach good tidings: "By the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The means bears no proportion to the result, simply because it is God's work. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." *God begins the work in every soul.* The light of the gospel only divinely reaches the soul that is born again, the one whom *God* has turned to Himself. It begins with fear, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"—like the thief on the cross, who says to his comrade, "Dost thou not fear God?"

Once it is seen that the beginning of the work must be wholly with God, it must be evident that God will only use His own means to bring that soul into the light; therefore the simple duty of the evangelist is to be like Philip, ready to be carried (Acts viii.), or like Paul at Philippi, to be in prison, to announce the glad tidings to one anxious soul. This is fully confirmed when we see that there is nothing owned of God on the earth that is not of Christ—a member of His body. It is not as in former times when there could be individual saints on the earth. Seeing this is the place of Christ's rejection God could not

now support anything here that is not of the rejected One—part of Him.

This is an immense point to keep clearly before the soul, and thus it is plain that nothing can be acquired from the earth for any of His own. Every additional blessing must come direct from Himself. The evangelist is sent from the Lord with a message from Him, with good tidings, and he must look to Him to guide him where he is to announce and make known the tidings. He should be always ready for it, whether in travelling or in the company of others, and he may be led to go to a house or a town to deliver the message; but he has no power unless he is consciously directed by the Lord. When he is so directed it may be that he may see no immediate result, but he has the comfort of knowing that he has done the Lord's will. I cannot see how in going to a town he is spiritually helped by announcing to the world—the public—his purpose in coming. It may be contended, How then could it be known? I reply, if the Lord has sent him, He will be sure to lead him to one and another, and when he has found acceptance with one like Cornelius, such an one will be glad to make it known to his neighbours and chief friends. It is happy for the evangelist to intimate his purpose in coming, as directed of the Lord, to his brethren, that they may

have fellowship in his work by prayer ; but as far as I see, the announcement of it to the public is in no way authorised by scripture.

I quite believe that the gospel should come from the assembly, and therefore that where it meets, the gospel should be regularly preached ; because we must bear in mind that we live among those who profess to be Christians, and therefore the word to Timothy was, "Do the work of an evangelist," indicating that they did not know the gospel though they had the profession of it. This is very different from great public evangelistic efforts and demonstration ; and, as far as my knowledge goes, I have never heard of a thoroughly devoted servant being the fruit of these demonstrations. We hear of converts from them, but I ask, Where are the souls devoted to Christ ? I believe when you come to the history of souls it will be found that where the work was deep it has been effected in a very silent and unseen way. Many confess to a limited gospel who would fear to do so to a full one, but it is the duty of an evangelist to present a full gospel. There was no knowledge of God in my father's house till I was nine years old, when a pious clergyman came to stay with him, and I remember him speaking from Acts ix. one evening. The point that arrested me was, that God would send a light out of heaven

to convert a soul ! I only adduce this to shew how little we know the particular word that may lay a living hold on the soul.

The work of an evangelist must be a deeply interesting one to us when we remember that he comes from God to a dark soul to present divine light to him, which is the beginning of divine knowledge in the soul which has already been the subject of the work of God. Very often converts bear a moral resemblance to the evangelist who has presented light to them according to his measure. As a rule, the work of an evangelist in any place is not accomplished in a day or two. Paul had to be admonished when he was inclined to leave Corinth, "I have much people in this city." I do not advocate periodical visits, that is more the province of the teacher, nor do I see that the evangelist is qualified, unless by a special gift, to take the place of a teacher, nor does he really understand the work of the Spirit in the assembly. It can be remarked that when an evangelist becomes a permanent resident in a place he loses his special power in his attempt to be a pastor or teacher. I have noticed that when an assembly is gathered by an evangelist, however earnest he may be, it does not understand what it is to be "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood"; and I have said to the evangelist, a very earnest,

devoted man, that those whom he had gathered came together to be acted on, rather than to act—to be “the holy priesthood.”

To sum up, it is plain that as the evangelist is sent of the Lord to accomplish a special work, he cannot solicit help or countenance from anything or any one around him, except from those who are led of the Lord in prayer or otherwise. I would add, it is incongruous to ask for a public subscription for the circulation of the Bible. Such an appeal is devoid of a sense of the relation in which Christ stands to the world. Anyway, as to printing or otherwise it should be at the evangelist's own expense and that of those who love the Lord.

I need not add more, but the evangelist should come as sent of the Lord to seek His own ; and as His own must be *of* Christ Himself, he must be confined exclusively *to* Christ, *to receive only from Him*, that He may be of real service to souls.

MESSAGE TO THE BRETHREN
GATHERED AT ROTHERHAM,
APRIL 16TH, 1897.

DEAR BRETHREN,

Though I am not able to be among you, my heart is fully with you and I have you in remembrance before the Lord, I am thankful to say, daily. I may just briefly express my great desire for you. We are delivered out of Egypt—the world, what man has made of the earth—to be in God's habitation: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." (Exo. xv. 13.) Now if this is definitely before you, namely, that you have been delivered from this present evil age *for heaven*, you must take the only true road to reach it. The divine path to heaven is through the wilderness; this world is a wilderness, and there is nothing for you here but Marah, that is, death on man's side; and the more you have fellowship with Christ in His death, the easier the path becomes to you, because you get the true character of this world, and the more truly you do, the more you seek Him where He is. "That . . . we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which

hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. vi. 18-20.) Now, if you are diverted from *His place* (where Jesus is entered as Forerunner) by anything here, even the mercies of His hand, you have lost the anchor of your soul, and you drift into the world; but if you cleave to Him and to His place, you learn, as in Colossians, that heaven is the hope of the gospel (see Col. i. 5): "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven"; also verse 23, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." You will find that it is God's grace to you that you should be morally dead to everything here, though fulfilling all the ordinances of God, while you are living in the present enjoyment of the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. No one can conceive a more wonderful position as set here on earth for Christ. The Lord incline each of our hearts more and more to follow Him there for present enjoyment. The Lord bless you much in your meeting. My love to each.

Yours very affectionately in Christ.

J. B. S.

HUMAN INTERPRETATION OF THE
TRUTH.

“FOR there must be also heresies [that is, opinions] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”
(I Cor. xi. 19.)

It is deeply interesting and important to note the way by which truth is divested of its power over us through attaching our own opinion to it, though there be no open denial nor any intention to deny the truth.

In Christendom this has resulted in systematised error. I will only adduce two examples of it: one, that though the judgment of man on the cross is believed in, there is no acceptance of the fact that for the believer that man is removed from the eye of God, and that every believer is in Christ before God.

The other example is, that while every believer accepts the Lord's supper, they make it a means of grace to themselves and have no thought of its being a remembrance of *Him*.

If it is once seen that the power of the truth is lost by adding our own opinions to it, we can easily trace how we may lose the power of it.

When Lot separated from Abraham, he did not leave Canaan, but he chose a spot for

himself, and thus he lost the effect of the truth without denying it: he had a sad life and a bitter end.

We see it also in the case of the twelve spies. They brought up a good report of the land, but the opinion of the ten who were afraid was, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched" (Num. xiii. 31, 32), and therefore they fell under the judgment of God.

Moses was debarred from entering Canaan because he added to the words of God. (Num. xx. 10.)

We learn from the similitudes of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew xiii. that the meal was leavened; it was not refused but it was added to, and thus it was vitiated. This leavening of the truth is fully corroborated in the two examples I have adduced.

Every pious man in Christendom believes that Christ bore the judgment of sin, but if you questioned him as to whether the man that sinned is removed and an entirely new man brought in, he will only admit that there is a moral change, that the bad is removed. Hence he can enjoy himself here as a man, satisfied with a good conscience and with a walk characterised by good conduct. Some

would quote: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. li. 10); but this is millennial and does not apply to the present time. And in the other example I have given as to the Lord's supper, the remembrance of Christ's death is limited to our benefit, assuring us only of our gain, but not calling upon us to be in fellowship with Christ's death here.

I think it is important to see in these two examples the result of the human mind adding to the word of God; for if you do not see that the old man is completely removed and Christ brought in, you will never get a true idea of what the new man is, and still more, you will have no divine conception of Christ personally, and therefore you never could understand what the church is as members of His body: "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Hence, you must drop into the thought current in Christendom, that Christ was made one of us, whereas the truth is that we are of Him.

I hope I have said enough to prove that the tendency, even of the believer, is, not to refuse the truth, but to qualify it and thus to vitiate it. Any one who will carefully study the Epistle to the Corinthians will see how the human mind engendered loss and failure in every circle from the house of God to our own

house. But I must add, that while in Christendom every believer has faith in the blood of Christ, yet the one entangled therein does not reach the fulness of the gospel, because he sees only atonement—that is, the covering of sin—in the work of Christ. I corroborate this by stating that the word “atonement” does not occur in the New Testament; the word for reconciliation is translated “atonement,” and thus by the intrusion of the human mind the greatness of the truth of the gospel is lost.

But I turn now to those who profess to have a full gospel, who believe that the man under judgment is gone in the cross of Christ, and see that believing in Christ risen they are justified and have peace with God, who rejoice in the perfectness of their salvation and have received the Holy Ghost as the seal, and therefore are associated together as members of the body of Christ.

Now there is great joy and often great devotedness in knowing this much, and yet many who know it do not know deliverance; they can believe that the man is gone from the eye of God in judgment in the cross, but they do not know in themselves that by the Spirit they are in Christ and are delivered from the body of this death, so that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made

them free from the law of sin and death. They have never really entered upon the new history that the old man is crucified and Christ liveth in them.

In confirmation of this I would state that however fervent and devoted they are in setting forth what Christ has done, and the blessing that has resulted from all He did in coming to our side, they never can speak of going to His side, or of having part in His things. Hence though they are separate from the world and cultivate amiability and graciousness of manner, they are not separate from the earth and things on the earth, as having fellowship with Christ's death here, and thus the place where He is, is not really the anchoring ground of their souls. They are deprived of all these great blessings of God's grace because of putting a human interpretation on Romans vi.: that because God sees you clear of the old man in the cross, you by the reckoning of faith can see yourself clear.

Now let us trace God's ways with souls. God begins the work; you are born again, you turn to God instead of being alienated from Him. You begin with fear, but you have a sense of His goodness and you are looking for light from Him, like the thief on the cross, who counting on Christ's goodness says: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into

thy kingdom." Then the light of God's grace shines into his soul in the words of Christ: "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Thus the newborn babe desires the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby: and you will remark that in reading the word, it is some particular passage that strikingly comes home to you. You are made conscious of the truth of the word, "My sheep hear my voice," and when this is known to you, you look for it again and you feel depressed without it. Then your cry will be: "Be not silent unto me, O my God."

I have often said to those who have been listening to an address, I do not ask you to tell me all you remember of it, but tell me the word that came home to yourself.

When I was in college, a divinity student, so-called, I went to hear Mr. Darby preach in a small room. He took up part of Ephesians i. I do not remember the address, but one word fastened itself on me: "*Accepted in the beloved.*" I had never before heard the word "acceptance"; it was not known in our course of theology. We had the word "assurance," but that refers to our own state, the other to how God is towards us.

You will remark that every man speaking with spiritual power bases everything upon

the word of God, he does not try to embellish it or to make it attractive to the hearers, he relies upon the greatness of the word itself. "The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psa. cxix. 130.)

If he quotes human authority he acquires credit for himself, but he really weakens the word of God on which he seemed to rely. You will find as a rule that every man speaking in power adheres to the very words of a passage, but many who have a general and extensive knowledge of the word, and are well up in the references, weaken the passage in hand by quoting passages that do not apply, and which, though having similar expressions, have an entirely different meaning. Every passage of scripture, however similar it may be to another, has a meaning peculiar to itself.

Many years ago there was a meeting in London of young men desiring to be in Christ's service, and each had to write a sheet of note paper on one or two verses, not merely telling of the subject of the passage, but of the importance of every word, adverb or conjunction, and this in order to get a clear idea of the plenary inspiration of scripture.

Every earnest soul expects, as he reads the word, not to remember all he has read, but to receive something specially from the Lord ;

and it is a well-known fact that every one walking with the Lord receives from Him fresh light on the scriptures best known to him. On the other hand we find that those who are declining can repeat old thoughts on scripture, but have nothing fresh from it, as we read in Deuteronomy xi. 17, the first mark of departure from the Lord was that they had "no rain."

Perhaps nothing is more derogatory to a servant than to give out as ministry what he has acquired by reading the best commentaries. We see it in our own day; those who read the Synopsis more than the Bible are never in power as to the present mind of the Lord. It is very easy to gather from the servant's words where he is himself, and no man has real power but according to the measure of the power the word has upon himself. Every one can speak of the past as he reads it in the gospels, but he must be in communion with the Lord in order to give out the present mind of the Lord. I do not think I need add more on this point to prove the importance of adhering simply to the word of God, and not being led by authorities or references into any deviation from it.

In conclusion, I would add that the truth is often limited or lost by the human title given to it. I have already referred to man's

idea of reconciliation being atonement ; consequently, in the translation of the New Testament, where the word ought to be "reconciliation," we read "atonement," and thus reconciliation is really limited to atonement, whereas it means a great deal more. It is said in one of the articles : "Christ reconciles us to the Father," whereas even in the parable (Luke xv.) the father was reconciled before he kissed the prodigal. In my own time I remember the title "gospel of the glory" was refused as an innovation, whereas in truth the innovation is the limitation given to it by man. More than thirty years ago, a young man proposing at the monthly Bible reading to consider the gospel of the glory, it was objected to by two, who I am sure would not do so now ; and at that time I have known an evangelist decline to go to a meeting, alleging that he did not know the gospel of the glory, and regarded it as something visionary. After some commotion about it, the most devoted servant of the day stood up to give an address, stating, "I wish to speak this evening of the gospel of the glory, and rightly called the gospel of the glory."

Thus we see that human interpretation of the truth naturally leads to resistance and opposition to the full meaning of it. As lately, the opposition as to the gift of eternal life

arose from the general idea that it is given at new birth, instead of seeing that, as in John xx., it is given with the Spirit: "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

And still more seriously the last phase of the church (Laodicea) seems to have affected some who began well; they contended that all the purpose of God's grace was free gift and not attainment, and were so far right. They allowed they could see it by the Spirit, but they overlooked new creation and the subjective work of the Spirit in them, so that men could talk of title and great things without really knowing them practically. The prodigal son not only knew his father's favour to him, but he was made personally fit to enjoy his presence. It would have been vain for him to talk of his possessions, what he was given, when he was not capable of enjoying them. It is lamentable to see men holding the truth of God's full grace to us, without any practical benefit from it, because they deny the Spirit's subjective work, which is really new creation, and in their writings and in their ways they declare that they are "poor and blind," and are not in communion with the Lord.

A MESSAGE TO THE QUEMERFORD
MEETING, 1896.

It is much before me just now to bring before the brethren how little the truth, made known to Mr. Darby, has been maintained and pursued by us. I am trying to write a review of the way it has been opposed and refused, and I want them to make it a prominent subject at Quemerford, that they should give it more thought, as that which has been given by the Lord in this century, each one being responsible for its maintenance. This is my message to them, with my best love.

REVIEW OF HOW THE TRUTH, WHICH THE
LORD REVIVED TO THE CHURCH IN THIS
CENTURY, HAS BEEN OPPOSED AND HOW LITTLE
ACCEPTED.

The Lord was pleased to revive through dear Mr. Darby the truth that Christ is the Head of the body, while he was still in the Church of England. Almost concurrent with this the opposition began. Dr. Pusey, who was of his own age, brought into force the great clerical opposition called Ritualism. At that time some of the leading men at Oxford—Mr. Newton and Mr. Harris—left the Established Church and consorted with Mr. Darby. He, having also left the Established

Church, now propounded the light which he had received, having first learnt the gospel which enabled him to apprehend the truth himself. I did not know Mr. Darby until after he was in Plymouth in 1833. After leaving the university, I went to stay with him at a brother's house at Cork, where I was his constant companion; and just to give an idea of the truth that came out, I mention an attempt of mine to compose a hymn, entirely a new idea to me, as a divinity student, raw from the university, and before I was twenty.

“ Hark ! happy saints ! loud lift your voice,
Tell to the world how ye rejoice—
Yon heaven is your home.
There lives your Head with glory crowned ;
Ye, members, for His kingdom bound,
All cry—‘ Lord Jesus, come.’ ”

You may see from this how very clearly was brought out the fact that our place is heaven, and that Christ is our Head there.

Not long after this there was a great movement in Plymouth on prophetic questions, to which Mr. Newton gave his exclusive attention, and most were carried away by it. During the few months that I was with Mr. Darby I used to hear him complain of what was going on as to the line of teaching; when I was in Plymouth in 1844, they had become a large

number, with a very large building to meet in, holding twelve hundred people. That was before the division. I want to point out how this prophetic teaching first diverted saints from the line of truth which the Lord had given. The division actually ensued (before the evil doctrine as to the Lord's Person was discovered) because the course of Mr. Newton and his adherents denied that the saints in one place are one with the saints everywhere, and are practically one body.

The next opposition was from Mr. Dorman, and was joined by Mr. Darby's own brother and others, who condemned him for saying that the Lord bore sufferings which were not atoning, and that He gave up the life to which sin attached. So much was Mr. Darby affected by it that he proposed to cease to break bread; but a few of us met him at a brother's house and dissuaded him from such a course. Thus we can easily see how low an idea was prevalent among brethren as to the Lord's humanity and work.

This discussion was a great help to me, because when I looked through scripture I saw that there were many sufferings which were not atoning sufferings. And then came the question as to the judgment of sin. There could not be really the judgment of sin if the life was not given up. If the judgment is

really borne, the man must be given up—not only the sin, but the man in whom the sin was. Mr. Dorman and others would not have that Christ bore the judgment; they held that He only bore death. This was in May, 1866.

At a large meeting in Manchester in 1873 I remember calling the attention of brethren to the way the enemy had endeavoured to spoil the pure stream given by the Lord, first by one thing, and then by another. I then referred to the subject—speaking on the passage, “Not holding the Head” (Mr. Darby was present). I was tracing how the truth came out, how it was refused, and how little it had been accepted. I shewed that the opposition of the enemy at that moment took the form of proclaiming the gospel without the church—limiting the truth to the salvation of souls. We know what a wave of gospel excitement prevailed at that time. I remember also calling the brethren’s attention at a large brothers’ meeting in London to the fact of how the gospel was set forth without separation from the world, and an assumption of holiness without separation from ecclesiastical system—just the difference between El-lohe-Israel and Bethel. The one, where there is no sense of His presence—the other, where the presence of God affects you down to the

smallest detail of your family. The leaven has spread from that day to this, namely, that you can have *professed* nearness to God (the right ground and the right blessing) and yet have no sense of His presence. It is really the effect of accepting and *exclusively* adhering to objective truth without the corresponding subjective state, which is the Spirit's work in us.

Subsequent to this the new creation was denied at Reading. It was said that old things became new, and from that day to this great ignorance of what is the character and nature of new creation has marked the opposers, and I am afraid there is still a very imperfect sense of what new creation really is—"the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Those who dwell exclusively on objective truth can never know experimentally what new creation is; that it is the great grace of God to give us a state fitted to the reception of His grace, as the best robe fitted the prodigal for the great supper. Thus God fits us for the new position which His grace has secured to us.

There is, thank God, a better and clearer idea now of what the new creation is than there was thirty years ago; but many of the evangelists do not really apprehend fully that the old man is removed from the eye of

God in judgment. If this were truly apprehended they would not address the old man by seeking to work on his feelings. It is quite right to awaken souls to their lost condition, but the grace of God is that He has removed that man in judgment. But I believe that what is not understood is the nature of the *Man*, the unique character of the One who has superseded the first man before the eye of God, and until this is apprehended, and that we derive from Christ, as members of His body, there can be no apprehension that He is our Head—the Source of all life and power, or of what it is to be united to Him.

Any one acquainted with the details of the controversy from Witney in 1888, on to the present time, must be convinced of the ignorance of some of the most advanced teachers as to what it is to have Christ formed in you. This was foreseen by Mr. Darby when he recommended the study of John's writings, which in a great measure are subjective.

The Lord give grace to His saints to awaken them to their immense loss in not making more of the great truth which He has revived among us. I see every one's power is in proportion as he approaches to it.

A MESSAGE TO THE NEWPORT MEETING
ON JULY 2ND AND 3RD, 1896.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

It is not the Lord's will that I should be with you at this time, but I rejoice in His constant special care of you, in sending His dear servants to help you on in His mind.

I have only one suggestion to make to you, and that is, that you not only follow Him in heart adoringly, for His wonderful service and interest in you down here, but that each of you study to know something of "beholding his glory"—not so much what you say to Him as what He is to you—not so much your prayers as the sense of being lost in the blessedness of being near Him, outside this world, and this you will find will have a greater effect on you than even His hearing your prayers.

With truest love,
Yours very affectionately in the Lord,
J. B. S.