

THE
GRACE OF GOD
THAT
BRINGETH SALVATION.

(IN SEVEN PARTS.)

GOSPEL ADDRESSES

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THE GOSPEL.

No. I.

THE PARADISE OF MAN LOST BY SIN.
THE PARADISE OF GOD *GIVEN* BY GRACE.

(GENESIS III. 8-11, 15; LUKE XXIII. 39-43.)

THE first question God put to Adam is the question that every soul has to answer, "Where art thou?" There are three great facts: there is the fall, there is the Saviour, and there is the new place with God. If you are raised out of the fall, you are raised to new ground. These three are very plain, the fall, the Saviour (or the salvation—how it has been effected), and where you are now as saved. The fall is where man is naturally. The Saviour effects your salvation; and being saved, your new place is with God.

In Genesis Paradise is lost; in Luke xxiii. Paradise is *given*. That you, who have lost one by sin, should get another so much greater is the marvel of divine grace, for it is not the one you lost that you get back, but you

are given through grace one which is infinitely greater. It is very difficult to explain grace. All can understand the Lord when He said, "The one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty;" that is, the grace which each would require to be forgiven; all in a way understand the grace which forgives sins; but do you understand God's measure of grace—the grace which would set you in an infinitely better place than you had lost? I could not give you the measure of it; it can only be measured by the love of the One who effected your salvation. Thus much merely as a preface.

I believe the great lack in souls, even in those who are converted, is that they do not see the extent of the fall. And if you do not see the extent of the fall, you certainly cannot see the measure to which you are raised out of it. If a man fell ten feet and was raised only five feet, he would not, if he knew that he had fallen ten feet, be satisfied with being raised five feet. The extent of the fall is the first subject I shall dwell on; secondly, the Saviour, how you can be saved; and thirdly, your new place with God.

Now I turn to Genesis iii., to present as clearly as I can the extent of the fall. The fall is "death by sin." Adam is to lose the condition he was in; not only is he a sinner,

but he is to lose the condition he was in. And consequently Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Adam, instead of being at ease in God's presence, as he was before, said : "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself." I desire that the youngest here should understand the extent of the fall. It is explained when Adam says, "I was afraid because I was naked." God said, "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" He had lost his body in the sight of God. Satan had said, "Ye shall not surely die." To man's eye he had not died : but the fact is, that the moment Adam transgressed, that moment he had a conscience, he was sensible of sin by committing it, and he was under the penalty of it, which is death. Death is the judgment of God ; he had lost his body in the sight of God. Hence the first sense any soul has of God is fear ; it could not be otherwise. "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid ; . . . and I hid myself." Why? "Because I was naked." I refer any one desiring to understand the subject better (it is not necessary to go into it now) to 2 Corinthians v., where the apostle writes : "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven"—that is, to get a new body—"if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." That is, that we should not be found as Adam was, in the sight of God. Every unconverted man goes about the world afraid of God, he avails himself of the trees of the garden, earthly greatness, to hide himself from the presence of God. You must accept that your body is under the judgment of God. Through grace you will receive another body, as the apostle says, "A building of God, a house not made with hands." Here grace, the salvation of God, begins. All the work of man could not remove the judgment. Hence we read in another place, "For since by man came death"—one would naturally add, "so by man came life;" no; but "by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Some think of doing works, in order to make reparation for their sins; and some think that the righteousness of Christ can be a set-off for their unrighteousness. You are a sinner, and you are under the judgment of God: "The wages of sin is death." The man who has sinned must die, that man could not be retained. Hence the scripture, "This corruptible must put on incorruption." We read, "Who

has abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel ;” and “ If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins.” I desire to press that every man on the face of this earth is under the judgment of God, unless it has been removed : it is not merely that he is a sinner, but he is under the judgment of God, and that body where sin is must go in judgment. If you have to undergo the judgment, you are lost. This is the first point.

The next great fact is—The Saviour, one born of a woman, was to bruise the serpent’s head. “ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” “ I will put enmity between thee ”—that is the serpent—“ and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; he ”—it ought to be —“ he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ” (Gen. iii. 15) ; that is, the Saviour would go into death : “ 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, that is, the devil.” (Heb. ii. 14.) In Genesis iii. 15 it is not your sins, but the nature of the judgment on you, and the only way of deliverance from the fall.

If you apprehend the extent of the fall, then you will have some idea of the work of the Saviour, how great it must be.

I see the history of man on the earth opening with two men, Cain and Abel. Cain, like every man of sense, perceives that there is a distance between God and man, and he desires to remove the distance. He is what you might call a man of good human aspirations ; but he thought that by the fruits of the earth he could restore relations with God. He did not understand the nature of the distance ; he was altogether in darkness as to it. And here many really pious are defective ; they do not understand the nature of the distance. Now, Abel in his offering corrects Cain ; he offers of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, a victim not chargeable with his offence, bearing the judgment of it, and, at the time of bearing the judgment of it, having a personal excellency. That was Abel's offering ; he got the fat through death ; he could not have got it if the lamb had not been killed. But there was no resurrection there ; and I refer to this on purpose, because many people find a measure of relief as to their sins from seeing that Christ died for them ; but you are not justified until you see Him risen from the dead. All through the Old Testament salvation was not accomplished, and could not

be accomplished until Christ rose: and when He rose, He not only had borne the judgment on man, but He Himself had risen out of it, and hence He originated, that is, He is the Head of a new race. As we read, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." He rose out of death; He was "Declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead:" but He had gone into it, and had borne the judgment; He was not only "Delivered for our offences," but he "was raised again for our justification."

Now I turn to Luke xxiii. in order that you may see the new place into which the Saviour introduces the believer. Here the Lord is between two malefactors, and one rails on Him and says, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." We have two men again; not only two men in the beginning of the world, but two men in the beginning of Christianity. Now these two men are two sample men, illustrating the two lines that are in the world. One of them cannot see anything in Christ, and yet one is locally as near to Christ as the other; he could see Christ only with the natural mind, and the natural mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God; hence he says, "If thou be

the Christ save thyself and us." Now look at the other ; he is as much degraded as his fellow ; but see how grace works in him ; the light of God enters his soul. Light is wonderful ! It was evidently very sudden, for in another gospel we read that he also was reviling. Beloved friends, light is very sudden ; it is instantaneous ; thank God, it is divine. Look at the light which shone out of heaven on Saul of Tarsus. That is the beginning of the work of grace. There are two parts of grace ; one, the work which Christ has accomplished ; the other, that the sinner's eyes are opened, and he is turned from darkness to light. This is the marvel of His grace, not only that He has removed everything against the sinner, but that He leads the sinner to know it ; as we read in Luke xiv., "Compel them to come in." He compels by His light shining into the soul ; hence, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv.) It is a light "above the brightness of the sun ;" it shines out of heaven. The world does not see it, but the soul who receives it is converted, turned to God ; he is converted by the power of God ; God sends His word, and His light shines into the soul. What

a moment! No one is converted otherwise. Then you fear God. You are consciously under the judgment of God ; you could not get near God without fear, as Adam said, "I was afraid because I was naked ; and I hid myself." Every unconverted man tries to conceal himself from God by something of the world.

Now it is interesting to note how "The other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God?" He has received light, and he finds himself in the presence of God ; "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." I like to see it in a child. It is a good sign when the fear of God is before your eyes. It is often, alas ! like the Pharisees in John viii. ; when the light shone, they went out one by one. Sometimes if a man is touched at a gospel preaching he will not come again for a while, though if God's light has entered he *will* come again. The Pharisees "went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." The woman, the sinner, remained where the light was ; she was blessed.

Mark the words of the enlightened thief, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" Note the word "condemnation," because death is the termination of the man. Look now at this sinner, a child of Adam, how he is made acquainted with grace.

He is not only turned out of Paradise, but he is suffering death for breaking the law ; he is thoroughly ruined, and as far as God was revealed, there was no hope for him ; he must die "without mercy"; but he finds mercy, because the Saviour has come. He sees "The just for the unjust." "This man hath done nothing amiss." He has received light, and he sees himself in the light of God, as Adam had done. But he sees also the Saviour ; and now he prays, he has confidence in the Saviour, and says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He was a Jew ; he had been educated, no doubt, in the Jewish expectation of a Messiah and of His reign on the earth. He knew that he was in the presence of "The King," and hence he says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Now mark the answer from the Saviour. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." That is the Paradise of God. It is the same place that Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians xii. 4. Poets tell of Paradise lost and Paradise regained. It is not true ; man is never restored to a state of innocence. Here a man is dying ; he has not got a new body yet, but he is to go in company with the Lord that day to the very highest place. I trust you see the perfection of His salvation. If you want to know the perfection of God's

salvation, you see it here ; a man under the judgment of God and naked in His sight, but who has been so completely freed from that judgment that he is to get another body, a glorious body, and in the meantime he is fit to be in the very highest place with God—"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The statement is so marvellous that many a commentator would have put a stop after "To-day," as postponing it to a future time. But I press that the word "To-day" sets forth the greatness of the salvation. A man would rejoice to be restored to the good position which he had lost by sin, but the believer receives infinitely more ; it is divine, spiritual ; "the first man is of the earth, earthy ;" the Saviour, the second Man, is "out of heaven," and His blessings are all of a new, heavenly order.

Look at the prodigal son. In Luke xv. the gospel in his mind is, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him Make me as one of thy hired servants ;" the most he expected was good quarters downstairs. But the grace of God was far beyond his thoughts, even that having turned to God, he should be given the best place. The only way we can apprehend the greatness of this grace is by recognising the greatness of the Person who has effected this salvation for us. I think but few apprehend how great

the blessing must be to be saved by the Son of God. God's Son has come out of heaven, and has borne the judgment on man, and every one believing on Him shares with Him all that He has obtained. He gained glory, and He will share that glory ; " The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." He suffered for sins, " the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." He who believes shall be in company with Christ in the brightest sphere. You may marvel at it, and I admit the human mind cannot take it in. The fall was terrible, and man is lost in the sight of God, as we read of the prodigal son, " This my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost and is found." Man is lost, but now God has come forth in His grace, and His own Son has borne the judgment that lay upon man, and the believer is not only freed of everything according to the glory of God, but he has part with Christ, he is in His company, and he will have a glorious body like unto His glorious body. The fatted calf, in the father's house (Luke xv.), sets forth the present blessing of the believer—he has a nearer place with God now than man had before the fall, because of the greatness of the Saviour. Man fell, and his fall was irretrievable ; man must go in judgment ; the man under judgment has gone in judgment in the cross ; but Christ has risen from the

dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept; “Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” There is a new order altogether; as we read in John xii., “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit:” a new order of man every way, with “life and incorruptibility.”

I need not add more. I only repeat these three facts—first, the fall, and the extent of it; next, the Saviour; He has come, and He Himself has effected deliverance from the fall; and thirdly, your new place with God—not only raised up from the fall, but given such a marvellous place with God, that we read, “As he is, so are we in this world.” It is so great that it is difficult to apprehend. If the word was, “As he is, so *shall we be in heaven*,” we might understand it; but when God’s love is known, we know that “As he is, so are we in this world” in His eye.

May the Lord, in His infinite goodness, keep this before your souls, and lead you to understand the greatness of His salvation. The marvel is, that any one knowing this wonderful salvation—the wonderful new place to which he is brought, as the Lord said to the disciples, “Come and see,” and they went and abode with Him—the marvel is that one’s heart is not more

affected by it. Were it not for the working of the flesh, we should ever be in "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

I now ask you to join me in looking to the Lord to make His word a blessing to every one in this room for His name's sake.



THE GOSPEL.

No. II.

THE DISTANCE FROM GOD BECAUSE OF SIN.
THE NEARNESS TO HIM THROUGH GRACE.

(GENESIS III. 24 ; MATTHEW XXVII. 50, 51.)

THE first sense of an awakened soul is the holiness of God, and rightly so. Some go on as if they were insensible of it. You see the inexorable nature of it in the first verse I have read. The man was driven out of the garden of Eden, and not only driven out, but God placed "Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way," so that he should not get back. Sin is abhorrent to the holy God; this is the first sense the sinner has of God: hence he shrinks from God. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die:" the body must go in judgment. If you have a true sense of the holiness of God, you are conscious that the man under the judgment of God can not face God. Hence the first truth to insist on is God's holiness. When God on Mount Sinai gave the law to Israel, it was a ministration of death. "And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that

heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. . . . And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." The nearer God comes the more distressed man is. This sense of God's holiness I greatly desire that you should have. If this sense were deeper in each of our souls, we should better understand grace. Sin has caused the greatest distance between God and man ; grace has brought the believer in Christ into the greatest nearness to Him. You must be conscious of the greatness of the distance ; if you do not understand the greatness of the distance, you will never understand the greatness of the grace. Many do not understand the greatness of the grace, because they do not understand the greatness of the distance.

In Genesis iii. 24 we see God could not allow man to return to the garden of Eden ; and, as we have seen, when God drew near to Israel with a demand, the reflection of His glory in Moses' face made the people afraid to come nigh him. They could not bear the sight of the glory. It gave them a sense of God's holiness. You are awakened when you have a sense of God's holiness, you may be some time awakened before you are relieved ; still you are awakened when you have a sense of God—that He is a holy God. This is really

light ; that is light which doth make manifest. But, " Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil : " they do not want the light. Any one here who has come from darkness, and has been brought to God, will admit that there was a time when he did not like to hear about God ; he felt it would spoil his pleasure, interfere with his own pursuits. It was not that you were occupied with something very bad, but you were alienated from God, and you did not want to return to Him.

The first thing, then, is the holiness of God. It is necessary for the soul to have a sense of the holiness of God, that God cannot bear sin ; it is not merely sins, but that where sin is, it must be set aside in judgment. Hence in the type (Lev. vi. 30) we read, " No sin-offering whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation, to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten : it shall be burnt in the fire " It was burnt without the camp. The blood was carried in, which shewed that death had taken place, but the carcase was burnt without the camp ; it must be removed from God's eye in judgment. I am trying to impress you with a sense of the holiness of God.

Next, I come to man's side : he is alienated from God by wicked works. So complete is

the departure that there is no fear of God before his eyes. You speak to an unconverted man about God, and instead of being pleased he will avoid you the next time he meets you, though you were trying to lead him into the greatest blessing. If you had spoken to him about a fortune in this world, how eagerly he would have listened ; but because you have told him the gospel, how God can “be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,” he will avoid you unless God has worked in his soul. Thank God, He does work ; but I am speaking of man naturally. “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” Our blessed Lord was “the light of the world,” and even the Pharisees, though they had brought to Him a transgressor, could not endure the light of His presence when it probed them, but “they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last.” They would not stay in the light ; the transgressor stayed and obtained the good of the light. Man’s entire unwillingness to do with God is the second obstacle. You cannot give credit to a man for conversion—turning to God. The holiness of God is inexorable, and man’s mind is enmity against God.

The next thing is, that there must be a complete removal of the man under judgment ;

this the sin-offering under the law typified. I hope you apprehend—first, the holiness of God, that He cannot behold iniquity, that the tree as well as the fruit must go ; and the next thing I want you to accept is, that man naturally hates the light. Hence my third point is, that the man under the judgment of God must go in judgment. You will be much helped when you see this. Of course a man must be converted before he can accept it ; but it is of the deepest importance. We read, “ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”

Now I turn to the New Testament to set before you the grace of God. The One who removes the distance between God and man must be altogether according to God’s satisfaction. The distance is the penalty of death, but this cannot be removed unless the judgment has been borne. No amount of good works could remove it, nor the imputation of righteousness : the man under judgment must be removed in judgment from the eye of the holy God, and a Man who fully pleased God has been raised up from death, the judgment on man. This is my fourth point. Now God Himself has done it ; God laid help upon One that is mighty : His own arm brought salvation : and so we read in scripture that our

blessed Lord said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." Now see the One who comes, One born of a woman, born under the law; He comes and He removes the judgment, He bears in His own person the judgment which rested upon man. But before He removed the judgment from the eye of God, He was in private life the One of whom God could testify, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and in His public service on the earth: "This is my beloved Son; hear him."

We read in Matthew xxvii. 50: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." He is dead; the perfect One, the holy One of God is dead. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." He laid it down, "The just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." See now the greatness of God's grace. You see, I trust, that sin is a terrible thing; that man who sinned must go in judgment: man, the child of Adam, could not bear the judgment, he could not rise out of it; hence it must be borne by One able to rise out of it. As we read, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Again, "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, that is the devil." Here (Matt. xxvii. 50) He dies; it is the fulfilment of Psalm xxii. He takes the sinner's place—He who knew no sin; He is the victim not chargeable with man's offence, bearing the judgment of the offence, and at the time of bearing it proving His personal excellency. The fat was obtained through death. You see this blessed One has come and given Himself; He was the sacrifice for sins; He dies, and as we read in another place: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Do you take in that wonderful statement? The Son of God was glorified in raising Lazarus; but "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." Under the sinner's judgment, at the most distant spot, drinking the bitter cup, He unswervingly maintained everything due to God. I remember saying many years ago to a dear man of God, It was a wonderful thing that the Lord was thinking of us at that moment. His reply was, "He was not thinking of you at all, He was thinking of God." Much of the feeble sense of salvation in souls arises from the fact that they are exclusively occupied with their own relief, instead of inquiring whether God whom they have offended has been re-

lieved. Have you settled with God? is the first question. Is your conscience settled? will come afterwards.

In Exodus xii. and Romans iii. you see how God, who has been offended, is relieved of the offence. He has found One who has removed all the judgment that lay upon man, and not only so, but who glorified Him in the removal of it; the Son has come and became Man, and He died to bear the judgment that rested on man. God now testifies of His complete satisfaction. "The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," from the inside. The testimony is that the distance between God and man has been removed on God's side. Man is at a distance from God, but God through Christ has removed the distance from His own side, and now He can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Do you give Him credit for removing the distance from His own side? Thank God, I trust that there are many in this room who can speak of the blessedness of the day when the light shone into their souls—that God had removed the distance, and that from His own side it had been removed to His satisfaction and glory by His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence there is an approach to God which before could not be known, the

greatest nearness. The veil of the temple was rent ; most significant to a Jew. I dare say a pious Jew, when he heard what had happened would say, Something very great must have happened, so that God could rend the veil and throw open the Holiest.

It is plain that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," and hence it is an immense relief to the soul of the sinner to lay hold of the fact that God, the One who was offended, is the One who was first relieved. If you do not know this in your soul, you have not settled peace ; the One who was offended by the sin of man was relieved of the offence by a Man—the Lord Jesus Christ ; and now God can be "just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." I ask each of you, Do you prefer Christ to Adam? Adam sinned and incurred the judgment ; the Lord Jesus Christ has borne the judgment to God's perfect satisfaction. And God now asks you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give Him credit for His grace.

Now that the veil is rent from the top to the bottom, what is disclosed? The ark of the covenant was in the Holiest. The golden box, of which the lid was the mercy seat, with the cherubim of glory overshadowing it, was the type of Christ. Hence the moment He died, the veil was rent from the top to the bottom. God can

testify that He has found a Man entirely to His satisfaction on whom all His glory can rest. In 2 Corinthians iii. we read of the contrast between law and grace ; the law was a demand for righteousness, grace is the ministration of righteousness. Do you understand the difference? If you were in debt, and the creditor said, "I do not ask you to pay the debt, I will not only forgive it, but I will give to you," you would understand him. That is the grace of God ; He is not now demanding righteousness, but He is giving. Why? Because a Man has glorified God ; and therefore He can rend the veil and declare that the distance has been removed on His side, and "all that believe are justified from all things." This is marvellous ; but thank God it is true. Why? Because Christ has finished the work which was given Him to do. God has been glorified by a Man. Hence I ask you to turn away from the man who brought you under judgment and distance from God, and to believe on Him who "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God."

I would now briefly recapitulate. First, I dwelt on the holiness of God ; next, on man's utter unwillingness to draw near to God, hating the light, so that of himself he would never turn to God ; thirdly, that there must be complete removal of

the man that sinned, the man in whom sin is ; root and branch must go in judgment ; so that it is true of every believer, "Our old man is crucified with Him ;" crucifixion is the judicial termination of the man, and the Man who removed the distance has glorified God, and has been "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." He glorified God, and the testimony now is, as we read in Matthew xxvii., God rends the veil, He has thrown open all on His side ; I do not say that every one enters in, but I say the veil is rent, the door of heaven is thrown open. God is the first relieved to His endless satisfaction.

And now I ask you to contemplate the blessing you will receive if you accept the grace of God. But before I speak of the blessing which God in His grace confers, I would ask you, Will you accept it? I have tried to trace your history as a sinner ; I trust I have shewn you that in the only way in which salvation could be effected it has been effected ; I have shewn you that because of the work of Christ, God has rent the veil. The way into the Holiest is open. There is a ministration of righteousness now from the glory of God, from the very highest point. The nearer you are to the Lord's glory the more assured you are. The glory resting on Christ is the expression of God's

satisfaction according to all His attributes ; the nearer you are to the fountain, the greater the sense of your acceptance. Many are in darkness because they are not near ; they are enlightened, but if they were near they would be established. When you are reconciled to God, you find that instead of being at the greatest distance, you are now in the greatest nearness ; you know the wonderful nature of your acceptance ; you find that “ Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Many have no idea of the abounding. They can speak of the forgiveness of sins ; but if you commit fifty sins and are forgiven fifty, there is no abounding there, no excess. “ Grace did much more abound ; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” You are brought into the happiest association with the Father, unto the home of His heart. The prodigal son wandered away, and had spent all that he had ; then by the light of grace he came to himself and returned to his father, and to his great surprise he found his father met him on the best of terms, he “ fell on his neck and covered him with kisses.” (New Trans.) How could this be ? Because the shepherd had gone out to “ seek and to save that which was lost.” All the offence had been removed ; God had

been relieved ; all that offended had been removed from the eye of God in judgment, and now His heart can come out in all its mighty volume and embrace the returning son.

It is marvellous, and yet there is more. The nearer you are to the Father the happier you are. You come in now in all the beauty of Christ. "And they began to be merry." Contrast this with the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life when Adam was driven out of the garden. The holiness of God could not suffer him to be there, and man's own estrangement from God would also forbid it. Hence the man under the judgment of God must be removed in judgment. This has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ to God's infinite satisfaction ; and now the invitation is, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ;" and as in the case of the brazen serpent, he that looked upon it, lived. If you believed even a little of the grace which I have been presenting to you, you will look—you will look away from Adam, and look to the Lord Jesus Christ ; you will give God credit for the immensity of His grace, and then you will find that not only has all the offence been removed, but that God has been so fully glorified, that the nearer you

come to Him, the more you are assured of His love. Many a one does not get this assurance till his death-bed, until he is passing away from all else and is going straight to God.

I need not add more, but I cannot conclude without expressing, how wonderful is the work which God has wrought. On man's part there was no drawing of heart to Him—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" but God now, in the greatness of His grace, says to the servant (this shews you the love which is behind the grace), "Compel them to come in." I do not expect anything from man, and I would not work upon any man's feelings, because I do not believe there is any good in him. But I desire that you should apprehend the grace of God. There is no door for the sinner but in the mercy of God. We read "That he might have mercy upon all." I will give you an illustration. The four lepers in the siege of Samaria said, "If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." (2 Kings vii. 4.) They looked for mercy, and they found mercy. You speak of casting yourself upon the mercy of God, but have you really done so? I

trust no one will leave this room with indifference, and in his heart say, "I will go on a little while longer with man. I will turn my back on the grace of God, on the good tidings which have come from God." Man is a sinner at the greatest distance from God, under the judgment of death. God sent His Son, who became a Man, and bore this judgment that was on man. "He died unto sin once," and so glorified God in the most distant spot, that He was "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," and now God can, to the delight of His heart, bring "many sons unto glory," "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Inconceivable, indeed, is the greatness of this revelation! This is the excess. Is there one in this room who will refuse the offer of God's grace? God has permitted His grace to be sounded in your ears. Will you turn a deaf ear to it? Let all who have received it join in praying that God will cause His grace to shine into every soul in this room, for His name's sake.



THE GOSPEL.

No. III.

THE DISTANCE AND THE NEARNESS.

(GEN. VI. 5-8, 12-14 ; VII. 11, 12 ; VIII. 13, 14, 20-22 ;
JOHN X. 11, 14, 15.)

EVERY ONE, as a rule, knows that there is a distance between God and man. I have dwelt on this on a former occasion. The great defect in many is, that they do not know the nature of the distance, one which they are unable to remove. I desire to bring before you this evening three parts in the gospel. First, the nature of God's judgment upon man ; secondly, how it has been removed ; and, thirdly, the new position on the earth of the saved. They are so simple, that the youngest can understand them. It is of the deepest importance that you should clearly know the nature of the pressure or weight on you ; if you do not, you do not know what must be removed ; if any of the weight remains, you will be still oppressed, and you cannot

enjoy the unclouded blessing which belongs to the one who knows that through the grace of God, all has been removed. The judgment on man is here simply told, "The end of all flesh is come before me." I know it is not pleasant to the natural man to hear the Lord's words, "The end of all flesh is come before me." Man was on the earth 1,500 years when the deluge came, and "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Man was getting a day older, and a day worse, and therefore "it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth," and He said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth."

It is not only that your sins must be atoned for, but there must be the ending of the flesh in judgment. This is God's judgment on man ; and you cannot apprehend the grace of God if you do not see the nature of the weight on you. I want you to understand the gravity of man's position before God. In Genesis ii. we read, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Death is the termination of man in the flesh ; the judgment in the flood was the sample of it. "And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt ; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me ;

for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth." That is the judgment resting on every man ; you must first accept that the man in the flesh must go in judgment. It is not possible that another can bear the judgment on you, in order that you may retain man in the flesh. Many make this mistake, even true believers ; they suppose that as the judgment has been borne by Christ, therefore they can retain the man under judgment. No ; the Lord Jesus Christ bore the judgment of death on the cross, and He rose from the dead. " For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead." The believer is clear of the man under judgment, and now he is of the Man who bore the judgment. " As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." " This mortal must put on immortality," but the nature of the weight is plain enough, so that each of you must come to this—I am ruined ; and in the spirit of the leper, you should put your hand on your mouth, your mouth in the dust, and cry, " Unclean, unclean !" I want to make it clear to you, that if the judgment on you be borne by another, you cannot retain the man which has gone in judgment on the cross. A great many are trying to improve the first man. How can

you improve a being which must go in judgment? And though it goes in judgment in Another, yet you cannot retain it, because it would be morally incongruous to retain the man for whom Christ bore the judgment. We could not appear before Him. Hence the apostle could say of himself, "I am crucified with Christ." I am trying to make plain to every one here the nature of the judgment on man. I know well how little people in general accept it. The weight on man is not seen, and few can believe that all that is so beautiful in man is of "the old things" that "have passed away."

Now we have seen, I trust, the nature of the judgment, which is the first subject. We now come to the second, how you can be saved ; how the judgment has been borne. God in His grace saves Noah and his house. Here His grace is displayed ; He shews that He can save, and how He does it. The ark figuratively sets forth the death of Christ. There was a moment upon the earth when no flesh could be seen ; it was either drowned in the water or covered by the ark. The covering, the atonement, is God's way of saving the soul. It was a type, only a few, eight souls, were saved by water.

Now the import of this type is, that they were exposed to the water, the judgment, and they

were saved out of it. We read in Genesis vii., "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up," and in chapter viii. 13, "And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry." Of course, we are looking at the type at present, how those exposed to the judgment can be saved, for there is no other way in which they could be saved. The Lord possibly refers to it when He says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." There was no way of being saved but by the ark, which typified the death of Christ. Noah and his house were a type of the saved company. This type (it is most important) shews that the first man is under the judgment of God, hence that man must go in judgment; and if that man is saved, he must be saved by another bearing his judgment; he does not retain the man under judgment. In the type the saved are covered in the ark, not seen. Hence we read, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us;" that is, you are baptised unto the death of Christ, and if this be truly

maintained, you cannot seek position nor recognition among men. It is by the death of Christ that you can be saved, but you must appropriate His death. (John vi. 53.) Noah and his house were a year and ten days in the ark ; that is, they were every day in the year in every kind of circumstance which a whole year expresses and at the end of that time they entered on a new history on the earth. They come out of the ark near the spot where they went into it. They went into the ark, because they were under the judgment of God. A word to every one in this room : Have you gone in ? You are under the judgment of God. You cannot get out of it but by appropriating the death of Christ, "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood." If you appropriate Christ's death, then you pass "out of death into life ;" you enter upon a new position on the earth. Here they were in the ark a year and ten days, which figuratively sets forth man's history in the flesh. (We read that the prophet was in the widow's house a whole year.) Now they are out of the judgment, the judgment has been borne. They were covered in the ark, figuratively the atonement. The man that was under the judgment of God is no longer to claim recognition among men ; you are saved from the judgment by Christ's death, and baptised unto His death ;

you enter on a new history here ; you shall never come into judgment.

Now we come to the third part. This we get in Genesis viii. 20, 21, "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD ; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour ; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake ; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." I am keeping to the type still ; it is important to understand the type, because it is a shadow of the reality. Noah and his house are out of the judgment, and because of the burnt offering now offered up, they are in the favour of God.

Now I turn to John x., to set forth the gospel in its fulness, as accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. I read two verses of John x., one is, "I am the good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." That is very definite ; no one ever heard before of a shepherd dying for his sheep ; a shepherd ordinarily cares for his sheep. If the shepherd has to die for the sheep, it is evident that nothing less would save them ; it was not said that He did good works for them, or that His righteousness would be a set-off for their unrighteousness ; no, "I am the

good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

Now I must explain how the type has been fulfilled. I would draw your attention to the blind man in John ix. There is a blind man, he is a typical case. If there is any one in this room that has light, you were once blind. I will give you the history of grace. The Lord begins the work, it is the Lord who anoints his eyes, and it is the Lord sends him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and he went and washed, and came seeing ; he has received his sight. I compare this to your eyes being opened to see things as God sees them. At conversion light has come from God. The difference between the two thieves was, that one had light, saw the Saviour ; and the other had only natural intellect. In the light I see things as God sees them ; as the Lord said, “ I am the light of the world.” Well, this man received light ; his neighbours were the first arrested, they could not understand the source whence the light came ; they did not doubt the fact that he had received his sight, but they did not see that it came from God. The neighbours brought him to the Pharisees, and they said, “ This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day.” Then they called his parents, and his parents say, “ We know that

this is our son, and that he was born blind, but by what means he now seeth we know not, or who hath opened his eyes, we know not : he is of age, ask him." They feared the Jews, who had agreed already that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Eventually, when reviled by the Jews, he said to them : " If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." They retorted, " Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out." I would press on you, that he is now outside of everything religiously good among men. First he was blind, and could not see any man ; but when he sees, having received light from God, he is outside of man. This is where grace puts you. As a man you are under judgment, when the light of God works you will find yourself outside of every man—even the religiously reputable. You may think this too hard, but otherwise you do not understand what it is to be clear. There would be more happiness among Christians if they saw the nature of the distance to be removed, and then saw that it was removed. The man once blind is outside of all that he revered religiously among men ; but he is now in the solitude of light. O what a place—the solitude of light ! I want you to estimate the moral

greatness which the light of God's grace conferred on this man. I wish you could really enter into what his position is now that he has light and he begins to see everything as God sees it. May you realise his singular blessed position. Now, at verse 35 we read, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He does not say "the Son of man;" some commentators would read, "the Son of man;" no; "the Son of God." Do you comprehend? Because if you do, you will be much interested. And he answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" It was not simply that the work had been wrought in his soul, but he had learnt that the light of God's grace puts one outside everything of man. I press this, because until you understand it, you will never understand the unique position which belongs at the present moment to every one who has been relieved of the judgment of God. I am speaking to believers now, and I say, Do you know that all of the man under judgment, the best of him, has been so completely removed, that you are outside of all, and that outside of all you are bound in heart to Another, your Saviour, the Son of God? He said, Lord, who is He? I believe that is

a blessed solitude. I have no doubt that it is because souls have never been in this solitude that they have not found the unexampled, the incomparable position in which a believer is placed at such a moment. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him"—the last time he met Him he was blind; now he sees Him—"thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." Now, beloved friends, bear in mind where this man who was blind is; he is clear of the darkness, and knows a new and unparalleled place when he said, "Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him;" his heart absorbed in delight with an object, the Son of God, outside of every man, and in seclusion with Himself.

I have read part of John x. in order to point out the two great traits of the good Shepherd. Many understand the one who do not understand the other. The one is, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." He died for them; Christ gave Himself a ransom for many. He gave up the life to which sin could be attached. You could not be saved by Him, and keep the life on account of which Christ died. Here there is confusion in souls. If there were true

apprehension of the work of Christ, that He so bore the judgment on man that all the man who had offended against God has been removed to God's infinite satisfaction, and that He who saved you from death is now your life, there would be a wonderful testimony to the grace of God. You could say, It is not merely that I shall be greatly blessed by and by, but I am unspeakably so now, in the place where once I was under the judgment of God.

The second trait of the good Shepherd we read in verses 14, 15: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep." You are brought into the greatest intimacy with the Saviour; though you are cast out by the religious man, you receive infinitely more in acquaintance with Christ, the Son of God. The correct reading is, "As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." It is almost too much to say, because it may seem so incomprehensible, that the same kind of acquaintance is to subsist between Christ and the believer as between the Father and the Son. I can understand an earnest soul saying, "Well, if that is true, I should not mind

being excluded from every man." We often sing :

"I have found a Friend in Jesus ;"

but this is incomparably more : you can say joyfully, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

I trust I have made it plain to you, that in the place where the judgment of God was upon you, you are set free from the judgment, and also that you are set up in the greatest blessing. You have seen this fulfilled in the man who was blind.

I desire much to press on you, that if any of the pressure from sin remains, your soul will be under a cloud. I have no doubt that this is the cause of the little happiness some believers have ; they are not quite clear of the man under the judgment of God. The apostle can say for himself, "I am crucified with Christ," not that he should retain the old man, but in order that, being free from the man under judgment, he should be here under the control of Christ, Christ being in him. Hence the apostle can say, "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."

I need not add more. I trust I have said enough to make it plain to you, and I will recapitulate concisely the three points I have spoken on. First, the weight or judgment on man, the nature of that judgment. It is senseless a man proposing to discharge a debt of which he knows neither the nature nor the amount. But, thank God, the Lord Jesus Christ knew exactly all that lay upon us; and He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He says, I will discharge it; "I come to do thy will, O God." "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me." "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Secondly, how you are saved. You are saved by appropriating in faith Christ's death, figuratively set forth in the ark. Noah and his house went into the ark and they were saved; they were a year and ten days in the ark, signifying that in the circumstances of every day here, they were under the cover of Christ's death. Excluded from man as he is, but shut in to Christ. You are saved out of the judgment, because Christ has borne it; and as you appropriate His death you are practically free of the man under judgment. Now, thirdly, you enter on a new history—you are in the favour of God. The man who was blind entered on a new

history ; he is not only clear of all the darkness, but he has now the most intimate acquaintance with the blessed Saviour. There could not be any greater favour or a happier position. Now this is yours ; you are clear of all that was against you in the sight of God, and you are in incomparable nearness and intimacy with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I trust that you have not only listened attentively to the three parts of this great subject, but that you will study them before the Lord.

May the blessed God, in His infinite mercy, grant that each one of you may be able to say, I know the weight which was upon me, and I know that it has been completely removed, and that I am now in unclouded happiness with the blessed One who accomplished this great work, for His name's sake.



THE GOSPEL.

No. IV.

THE SALVATION OF GOD AND THE NEW HISTORY.

(Ex. xiv. 15-31 ; xv. 1 ; ACTS ix. 1-18.)

WE have a very interesting type of the work of grace, "The salvation of the LORD," as it is called, in the way Israel were delivered out of Egypt. The judgment of God had fallen upon Egypt, so that "there was not a house where there was not one dead," a terrible night of judgment ; and as we find in chapter xii., Israel were told to kill a lamb, every man according to his family, and to sprinkle the blood upon the lintel and the door-posts—figuratively the blood of Christ ; and God said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." They were inside, and the blood was outside on the lintel and the door-posts, and the judgment passed over them ; they were safe from the judgment.

One can be thankful that there are many

who believe that the blood of Christ is before the eye of God ; it is a good beginning, a good start, but not all. It is an immense gain to believe that the blood of Christ is before the eye of God, and that because of that blood-shedding, He passes by. A familiar phrase quite conveys it, "I know I shall not be lost." That is all ; you cannot go further. So with Israel, they were inside, and they were safe from the judgment ; but they were not happy. They were very like a drowning man, rescued by a life-boat, but he was still in the storm, on the rough sea ; figuratively not out of the place of judgment. The gospel is that not only are you passed over, but that you are delivered from the judgment.

The man in the life-boat is still occupied with his safety, he is not yet delivered from all danger ; the nearer to drowning, the more he longs to be where drowning is not possible, he longs for the shore, and the moment he reaches it, he is delivered ; he is saved. When Israel were in Egypt, though they were inside feeding on the paschal lamb, they were not happy, for you find that they had to leave Egypt, with their loins girt and their shoes on their feet and their staff in their hand ; they were to leave the place of judgment, for they were not clear of the power of the

Egyptians (the flesh), nor of the power of Pharaoh (Satan), by which they were oppressed ; they were not yet delivered. It is true they were sheltered ; the word shelter implies that the oppressor has not been removed. They were sheltered from the Judge, but they were not resting in the favour of God ; they were not assured that every disturbing element between God and themselves had been removed ; they could not have peace while the enemy was still in power. Hence we find they were in terrible fear ; Pharaoh and his army were behind them. Jehovah now said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." This is a very interesting moment in the history of a soul. Do you believe that the blood is before the eye of God ? Then you are sheltered ; it is the right way to begin, but you cannot have peace until you see the offender removed in judgment, and the power of the oppressor broken ; then you can sing the first verse of the song—"I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously : the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." A little further down it is said of their enemies, "They sank as lead in the mighty waters." All that had incurred the judgment is gone in judgment. Israel were involved in the judgment on Egypt by being there,

and hence they must pass through the night of judgment before they could be free of it. Of course, it is a type: they could not be saved from the judgment but by another bearing it. The passover prefigured the death of Christ. Many have the deep consolation that God's eye rests on the blood of Christ; they call it assurance, and I admit that it is assurance, but it is not peace: nor are they consciously in the favour of God. They do not yet see, by the light of God, that all has been removed which caused the judgment. Hence God said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." They were now to see the salvation of God. Mark how they were brought into peace, into complete deliverance from the judgment. It is not only, as in Romans iii., "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" but you have to believe that "God hath raised him from the dead." Hence God tells Moses to stretch forth his hand over the sea and divide it. The sea was figuratively death, and there was a way made through it, a way through the judgment; Pharaoh and all his host, chariots and all, were to be consumed, and Israel by divine light walked this new way; but Pharaoh and all his host perished.

There are two things of great importance to

bear in mind : one is, that God made the way through the sea ; and the other is, that the light which shewed the way was God's light. Christ has made the way through death—the judgment of God. He died ; He has borne the judgment, and He has been “raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.’ ’ I want you to accept that the Israelites did walk this new path through the sea ; and every one who walked it knew that he had found the way out of it ; as in John v. 24, he had “passed out of death into life.” Every one is involved in the judgment. You cannot get out of it except through the death and resurrection of Christ. He has opened a way out of death, He is “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.” There is no one who with the eye of faith beholds the Lord risen, but sees there is a Man who has come out of all that was against me ; He was raised out from among the dead. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Think for a moment, it is very simple ; one Man has risen out from among the dead, and He has broken all the power of Satan. Satan tried to terrify Him in the garden of Gethsemane, so that He said, “This is your hour, and the

power of darkness." He went down into death, and bore the sinner's judgment; He so glorified God that He "was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." I am speaking now of the antitype; but the type shews us the beautiful way all was done. There were two things of deepest interest: one, that the way was made through the sea; and the other, that the light from God showed them the way. They saw the sea on the right hand and on the left—the judgment which they incurred—but they were saved out of it, while Pharaoh and all his host were drowned in the Red Sea: "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." It is a type that both Satan, and the flesh which Satan can act on, are gone in judgment. I can understand a simple soul saying, Well, if I could see that, and know that all against me was gone in judgment in the eye of God, I should be perfectly happy. It is not merely that the blood of Christ was offered, but that He went under the judgment, that He broke the power of the devil, and judicially terminated the man under judgment; as we read in Hebrews ii. (mark the words), "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, that is, the devil." I ask every one in this room, Do you really believe the power of the devil is broken, and that Christ has abolished death? Not the power of death only, but "that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." All the saints before were subject to bondage, because death had never been annulled.

It is of great importance that you should understand the type. Israel went into the sea, figuratively the judgment of God, and they found that there was a way made for them through it. "The waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." They walked through the sea, and when the morning appeared they were saved, and the waters covered their enemies. The death of Christ is the judgment of this world; as the Lord said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." All Israel walked through the Red Sea; they did not only hear of it, but they walked every step of the way; they appropriated practically for themselves the work which was done for them. Step by step they appropriated the salvation of God; and where they were saved, their enemies were swallowed up.

Hence the song in Exodus xv.: "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." The power of the devil is destroyed. Though the devil is still here, his power as Pharaoh, is gone for the believer. Christ has abolished death. I do not say that you have by faith laid hold of this great fact. You may believe in the blood of Christ before the eye of God, but you may not have seen by faith that all which was under judgment has been set aside in judgment. Israel was implicated in the judgment because of the Egyptians, and now they are gone in judgment, while Israel was led safely through by the Lord. Hence it is no work of their own, but they sing, The LORD hath triumphed gloriously.

So far is the type. Now I turn to Acts ix. This is the first account of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; he, in the most relentless way, was persecuting the church of God worse than ever, "But as he journeyed suddenly there shined round about him a light out of heaven." The light has come from God: that is His first work in the soul. As I have already said, there are two things; there is the way of escape, and there is the light to see it; there is a way out of death through the death and resurrection of Christ, and there is the light out of

heaven to shew the way. The light is the first thing ; you cannot see at all if you have not the light, and the light comes from God. As the apostle says, " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the radiancy of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The light has shone on this man ; he had thought himself a very exemplary man, though he was unrelentingly persecuting the church of God. He even forced some of the Christians to blaspheme ; while in the eyes of the religious world he was most commendable, and as to himself he " lived in all good conscience." I call a man a monster who is opposing God in the most daring way, and at the same time getting credit from men for being religious. Saul had gone outside of Palestine on his terrible mission, and was journeying to Damascus, when suddenly the light shone out of heaven. Though so religious he could not bear it ; he fell to the ground ; though he had lived in all good conscience unto this day, when the light of God reached him, he fell to the ground. The work of God has begun ; Saul cries, " Who art thou, Lord ?" He had a sense that he had to do with God—a sense which always awakens fear. " And the Lord

said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." How terrible that moment must have been to him! Full of self-righteousness, he was the chief of sinners, as he afterwards owned. I do not consider that an exaggeration. No one surpassed him in his opposition to Christ. It is important to bear in mind, that a man of unblemished conduct may be the greatest opponent to the truth. Now he is subdued: "And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—he is not off legal ground yet. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus." He has received divine light, the light of God has shone into his soul, and he has heard the voice of Jesus; but he is not rescued yet; he has not peace.

Now read verse 9, which describes how he found salvation: "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." What was he doing? Then the work of grace was effected in his soul. Many have faith in the blood of Christ, are assured of its virtue in the

eye of God ; and yet are much distressed by Satan, and by the flesh. You are not clear of them if you do not see that Christ has made a way through death by His death and resurrection, and that you cannot be clear until you have appropriated His death, the antitype of walking through the Red Sea. In deep seclusion, apart from every one, like Saul of Tarsus here, when for three days he did neither eat nor drink, you have so believed in the work of Christ on the cross, that you have walked through the Red Sea ; you have seen the way for you out of death through the death and resurrection of Christ. What a wonderful relief to Israel when they had reached the other side ! We can understand that Saul during those three days did neither eat nor drink. He is learning that by the death of Christ he is cleared of all against him in the sight of God. The light had come to him from the glory of God, and he had heard the voice of Jesus in the glory, and now he sees that there is a way for him unto Christ in glory, through His death. To the satisfaction of his soul, he appropriates by faith the death of Christ as the only way " out of death into life." Then he prays ; he has come to God. " For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee." Then Ananias is sent to him. The Lord's commendation is, " Behold, he prayeth."

He has to do with God, he prays. The prodigal son says, "I will arise and go to my father." That is confidence ; presumption is acting from my own feelings ; confidence is acting because of the feelings which another has for me. You see the same with the thief on the cross : " Lord, remember me ;" he began by prayer. Great was his confidence in the Lord. Now Saul prays ; he has turned to God, he has confidence in Him ; the judgment is over, the morning has appeared ; and now Ananias is sent, and says to him, " Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." That is, that he is to enter on an entirely new history here. I do not dwell upon this, but I press that the wonderful fact was now known to Saul that all under the judgment of God had gone in judgment ; he had learned that the old man was crucified with Christ ; he had walked through the sea, literally he had travelled through Christ's death to the other side of death. " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Now he can say, The LORD hath triumphed gloriously.

Saul is now outside of judgment, and no one who dwells on it, but will see the great advance there is from the light coming to him and his

hearing the voice of the Saviour, and his present position—saved for glory, and the Holy Ghost filling him. I trust you see that all under judgment has been removed in judgment in the death of Christ, for though Satan is still here, he is never again as Pharaoh to the believer in Jesus, and though the Egyptians are here, that is, the flesh is here, yet Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore. So should you see our old man crucified with Christ. If Israel attempted to revive an Egyptian dead on the shore it would be unaccountable. Christians are more so when they revive the flesh which was set aside in the cross. You should rejoice that our old man is crucified with Christ. But no one will be free of the old man till he is glad that he has gone in the cross; and you never can know that he has gone till you travel through faith in Christ's death out of the place of judgment. If you do not accept the death of Christ as the salvation of God, the wrath of God abides on you. But on the other hand (the Lord grant you may be deeply interested in His grace), even that not only is the blood before the eye of God for you who believe, but the man under the judgment of God has been judicially ended in the death of Christ, and as He is risen out of death, you have to do with Him risen and glorified. The effect upon you is that not only are your eyes opened to see

things in this world in a new way, but you are filled with the Holy Ghost ; you enter on a new and blessed history on the earth. You begin your new history with a song ; you have come to God—"The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation." Like Saul of Tarsus you are in a new and wondrous position on the earth ; you have a Saviour in glory, and the Holy Ghost in you.

May your hearts be bowed in faith with thanksgiving, for His name's sake.



THE GOSPEL.

No. V.

GOD'S DELIVERANCE AND RECEPTION.

(EX. III. 7, 8 ; LUKE XV. 11-32.)

I HAVE been pressing on previous occasions the judgment on man which had to be removed. The judgment on man is, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The man under judgment must be removed in judgment. There is a judicial termination of man in the cross of Christ.

Now I desire to set forth, the judgment being removed, the greatness of God's gift and reception. If you do not see that all of the man who has offended against God has been removed in judgment—alas! where many converted souls are—you cannot enjoy His gift and reception. Until you see every atom of the old man removed from the eye of God, you are occupied with yourself: the distance between Him and you has not been fully removed. Our old man is crucified with Christ. It is not "our old man is dead": no; crucified. Crucifixion was the

judicial end. Hence, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Christ was delivered for our offences and raised for our justification. You cannot enjoy the favour of God until you believe that every element of disturbance between Him and you has been removed by Christ; then you are justified by Him, and then you have entrance into this favour wherein we stand.

Now, when you are brought from everything contrary to God, you begin to apprehend that you are brought to God. Many desire to enjoy the favour of God: but they do not, because they do not see the judicial removal of man in the cross. If man has been judicially removed from God's eye, he could not be revived on God's side. It is immense blessing when you believe that all this has been effected for you. You have peace when you are justified; and you are justified when you believe that God has raised Christ from the dead.

Now I turn to set forth the greatness of the favour into which we are brought. I have read those verses in Exodus because they give you a good idea of the purpose of God. He saw the affliction of His people who were in Egypt, and He said to Moses: "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that

land." If you stop there, much would be effected for them. They would be free from the oppressor when they had walked through the Red Sea ; they were then delivered from Pharaoh and the Egyptians : surely a very great deliverance. But that is only a part of the purpose of God, and bear in mind that it is not some great blessing which will be given hereafter, but which is given at once ; you will be delivered out of your misery at the present moment, and you will be received into the greatest favour the same moment. The grace of God has two parts : one is to bring you out of your misery, and the other is to set you up in a new condition in the spot where your misery was. I mean at this moment, not merely when you go to heaven ; of course all will be complete then, there will be no interruption to your blessing then. If you were not set up in a new condition, Israel would be better off than you are, because they were to be brought out of the place of oppression, and brought into "a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." It was not merely to get them out of one, but to bring them into another. Is it only judicial, only inexorable hatred of sin ? That is one side of it, but when that has been met, there is unbounded love. It is a great

thing to understand the heart of God. All that is contrary to the holiness of God must be removed before the heart of God can be disclosed. When Christ died then the veil was rent, God could declare Himself.

In Luke xv. you will see this explained. In Exodus Israel were to be brought out of one place into an infinitely better place. If I were addressing a young man, full of aspirations in this world, I should say, I offer you infinitely more than all you seek here, and at this moment. You have to learn that it is not merely a future blessing, but a present one. Hence we read, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." There are Christians who could not explain this passage; they know that their sins are forgiven, but they do not understand that "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The much more abounding is unknown. In the righteous government of the world, when a man commits an offence, he incurs the penalty of the law; and when the penalty is paid he is set free. If for a debt in prison, a friend pays his debt, he is discharged; his debt was paid through grace, but there is no abounding there. It is, of course, a great thing to be free of debt. But there is not only forgiveness with God; God has laid help

on One that is mighty: His own arm hath brought salvation to Him. In John iv. Christ says to the woman of Samaria: "If thou knewest the gift of God." God has come out in quite a new way, so that "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The man saved by grace is infinitely better off than man was before he had sinned. I am pressing the wonderful greatness of the love of God, so that He can say, All in you contrary to Me has been removed, to My infinite satisfaction, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; and now My heart is at liberty to do as I please for you. This is the gospel of the blessed God, and therefore your new state bears no comparison with the old. There is no comparison between Canaan and Egypt. You read in Deuteronomy xi. of the contrast between them. In Egypt there was no rain, but when the overflow of the river came, they had to conduct the water to the roots of the trees. "For the land whither thou goest in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs." But the land of Canaan is "A land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the LORD thy God careth for; the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning

of the year even unto the end of the year." The land to which Israel were going was infinitely superior to the land they were brought out of. That is a type of the magnitude of God's grace.

In Luke xv. we get three parables. The first is, the shepherd goes after a lost sheep until he finds it, and when he finds it he lays it on his own shoulders rejoicing, and brings it "to the house" (the right reading), and calls his neighbours together to rejoice with him—*it is the joy of the finder*. If that little sentence is wrought in your soul by the Spirit of God, it will be for much blessing. We think of our joy in our salvation, but did you think of the joy of the Finder? "Rejoice *with me*, for I have found my sheep which was lost."

The second is the woman with a lighted candle sweeping the house diligently (properly the work of an evangelist) for the lost piece till she finds it, and the light rests upon the piece; and then when she has found it, she puts it along with the other nine. One is the shepherd, who seeks and finds; the other is the light by which the soul is turned to God. In the third, there were two sons, and the father divided his living between them; one remained as usual with him, but the other went into a far country, and wasted his goods with riotous living. This is a

picture of man naturally. The temptation to man in the garden of Eden was that he could do better for himself by doing his own will. Hence every one, sooner or later, be it from bad health or some other cause, comes to the end of his resources ; like the prodigal, " he began to be in want." It is a terrible moment when death stares you in the face. The prodigal made several attempts to retrieve his position, but they were ineffectual. " He joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him." It is in this state of need and desperation that the light arrests him ; as the scripture describes it, " when he came to himself." The goodness of his father awakens confidence in him : he says, " I will arise and go to my father ;" he can say nothing for himself ; but " The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." It is a faithful description of the sinner reduced to the lowest point, like the thief on the cross ; still more markedly Saul of Tarsus.

The unspeakable misery of the lost will be when they wake up to the fact that there is goodness in God, and that they never turned to Him. Is there any one in this room who has not turned to God ? No one turns to God until

he is brought to the lowest point ; while any other hope remains, man will not turn to God. Hence the word to the servant, "Compel them to come in." It is not enough for the blessed God to announce, "All things are now ready ;" but He compels you to come in. Anyone here who has turned to God, knows that, like the Philippian jailor, he was reduced to the lowest point before he turned to God. You were like the four lepers at the siege of Samaria : they said, If we stay here we die, and if we go into the city we die there ; the only one door open to us is the mercy of our enemies : but they trusted mercy and they were not disappointed. A beautiful type. God favoured them, because they trusted in mercy. I may say to each one here, Have you trusted in the mercy of God ? The prodigal says, "I will arise and go to my father." This is the history of every converted soul. You have not anything to say for yourself, not one word. But you count on His goodness. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants." That is the prodigal's gospel. And, alas ! many truly converted have no better gospel than just to get within the door of heaven. At any rate the work of grace has begun, he has left the

far country ; all the fruit of the shepherd's work.

As I have already said, the moment Christ died God rent the veil, the distance between God and man has been removed by a Man—a Man who finished the work God gave Him to do, the One in whom He is well pleased. The question is, Do you turn away from the man who ruined you, and do you believe in the Man who wrought out your salvation? “The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

Next the prodigal “arose, and came to his father.” Now we have the father's side. People are constantly telling me of their feelings about God. I want you to know His feelings about you. Believe me it will make a wonderful difference if you learn His feelings about you. He came to his father, because he had no one else to count on, he could not say anything for himself, he could only count on his father. Now while he was yet a great way off his father saw him. And what did he do? It is too much to describe. “He ran and fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses.” (New Trans.) Is there any one who can describe the greatness of that act? No one. The father ran. Yes, he says, as it were, I take a greater interest in the prodigal's conversion than the prodigal himself. This would deeply touch any one who believed

it. The gospel is often spoken of as if the prodigal only had an interest in it ; but the Father has an interest in the gospel, and therefore our blessed Lord says in John iv., “ I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” “ My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” Christ worked from God to the sinner ; from the highest to the lowest. Put yourself in the place of the prodigal, and what would your feeling be ? It would be, How much my father cares for me ; he has nothing against me ; he is on the best of terms with me. Of course the prodigal was so surprised at the graciousness of his father’s reception that he could not say all he had intended, but as has often been remarked, he only says, “ Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” And the father said, “ Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him,” &c.

Now mark, the first impression the prodigal got on coming to his father was the tenderness of his love. I lay great stress on this, because the lack in many is that they do not believe it. Here is verified, “ God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself ;” and hence when known, “ We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation ”—not “ the atonement.” God

Himself has effected it, and therefore He can greet the returning prodigal in the most loving way. The prodigal at the same time has a deeper sense of unfitness ; that is repentance ; but the father said to the servants, " Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet : " that is, he is " made meet, " " accepted in the Beloved. "

The prodigal is given an infinitely higher position than the one he had lost. Because God has been glorified by Christ in the work He has done, God can now do more for us than if we had never sinned at all ; He can satisfy His heart, so that " Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. " The moment the prodigal was fit for his father's house he was in it. The word now is, " Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. " The meaning is that the believer shares in heavenly festivity. You may admit that Canaan is superior to Egypt, but here you share in the joys of heaven. Do you think there are no joys with God ? Do you think man only has joys ? Inconceivably great is the believer's reception ; but the joys of God are immense, " In thy presence is fulness of joy, " " And they began to be merry. " May we apprehend the nature and greatness of the reception vouchsafed to the returning son, even to share in the joys of the Father's house,

and that his home is there ; for though no one here has gone to heaven, yet every one who has tasted of the Father's reception has the joys of his heavenly home along the road. May the Lord lay this on your heart.

The greatest festivity is accorded to every returning wanderer. The elder brother, who was self-righteous, traduces his own brother, because he was received by his father in such a loving and remarkable way. You may wonder and say, Why should the prodigal's position be better because of grace than if he never needed grace? Simply because it is grace, and that grace has come by the Son who has glorified God when man had dishonoured Him, so that He is now at liberty to open out all His heart, and do all His pleasure for those who are brought to Him by His Son. The answer is, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad ; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again ; and was lost and is found."

I desire that it may remain in your heart that your need is not the measure of God's grace ; but that the measure of His grace is His own heart. Do you know the measure of it? "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It is a very simple statement. May you lay hold of, that not your need but His heart is the measure

of His grace. This utterly confounded the elder brother. The believer is altogether a debtor to grace ; all has been effected for him by the blessed God ; so that there is nothing which could be done for him which is not done.

The Lord grant that each one here may be led to do as the prodigal son had done. Do not make light of it. He began by thinking of his father ; that is the beginning : but how great was the end. I could understand the prodigal standing up at the end, after the feast, and saying to his father, How blessed you are to have blessed me so much !

The Lord grant that your eyes may be opened to the completeness of God's salvation, and the blessedness of the reception which He vouchsafes to each returning one, for His name's sake.



THE GOSPEL.

No. VI.

THE OLD STATE AND THE NEW STATE.

(1 KINGS XVII 8-24 ; JOHN IV. 7-15.)

I DESIRE to bring before you this evening the greatness of the blessing vouchsafed to the believer in Christ on the earth ; the greatness of the gift of God, I do not say *from* the earth, but *on* the earth. It is not merely that all that which was against you has been removed in the cross, that Christ "hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God," but the blessing you receive on coming to God. If it were better known, or rather enjoyed, there would be a wonderful testimony to the grace, even apart from preaching ; great would be the testimony of the one who really knew the gift of God, his present portion on the earth ; not one which he is expecting, but which he is enjoying ; as our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God," or God as a giver.

I read about the widow of Sarepta, because the Lord alludes to this case in Luke iv. ; when He was rejected by the Jews, He refers to the Gentile widow and to the Gentile leper. The tale told us here is very interesting. There was a great famine in the land, and Elijah was sent by the Lord to be sustained by a widow in Sarepta. When he came to the city, he saw a woman gathering sticks, and he asked her for a little water. As she was going to fetch it, he asked her to bring him a morsel of bread, and she said she had not any, she had only a little oil in a cruse and a little meal in a barrel, and she was gathering a couple of sticks, that she might bake a cake, eat it, and die. Can you conceive anything more deplorable? It is a true picture of the natural man, he is looking for present enjoyment ; but beyond the present he knows nothing. She is deliberately bent on enjoying her last meal ; after that, death—she had no more.

Is there any one here who is bent on some present enjoyment? Supposing you get it, what next? It may be your last, and then death. Now Elijah announces to her, “The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah ;

and she, and he, and her house did eat many days :” in the margin of your Bible it is “a full year.” A full year figuratively embraces all the circumstances of every period of your life. At the end of it her son dies, there is death in the house, and the widow said to Elijah, who had been in her house for a full year : “Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. . . . And he stretched himself upon the child three times”—he identified himself with death (typifying how Christ entered into our death) and the child revived. “And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother : and Elijah, said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.” She sees that death has been overcome, for the prophet had identified himself with it.

In the opening of John’s gospel you find that Christ was to effect two great works : one, “The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ;” and the other, “The same is he which

baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." It is important to connect them together. In the one He removes all that is contrary to God, and in the other He fits us for all that is according to God. On previous evenings I have dwelt on how He removes all that is contrary to God ; I desire now to dwell on the greatness of His gift. It is of the last importance that you should understand that all that was against you has been removed in the cross, all in the believer contrary to God has been carried into the land of forgetfulness: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." But great as this grace is, yet there is more. He has done the greatest work for you, and He has given you the greatest gift. In John iv. the Lord is opening out the gift of grace. I do not confine it to chapter iv., it extends to chapter vii. Here in chapter iv. this woman of Samaria comes to the well at an hour of the day when the others would not be there. She had sought isolation, she had no reputation, she was desolate. The Lord is sitting on the well, and when she comes He accosts her, and is ready to receive a service from her. "Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." The one who gives is greater than the receiver, but He in His grace puts Himself in the position of a receiver. The woman of Samaria cannot understand His grace,

but says, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." His asking her for a drink might have inspired her with confidence to ask Him. If you ask me to do anything for you, you embolden me to ask you to do something for me. If she had asked of Him, He would have given her living water.

I believe the true way for a sinner to begin is, I have offended God, and I want to know how the offence can be removed. By the grace of God it is removed. Christ has died, the just for the unjust; He has glorified God in bearing the judgment on man, so that God can be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." As I have already stated, He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." All contrary to God has been removed from His side in the death of Christ, to His infinite satisfaction and glory. Man does not know the nature of his offence, the grievousness of sin in the sight of God. We know sin is very grievous, but we do not know God's estimate of it. No one but His own Son

knew the measure of our distance, and He has removed it. Now the Lord is shewing in this chapter the greatness of His grace; it is the *gift* He is setting forth, and this woman is a sample case. Here is a woman, He knows all about her, and before she acknowledges Him, or believes on Him, He tells her of the wonderful new condition in which He can set her up in Samaria at that moment.

In verse 14 the Lord tells her, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (the word for "never" is the strongest word that can be used; it means, neither here nor hereafter); "but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." That is, death has been removed, and you are brought into life in the Spirit of God. The widow of Sarepta saw death overcome; but the believer has a divine fountain within him springing up into eternal life. The woman was attracted by this great gift; she could not be otherwise. I would say to any one much attracted by the things of the world, I can tell you of a present benefit, far superior to the brightest gain in this world. If you could acquire the brightest and greatest benefit here, you must part with it some day, and however great it was you would like to add to it, you

could not be satisfied. But here you are told that the gift of grace is so great that you shall never have a sense of deficiency ; you will be in the region of satisfied desire, because it shall be in you ; it is not from anything outside of you : “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” I believe the more you read and the more you meditate on this passage, the more its greatness will open out to you. I am sure every believer here would own how little he lives up to his privileges. But if you do not start here, you have not started at the beginning of the gift of grace. The woman is attracted, and I think nothing would attract a person more than to hear that you could put him in the way of being in that state of satisfied desire while here on the earth, so that he did not want an addition. I know you may say that it is impossible to be so in our natural state. I am not speaking of our natural state. I admit that the most intelligent man on the face of the earth would say, ‘The offer is splendid, but it is impossible, because it is contrary to all human experience. But I ask myself, and I ask you, Do you believe it ? Then if you have received this gift, live in it, seek the good of it.

If you look for natural additions, you are

carried away with them ; you do not know the greatness of God's gift, for it is inexhaustible, it could not be otherwise ; and in fact, the more you know of it the greater you find it to be. You shall never thirst. You must first accept the word of God. You may not understand it, yet you are bound to accept it. Hence the woman was right when she said, "From whence then hast thou that living water?" She was conscious that it would suit her. There is no one who would not own its greatness.

This chapter is the contrast to John ii. There the Lord goes to a marriage feast, the happiest human circle, where man concentrates all his ability to make it a brilliant time ; what happens? "The wine ran out!" Man's brightest day comes to an end. Every one knows that the brightest day ends, and very often in sorrow and disappointment. This is man in his natural state. Moreover the most valued favour on this earth, whatever it be, is overcast with the fear that you might lose it. A philosopher has described a mother dropping a tear on her babe as she gazed on it, fearing she might lose it. And it is a well-known fact that men who possess earthly advantages to the greatest extent are unhappy, because of the fear of death, when all would be lost.

It is the natural man who is before us in

chapter ii., both in relation to man and in relation to God, but the contrast is here ; the new state is declared. The Lord is setting forth the grace of God, the greatness of His gift. If He had spoken to the woman of the law, she would have been familiar with the subject. Here the Lord speaks of God giving, the very opposite of demanding. God is come out in a new way. Law is a righteous demand ; grace comes to give to the undeserving. "If thou knewest the gift of God." No one could have apprehended the greatness of the gift, that it should be in him ; not like the wine, outside of himself ; and instead of running out, it should be "in him a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life."

Next, let us look at the nature of the gift ; it is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is given to every believer in Christ, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Therefore the apostle says to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" We do not dwell sufficiently on the simple fact that we have received the Holy Ghost. If you have not received the Holy Ghost, you have not believed on Christ personally. In that sense you have not come to Him. I do not say you have not faith in His work ;

but as in the case of the ten lepers (Luke xvii.) all were cleansed, but nine of them went to ritualism to find approach to God. Many converted are here ; only one of them came direct to Christ ; he had now a living link with Him ; this in pattern is sealing by the Holy Ghost. Not only has Christ saved you, but you are of Him. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." I press on you that it is His gift. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" The great point for you is, do you believe in the greatness of God's grace? His word is that you are to be set up, not in some future day, but now where you are, in the best and greatest way ; "a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." As to this woman, she had sought happiness in the world, and now she is degraded. The Lord reveals Himself to her in her desolation, and proposes to her not merely that she should be clear of all her offences—that is true—but that she should be set up in an inconceivably blessed way in the place of her degradation. No language can convey the greatness of this grace. If our faith were more abiding, we should understand it better. I would press on you how infinitely greater the grace here is than that vouchsafed to the widow of Sarepta. She rejoiced greatly to see death overcome, and in Luke iv.,

she is referred to as a type of those who will receive Christ when rejected by the Jew: the Gentile widow would be glad to receive Him. But inconceivably greater is the grace that there is in you "a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." As you read in John i., "The same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost."

Now I add a word to those who have tasted this gift of God. The only way to increase your enjoyment of Him is to be in continued deference to Him. If you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit. If there was a room in your house where you would have untold joys, but because of your business you could not be always in that room, yet whenever you had a spare moment, I am sure you would go there. Well, how much more should you walk in the Spirit, so that you should never thirst, for there is in you "a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." You may have business and many duties, but the more thoroughly you do your duty like a horse in a mill, the more constantly you will be revived and invigorated by the Spirit in you who fills your cup. You have not to go outside yourself. You sometimes hear it said, Such an one is not a man of resources. A Christian is a man of resources; he "shall never thirst;" he is in a region of satisfied desire.

I could not exaggerate this grace. It is surely marvellous that God has not only effected the greatest work, the work of our salvation, but He has given you the greatest gift which you are to enjoy now on earth. If we were more cast upon the Lord as indispensable to us, we should receive more. You should ever be able to say, "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." We are very often counting up our mercies, the different ways God deals with us, and we say, Well, we are happy. There is a great deal more for us. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

The Lord grant in His infinite goodness that every heart may be impressed with the sense of His wonderful grace, so that in this poor world a man may know that he possesses divine resources in himself, and therefore be able practically to say, Never less alone than when alone. I do not want any one to be a recluse or an ascetic, but I want you to apprehend the immensity of the gift which you have received, as well as to know the greatness of the work of salvation. In fact the order in John's Gospel is, first, the gift of grace, and then from chapter viii., the work of grace. When we think of ourselves, we begin with the work; but when we look at God, He presents first the greatness of His gift. Have you resources?

They are not outside of you, but you have to appreciate them, you have to draw from them ; if you have a fountain of water you have to drink of it ; and it is as you drink of the water that you shall never thirst. The Spirit assures you that you are outside of all the ruin and the misery here, and that your resources are in the Lord Himself ; as has been said, it is like water which rises to its own level, it comes from Christ and rises to Him. The Lord grant that each of you may be more acquainted—great is your gain as you are acquainted—with the gift of God, for His name's sake.



THE GOSPEL.

No. VII.

THE WORK OF CHRIST AND THE LOVE
OF CHRIST.

(GENESIS I. 15-21 ; LUKE V. 1-11.)

THERE are two parts of the gospel—it is very plain ; I have gone over it before. First, what you are brought *from* ; and secondly, what you are brought *to*. If you are not brought *from* the distance of sin, that is, if everything has not been removed which is contrary to God, you could not be brought to God : “ He [Christ] hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” You must know that everything has been removed before you can understand the perfection of God’s grace. “ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Everything has been removed from God’s side to His infinite satisfaction and glory, and now He can unfold the full purpose of His grace. Until you

enter on this ground to which you are brought, you are never restfully assured that you have been brought from the old ground. I desire to fix this last upon your heart. The prodigal son was not quite sure that he was free of the far country till he was in the father's house ; then it was not what he was brought from that occupied him, but what he was brought to. The new ground assures you that you are clear of all against you on the old ground.

I read the verses in Genesis l., in order to shew that many are in a sense acquainted with the work of Christ who are not assured of His love ; they are not brought to Himself. They have learnt the work which He wrought for them ; and this I get in type in Genesis l. Here Joseph's brethren, who had been living for seventeen years (as far as I can count) on the service of Joseph, do not know his love ; doubtless they would say, There is no one like Joseph ; just as a great many Christians in the present day say, There is no one like Jesus. But do you know His love ? Do you know His feelings about you ? You may say, I know the proof of His love. Ah ! that shews me you do not know His love, because when you do know His love you will not dwell on the proofs of it. Our blessed Lord rested in the Father's love, and not in any proof of it.

He knew the love, He lived in it. Now this is the lack in Christians, they are not assured of the love of Christ. Here are Joseph's brethren, after living for seventeen years on the service of Joseph. Their father dies ; they are thrown, as it were, into close quarters with Joseph, and now they have to judge themselves, which they ought to have done long ago ; they have to own how bad they were. Mark their language, they said : " Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin ; for they did unto thee evil : and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father." They are not clear with Joseph yet ; after an interval of seventeen years—a long time—they now come and own their trespass. Here you find two things come out at the same moment one, the sense of their guilt ; and the other the assurance of Joseph's love for them. It is a wonderful moment when in your soul you know that Christ loves you, though you are utterly unworthy of it. Joseph's answer to this sorrowful confession was, "*Joseph wept* when they

spake unto him." He intimated by this, "After seventeen long years, is that all you know about me?" This is often the case with believers, they are not acquainted with the love of Christ, though they are acquainted with His work, and are enjoying the benefit of it until some great visitation occurs, when they are brought to the end of themselves, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, and they are thrown alone with the Lord.

I have referred to this in speaking of Saul of Tarsus ; he had seen the light out of heaven, and had heard the voice, but he was three days "and neither did eat nor drink ;" he was engrossed with the Lord, he was learning the way out of his distance from God, and he found it in the death of Christ ; he did get out of it, for he prayed. Some say, But we pray. Yes, I know you pray, but it is to be kept in fresh remembrance of Christ's work and not of Himself. Joseph's brethren never knew the heart of their brother ; they knew that he was their brother, and that there never was a better one ; but still, though they could say this, they did not know the love which Joseph had for them. And so it is with many, they do not know the love of Christ ; you may know His work, all He did for you, and not know the love in His heart to render you the greatest service ; but you will

never be restful until you do. When you do, yourself in your true colour is disclosed to you, while Christ in His grace and love is assured to you. And when His love is perfected to you, it is more than you can comprehend. It "passeth knowledge." Our translators did not catch the right idea in 1 John iv. 17: "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world." This means that the love of God is expressed and made known to you; a ray of His own feeling about you and the brightness of it has entered your soul and has so affected you that you have "Boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." God has but one standard—His own Son; as He is up there in the glory, so are you now in this world. You may say it is too great; but that is the meaning of the scripture. When God's love shines perfectly into your soul, you have this sense of boldness in the day of judgment; consequently we read, "Perfect love casteth out fear;" and nothing casts out fear but love. His work does not; but you have no fear when you know He loves you.

Now let us see how this is effected. I turn to Luke v., where you will see it brought out very plainly in the case of Peter. This incident

is given only in Luke ; it is very interesting, because it records how the apostle of the circumcision was a debtor to grace. Peter was the contrast to Saul of Tarsus ; he was doing everything right at the time. The Lord had previously called him, though it is not mentioned here. The Lord uses Peter's ship for preaching. And doubtless there is many a pious man at the present day who would open his house for preaching the gospel, and who, though he rejoices in the work of Christ for his salvation, is not assured of His love ; he is not without fear. When I was young it was a question usually asked of the young Christian, Are you without fear? "Fear hath torment ; he that feareth is not made perfect in love ;" that is, he is not assured of God's love for him. Many speak of their own feelings. Your feelings cannot be happy until the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Look at the prodigal son ; he counted on his father's goodness, he had none of his own, he is surprised that his father should fall on his neck and cover him with kisses ; he could not account for it ; but he was assured of his father's love for him. Surely that is a wonderful moment ! If there is any one in this room who has never experienced it, I ask

you: Would it not be a wonderful moment to be assured of God's love for you? Would you not walk about this world in a new way, and would you not say over and over again—and the oftener you said it the better—God has love in His heart for me? The prodigal did not know this at first; he only counted on his father's goodness; still it was a good beginning: "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance;" but he discovered when he came to his father that he loved him.

Here is Peter giving the Lord the use of his ship to preach from, just as you may see a pious man in the present day ready to use his property for the Lord's service. Peter, in a sense, is most devoted, he is exemplary; you cannot but be attracted by him. If you saw a fisherman now giving up his boat for the Lord's work, you would say, How devoted he is! Well, that man, like each of us, has to learn grace. The Lord uses Peter's ship, and then proposes to him to let down his net for a draught. Peter gives his own judgment, that they had toiled all the night and taken nothing, but "Nevertheless," he adds, "at thy word I will let down the net:" he was subject to the Lord. He was very exemplary; not only was his conduct excellent, but he was subject to the word of the Lord; and he let down the net for a draught,

“And they enclosed a great multitude of fishes.” If you understand fishermen, you know they are full of delight when they have a great take of fishes. But not so with Peter. “When Simon Peter saw”—(the word “it” is not there; it appears to refer to the ships beginning to sink, but it is not that exactly)—“When Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

Now here was a man who had everything that a Jew could desire; he had the two things which a Jew valued; one, his conduct was exemplary, and the other that he was a recipient of divine favour in a miraculous way; he was in the favour of heaven, and yet that man falls down at that instant—you cannot account for it—and says, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” It was not that he was doing wrong, but he felt that he was not fit for Christ. It is very much like what you get with Joseph’s brethren; they are sensible of the enormity of their guilt and their treatment of Joseph. The remnant will go through it in the latter days. And it is what we all have to learn, the enormity of our sin. Here is a man who was giving his time and means for the work of the Lord, and was a recipient of favour from heaven in the most miraculous manner, and yet that man falls down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me;”

not as another has said, that he wished Him to leave him, but he felt that he was not fit for Him. The Lord had previously called him, and given him the name "Peter," but now he is made conscious that he is not fit for Christ; that he is in the presence of God. Now I put it to every soul in this room, Have you been in the presence of the Son of God? I believe many a true Christian has never had the sense of being in His presence, *so* in His presence that he knows that man as he is in God's sight is condemned. Peter was relieved when the Lord said to him, "Fear not." Have you ever heard these words? I daresay I am addressing many in this room who can say, I know well the wonderful work Christ wrought for my salvation and that by His grace all is cleared away, so that I am free from all the ruin and misery under which I lay. Quite right; but do you know Him? Do you know what it is to be so near Him that you know His love for you? Because if you know how He feels for you, if you know His love for you, you know that He would render you any service. It is important to bear in mind that service can be rendered at any distance. From heaven God can render you a service here; but you can never know His love till you are near Him, never! The prodigal son never knew the love till his father fell on his

neck, and covered him with kisses ; then he had the sense, "Oh ! he cares for me." That was a wonderful moment to him ! Hence though he had to own, "I am not meet," yet he did not ask for anything. Peter here is entirely a debtor to grace ; as a Jew he was exemplary, his conduct unimpeachable, and he, an object of divine favour, might have been satisfied ; but no ; he has been in the presence of God, and he knows that he is unfit for Him ; he had no place there. He cries out, "I am a sinful man, O Lord." Then the Lord said to him, "Fear not."

Now, I ask you, What did he get ? Because the chief subject I have before me is not merely all that you are brought *from*, but all that you are brought *to*. What did Peter get ? If I were to speak for an hour I could not explain all he got ; he had come to Christ and he is assured of His love. If I have the love of a person, I share in all that person is. "Perfect love casteth out fear." It is a great thing to know Christ personally. Joseph is a type ; he said to his brethren, "Fear ye not, I will nourish you, and your little ones." Christ has done for us the greatest work. In that sense, He has proved the greatness of His love : "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But that is not all ; the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy

Ghost which is given unto me, and I know Christ personally. Peter now knows the One whom he had followed ; he knows that Christ loves him, and this he will never lose. Although afterwards he denied Him, he never lost the assurance that Christ loved him. Once you know it, you never lose it. When you are near Him you enjoy it. You must be near Him to know His love, and you cannot know it without being apart from the man for whom Christ suffered ; the flesh cannot intrude into His presence. When the apostle corrects the Corinthians, he presents to them the glory of the Lord, nothing of themselves could enter there ; flesh must be excluded, and the effect of it practically is that you are " Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." You now know that the carnal mind is an interruption, but you would not have known this unless you had known the presence of the Lord. It is here the lack is in those who are seeking after holiness. How can you seek for holiness till you know what it is ? When you do know it in the presence of Christ, then you will be glad to bear about in your body the dying of Jesus, that all which interrupts it should be removed.

In John iv. the Lord tells the woman of Samaria, " 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 fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." This you enjoy by the Spirit dwelling in you. In order to have this great gift you must come to Christ the Giver. Mark the change now made known. To Adam a garden was given, and everything in it ; a tree of life in the midst of the garden, and there he was set, subject to God's word. But now it is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary Magdalene, in a garden, said to the gardener, " They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Very ignorant, I admit, but her heart was set on a Person. Hence the Lord reveals Himself to her ; He does not give her anything on the earth, but He said to her, " Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father." It is a great thing to know Christ personally, so that you can sit down under His shadow with great delight. There is a universality about a person that no combination of circumstances can supply ; we all know that no combination of circumstances can make up for the loss of a near relative ; things cannot equal a person.

The more you know of Christ the more you will find that " He satisfieth the longing soul ;" and when you know Him as your Head outside of every human voice, then He will be everything

to you. Many Christians can say, Christ is chiefest. Yes ; but can you say, He is everything? This is a wonderful reality—a Person who is everything to you. His love passeth knowledge. It has been said that the greater the mind, the greater the affection.

I hope you see the blessing to which you are brought, not to an earthly property, but to Christ Himself! In conclusion, I refer to Luke xviii. 28 : “ Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all and followed thee.” This was about three years since the occurrence in chapter v., when Peter left all and followed Christ. Now mark the Lord’s answer, “ And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.” You may ask, What is this manifold more? I answer, The company of Christ.

Peter was three years with the Lord. I put it to any one who has never thought of it before, Would you not like to get what Peter got? For three years he was in the company of Christ ; all that time under His wing, under His influence. Surely that was better than fish, or any earthly blessing. We read, “ When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed

him." Doubtless their neighbours said, "Did you ever see such foolish men? They have received a great favour from heaven, and they have left all to follow a poor man!" "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Do you think Peter and his companions had any loss? People speak of the loss which you sustain when you break away from your friends, and from gain in this world to follow Christ. Loss? Instead of loss, "Manifold more in this present time." Some imagine it is something of the same kind as that which you have surrendered. No, it is Christ Himself. Peter could not say that he had not gained? He knew well that he had received "Manifold more in this present time." Never was any promise more verified; it is not only the work of salvation, but that you know the heart and interest of His blessed self; how He thinks of you, how He seeks to attach you to Himself, and to connect you with His own interests, so that the more your heart understands His love, the more you are convinced that if the whole world were given up for Him, He is manifold better than it.

The Lord grant that every heart here to-night may be moved, not only to see that you are brought from all the misery and ruin under which you lay, but also that you are brought to Christ Himself. It is not only that, like

Jonathan, you have found David, but you have found the Son of God.

The Lord grant that each heart here may be awakened to see the wonderful nature of the grace of God, that you are brought from the deepest, darkest condition into the brightest enjoyment on earth. I am not speaking of the joys in heaven, but of the joys here. Hence as I have already quoted, when His love in its perfection enters you, you not only have "Boldness in the day of judgment," but "As he is, so are we"—in heaven? No; but, "as he is, so are we in this world." Thus you are in the sight of God. Surely then you can "Come into his presence with a song!" Amen.

