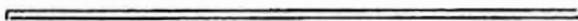


# GOODNESS AND MERCY.

BY  
WILLIAM YAPP.

With Introduction by Miss M. M. Davis,  
of Leominster.



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THY BRETHREN, LORD, ARE MY DELIGHT,  
I LOVE THEM, STRONG OR WEAK;  
THEY ALL ARE PRECIOUS IN MY SIGHT,  
THE FROWARD WITH THE MEEK.

I SERVE THEM, LORD, FOR THEY ARE THINE,  
THE FATHER'S GIFT TO THEE ;  
THE SPIRIT, BY THE BLOOD DIVINE,  
FROM PRISON SET THEM FREE.

*R. C. Chapman.*

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# In Memoriam :

. . WILLIAM YAPP.

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BELOVED AS A SERVANT OF THE LORD, AND AS A  
SUCCOURER OF VERY MANY.

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**I**N foremost ranks of life's stern battlefield,  
With hands upraised the sword of truth to wield,  
The Christian warrior stood in holy zeal—  
To his great Captain ever true and leal.  
When lo! the word of sweet command was given,  
Sheathed was his sword, and he upborne to Heaven!  
Yes, thither soared the disimprison'd soul,  
Where victory's psalms in notes harmonious roll;  
The full fruition of that life to know,  
Of sacred peace sown in his heart below.  
How sweet his joys, how high his portion there,  
Where God's redeem'd in love's rich banquet share!  
Through all his course he dwelt to JESUS near;—  
His smile to see, His gracious voice to hear;  
These the blest boons for which he counted dross,  
The things of time, and nobly bore the cross:  
And, filled with love, which Christ Himself had given,  
He lived a willing sacrifice to Heaven.  
Lit with a beam from God's eternal throne,  
His pathway brighter and still brighter shone;  
And to his memory many a grateful heart  
Shall raise a richer shrine than sculptur'd art;  
While Christian hearts, in noblest strains shall sing  
The power of HIM from whom all graces spring.

*November, 1874.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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IN the brief space available, it is impossible to give more than a fragmentary outline of the life and labours of the beloved writer of the precious truths that are gathered in this small volume.

Only those who were privileged to *personally* know MR. WILLIAM YAPP, can have any adequate idea of the wealth of love he lavished on God's people during his long life, and the nobility of his Christian character.

Brought to the Lord in his youth, Mr. Yapp immediately yielded his body a living sacrifice to God, and the sacrifice once laid on the altar seemed never withdrawn. To the Church of God his whole life proclaimed him—“*Your servant for JESUS' sake.*” By him *all* saints were recognised as having a claim on him; the sorrowing and the erring drew out his sympathy and his help, and many a bereaved heart has he made to sing for joy. Nor were the children forgotten; they had a large share of his tender love and care, and a sight of Mr. Yapp's kindly face coming along the road, would cause their eyes to sparkle, and their feet to go faster till they met him; and they went on their way with lighter hearts for his cheery words

and loving smile ; still a fragrant memory after more than a quarter of a century !

It was not alone his ministry, varied and precious as it was, that drew hearts everywhere to him, and caused them to look beyond the servant to the Master : it was “ the love of God shed abroad,” by word and deed, that drew and held fellow-saints in a manner those who did not personally know him can have little conception of.

For many years in *Hereford*, and subsequently in *London* and *Leominster*, Mr. Yapp took a large share in gospel work, extending the testimony to neighbouring counties: Worcester, Malvern, Ross, Ledbury, Leominster, and Ludlow were reached by horses and traps. Mr. Yapp, at one time, kept five horses in his stables for this purpose.

Breaking of bread was instituted every Lord's day morning in a large room at Mr. Yapp's house ; which, becoming too small, was enlarged, and the cost defrayed by brethren and sisters selling their silver-plate and superfluous furniture. Many of the believers connected with this movement, in which Mr. Yapp had a prominent share, had been connected with the Church of England. Gifts, which their church position had hitherto repressed, were now brought into exercise, and many laboured as evangelists, pastors, and teachers, &c.

Grace, love, and power prevailed, God was glorified in them, and many from the world were thoroughly converted.

Among these men of God it was said that, "Mr. W. Yapp was head and shoulders above anyone else in his love and self-sacrifice, ever willing to give up time, comfort, and purse, for the welfare and spiritual good of others."

Failing health compelled Mr. Yapp to leave London in 1863, and he returned to end his days on earth in the scenes of his youth, viz., in *Leominster*. And highly privileged was that little town in being permitted to have eleven years of his faithful care and loving ministry.

One of the last acts of this noble-hearted brother was to rent and furnish the *Waterloo House, at Leominster*, for the purpose of accommodating brethren, whom he hoped to assemble in the Lord's name for mutual prayer, counsel, and conference, on matters concerning the welfare of the Church of God. Mr. Yapp had the joy of seeing four conferences held there that year (1874). And many are alive who remember some of those first ministering brethren. Three of the chief were Messrs. H. Dyer, H. Groves, and H. Heath (familiarily known as "The Three Henrys"). Men who were "mighty in the Scriptures," and who, "being dead, yet speak." Many to-day have cause to thank God for their faithful ministry. Some of their writings may be had in other volumes of "The Leominster Library" uniform with this one.

On November 28th, 1874, the Lord called His faithful servant to His rest above. He committed

this service to his beloved wife, and how well and faithfully she has carried on this service, so dear to Mr. Yapp's heart, is too well known to need comment here. Suffice it to say, that this work for God so ably begun by Mr. Yapp, in 1874, has so grown and increased, that now, in 1901, there is scarcely any land in the wide world where the name of "The Leominster Conferences," and the names of the beloved servant of God who began, and the one who carries them on still, do not cause a thrill of joy when called to remembrance.

In the *Golden Lamp*, which for five years Mr. Yapp had edited with love and prayer, there appeared in the January issue of 1875, a brief but deeply interesting account of his last days on earth:—"In prosecuting labours of love for the Lord and His Church, illness fell upon him from which he became prostrate and sank, overcome with the much toil he had had, especially of late. His cry—'Loose me, and let me go, Lord Jesus! Take me to Thyself, Lord Jesus!' was soon answered, and his happy spirit passed into the presence of his Lord, whom so long he had loved, and whom so faithfully he had served."

"So ended a life, noble, consecrated, and devoted, having one purpose, and that CHRIST. To serve His Church was ever his highest ambition, and life, health, strength, ease, and means, each and all were laid as willing offerings on God's altar."

*M. M. D.*

# GOODNESS AND MERCY.



## The Family of God.

“**I** AM the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” were the words of the Lord Jesus to the enquiring disciple; and they are still His words to all who desire to know Him in truth.

“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

Such, beloved in the Lord, is part of God’s written testimony concerning His children. It was God’s pre-determined purpose and grace to have a family who should be “a peculiar treasure”

to Himself, and in Christ Jesus this family was chosen by God before the foundation of the world. He “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”

This family differs from Adam in innocence. He was made “of the dust of the ground,” and was “of the earth earthy.” It also differs from angels in glory: *they* are not called sons, but are “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” God’s “peculiar” family is formed by special relationship, they are “begotten of God,” “partakers of the Divine nature,” “one with Christ;” “for both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren;” “and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Thus, then, those who are the children of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are predestinated, chosen, called, begotten, adopted, one with Christ; and as already possessing eternal life are, by the love of that gracious God, who has “begotten them again,” entitled to the spirit of adoption; and if they have it not, oh, let them consider that it is their own ignorance or unbelief, and neither the decree nor the desire of their Father in heaven; for as truly as they were once begotten according to nature, so truly has every

child of God been “begotten again” of grace.

The Lord Jesus can say of them to His Father, “Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me;” and of His sheep, He says, “I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand: My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” Of such it is written: “If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Such is the place of dignity to which every child of God is already raised. They may know it, or may, alas! be ignorant of this wondrous grace; but the Lord Jesus distinctly declares, “He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment), but is passed from death unto life.” “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

This family is distinguished from Israel of old; *they* were the lineal descendants of Abraham, who was indeed God’s friend. They were a nation separated from all nations to be an earthly tabernacle for God, that He might dwell in their midst, having an earthly nature, earthly promises, earthly blessings, “carnal ordinances,” and an earthly inheritance; whereas God’s own chosen family are gathered out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” to be the “sons and daughters

of the Lord Almighty," one with and made in the likeness of "the second Man, the Lord from heaven;" for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

They are also "a *purchased* possession." By nature all men are alike lost, ruined, undone; "but God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us," "found a ransom," and paid the price of our redemption to the uttermost farthing. Would you know how precious these ransomed ones are to God? Would you try to estimate the value God set upon this "one pearl of great price?" Listen, beloved, and while you hear, bow down with the deepest reverence and gratitude, and worship and adore Him whose love to you is thus unfolded. Yes, HE so loved *you* that "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Yes, beloved, to save us from eternal condemnation and unutterable woe, and to make us partakers of eternal life, and sharers in the glory, He has given His only-begotten and well-beloved Son: that blessed Christ of God had to expiate our sins by His own death on the cross, and while hanging there, to endure the wrath of God against sin to the uttermost; and thus we were "*redeemed* with

the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." This was the *ransom* God gave—this the inestimably precious price He paid, and all who are thus redeemed form the one family of God—"the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood."

Thus the Son of God "was delivered for our offences," and, blessed be God, "was raised again for our justification." He was the first-begotten from the dead, and all who now believe on Him are described as "quickened *together* with Christ, raised up *together*, and made to sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "That in the ages to come God might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Christ in resurrection becomes the Head of His body the Church, and every believer is one with Him—a "member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Whether, then, we consider the inconceivably precious *ransom* our most gracious God provided and paid, or the dignity to which in wondrous grace He has raised His people, creating us anew in Christ Jesus, and making us His sons and daughters, we can but wonder and adore, and call upon our souls and all that is within us to bless His holy Name.

We have quoted largely from Scripture, for it is all important our readers should for themselves determine whether they belong to this heavenly

family, not by *profession* only, but by the present possession of eternal life—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

You must be a *saved* person before you hear the voice of the living God saying: "My son, give *Me* thine heart." You must know that you are of the family ere you can attempt to walk worthy of God unto all pleasing. You must have *life* ere you can *walk*—must know the love of God which passeth knowledge, before you can present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service. God in His grace enable you to decide truly.

The Christian is privileged to know the purposes of God's grace from the revelation God Himself has made; that revelation is contained in the Scriptures only, and when the Scriptures are diligently searched, and Divine knowledge is imparted by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the soul is overwhelmed by the wonders of grace, and exceedingly marvels as it strives to "comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

While the heavens and the earth, with all their infinitely varied beauties and glories, were created and perfected in *six days*, the *new creation*, of which Christ is the firstfruits, and all who are His at His coming the full complement, has been in process—how long? Oh, beloved! how many

centuries has it taken the triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to create “the body of Christ”—to perfect the number of the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?

If “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork,” if “His eternal power and Godhead” are now manifested in the things that are seen, what must be the display of His glory when, in the ages to come, He shows forth “the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus?”

The mind, the will, the wisdom, the power of God, are all gloriously displayed in the first creation; but ah! in the *new* creation the *heart* of God has to be unfolded; the infinite heights and depths of boundless LOVE have to be revealed, and the *saved sinner* has to learn to his amazement that he—*he* is the peculiar object of God’s most wondrous love, and the special subject of His mightiest power!

A rebel against God the sinner has always been; in a state of alienation, depravity, and moral vile-ness which can scarcely be conceived; yet *his* sins and *his* necessities educe the much more abounding grace of God, and are the means of developing “the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” Yea, the full and triumphant development of the holiness, love and grace of God depends upon the glorious fact, that *sinners* are being *saved by grace*, made *sons of God*,

and heirs of glory. Yes, of *such* sinners God is forming His own peculiar family.

God had one only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who “was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” This Son “thought it not robbery to be equal with God, for He was God.” This Son, in boundless love, left the heaven of heavens, His own dwelling-place, vacated the throne of His glory, and came down to this world of sin and sorrow; “and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” He “once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring *us* to God.” And God, “in bringing *many sons* unto glory,” made “the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all *of one*: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Thus we briefly learn what is the “body of Christ,” and who are the “children of God.” “He who sanctifieth” is CHRIST, and “they who are sanctified” are Christ’s—united to Him as the branch to the vine, as the living members to the living Head; *one* with Christ as having received His life, “joined unto the Lord, one spirit.” Having received the Spirit of adoption, we cry, Abba, Father; “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that *we are* the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and

joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Such, beloved, are God’s family—poor sinners raised out of the dust, beggars lifted from the dung-hill and “set among princes, to make them inherit the throne of glory.”

Very unequal they may have been in their earthly circumstances, but whatever their natural status, all were equally alike “dead in trespasses and sins.” So also all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are equally quickened into life, and have “passed *from death* unto life.” No doubt there was a vast difference in social position between Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, and the thief on the cross; between Chuza, the wife of Herod’s steward, and Mary Magdalene; yet all alike were saved through the precious blood of Christ. Every believer everywhere is equally indebted to the grace of God which brought salvation. All are alike loved of God; infinite, eternal love the portion of each and all. And should we not, beloved in the Lord, ALL be equally devoted to Him?

Rich, indeed, is the grace that invites us to “behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that *we* should be called the sons of God.” Never should we forget, never for an instant forget, that “*now* are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we *know* that, when He shall appear, we shall be *like* HIM; for we shall see Him as He is.”

Blessed result of His appearing—we shall be *like Him!* This we *know*; we do not think, or suppose, or even hope that it may be so; we *know* that “when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.”

To have a clear and distinct understanding of this new relationship, formed by God’s love and power, is essential to the happiness of the Christian, and surely is conducive to the glory of God.

A good conscience, holy affections, and godly conduct, are the *outcome* of the heart’s apprehension of the new and wondrous place in which God has in His grace set us; and these fruits of a renewed nature all flow from the power of Divine life working effectually in us.

A Christian desires a conscience befitting a heavenly person. A child of God, he seeks to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man—toward God, who searches the inward parts as with eyes of fire, as truly as toward man, who can only judge by the outward appearance.

He wants a holy, loving, humble, tender heart; weaned from the love of earthly things, occupied with heavenly realities; always at leisure to receive the communications of the Holy Spirit of God; ever a welcome home for Christ Himself; a heart that will never keep HIM knocking without (Rev. iii. 20); and never grieve, by the indulgence of evil, that Holy Spirit by whom he is “sealed until the day of redemption.”

A Christian wants to conduct himself as becometh a son of the Lord Almighty, giving none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God; but, on the contrary, ever ready to lay down his life for the brethren, and to be “fruitful in every good work, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

These precious fruits of God’s love and grace can only flow from a heart at perfect rest and peace with God, and happy in the knowledge of His favour. This is surely the portion of every child of God, and should be diligently sought after; so that with every anxious question answered, every fear removed, every doubt dispelled, the soul might rest in complacency and delight in the enjoyment of the love of God.

It may afford us further subject of meditation to consider our gracious God’s happiness and joy in His beloved children, the presence of the Heavenly Father with His heavenly family, and all the happy responsibilities arising out of this relationship, whether on God’s part or on ours. As yet we have reached but the threshold of our heavenly position, we have considered but the first step into God’s household, and have barely entered on the knowledge of that Divine relationship and glorious inheritance, into which our gracious God has brought all who come unto HIM through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## The World Created for Man and Ruined by Sin.

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**T**HE marvels of God's wisdom and power are unfolded in Creation; whether we consider the infinite glories of the heavens, or the varied beauties with which the earth teems, all alike are undeniable proofs of the skilfulness of His hands, and are the manifestation of consummate wisdom and almighty power. His eternal power and Godhead are thus so clearly seen, that all are left without excuse who do not bow down and worship Him who is the Creator and sustainer of all things (Romans i. 19, 20).

But the exceeding riches of His grace are, and can only be known in redemption; and here the exhibition of His love, and wisdom, and power are so surpassingly glorious, that the first creation, and everything connected with it, pales into comparative insignificance. The brighter glories of *grace* are unfolded, and we behold from first to last, in everything and in every way, the God of all grace working out from the profound depths of infinite wisdom, and the mighty ocean of Divine love, the eternal purposes which He purposed in Christ Jesus.

God rested in blessed satisfaction when contemplating the first creation, as it shone forth in the

unsullied freshness of living beauty, and pronounced it all "very good." He delighted in the work of His own hands, in the light and life, the fruit of His power; He surveyed the heavens above; He held converse on earth with the man whom He had created in His own image, after His likeness; He listened as "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and the goodness of everything above and around gave satisfaction to the living God.

Holy Scripture clearly and fully reveals what the earth was in its pristine glory and beauty, and God's purpose in creating it for man's abode and as man's inheritance, and as distinctly informs us that Adam by transgression fell from the lofty pinnacle on which he had been placed in stewardship to God, and as Lord over the whole earth. By sinning he became ruined, helpless, wretched, lost, and utterly undone. Disobedience to God's holy commandment marred and utterly spoiled God's work, and Satan, having ruined Adam and made him a slave, took possession of man's inheritance, and thus became the god of this world.

With a ruined man and a blighted world, God's labour *seemed* to have been all in vain, and the great enemy of God and of the human race *seemed* to have triumphed. The fearful consequences of disobeying God's commandment are thus early seen, and when traced from its commencement in the human heart to its withering effect on creation,

and its final judgment in the lake of fire, ah! who cannot see that it is indeed a terrible thing to sin against the Holy and the Just One, and that every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompence of reward?

If God's purposes in producing a holy and happy creation appear to be foiled by the subtle craftiness and deadly hatred of Satan, yet God has infinite resources in His own grace, and having another purpose at heart, He at once proceeds, according to the counsel of His own will, to work a work which shall be immutable and eternal, and which all the malice and efforts of devils and men will not be able to mar or hinder—a work in which God will manifest that He is “glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.” Discerning this by faith we can now exclaim—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out;” and triumphantly proclaim that “*grace reigns* through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Marvellous indeed is it to see that, without yielding one atom of His holiness, or swerving one hair's breadth from His inflexible justice, God can deal with man in the richest grace, and bring him into a place of such glorious bliss as Adam in innocence never could have known, and which archangels in glory are incapable of entering into.

Such is our God; and He permits and invites

us to search into “the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” The dawn of His deep purposes of grace and glory breaks upon us in “the tabernacle.”

## A Tabernacle for God in a Ruined World.

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**W**HEN God “through a mighty hand, and by an out-stretched arm” brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, and bare them on eagles’ wings, and brought them to Himself—when He had brought every one of them safely through the Red Sea, and the wilderness was fairly open before them, “the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering . . . and let them make Me a *sanctuary*; that I may *dwell among them*.”

Here is an unfolding of God’s grace, and an increased manifestation of His goodness of which hitherto there could have been no conception. God had walked with Adam in Paradise—had made Himself known unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and given them exceeding great and precious promises, upon one occasion even partaking of a feast which He permitted Abraham to provide for Him, but never had He given the most remote idea that He would come down and *dwell* among a people who were to be a “peculiar treasure” unto Him above all people.

To accomplish the redemption of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage—from slavery under Pharaoh and from the dominion of sin—God made the provision required by His holiness, to bring a judged, a degraded, and wicked people nigh unto Himself: this could be done only *by death*. The death of the lamb, and the sprinkling of the blood, foreshadowed the death and shedding of the precious blood of “the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world”—the Christ of God—the sinner’s Substitute. Death must be executed upon the perfect and spotless One, that the sinful and lost ones might be saved and blessed. Israel must kill the lamb, Israel must sprinkle the blood: then Israel may shut to the door and wait in perfect security and profound serenity, while judgment is being executed upon the first-born of Egypt. Thus Israel learns how “mercy rejoiceth (or glorieth) over judgment,” and *we* learn what a provision God has made in the gift of His Son, who has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

All the requirements of God’s holiness being thus fully met through the death of the Substitute, way is now made for the outflowing of that love wherewith God loved His people. True, the gift of the lamb and the death of the lamb was also the fruit of God’s love, but this was only a means to an end. While death delivered from the wrath of God, all who were so delivered were brought

nigh to God. "That I may dwell among them" was the blessed announcement of Jehovah God, and although "the heaven of heavens" could not contain Him (1 Kings viii. 27), yet Israel is permitted and commissioned to make Him a sanctuary, a tabernacle for God's dwelling-place.

This building was to be provided by the love of His people for their God. Everything pertaining to it must be the free-will offering of a loving heart; nothing given by constraint or of necessity could be accepted. It was not mere conscience saying—God has commanded, and I must do it. No—this would not satisfy the love of Him who had brought them nigh unto Himself to be His peculiar treasure. It was love in Him for them, that brought God down from the heaven of heavens to accomplish their deliverance. It was love, marvellous love, that devised life for them, through the death of a Substitute; and now that Israel is delivered, justified, sanctified, they are permitted to manifest *their* love for Him who so loved them.

The result of this appeal to their love was, that the people brought much more than enough for the service of the work, and proclamation had to be made throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (Exodus xxxvi. 5-7).

How precious to see the influence of the love of God in the human heart—*love produced by God*. Every wise-hearted man endued with wisdom from on high was permitted to do the work for which God had fitted him; and every individual, without exception, among the countless thousands of Israel, was allowed to bring a loving and acceptable offering to the Possessor of heaven and earth, who thus condescended to receive at their hands what their love enabled them to give. How precious for us also to see that *all* might lend a hand in providing and forming this tabernacle, that every single thing was to be made according to the Divine direction; and that when all the varied materials were put together—formed, erected, and placed by God's command—there was perfect uniformity, utility, and beauty, according to God's order, for His own praise and Israel's blessing and glory. Is it otherwise in the Church of God?

The tabernacle is in type and image, form and shadow, a representation of Christ. From the ark and the mercy-seat in the holiest of all, to the outer gate of the tabernacle, all exhibits the blessed Christ of God, to the anointed eye and instructed mind: the Son of God in His Divine nature as the mercy-seat upon the ark—or the Christ of God, in His two-fold nature, God manifest in flesh—or the same ever-blessed and most glorious person in union with His Church. Everything connected with the sanctuary or the priesthood,

the holy mitre on Aaron's head, the precious gems on the breast-plate, the censer in his hand, the pomegranates and bells on the hem of his robe—everything from the sockets in which the pillars of the sanctuary rested, to the taches and loops by which the curtains were suspended—from the altar of burnt-offering at the door of the tabernacle to the blood sprinkled before the mercy-seat and upon the mercy-seat—all, all speak to us of Christ; therefore it is most important that everything should be exactly placed in its adapted position.

God, who devised this wondrous structure, could alone impart the wisdom, and supply the knowledge by which all should be formed and perfected according to the good pleasure of His will. Man's thoughts, man's wisdom, man's knowledge, in dealing with the things of God, or daring to transpose, or dispose anything contrary to God's direction, is the very height of presumption, and a proof of intense ignorance and folly. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Corinthians ii. 11, 12).

As this first tabernacle with its priesthood and service is presented to us as "the example and shadow of heavenly things"—"the patterns of things in the heavens"—and formed God's habitation in the wilderness, it becomes intensely

interesting to all Christians as an exhibition in type and shadow of the Church of God in its wilderness pilgrimage through this world, from the cross to the glory; and most fruitful and precious is the instruction it imparts to all who desire to be obedient children and to follow the Lord fully.

We read in Exodus xl. that as everything had been provided by God's direction, and supplied by the willing hands and the loving hearts of the Israel of God, so everything was erected and placed exactly as God had ordered. Immediately this was done, "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle;" and "Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle;" and "the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

Thus God *took possession* of His sanctuary, and *abode* there. The love of His people had provided a dwelling-place according to His own direction, and the Lord who "chose Zion, desired it for His habitation," and said, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14).

Who can speak or think adequately of the amazing grace of God thus manifested! Jehovah of hosts, the mighty God of the universe, before

whom angels and archangels bow and worship as the holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, coming to dwell in the midst of a poor earthly people, just redeemed and brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, where *they* would but prove how ignorant they were of His grace, how utterly ungrateful and worthless they were in themselves. But God dealt with them not as they were in themselves, but as accepted and adopted, enriched and blessed in the Beloved. God dealt with them in Christ, redeemed them through His death, and surrounded them with His merit, and supplied their every need by virtue of what Christ was. Apart from Christ, nothing but judgment could have befallen them; accepted in Him, nothing but blessing was their portion.

How slow the Christian is in learning this, all who are Christ's know too well; still most blessed is it to be assured that Christ is all and in all, and that it is only on the ground of what Christ has done, and what Christ is, that our gracious God bears with our manners in the wilderness. We are His witnesses that though, alas, sin aboundeth, yet grace doth much more abound!

Having taken up His abode in the tabernacle, God makes known His presence in the midst of Israel, not only by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, to lead them by day and by night; but at once speaks to Moses out of the tabernacle, and gives him instructions as to how

communion between Himself and the children of Israel is to be procured and maintained.

Here, too, the rich grace of our God is further displayed. As He had given permission to any and every Israelite to bring an offering according to his love and ability for the sanctuary of God ; so now He makes full provision for every Israelite alike to draw nigh and have intercourse and communion with the God of his salvation, according to the state and condition of his heart and mind. He defines the nature and object of the various offerings, which will suffice to meet the need of the worshipping or the failing Israelite, and gratify and satisfy that precious God to whom he draws nigh.

All the Levitical offerings have this glorious object, to bring the worshipper near to God, to maintain him in that nearness, and to enrich and bless his soul with the revelation of the love and goodness, the grace and holiness of Him with whom the true worshipper has to do. But this is a theme which can now only be alluded to. The book of Leviticus, so full of hidden treasure for the saints of God, must be searched and known, ere the full blessing of God's dwelling in the midst of His people can be realized. Enough, perhaps, has been said to induce the earnest Christian to search into "the things that are freely given to us of God."

## The Golden Candlestick in the Holy Place.

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**E**RE we can hope to understand the spiritual teaching of the various things contained in the tabernacle of Israel, we must have some definite thought of what the tabernacle itself represents.

A heavenly original had been shown to Moses when he was forty days and forty nights in the mount with God; and in giving him directions for the construction of the earthly tabernacle, and all the things to be contained therein, God was pleased to reiterate again and again, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was showed to thee in the mount."

Thus then the tabernacle, and everything inside it, and everything connected with it, was an earthly representation of heavenly realities—"a figure for the time then present," "a worldly sanctuary," with "carnal ordinances" and "a changeable priesthood," all of which served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

May we not suggest that the tabernacle itself represents the secret dwelling-place of the Most High? and that the things of the tabernacle depict to us those heavenly realities which have

been occupying the mind and heart of our God and of His Christ, from before the foundation of the world?

There was no tabernacle in Egypt, no dwelling-place *there* for God; but when God has redeemed His people, and brought them out of Egypt, we hear the gracious commandment, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that *I may dwell among them.*" He redeems a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself above all people; and when the tabernacle is reared up, and everything is completed according to the prescribed directions, He takes possession of it: "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Heaven comes down to earth, and God dwells in the midst of His people, to be unto them everything they need in their passage through the wilderness to the land of promise.

God thus acts in wondrous grace, and reveals Himself in a manner and measure hitherto unknown. But our blessed God is also the *holy* God, as truly as He is the God of all grace; and in unfolding His purposes of love to His purchased people, the claims of His holiness may not be forgotten, but must be met in a way consistent with the dignity and glory of "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity."

In this earthly tabernacle there must be a holy and a most holy place.

Into the most holy place the High Priest alone

could enter, and that but once a year, on the great day of atonement, with the blood of atonement, which he offered for himself, and the errors of the people; while into the holy place the holy priesthood alone may come. Only that foot which had been sanctified by the blood, and anointed with the holy anointing oil, could tread there—only that hand which bore the mark of the blood, and had the sweet fragrance of the holy anointing oil, might handle the holy things of the holy place. No unhallowed foot must tread that holy ground, no unhallowed hand dare touch those holy things. Instant death was the penalty for intruding into the privacy of God's sanctuary.

Provision was indeed made for every Israelite to draw nigh to God day by day. The altar of burnt offering at the door of the outer court was always accessible to those Israelites who sought after God. This was the appointed place of which God had said, "There will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle [*or Israel, margin*] shall be sanctified by My glory." God would in grace *come out* to meet Israel; but none other than the holy priesthood may *come in* to God: even the Levite, specially separated as he was to God's service, dared not enter into the holy place.

This is most significant, and speaks to us in a way we ought not to misunderstand of the intense holiness of God's dwelling-place, and of the preciousness to God of those holy things which

were formed and arranged in it according to His Divine wisdom and goodness. If, then, in the earthly figure we learn the holiness that becomes God's house, and the sacredness of everything therein, with what manner of spirit ought we to contemplate the heavenly realities? Is there not, beloved, a special need in our day to guard against the profanity which prevails, in dealing with the things of God and the Church of God?

Let us for a moment consider the relative position of the golden candlestick. The tabernacle had four sides. On the west side of the holy place hung the beautiful curtain or veil, which separated between the holy and the most holy; before the veil stood the golden altar of incense. On the south or left side was the candlestick of pure gold; opposite to which, on the north or right side, stood the table of shewbread; and on the east hung the embroidered hanging or curtained entrance, the only way or door into the tabernacle.

All *natural* light was carefully excluded from the sanctuary, another deeply important and instructive truth. The rays of the mid-day sun could not penetrate there, nor could the silvery beams of the moon by night. It had "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it." There was no light there but that which radiated from the shekinah of glory in the most holy, or from the golden candlestick when the lamps were lighted in the holy place. Thus I think that in

this earthly representation of a heavenly reality the same truth is presented to us as in the book of the Revelation—"The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple," and "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

What, then, is the golden candlestick with its seven lamps, and what Scriptural and heavenly instruction may be obtained from this most precious symbol? May God in His grace preserve us from error, and guide us by His Holy Spirit into the knowledge of the truth He would unfold to us through it.

The candlestick was "of pure gold." "Of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side. . . . Their knops and their branches shall be of the same; all of it one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. . . . And look that thou make them after the pattern which was showed thee in the mount" (Ex. xxv.)

The whole candlestick was formed out of one talent of pure gold. Divine wisdom and skill given to Bezaleel enabled him and his assistants to beat the gold into the perfect form of exact resemblance to what Moses saw in the mount. There was no

furnace to melt the gold; no process for refining it. The gold was pure, without alloy, ere it was appropriated to its purpose.

Surely the pure gold represents Christ Himself in His Divine nature, formed by Divine power into this candlestick of surpassing beauty and glory; and in the branches *beaten out of the shaft*, is there not a representation of the Church of the living God, formed out of the Son of God Himself? “For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ.”

We are made partakers of the Divine nature; or, as taught by the Lord Jesus Himself, “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.” “I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Is not this ONENESS? Are we not the “body of Christ, and members in particular”—living branches of the true Vine?

In the golden candlestick we have in symbol Christ and His Church, essentially, inseparably, eternally ONE. “The mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God” is thus prefigured; and now in these days of wondrous grace, when it has pleased God to reveal “the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you the hope of glory,” we may look back to this beautiful candlestick, and learn some of the precious secrets of this mystery.

When Adam awoke out of his deep sleep, and fixed his gaze on the beautiful bride taken by God out of Adam himself, he at once recognized her as his own, and said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." So also "Christ is the head of the Church," as "the husband is the head of the wife;" and though it is "*a great mystery*," yet is it true as it is mysterious, that "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." And on the glorious morning of the resurrection, He will present us to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. *Then* we shall see the pure metal of the golden candlestick shining out in all its brilliancy and glory, and share with Him in the ecstasy of that day when He presents us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

We *now* see through a glass darkly, but *then* face to face; we *now* know but in part, *then* shall we know even as we are known. Our present knowledge is indeed most limited and imperfect, and we yearn for that day of full and complete revelation, when "we shall see Him as He is"—when "we shall be like Him!"

With holy joy we now can say, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," and boasting in His grace may triumphantly exclaim, Our life is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear

with Him in glory. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

The candlestick had intrinsic excellence and value: it was of pure gold, and it exhibited the perfection and unity. We have seen that it was beaten out of one piece, and branches were formed out of it to bear the lamps, the sevenfold light from which diffused itself through the holy place, revealing the beauties and glories which were otherwise undiscernible.

Christ was hidden there in the manifold characters of His grace. The boards of shittim wood, encased in gold, declared Christ. The veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of cunning work, with cherubims, unfolded Christ. The curtained entrance by which the holy priesthood gained access exhibited Christ. The ceiling or covering of the tabernacle, glowing with brightness and beauty, displayed Christ. In every place, and in every thing, the glorious Person, offices, and work of the Son of God, were variously portrayed. Yet was there "the thick darkness," impenetrable to the human eye, until the lamps of the golden candlestick were lighted, and then the hidden glories of the holy place shone forth, to the delight and joy of the holy priesthood.

The floor was the only part of the holy place which did not witness to Christ. It was formed of the desert itself, and had no covering of any kind. One pregnant reason amongst others for this

arrangement is surely this—that the things of God must not be trodden under foot even by His holy priesthood.

When the passover lamb was slain in Egypt, the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and two side-posts of the door of every Israelite. Any one of the redeemed standing in the open door-way, looking above, beholds the sprinkled blood; turning to the right, his eye rests on the blood; or to the left, still the blood meets his view: the blood above him, the blood around him, but no blood could be found on the door-step.

God will not have the precious blood of His dear Son trampled under foot; and when through that precious blood access is obtained into the holy or most holy place, the holy things of the living God must not be trampled upon. Therefore, in the tabernacle in the wilderness, the sands of the desert form the only floor; as also, if we look into heaven itself, we behold “a sea of glass mingled with fire,” upon which those stand who get the victory over the beast, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Nothing in heaven or on the earth that unfolds the person or work of Christ may be trodden under foot.

Standing, then, in the holy place ere the lamps are lighted, all is “thick darkness.” God may make “darkness His secret place,” but man may not enter into His presence. He has eyes indeed; but He scans not Divine things with the natural

eye. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;" and man must ever remain a stranger and utterly blind to the glorious mysteries and the wondrous contents of that holy place, unless light shines within, and God Himself reveals that which is hidden.

When Aaron filled the seven golden lamps with the pure oil olive, and lighted them, the beauteous scene he gazed upon, and the varied glories by which he was surrounded, were not *produced*, but only *displayed*. The light itself could not add virtue or value to anything it shone upon; it could merely exhibit what was there.

The candlestick represents Christ. It was elaborately ornamented, and beautified by Divine wisdom. The brighter the light shone upon its towering shaft, the more clearly would its manifold beauties be developed; but not one tittle of beauty or value could the light confer upon it. The light could display and make manifest, but could not add one atom to its worth.

Thus Christ, the Son of God, stands before us in symbol in all the transcendent dignity and perfection of His own nature; while in the branches beaten out of the candlestick—on either side three, each bearing equally with the central shaft its golden lamp, and all burning in lustrous brightness—we behold a gloriously perfect whole, symbolizing Christ and His Church, yea, the Church of the living God, abiding in HIM in ever-

lasting oneness—another form of the truth taught by our blessed Lord Himself—“I am the Vine; ye are the branches.”

Well may the apostle to whom the knowledge of this mystery was specially revealed exclaim, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . . I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Surely the complete anti-type of the golden candlestick, its branches and seven lamps, luminous with Divine glory, is *yet* future, and will be manifested in heaven itself when the glory which the Father has given the Son, and which the Lord Jesus in richest grace shares with His Church, will be displayed. Then, in the perfect unity of the Divine nature, and in blessed conformity to His glorious image, will be fulfilled those precious words of the Lord Jesus—“I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” And again, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me.”

Then will be fully manifested “the exceeding

riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The bride of Christ, in transcendent loveliness, will shine forth in the brightness of His glory. Intense happiness and joy will fill every heart; worship and thanksgiving, adoration and praise, will again and again burst forth, ascending to Him whose infinite love and amazing grace are thus revealed.

Then also will the manifold wisdom of God be displayed; and not the church only, but principalities and powers in the heavenlies, will look back with wonder and delight upon the wisdom and prudence, the patience and forbearance, the tenderness and care, with which this glorious candlestick was formed.

Then, too, will "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints" be apprehended in the clear light of that wondrous day. If "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," as the old creation with its teeming wonders came fresh from God's hand, oh, what will be the outflow of ineffable joy, and the chorus of universal praise, as God's workmanship in Christ Jesus—the sons of the Lord Almighty—stand out, invested and arrayed in the glory, which is their everlasting portion in Christ Jesus the Lord!

There will be no failure then; no dim lights or charred wicks; no need for the golden snuffers: the one Spirit of the living God will fully animate the whole; the life of Christ will flow forth in all

its power and fulness; His unsearchable riches will be unfolded; and “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” will be the rapturous utterance of every creature in heaven and earth.

One word more as regards the symbol. Do we not learn that Christ and heavenly realities are absolutely unknown and undiscernible except by the inshining of the Holy Ghost into the mind and heart? and are we not assured by the Lord Himself, that God the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven to take of the things that are Christ's and show them unto us? Is it not true that the marvellous love of the Father in the gift of the Son, and the equal love of the Son in giving Himself for our sins, would be of no avail were it not also for the love of the Spirit? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, and in all the things of God the flesh profiteth nothing.

This united interest in and love for the saved sinner by the eternal Godhead, in the distinctness of their own personality, is very wonderful! We hear God saying in the very beginning, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;” and, alas! how soon Adam fell from innocence and happiness to sinfulness and misery! But never do we learn what the “new creation” is until “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” was accomplished; until He “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” had ascended up into heaven, and sent down the Holy

Ghost to “baptize believers into one body”—thus forming the Church of the living God, where according to Christ’s promise He is to abide for ever.

Then “the eternal purpose of God which He purposed in Christ Jesus” was revealed; and types and shadows, images, figures, and symbols of the Old Testament Scriptures could be understood, and “the exceeding riches of His grace” be proclaimed! And, blessed be God, notwithstanding the apostacy of Christendom, the Holy Ghost still remains in and abides with the Church, and is ready as ever “to guide us into all truth.” May we listen to His teaching, be instructed by His wisdom, and no longer grieve Him by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

May this very bare outline of the teaching of the golden candlestick lead into deeper research and increased knowledge of this precious subject. It is prefatory, if the Lord please, to the further consideration of HIM who is “the Light of the world,” and also of the place which His Church occupies between the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the appearing of the bright and Morning Star, when the Church will be completed, and we shall find ourselves “for ever with the Lord.” “Amen: so let it be.”

“O blessed Lord, unveil Thy glorious face!  
Shine, brightly shine, and bid all darkness flee!  
Shine till my soul, reflecting back Thy grace,  
Tells of the glory that abides in Thee.  
Shine thus upon me, Lord, till I depart  
To be with Thee for ever where Thou art.”

## “Immanuel: God With Us.”

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**T**HE contrast between the coming down from heaven of the mighty God to the children of Israel, described in Exodus xix., and the coming into the world of the same blessed Person as seen in Luke's gospel (chapter ii.) is very striking.

At Sinai His presence was announced by “the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words.” The thunders, the lightnings, the thick clouds, the quaking and smoking mount were witnesses to the terrible majesty of Him, who came from heaven to seek the welfare of and impart His blessing to a people whom He had redeemed as His peculiar treasure.

God's *power* had been manifested in Egypt. The sore plagues wherewith the Egyptians were visited, ending in the death of all the first-born, and subsequently in the utter destruction of Pharaoh and his warriors in the Red Sea, were witnesses of that power.

God's actions *for* Israel's deliverance, and *against* their enemies, were well known to His people. His provision also for their daily sustenance in the manna from above, and in the flowing rivers from

the smitten rock, were exhibitions of His care and love. They had seen some of His mighty acts, but were now called to know His holy and His glorious presence with them.

“And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice;” and so terrible was that sight, so awe-inspiring was that voice, that all the people in the camp trembled, and even Moses said—“I exceedingly fear and quake.” God’s holy presence realized, without the full knowledge of His grace, must appal the stoutest heart, and cause the haughtiest spirit to quail.

How contrasted to this revelation of His majesty and power, are the scenes described in the second chapter of Luke’s gospel.

Shepherds are keeping watch over their flocks by night, when lo, the darkness is suddenly dispersed, and the glory of the Lord shines round about. The silence of midnight is broken by the angel’s voice, declaring unto the shepherds “good tidings of great joy.” “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

If the golden bells on the high priest’s garment sounded sweetly in the ears of the outside worshippers, bringing the assurance that the high priest was alive in God’s holy presence, and was occupied about their business, oh, what ravishing melody is there in the angelic message to the poor

needy sinner—that God HIMSELF had come down into this world as the anointed Saviour, and was to be found wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger at Bethlehem !

The sinner needs a Saviour ; the Saviour wants the sinner. The whole world having departed from the living God, and every human being having become exceeding sinful, all are now called to behold the grace of God in the Saviour thus announced, and to see “God manifest in flesh” come down from above, in pursuit of the straying ones, and occupying a place in the world where all who seek may find Him.

Scarcely had the angel’s voice uttered the “good tidings of great joy,” when suddenly there was with him “a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The wondrous testimony of the first angel appears to attract and gather the heavenly host, and the glory of our gracious God is chanted in heavenly strains. Heaven and earth hear and echo and re-echo the glad tidings of great joy, that God’s Son has descended from the throne of His glory, to dwell amongst men ; and for a time at least the earth becomes the dwelling-place of the most High God.

Never had grace been so displayed, never before had angel tongues uttered such praises. The invisible God is thus manifested as among men, unaccompanied by the appalling terrors and glories

of Sinai. No sounding trumpet strikes terror into the heart; no quaking earth or crashing thunders, no scorching lightnings or other accompaniments of Divine majesty, but in the gentleness of a little babe, and in the lowliness of a manger, men are called in richest grace *there* to behold their God!

The presence of God had been witnessed by Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire; the holy priesthood had communed with the Holy One inside the tabernacle in the wilderness; Solomon's temple had been the abode of the Most High when Israel obtained possession of the promised land; but alas! whether in the tabernacle or in the temple, God was grieved, dishonoured, disowned, until He could no longer endure the rebellion and wickedness of His people, and He finally took His departure from among them and ascended into heaven again.

How deeply affecting to the renewed heart is it to witness God's departure from the midst of His people. In Ezekiel x. we see the glory of God above the heads of the cherubims, and the cloud filling the inner court. “Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over *the threshold* of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory.” The cherubims are then described; and in verse 18, it is written, “Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.” And in the following chapter, “Then the

cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the *midst of the city*, and stood upon *the mountain* which is on the east side of the city.”

The glory had removed from its usual place in the house to the threshold, from the threshold into the midst of the city; thence to the mountain on the east side of the city, from which it appears to have gone up into heaven.

The lingering love of God to His people, and His unwillingness to depart from amongst them, is most evident. Step by step He recedes farther and farther from Israel, waiting after every step to see if there were any kindlings of repentance, any contrition, any humiliation, any desire to return unto God, that His absence from them might be averted.

We may well pause and consider how like this was to our precious Lord, when here among men. He went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” “And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid

from thine eyes.” Again, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

But the climax of His love, and the wickedness of His people was yet to come. They cast Him out of the city! He suffered without the gate, and after His death and resurrection He ascended up from that very Mount of Olives where the glory had tarried, and from whence it had ascended so many centuries before.

The babe at Bethlehem is God’s Son. He is God manifest in the flesh. He came down to seek and to save the lost. He tabernacles in human form. He dwells amongst men. Surely *all* will receive, *all* will welcome, *all* worship and adore and obey HIM, who will manifest Himself as the image of the invisible God, the brightness of God’s glory!

Alas! how contrary to this natural expectation everything proved.

A *few* wise men from the east were indeed led by God’s star to God’s Son, worshipped Him, and poured out at His feet their treasures of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. A *few* shepherds also who heard the angel’s message, and were enrap-

tured with the angels' song, said one to another, “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.” The shepherds spoke of Him to others, and returned to their occupation, “glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.”

Simeon also, an aged servant of the Lord in the temple, received the young child from His mother's breast, and took Him up in his arms and blessed God for this inestimably precious gift. He carried in his arms the Prince of Peace, whose value and virtues gave the peace of God to Simeon's soul, and delivered him from all fear of the future. He gazed upon the infant Jesus. His eyes beheld, his hands handled God's Saviour, and his soul received God's salvation. Now he could depart in peace. He had got the Christ of God, and could pray as he had never prayed—“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

Coming in at that moment, Anna, the prophetess, who for years had been waiting for this gift of God, beholding HIM, at once gives thanks unto the Lord, and speaks of Him to all that looked for redemption in Israel.

Marvellous fact of God's grace! wonderful provision of His love! The glad tidings that Christ the Lamb of God is come spread from one to

another. If He is received, eternal life is at once possessed by the receiver. If He is rejected, the one who rejects, disowns, or neglects, abides in death, and has to answer to God, not only for his own personal sins and condition, but also for the crime of crimes—the rejection of God’s salvation and God’s Son.

While a very few were influenced by Divine grace and received Christ, the vast multitude refused Him. Kings, priests, rulers, scribes, Pharisees, men of every grade and character agreed in this one thing—they despised, they scorned, they rejected the Son of God, and would not accept salvation from the only Saviour of the lost.

Thus was the surpassing grace of God met! Instead of *all* receiving, *almost* all rejected Him. There could be no plea of ignorance. The Spirit of God had predicted, the angels had announced Him; the wise men from the east had worshipped, holy men and women in the temple had acknowledged Him. Nothing had been lacking on God’s part to assure His Son a welcome to the hearts of His people, for their homage and worship; but, alas! the god of this world had blinded the eyes of those who believed not, and the whole nation, with the exception of a very small remnant, utterly refused to acknowledge and accept the Son and Saviour whom God in His grace had sent to them.

Here for the present we must leave the history

of the virgin's Child—the Son of God—Immanuel—God with us. The Child is born; the Son is given; the government shall be upon His shoulder. His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. However men have rejected, or may reject Him, His people know “that of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.”

Great and glorious as was the grace of God in sending His Son into the world—marvellous as was the love of the Lord Himself in that He did not abhor the virgin's womb, nor refuse the position assigned to Him among the very poorest of the poor—yet these are but the beginnings of the wonderful things unfolded to us for God's glory and our blessing.

God indeed came down and dwelt among men, and believers can say, “We beheld His glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Happy they who thus know Him, whom to know is life eternal. Happy, most happy, they who now daily take up their cross and follow Him.

## The Sufferings of Christ.

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**E**ACH detail of the sufferings of the Lamb of God opens to our souls a fresh stream of the fulness of that mercy which endureth for ever. The sufferings and the glories of the Lamb are all-engrossing subjects in heaven, the substance of the testimony of the prophets on earth, and the continual ministry of the Holy Ghost to the church now.

When we meditate on the wounds, bruises, and sorrows of Jesus in connection with our sins; when we see that we could be healed in no other way than by such stripes, and that it was our transgressions that caused Him such immeasurable agony, surely sin becomes exceeding hateful to us, while we adoringly own and magnify the wonders of redeeming love.

The same lesson teaches us that the holy sin-hating God, is also a gracious, sin-pardoning God. Neither sin, the world, nor Satan, look so black anywhere else, as at the crucifixion of Christ, the only fountain of life, and light, and love, and peace.

Look at Him in the garden of Gethsemane! See Him in that solemn hour, when bathed in agony and blood, He cried, "Father, if it be

possible, let this cup pass from me." Watch with Him there awhile, and mark the bitter conflict of His soul, as He looked onwards to the fearful wrath He had to bear. Then see Him rise, collected, calm, resolved to go through *all*, that He might win us for Himself.

Listen again, and hear Him say, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" He had measured its depths, but still He shrank not back; He had tasted its bitterness, but would not put it from Him.

Oh, what precious lessons of Divine grace are here set before us! We can only look on, and worship.

Jesus was drawing very near the cross. The great testimony of all the prophets was about to be accomplished. The Son of the Highest was about to enter into the lowest depths of humiliation. And eternal victory was to be achieved, and captivity itself led captive. The gate of heaven was to be thrown open by the bleeding hands of the Son of God. The Lord of glory was drawing near to the shameful tree, there to give His life a sacrifice for sin; and as He delivered Himself into His murderer's hands, He says, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

He thus reminds us of the Father's love. The Father chose us in Christ, and gave us to Christ, before the foundation of the world. The Father

sent forth His Son to redeem His people. The Father gave commandment to Jesus what He should say, and what He should speak. The Father was always with Him; and now the Father presents to Him the bitter cup to drink, that *we* might not drink it, but be brought into blessed and unchanging nearness to Himself.

Well might the apostle John exclaim, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!” We had no claim whatever upon God. We were by nature dead in sins, whilst practically we were only sinners and ungodly; but the Father’s eternal purpose of blessing us in Christ must be carried out, and though it could only be accomplished by the bloodshedding of His beloved Son, yet He spared not even Him. He gave Him the cup of woe to drink. He laid upon Him our iniquities, and bruised Him; and

“*He* bowed His willing head,  
*He* drank the bitter gall.”

The Lord Jesus knew that the eternal welfare of unnumbered multitudes was connected with His drinking that cup, as well as the glory of the Father of mercies; and however deep and bitter the cup might be, the intensity of Christ’s love knew no reluctance—“Shall I not drink it?” What breadth, and length, and depth, and height of love are here! What unsearchable riches! What abounding grace! When He knew that the time

was near that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

“His love to the utmost was tried,  
But immovable stood as a rock.”

Long had He anticipated the drinking of that dreadful draught, and now the moment was at hand. He had repeatedly said to His disciples, “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised again the third day;” and though He “knew all things that should come upon Him,” He willingly went forth. “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

“O love Divine! what hast Thou done?  
The Son of God His blood hath shed,  
The Father’s co-eternal Son  
Had all our sins upon Him laid:  
The Son of God for us hath died,  
Our Lord, our life, was crucified.”

But what was the cup? Who can tell, but He who mixed, and He who drank it? What angel or seraph can tell the contents or measure the depths of that cup? No mortal mind can grasp its infinite realities. The most spiritual saint knows but little about it.

There is, however, much instruction in the Scriptures on the subject; and sure we are that it was connected with the deepest and most unutterable anguish and sorrow to Him who drank it, and called forth from His pure and holy soul such

bitter cries as, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? ” “ I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried ; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. . . . Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour ; mine adversaries are all before Thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness.” “ Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts ; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.” “ My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. . . . Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. . . I am shut up ; I cannot come forth . . . thy fierce wrath goeth over me, and thy terrors have cut me off.”

Our consciences acknowledge that *our* sins caused that cup to be mixed and drank, while we recognize in Him our Surety, our Substitute ; One standing in our room and stead ; One made sin and a curse for us ; One bearing our sins, and suffering all the wrath and judgment *we* merited at the holy hands of Divine justice.

Neither man nor angel could drink that cup—none but JESUS. One who was equal with God alone could meet Divine wrath, and satisfy Divine justice. This was why Jesus exchanged His Father’s bosom for the unparalleled scene of sorrow, that HE might be the Daysman to lay His

hand both upon the just God and the unjust sinner, and by the willing sacrifice of Himself open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Throughout His sojourn in this wilderness the Lord Jesus had anticipated the drinking of this cup, but it appears to have been presented to Him at Gethsemane. It is there we hear Him say, in the sore amazement of His spirit, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." And so terrible was His anguish, that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." But the cup was not drunk then. This was but a foretaste of what the agony of that cup would be ; and if the foretaste was so terrible, what must the reality have been !

But now the cup has been drunk even to the dregs. The spotless Sufferer drained it to the last drop, saying, "It is finished." That bitter cup, which would have been to us an eternity of unmitigated woe, He freely drank. The sword of justice, which so long cried for vengeance upon our sins, was sheathed in His holy heart. Our unnumbered transgressions were laid upon Him. He answered for all our sins. The cup of fierce and righteous anger which we justly merited Jesus drank, thus accomplishing our eternal redemption, and setting us free from all condemnation, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Such was His mighty victory, and now it is *His*

joy to see us drink the cup which He thus purchased for us; a cup without a single drop of wrath, but filled with love, salvation, victory, and peace.

“Jesus took the cup (the cup of blessing), and when He had given thanks, He *gave* it to them, and they all drank of it; and He said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.” This is the cup which Jesus has left us to drink, the cup of blessing which we bless indeed, which we never could have tasted had not Jesus drank that cup which the Father gave Him. He drank the bitter, and has left only the sweets. He tasted death that we might live for ever. He endured the wrath and curse, that we might have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

We are not our own, we have been bought with a price; such an inestimable price; the precious blood of Christ; and therefore should not live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. We should obey and glorify God because we are *His*. In the riches of His grace, He passed by us, saw us polluted in our blood, and said, “Live!” He looked upon us, spread His skirt over us, and covered our nakedness, swore unto us, entered into covenant with us, thoroughly washed us, and we became *His*.

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We *are* children of God, and should seek to be obedient children. We are

called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, to “walk even as He walked.” We are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that we should show forth the excellencies of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

We have passed from death unto life: we are made nigh to God; there is no further condemnation for us, but blessing has been, is, will, and must be our continued and eternal portion. Surely we can say, “I have a goodly heritage.” “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name!”

## The Toil and Triumph of Love.

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**W**HAT astonishing love, mercy, condescension, compassion, and patience, shine forth in the wonderful salvation which Christ has wrought out for us! And what should *we* do with all that we are and have, but cast it down at the feet of Him who has redeemed us by His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God?

He has purchased *everything* for us, without the least help from any one! *All, all* the product of free eternal love! From eternity we were chosen to all this blessedness; all most free to us, but what a price it cost our Lord! What could He give *more* than His life, His blood, His very self? Could love have been manifested in a more transcendent, glorious, and excellent way? What could He have done more than He has done?

Has He not made a noble conquest? He conquered by blood and death, yea, He slew death itself! He rode over hell and devils, and vanquished our strongest and bitterest foes! He led captivity captive by being led captive Himself! He underwent shame, pain, and ignominy for us, and so gained boundless joy, glory, and renown. By

dying He vanquished death, and “destroyed him that had the power of death.”

The life, the blood of the Son of God, the life of the Lord of Life was laid down as a ransom for us, as the price of our eternal blessedness! Oh, the price—the price! Behold the Son of God shamed! Behold the Prince of Life in agony, bleeding, dying, even the shameful death of the cross! See the compassion of our blessed Lord Jesus, whose love was so strong that nothing could quench it! He laboured through love, sorrowed through love, wept through love, He died of love! And now He has made us one with Himself, put in *our* hands the palms of victory, put on *our* heads the crowns of conquerors, and finds His reward in our eternal joy! Yes, HE has done *all*, and *we* reap the fruit of it. HE has conquered, and *we* triumph in Him. HE has suffered, and *we* share His glory, as the purchase of His precious blood.

Thus we are justified, yea, cleansed from sin, and acquitted from all fear of wrath. And now His eyes are fixed on us, to watch over and bless, and keep us from harm. Every act of His, every word, manifests a love ever to be admired, and yet never understood in its heights and depths! O hear Him say, “I have loved you with an eternal love, washed you when polluted in your sins, and made you kings and priests unto my God and your God. I loved you when vile and abominable, and now I have made you fair and spotless, yea, perfect

through My comeliness, which I have put upon you. You are the fruit of my sufferings and toil, My tears and groans, My shame and reproach, and now in *you* I see the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. I have redeemed you from eternal wrath, and purchased all things for you; and *now* I will cast out the enemy from within you, and will say ‘Destroy them.’”

Are we not blessed, eternally blessed, to whom such words are spoken? Should we not be overjoyed because of the Bridegroom’s voice? No wonder it was said of Him, “Never man spake like this Man.” Has He not brought us into the most intimate fellowship with Himself, and called us to drink of the river of His pleasures? *We* reap the fruit of His groans and tears, afflictions, and labours, and He joys in our joy, and delights in our comfort! And *soon* the day will dawn when the topmost stone will be put on the glorious temple which the Lord is building for Himself; a temple formed of living stones, each stone hewn out of nature’s quarry, and quickened into life and glory; each indwelt by the Spirit of God, and carved and polished by His skilful hand. *Then* the desires of His soul will be fully accomplished, His joy will be complete, His reward full, and He will drink with us of the new wine of the kingdom which He has called us to enjoy.

And now while we are still in this world of sin and woe, this time of our betrothal, while we are

waiting for the nuptial day, what shall we do, and how shall we act? Shall we not seek to yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him who has done so much for us, and loved us with such amazing love?

“ His be the Victor s name,  
Who fought our fight alone ;  
Triumphant saints no honour claim,  
The conquest was His own.

“ He hell in hell laid low,  
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew ;  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
And death by dying slew

“ Bless, bless the Conqueror slain !  
Slain by His own decree ;  
Who lived, who died, who lives again,  
For thee, His saint, for thee.”

## The Temple of God—What is It?

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**W**E read that the children of Israel “drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them, and *that Rock* was CHRIST.” This metaphor appears in various ways in the Old Testament Scriptures—to express one of the many manifestations of the Son of God to the saints of old. In the New Testament the Lord Himself uses it, to give to Peter and to the other disciples the first intimation of the new relationship He was about to form.

When, in answer to the Lord’s question, Peter said, “Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,” the Lord instantly replied, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven ;” and added, “I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon *this Rock* I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” We have thus the Lord’s own authority for saying that Peter, having “heard and learned of the Father,” was drawn to Christ, and was thus enabled unhesitatingly to confess *who* and *what* Christ was.

Here, then, we see Christ is “the Rock,” “the

Living Stone,” spoken of by Isaiah. “Thus saith the LORD GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.” A *living superstructure* has to be built upon this Living Stone.

The Apostle Paul assures the Corinthians, that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” He also writes: “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation.” He had preached “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” and could remind them—whom also ye have received, wherein ye stand, and by whom also ye are saved.

The Lord Jesus Christ received into the heart by faith is the only foundation on which the soul can rest. He is God’s provision for the ungodly, the ruined, and *lost* soul. He is also the Rock that never can be moved for the *saved* soul; and whether resting or standing on that Rock, or hid by God Himself “in a cleft of the rock,” as Moses was (Exodus xxxiii. 22), the soul is equally and eternally secure. Indeed, Christians are entitled to say, our “life is hid with Christ in God;” and looking out from that place of security and blessing, are privileged to become acquainted with God’s purposes, and to learn to do His will.

God the Father first communicated the knowledge of His Son to Peter, and believing on Him, Peter became “a living stone,” and was built

upon and united to *Him* who was “THE LORD JEHOVAH,” “the Rock of Ages” (Isaiah xxvi. 4), God’s “sure foundation,” His “elect and precious stone.” Peter writes to the strangers scattered abroad, and says, “To whom coming as unto a Living Stone . . . . *ye also* as living stones are built up a spiritual house.”

When Saul of Tarsus had his blind eyes opened to heavenly light, and received the knowledge of the truth from Jesus Himself, he straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God; and all who believed his testimony received Christ, and equally with Peter and Saul became living stones, built upon God’s foundation, and form a part of that building which has been in progress ever since.

Mark, then, how truth is gradually developed in Scripture. God dwelt with Israel in the *wilderness* in a curtained tabernacle, made according to His own directions by the free-will offerings of the people. He dwelt also with Israel in the *land*, in the temple for which provision was made by David, though it was built by Solomon. When the fulness of time had come, *the Babe* was born in Bethlehem; and from that moment until the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, God was manifested in the flesh in the *temple* of CHRIST’S *body*. He was “Immanuel, God with us.”

The tabernacle of God in the wilderness shadowed forth His wisdom and glory, and Israel’s

offerings exhibited their willing-heartedness. The “exceeding magnificent” temple of David and Solomon was of fame and glory throughout all countries; but both were now to be superseded, and a heavenly structure was to be formed and built by the Son of God Himself, which would as far eclipse all buildings made by hands as Christ was greater than Moses or Solomon, and which would outlast sun, moon, and stars; yea, continue throughout the countless ages of eternity.

During the sojourn of the Son of God in this world, He revealed Himself as the Foundation upon which He would rear a temple for God—not of the “goodly stones” which composed the earthly temple, nor of the frail materials which formed His habitation in the wilderness, but a building of “*living stones*,” builded *by* Himself *upon* Himself, to grow up into a holy temple in the Lord.

Christ, then, is the “Rock,” the one Foundation; and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a living stone quarried out of a dark and dead world, builded on, united to, and made one with Him by whose power and grace he has been delivered from the world, from death and judgment, and every one of these living stones has a place in that glorious temple which is to be God’s habitation for ever. Life is *first* given; and then He who has selected the stone, and imparted the life, will form and fashion it according to the good pleasure

of His own will, for the place He designs it to occupy in the heavenly and eternal building.

After the Lord Jesus had expiated our sins “in His own body on the tree,” and on the first day of the week had risen from the dead, on the evening of that same day when the disciples were assembled together with closed doors, He suddenly came and stood in their midst, saying, “Peace be unto you.” Having made peace by the blood of His cross, He thus early announces and imparts to them the peace He had made. He had come forth from the sepulchre and from among the dead as the LIVING STONE, and now takes His place among *these* living stones, who had been given to Him by the Father.

God is thus seen in His holy temple. The foundation provided in the everlasting counsels of God is now laid. Christ the first-fruits from among the dead is life again, and “alive for evermore.” In resurrection power and blessing He gathers to Himself and clusters around Himself some of the brilliant gems that are to shine with Him in the glory of God. Surely, this is a specimen, a representation, of that holy temple where Christ and His elect are one—a beautiful exhibition of what the Church should be *in time*, and what the heavenly temple will be throughout eternity. *In time*, between the cross and the glory, “where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” *In eternity* “the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell

with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

Blessed and happy as must have been the communion of Christ with His people after His resurrection, it was but of short duration, and only occasionally renewed, during the forty days that transpired ere He re-ascended to heaven. Then He must again in bodily presence be separated from them, and received back into the glory (which He had left for their sakes), to take His place at the right hand of power, and to assume the functions of another entirely new relationship which their new necessities required. He thus becomes the Great High Priest for His people in God's presence. They must have an Advocate with the Father—One ever-living there to make intercession for them during the whole of their wilderness journey from Golgotha to glory.

As in the redemption of Israel out of Egypt the lamb must be slain, and the blood must be sprinkled, or the people must perish, so in the New Testament, the “Lamb of God” must die. His precious blood must be shed; it must be presented to and accepted by God, then sprinkled on the guilty conscience, or there could be no expiation for sin, no forgiveness to the sinner.

So also when Jordan was crossed, and Israel were in the land, the Captain of the host of the Lord assumes the command of God's heritage, and with sword drawn fights their battles, and leads

them from victory to victory, until their enemies are destroyed or overcome, and quiet and peaceable possession is obtained of the long-promised and much-desired inheritance. Even so with our beloved Lord. He is the Captain of our salvation, made perfect through sufferings. “When He had by Himself purged our sins,” He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, to serve us as faithfully in the courts of heaven as He had lived and served and died for us on earth—to watch over our interests with unceasing vigilance, to overcome all our enemies, and to become “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God . . . and to succour them that are tempted.” The personal departure of Christ from amongst His people was necessitated on this as on other accounts.

We see, then, clearly that “Christ the Son of the living God” is the Rock, the *one* and only *Foundation*, upon which the new temple can rest or be builded; also that the “*living stones*” are sinners saved by God’s grace through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and partakers with Him of the blessings and glories of “the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.” And surely we should be deeply interested in learning what provision God has made for His people, in the personal absence of His beloved Son, to ensure the greatest amount of spiritual blessing to them, and to produce the spiritual

worshippers whom the Father seeketh to worship Him. According to our Lord's own words, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Happily, there is no lack of instruction in the Scriptures of truth on this important subject. Satan's imitations and man's inventions tend indeed to mystify and puzzle the enquirer; but let the believer be true-hearted in his desire to *know* God's will, *that he may do it*, and all is as clear as sunlight, and plain as God can make it.

## The Present Ministry of the Spirit.

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**T**HE Church of God was manifestly formed at Pentecost. Believers had been blessed and saved through all the previous dispensations from Adam to Christ; but the eternal purpose of God to incorporate all Christians into “one body,” to be a dwelling-place for Himself, was not unfolded until after the descent of the Holy Ghost at the feast of Pentecost.

During the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth, sinners who believed in Him were saved by His grace and power, and united to Him also by His gift of eternal life. HE had life in Himself, and communicated that life to those who had been given to Him by the Father. Those precious words, “I give unto them eternal life,” “Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me,” are blessedly familiar to us; they contain a fulness of meaning and richness of grace, yea, boundless unfathomable grace, and evidence indeed that the love of God passeth all understanding. But not till after the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as “Head,” could His members be formed into “one body”—a heavenly body in living union with a heavenly Head.

Such is the Church of God—the body of Christ:

HE the Head of the body, and every Christian in this dispensation of His grace a member of that blessed body possessing His life, and chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Such, too, is the "temple of God." If we speak of the body, it is a living body; if of the temple, *it* is composed of living stones. "Members" or "stones" alike possess life in Christ, eternally one in and with Him.

After the ascension of Christ, the number of the disciples in Jerusalem being about one hundred and twenty, it is written of them that "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly . . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven was the fulfilment of the repeated promise made to the disciples by their Lord, after His resurrection as well as before His death. Thus the "other Comforter" took possession of the temple composed of living stones, and the Church of God in its corporate capacity was formed, indwelt, and manifested to be "God's habitation through the Spirit."

The *unity* which life produced was then seen. Every living member was "baptized by one Spirit into one body." The presence of God was attested by the power of God. Life filled every member. Love flowed from every heart. The word of God's

grace and the presence of God's Spirit were realized; living waters suffused dead souls, and on that day about three thousand were added to the Church of the living God. In former papers we have briefly meditated upon the entrance of the Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, into this scene of sin and sorrow, and now, after His re-ascension to the right hand of power, we behold the introduction of the Church of God into this world. On the morning of the feast of Pentecost there were about one hundred and twenty disciples, including the apostles, and during that memorable day their numbers swelled to upwards of three thousand!

The Holy Ghost had come down on a previous occasion. Jesus had been baptized of John in Jordan, and while "praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God the Holy Ghost thus descended upon and indwelt the Lamb of God—the guileless, harmless Dove abiding upon the gentle, holy Lamb. No rushing mighty wind from heaven, no extraordinary manifestation of Divine power with its overwhelming results, but the Father's voice announces the Son of His love, and the Holy Ghost by His presence attests the same truth; two wonderful and unimpeachable witnesses to the dignity and glory of the illustrious stranger. Thus before the work which the Father

gave Him to do was entered upon, He was introduced by the Father and the Holy Ghost to Israel and to the world, as the Son and the Servant of God sent here on a special mission of grace and mercy in which all alike were interested and included.

Instantly this faithful messenger submits to the guidance and teaching of that blessed Spirit. We read, He was “full of the Holy Ghost,” “and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil.” Afterwards He came into a synagogue at Nazareth, and opening the book of the prophet Esaias, read—“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” So it will be found from first to last—from the anointing at John’s baptism, to His cry on the cross—“It is finished”—everything Christ did, every word He said, everywhere He went, He was under the guidance, teaching, and power of the Holy Ghost, as also of the Father who had sent Him. Marvellous mystery—the triune Jehovah in the person of the Son! “For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell.” “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

We cannot now dwell on this wondrous fact, but it is specially worthy of attention, that so subject was the Eternal Son when in grace He became

the Servant, that while saying to Philip, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" He could add, "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." He was the true and faithful Servant of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, as truly as He was God's equal, God's fellow from all eternity.

As with the Lord, the Head of the body, so is it with the Church, the members of His body. The Church *lives* in the Spirit, and should *walk* in the Spirit. Christians must "*worship* in the Spirit," "*pray* with the Spirit," "*sing* with the Spirit," "be filled with the Spirit." The Holy Ghost dwells, abides, continues in every believer. As the Holy Spirit of promise, He is given to the Christian for His name's sake, whose we are, and whom we serve, and by His Spirit alone can the infinitely varied work of every member of the body be accomplished.

The Scriptures of truth are the alone standard by which everything is to be tested and judged, and the Spirit of God is the alone power by which truth can be discerned, worship be acceptable, or service rendered.

In reading the Acts of the Apostles, and the various epistles written for our learning, a single and unprejudiced eye will at once see how entirely everything from the beginning to the end was dependent upon and accomplished by the Spirit of

God. True, the living members of the body were used according to their varied gifts and grace, but all the *power* was *of* God—*from* God. Christians were instruments, according to the good pleasure of His will, their hearts were occupied, and their tongues used, but all was valueless except “as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

As it was in the first hours of the Church’s corporate existence, so will it be to the last moment of its continuance here. Human eloquence, wisdom and learning, are poor substitutes for the Holy Ghost’s ministry. The wise Paul might plant, the eloquent Apollos water, but God alone could give the increase.

The truth is, that as the work of Christ in redemption is a perfect work, most jealously guarded by God, which must neither be added to nor taken from, so is the work of the Holy Spirit of God. He has come down from heaven to quicken dead souls into life, to dwell in the souls so quickened, to take of the things which are Christ’s, to shew them to such, and finally to consummate and perfect His work by quickening our mortal bodies, when our Lord shall come, and we shall be raised incorruptible, and be for ever with the Lord. There is never a moment in which the Christian does not need the Spirit’s help—no effectual work can be done, no word even is fitly spoken in the church or to the world but by the Spirit’s power:

Beloved Christians, let no man deceive you. The Church of God is formed of living members only—those who have life in Christ, and are eternally one with Him. Every such member is indwelt by the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians vi. 19), and whether few or many meet together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have *His* presence (Matthew xviii. 20); they are the temple of God; the Spirit of God dwelleth in them (1 Corinthians iii. 16); they are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22). It is a gathering together simply on the ground of having life in Christ. Woe to those who hinder a Christian taking his place among such. Woe to those who invent names, and make distinctions by which Christians are prevented from meeting with Christians to “worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

There were indeed lepers in Israel, but they were commanded to be put outside the camp until the plague of leprosy was healed. There were presumptuous, self-willed sinners who, under the judgment of God, perished in their sins. These were exceptional cases, and such cases, alas, will now never be wanting in the Church of God. “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person,” is God’s sentence of excision upon the evil doer, which *must* be obeyed, while the *rule* must be maintained intact and inviolate—“Receive

ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." So the apostle enjoins. This also the Holy Ghost manifested as the good pleasure of His will when He first took possession of and formed the church. "All that believed were together." Surely, surely, we must say, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Again, when these living members come together, whether to worship God in the Spirit, or to edify one another, they can worship and be blessed only so far as God is pleased to use the members severally as He will. HE must be the doer of all that is done, or the flesh will be opposing the Spirit, and man be found the antagonist of God! There may be weakness, there will be infirmity, but when God is really and entirely confided in, He will enrich and bless above all we can ask or think.

The Church of God!—its value and importance cannot be overstated. It is God's family—it is Christ's household; and in these two relationships are involved responsibilities to which our gracious God is most faithful, never forgetting the relationship He has Himself formed, always waiting to communicate His richest blessing even to the weakest and most wayward of His children. Not a child is forgotten, neglected, or disowned. His children indeed lose blessing, oh how much blessing! through unbelief, carelessness, disobedience, and the various forms of evil to which we are so prone;

but as it is written, "Jesus having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end;" even so our gracious God and Father in Christ Jesus will never leave, never forsake, until all His children are perfected in glory.

Ah! how sad it is when God has to address His people, and say, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if I be a Father, where is Mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is My fear?" How applicable is this language to God's people now. Many, indeed, care for their souls, and get saved by God's grace, but who cares for the house of the Lord, the commandments of the Lord, the ordering of His house, the sitting of His servants, the attendance of His ministers and their apparel? Who cares to set things in order, that God may be glorified, the Father honoured, the Master served, His people blessed, and His holy name magnified?

Some efforts indeed have been made to set things in order after a godly sort, but failure has come in as of old. Satan has succeeded in perverting and misapplying these very truths, and many are discouraged if not turned aside by the apparently abortive effort. False assumptions and an unscriptural unity have made sad havoc amongst many whose hearts were stirred within them to seek the more excellent way; bright hopes have been blighted, hearts have been sickened, and not a few led to despair of obtaining anything better

than what is unscriptural, and alas, so common.

We need not, however, though discouraged, be driven aside or turned back. Oh no, let but our hearts truly feel how God is dishonoured by His people—the children not obeying their Father, the servants not serving their Master—and we shall understand *why* blessing is withheld, and God “can have no pleasure in us.” Let our hearts really contemplate this, and if a spark of affection to Him who so loves us remains, we shall with one heart humble ourselves before the Lord, we shall cease to complain of each other, we shall judge ourselves and endeavour to learn how far *we* are personally responsible for bringing discredit upon the truth, and dishonour upon Christ.

Oh, let us return to the Lord from whom we have grievously revolted, let us confess our sins and evil to Him; He will have mercy upon us, yea our God will abundantly pardon. He who restoreth the soul, will restore and increase the blessing. Let us be determined to have God’s Word and God’s Spirit only, and we shall increase with the increase of God, we shall edify one another in love, come behind in no good work, and be found waiting for His Son from heaven. The Lord grant it all and more to us, for His holy and blessed name’s sake. Amen and Amen.

## A Few Thoughts on the Lord's Supper.

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**I**T is, perhaps, impossible to overestimate the importance of the Lord's Supper to the Christian. It is the spiritual answer to the commemoration of the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, as commanded by God to Israel. This is indubitably proved by those precious words—"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The Lord's Supper is not merely a memorial of the death and sufferings of our blessed Lord, but it is also a feast where our heavenly Father invites us to eat and drink, yea, feast with Him on the same Divine food as He Himself delights in. Marvellous miracle of grace! Poor, wretched, worthless sinners are brought into God's own banqueting house, and fed with the very bread of God—even Christ Himself. God finds His constant joy and satisfaction in His well-beloved Son, and He presents this precious Son to us, gives Him to us as our very own, and bids us eat His flesh

and drink His blood, and thus continually receive nourishment and strength.

No stranger or uncircumcised person, no hired servant was suffered to eat the passover ; and only those who have been redeemed and cleansed from their sins by the precious blood of Christ, made children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and separated from the world by the Spirit of God, have any right to partake of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, no others are invited or welcomed by God, nor even permitted by Him to partake of His sacred feast.

How important is this truth, and how careful we should be to see that all who venture to eat of this bread and drink of this wine, are those whose hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience, as manifested by the confession of their lips and the testimony of their lives, and are thus made capable of feeding upon the flesh and blood of Christ. It is an awful thing to make a mockery of this most solemn mystery of the faith of God's elect, and surely all who eat this bread and drink this wine with uncleansed hearts and consciences, do trample upon the Son of God, and treat the blood of His covenant as if it were an unholy or common thing. May the Lord preserve us from thus dishonouring Him, and eating and drinking judgment to ourselves.

It is remarkable that the passover lamb was commanded to be eaten "roast with fire." "Eat

not of it raw nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head, with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." Other sacrifices, such as the peace-offering, part of which was burnt upon the altar as a sweet savour to God, and the remainder eaten by the priests and the worshippers, were permitted to be boiled; but here the command is very stringent that it was to be roasted whole—and why? Is it not especially to bring before our souls the *sufferings* of Christ? In the Lord's Supper (as typified by the passover) the suffering, bleeding, dying Lamb of God is presented to us, and He asks us to remember Him as the One who suffered thus for us.

We may and should continually delight in Jesus as the loving gracious One, whose every thought and word was most precious to God. We joy in Him as the One whose heart was intent upon His Father's business, and whose meat and drink was to do His will. But in the Lord's Supper, Christ is presented to us as enduring the fire of God's wrath for our sins; and here the type comes short of the dread reality. The passover lamb was first slain, and then roast with fire, but the sufferings of our blessed Lord preceded His death. He was scorched, withered up, consumed with the intensity of that wrath. His heart melted like wax, and the fire entered into His bones, while the face of His God was averted from Him. Though His holy soul cried, yea, roared with groanings unutterable,

yet His prayer was shut out, and His cry unheeded—He was forsaken. Oh, who can tell the agony He endured, the price He paid to redeem our souls from hell!

“ Well He remembers Calvary,  
Nor let His saints forget.”

The whole of the passover lamb might be eaten, “his head with his legs, with the purtenance thereof.” So God has given us a whole Christ to feed on—all He is, and all He has, and all He has done. His deep unfathomable love, His mighty strength and power, His infinite wisdom, and matchless grace and tenderness, all, all is given to us: all is our present portion, and all may be enjoyed and fed upon according to the measure of our spiritual apprehension and appetite.

The lamb was fed upon during the night, and surely it is night with us now in the world, but blessed be God we can rejoicingly testify—“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” We are *in* the night but not *of* it, for we are children of the day, and we are waiting for that bright morning without clouds, when Christ shall come again and receive us to Himself, that where He is we may be also. But *now* is the time to *feed* on Jesus, and *only* as we feed on Him shall we grow like Him, or have strength and power to walk with Him, and do His will.

We feed on Him *now* (during the night) by faith with thanksgiving; He is the true and only nourish-

ment of our souls. Our spiritual stature depends on how much we feed on Jesus. We can only get power to mortify the flesh and grow up into His likeness by receiving continual and abundant supplies of the bread of life, and our future place in the acquired glory will correspond with our *present* likeness to Christ here.

The morning will soon be here, and as Israel were not permitted to eat the remainder of the lamb in the morning, so when we see Him as He is we shall no longer be able to feed on Him *by faith*. We shall be with Him and like Him, and shall eternally enjoy uninterrupted and unhindered fellowship with Him, and He will be our constant and eternal joy. Then faith will be changed to sight, and prayer to praise; but we shall no longer have the opportunity of glorifying Him by drawing strength from Him to overcome the sin that dwells in us, and the enemies who oppose us.

This is the time and the only time for feeding on the unseen Lamb of God, and this is the time to prove the mighty sustaining power of His flesh, which is meat indeed, and His blood, which is drink indeed. Oh may we be more earnest and intent on partaking of the Lamb roast with fire, and thus prove for ourselves the mighty transforming power of this blessed feast which our God spreads for us while passing through the wilderness.

## God's Joy in His Family.

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**G**OD'S object in our redemption is not merely that He might deliver us from hell, and take us to heaven. Great and glorious as this object is, and calling as it does for our adoring and eternal praise and gratitude, yet it falls infinitely short of the blessed purpose of our gracious God.

He desires to gratify the deep and overflowing affections of His own heart, by surrounding Himself with a *family* on whom He can lavish the fulness of His grace and love ; a family in whom He can delight Himself, and make them as happy as He Himself is happy ; a family who will reciprocate His love, whose every heart will beat in unison with His, and in the midst of whom He may regale Himself with the pleasant fruits of love, and gratitude, and praise, which He Himself has sown and cultured in them.

This deep and earnest longing of our God will be fully met in the home He is preparing for us in His courts above. All His children will *then* be conformed to the image of His Son. Each one will then shine forth resplendent in His likeness, all glorious within and without. Each one will respond to every desire of His heart, and gratify and glorify Him in every way ; and collectively they will form a family worthy of Him, made worthy through the worthiness of the Lamb.

What parent does not know the joy of seeing his children delighting in his love? This is the joy our Father seeks from us. What father does not desire to have his whole family happy and contented, each one filling and satisfied with his proper place and service, and all loving and caring for one another? This is our Father's desire respecting us; not only His future purpose, but His present desire; and a desire so deep and precious to Him, that He has made most wonderful provision for its present fulfilment. And shall *we* be careless and indifferent respecting it? Is it right that He should have no *present* answer to His love? no *present* delight in His family? Shall we be satisfied to postpone the joy of thus rejoicing our God until the future? Shall we neglect the *present* opportunity of gathering around Him, that He may delight Himself in us, and minister increased blessing to us?

He has redeemed us to Himself, and He seeks—yea, covets our love! Wonderful indeed that it should be so; yet is it blessedly true that He *values* our affection, and delights to have us near Him. He loves to hear our voice, and He rejoices over and treasures up any truthfulness of heart or real devotedness to Him. “The Lord's portion is His people.” The saints are His inheritance; aye more, they are “the riches of the glory of His inheritance.” Not only has He saved us with an everlasting salvation, but He has crowned us with

loving-kindnesses and tender mercies, and made every possible and needed provision for our *present* as well as future joy and blessing.

The deep desire of our gracious God to dwell among and delight Himself in His people was very early manifested in His dealings with man. When He created Adam and Eve in innocence, and placed them in the garden of Eden, He was accustomed to come down and walk and talk with them in the cool of the day; and when sin came in and marred this holy, happy intercourse, He did not rest until He had again restored them to His favour and presence. True they had to suffer for their sin, and terrible have been the fruits of their disobedience; yet His grace abounded and devised a way in which His banished ones might be redeemed and brought nigh. His Son, His well-beloved and only Son, was sacrificed in their stead; and pardon, life, and glory flowed to them through Him, and raised them up again to fellowship with God.

The same truth is unfolded in the history of the children of Israel. Redeemed out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb, and fairly brought unto Himself in the wilderness, we hear God say, "Let them make ME a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." True He had redeemed them; but how could holiness dwell with unholiness, light with darkness, perfection and purity in the midst of evil and pollution? The Lamb, the slain Lamb, is the blessed and perfect answer.

If we turn to Exodus xxix. 38-46, we find that when the sanctuary was formed, where God in His wonderful grace promised to dwell, the priests were commanded to offer two lambs upon the altar day-by-day continually, one in the morning and one in the evening. Thus morning by morning, as the sun arose, the sweet savour of the offered lamb ascended up to God; presenting Christ and His perfections, and pointing onwards to the precious sacrifice which He would make as the full atonement for Israel's sin. Again at even, as the sun went down, the bright flame of the evening-offering shone forth through the darkness, and spoke again to God and Israel of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

Thus Israel were never seen by God apart from the lamb. They were always under the shelter of its blood, and accepted in its perfections. These lambs were not offered for the priesthood only, but for the whole of Israel. The fire on the altar was never suffered to go out, and day and night the flaming fire or smouldering embers of the burnt-offering, perpetually presenting Christ, and ascending up as a sacrifice well-pleasing to God, brought down one continual stream of blessing from His gracious hand.

These lambs were the provision of His grace, that *He might dwell among them*; as He says, "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle

of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and Israel [margin] shall be sanctified by My glory. . . . And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God." Again and again He reiterates the same words—"that I may dwell among them" (see verses 45, 46), proving how deep and abiding was this desire respecting them.

Our God is the same; He changes not; and this is His *present* desire concerning us who are His children. He has given us JESUS, His well-beloved Son, as the sacrifice for our sin. His blood cleanseth from all sin, and makes us meet for fellowship with God. He has also given us JESUS as our perpetual burnt-offering; and not only have we redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, but we are also complete in Him, arrayed with His perfections, and accepted in the Beloved.

Thus our God and Father can meet with us, and speak to us, and delight with us in all that Jesus is and does. As Israel formed the sanctuary for God according to His own appointment where He might come and dwell among them, so now the new-born members of the family of God are builded together an habitation of God through the Spirit; and when two or three, or two or three hundred or thousand of these living members gather together in the name of Jesus they form a

*tabernacle for God*, where He delights to come and meet with them and reveal to them more and more of the riches of His grace and glory.

Not only does He dwell by His Spirit in every individual believer, as He says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Corinthians vi. 19), but He also dwells in the Church *collectively* whenever believers are gathered together unto Christ. The Lord Jesus has promised to be in the midst of even the two or three gathered together in His name, and He must be ever faithful to His promise, and ready to manifest HIMSELF and to delight Himself in us.

Oh, if our hearts were more alive to this truth, how different would our meetings be! What unction and power, what holy fear and reverence, would characterize them! what patient waiting upon God! what lowly sitting at His feet! Did we see Jesus *personally* in our midst, how humbly we should wait for His direction in all things! Each eye would be fixed on Him, each ear attent to hear what He would say, and in very deed we should look to Him to order and lead our worship. Prayer, then, would indeed be in the spirit, and not the mere utterance of words; and no one would venture to minister the truth unless he were very sure that He had bidden and empowered him so to do.

And is He less present because we do not see Him? Often indeed His voice is not heard because of our fleshly impatience. We do not realize His

presence, and therefore do not wait on Him, but attempt to do in our own wisdom and strength that which He in His grace is waiting for the opportunity of doing for us. We forget that we have to walk by faith and not by sight, and therefore fail to depend on the *unseen* but surely present Lord. Good intentions and knowledge of the truth are allowed to usurp His place, and the Spirit's manifested presence and power are greatly hindered. Though professedly waiting on the Lord, how often prayers are prayed, and hymns are sung, chapters read, and the truth ministered, and yet all is comparatively cold and lifeless. And why? Simply because the Lord's presence is not realized, and therefore He is not waited on to order our worship and supply our need.

"*There I will meet with you.*" Did we but remember this, how different it would be! When we come together it should be to *meet God*—not merely to meet with one another and refresh each other, but to *meet God*. He desires to meet with us. He loves to have the members of His family gathered together that He may joy in their love, and have the opportunity of enriching them still more abundantly out of His own exceeding fulness.

Shall we refuse to give Him this joy? Oh, rather shall we not cluster around Him, and with humbled, chastened spirits seek to listen to His voice, and give Him the opportunity of blessing us as He delights to do?

## The Pearl of Great Price.

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“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew xiii. 45, 46).

**H**OW unspeakably precious is the Church to Christ. Verily *she* is the “pearl of great price,” for which He gave up everything, yea even life itself, that He might buy her for Himself.

She was a lawful captive, the bond-slave of Satan, sold under sin, and nothing short of the precious blood of Christ could redeem her from the lake of fire. The Son of God must die; the holy, harmless, undefiled One must give His life a ransom; the Lord of glory must stoop to bear her shame and woe—or she must be lost for ever.

Oh what love He bare her! oh what a price He paid! It was love for *her* that brought Him from the realms of bliss to be the man of sorrows here. It was for *her* He gave Himself to suffer, bleed, and die: for *her* He endured the cross, and drained the bitter cup of wrath; yes, love, intense, immeasurable love, sustained His soul throughout that awful agony. He remembered the prize which would be the award of His suffering (Heb. xii. 2).

He looked onwards to the time when she would dwell with Him above, all pure and holy, without one spot or stain, *there* to reflect His glory—*there* to delight in Him, and fully respond to His love.

She is His bride, His dove, His love, His only one; the one whom He is forming for Himself, training and making meet for constant fellowship. There, in the highest heaven she will perfectly reflect His image. There she will walk with Him, and be His constant joy, and reign with Him to all eternity.

Oh, what a glorious lot is ours! Well may we trample on the world and all its fancied greatness, and triumph in our blessed Lord. Union with Christ, eternal, blessed, close companionship with *Him*, the gentle, gracious, loving Jesus; with *Him*, the high and holy King of kings. Who can describe the joy, or who can conceive the bliss?

“ Human thought is here confounded,  
'Tis too vast to comprehend.”

She is the darling of His heart, for whom we hear Him pray—“ Deliver My darling from the power of the dog;” “ rescue My darling from the lions.” In the intensity of His agony, when pouring out His soul an offering for sin, He still remembered her. There she lay enshrined in His affections, the object of His true and fervent love. Verily His love was stronger than death. It was a love which many waters could not quench, neither could the floods drown.

This precious pearl is the elect bride, chosen of the Father for the Son of His love; and when the King shines forth in His glory, the queen will be seen at His side enjoying and reflecting that glory. She is the “riches of the glory of His inheritance,” His own peculiar treasure.

Mark, it is not a necklace of pearls, but *one pearl*, and that a “pearl of great price.” This pearl is composed of *all* true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, for all such are baptized by one Spirit, into one body, to form the bride, the Lamb’s wife, the true Eve, taken out of the second Adam.

Some speak of Christ as “the pearl,” and verily He is a pearl of priceless value; but He cannot be the pearl alluded to in this parable: for how can poor bankrupt sinners purchase Christ? Who, indeed, does fairly give up everything for Him? And though it is our privilege and duty so to do, yet, how could that *purchase* Christ? What could we give that would be in any conceivable measure commensurate with His inestimable worth?

He is God’s *gift* to us—His free, His precious gift; and well may we clasp Him to our hearts and rejoice exceedingly that such a gift is ours.

“His gift of gifts, all other gifts in one.”

Such is His love for us; such is the price He has paid for us; and now what shall we render to Him, or how shall we return His love? He appeals to us so tenderly, and says—“If ye love

Me, keep My commandments.” Oh for more love, more devotedness, more alacrity, in His service, more love to and care for one another! Thus our God and Father would be glorified, and we should enjoy far more of that holy, heavenly fellowship which Christ has obtained for us.

## Satisfied with Christ.

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**T**HE Apostle Paul is presented to us in the Word of God as a pattern saint, and seems to stand pre-eminent among all the servants the Lord Jesus has ever had upon this earth. His devoted service, his continued labours, his fervent love, his earnest zeal, his patient grace, his deep humility, have surely been surpassed by none. His sufferings also peculiarly abounded. What persecutions he endured, what shameful treatment from the hands of the world, what base ingratitude from the saints of God, what traducing and maligning from those who ought to have loved and honoured him.

Still none of these things moved him. His face was set like a flint. He had drunk into the Spirit of Christ, and he was intent upon serving and pleasing Him. Not only was his *mind* filled and occupied with the truth of God, but he had a *heart* for Christ, and perhaps more nearly fulfilled that precept than anyone else (except, indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself)—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”

Now what was the secret of the apostle's faith-

fulness? and why is it that we come so far below him in our zeal and obedience? He was a man of like passions with ourselves, he had to contend with the same evil nature as we have, fightings without and fears within; and what is there to hinder us from attaining to the same measure of devotedness as he did?

We naturally shrink from measuring ourselves with the Lord Jesus. Though we thankfully own that He has left us an example that we should follow His steps, and rejoice to know that we are predestinated to be conformed to His image, and are fully assured that what He has promised He is able and willing also to perform, yet we feel that we cannot attain to His infinite holiness while in these bodies of sin and death. He had no sin within to struggle against, no innate iniquity continually cropping up. He was the holy, spotless, harmless, Lamb of God, whose every thought was pure, and every feeling intensely holy.

But in Paul we have a man like ourselves; a man with an evil heart of unbelief, and sin indigenous to his nature; and why should we not serve and follow Christ as he did?

Can we say that Christ was more necessary to Paul than to us, and that this gave Him more stedfastness of heart? or that there were richer supplies of grace provided for him than for us? Was he loved with a greater love than we are? or was the Holy Ghost more ready to take of the

things of Christ and reveal them to him, or more willing to minister to his need than He is to minister to us?

To all these questions we must answer *no*. We dare not assert, with the Scriptures in our hands, that there is less love, or less grace, or less provision for us in every way, than there was for him. "The grace of our God is exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;" and the Spirit of God in His unwearied love is ever ready and waiting to bless and enrich our souls.

Why, then, are *we* so poor and feeble? Oh, is it not because our eye is not single, and our heart is not engrossed with Christ? We want something for ourselves instead of everything for Christ, and this produces an uneven and wavering walk.

We read of some who should arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. These were evidently real believers, for they are distinguished from the grievous wolves who should enter in, not sparing the flock, and are specified as being "of your own selves;" and what was the secret of their failure? Was it not because their hearts were not satisfied with Christ, and therefore they wanted something for themselves? A name among men, a place in the church, the admiration of their fellow-disciples.

Not so with Paul. Christ was his all in all; his love was firmly set on Him, his affections twined

around Him, and he wanted everything for Christ, and nothing for himself. This nerved and sustained him in his path of self-sacrificing love. This gave him power to go on serving and caring for those who only gave him hatred for his love. This kept him from turning aside because of the afflictions that came upon him ; and this kept him steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Our hearts glow as we listen to his words of holy determination, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

He had received a special ministry from the Lord Jesus, and his heart was set on fulfilling it: and have not *we* received the same? Not the peculiar service that was committed to Paul, but has not the Lord Jesus committed to each of us a special ministry, a special sphere of service for Him which He would love to see us faithfully fulfilling?

Paul writes to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it." The kind of ministry is not mentioned, but it would not seem to have been a very prominent one. He is only named twice in the Word of God, once in the passage already quoted, and again in Philemon, where he is styled "our

fellow-soldier." And are not we also fellow-soldiers, called to fight the good fight of faith, and to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil? Does not the Lord say to each of us, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of Me, that thou fulfil it?"

Our service may greatly vary, but will anyone dare to say, "the Lord has not given *me* anything to do for Him?" If our service be in the kitchen, let us serve Him faithfully there; if in the workshop, let us seek there to glorify Him; if behind the counter, still there we may represent Him; nor is there any lawful position in life where we may not show forth His virtues. We are His witnesses, left here to testify for Him, and to show forth His praises in all our ways, and words, and acts.

Oh, for hearts to be satisfied with Christ! intently, continually, occupied with Him! Thus shall we be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and shall prove that we have a goodly heritage, and that the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places.

## “The Love of the Spirit.”

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**I**T is impossible to think or speak too much of the love of the Father in giving His only begotten Son to be the sacrifice for our sins ; nor can we overstate or overvalue the rich and precious love of our beloved Lord Jesus in giving Himself for us ; but are we not very prone to forget the love of the Holy Spirit of God ?

Do we consider His amazing condescension in taking up His abode within us ? the patience with which He bears with all our ingratitude and evil ? the gentleness with which He leads us on in the Divine life ? the grace with which He ministers to our continual need ? and the faithful love which induces Him to remain with us in spite of all our provocations and rebellion ?

“The love of the Spirit,” how great, how full it is ! He is that other Comforter—the joint gift of the Father and the Son—who delights to lead us into the enjoyment of all the spiritual blessings which are laid up for us in Christ Jesus our Lord, our Head. He has come down to this world of sinners to search out and prepare the bride for God’s beloved Son ; and He becomes the faithful

Sustainer and Instructor of those who yield themselves to His gracious power.

We get a faint type of His blessed ministry in Eliezer's conduct when he went in search of a bride for Isaac. (Read Genesis xxiv.)

Like Abraham's servant, the Holy Spirit speaks not of Himself, but takes of the things of Jesus, and shows them to us, enriching us with heavenly treasures, alluring our souls from the things of earth, and winning our affections for Christ Himself. Like him, too, He hastens us from our own people and our father's house, entreating us to come out and be separate, that we may be a holy and peculiar people unto our God. And also, like him, He undertakes to be our Guide and Protector, all through the wilderness, and promises to bring us safe home to our own "Isaac"—our true joy and "laughter"—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

It is *He* who convinces of sin and attracts the poor troubled one to Jesus. "When He is come, He will convince the world of sin."

It is *He* who quickens the soul into life. "It is the Spirit who quickeneth." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

By *Him* we are "baptized . . . into one body," and thus become members of the body of Christ, and are eternally united to Him as our living Head.

Upon believing we are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," and He is thus God's personal

seal upon us, marking and separating us as God's own peculiar possession and purchased people.

He is the indwelling Spirit, who, in rich and condescending grace, takes up His abode within us. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?"

Such truths may well stagger us, they are so grand, so marvellous! but faith listens, receives, and worships; yea more, faith delights in this glorious portion, which flows to us because of the infinite value of the precious blood of Christ.

We read of the holy anointing oil (which typifies the Spirit of God), that "upon man's flesh shall it not be poured" (Exodus xxx. 32), and yet *after* the sons of Aaron had been washed, clothed, and consecrated by the blood, Moses was commanded to sprinkle that holy oil both upon them and upon their garments. (Exodus xxix. 21).

So now, when a poor sinner has been cleansed in the blood of Christ and clothed with His righteousness, the Holy Ghost not only seals but takes possession of him, and dwells within him. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

He is the "Spirit of truth," who is given to us to testify of Jesus, to guide us into all truth, and to show us things to come; and did we yield ourselves to His teaching, we should know far more of the force of those words, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." He

would teach us to abide in Jesus, and abiding in Him, we should walk in the light of God, and be able to discern between truth and error.

It is *He* who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, and is thus the communicator of all our peace, and joy, and gladness.

He also teaches us to pray, helping our infirmities, showing us what we need, and enabling us to pour out our hearts before our God; and often indeed He makes intercession for us Himself, with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26).

It is He also who separates and consecrates us for God's service, who distributes the varied gifts which Christ has bestowed for the edification of His Church (see Eph. iv. 7-13, and 1 Cor. xii.), and empowers us to use them for God's glory and the blessing of His people.

Such are a few—a very few—of the things in which, as children of God, we are dependent upon the Spirit. And what heed we should give to that solemn and gracious admonition—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

His faithfulness and love are such that He will *never* leave us. Not all our wilfulness and sin can drive Him from our breast; but, alas! how He is grieved! Sin is a hateful, loathsome thing to Him. He is the *Holy* Spirit, and as the gentle dove He folds His wings and groans within us if we *indulge* in sin. But still He will not leave us.

No, He has pledged Himself to bring us safely home to Christ. He will not break His word, but as the faithful monitor, He speaks *within*. He speaks *reprovingly*. He will not let us rest. He tells us of our sin, and strives to draw us back to God. He does not cast us off, but our joy is gone; our peace is lost; we are shut out from fellowship with Christ, and have to prove the bitter fruits of sin, the wretchedness of distance from our God. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked;" and true indeed is this of wayward, wandering saints.

O that we were wise; that we understood this; that we considered our ways, and sought to walk humbly with our God! What gainers we should be! How deep the peace we should know! How full and unhindered the joy! And what strength we should receive, through the inworking of the Holy Ghost, to abound in every good word and work.

But more than this, the Holy Ghost is not only the indwelling Spirit to every individual believer; He is also God's gift to the Church *collectively*, as we read in 1 Corinthians iii. 16—"Know ye not that *ye* (the church at Corinth) are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Not only does the Holy Ghost distribute distinctive gifts in the Church of God, "dividing to every man severally as He will," but we also read, "All these *worketh* that one and the self-same Spirit." There may be much will-worship and

ministry of the truth, which is the fruit of man's natural power and intelligence, but such service is not well-pleasing or acceptable to God. The Holy Ghost is the *alone* power for worship or ministry, so that we are dependent, *entirely dependent*, upon Him for the *profitable use* of any gift we may have received for the blessing of saint or sinner.

When the Lord Jesus Himself was dwelling upon earth, He was led of the Spirit, and spoke and acted as empowered by the Holy Ghost. As the obedient Servant, we hear Him say:—"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself;" and again, "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things;" and even after His resurrection He, through the Holy Ghost, gave commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen (Acts i. 2).

This is a great mystery, and calls for our adoring worship; but surely, if the Lord Jesus when on earth only spake by the Holy Ghost, how important it must be that all *present* ministry of the truth should be under the leading, and in the power of the Spirit of God.

If *He* who was perfect in wisdom and knowledge waited morning by morning to hear as the learner, that He might know how to speak a word in season to him that was weary (see Isaiah l. 4), how futile and valueless must be all our efforts to speak of Jesus, unless we also are instructed and enabled by the Holy Ghost.

Surely we need increasingly to lay these truths to heart, and to wait on the Lord with that humble listening ear which would discern the Spirit's leading. Our worship *should* be in the Spirit and of the Spirit, and the mere energy and activity of the flesh is not acceptable to God; indeed, everything connected with His service and worship is of no real profit, unless it be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

We read of some who were "*filled* with the Holy Ghost, and with power;" and there is the same rich and full supply for us now. We are not straitened in our God. He is the same, He changeth not; and He is able and willing to make all grace abound toward us.

Let us, then, seek for a further "supply of the Spirit of Christ" (Phil. i. 19), that we also may "be *filled* with the Spirit;" and then we shall not only be empowered and fitted for the Lord's service, but we shall practically know far more of what it is to "walk in the Spirit," and "not fulfil the lust of the flesh;" and building up ourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, we shall keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 20, 21).

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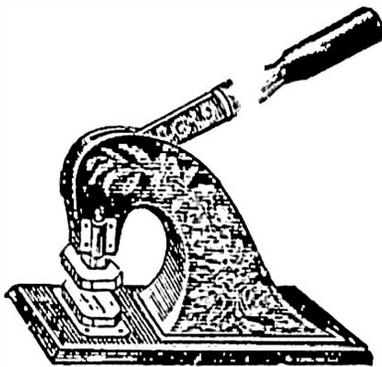
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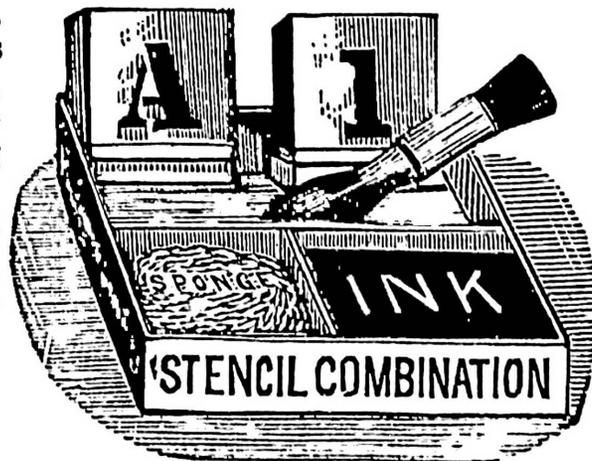
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