

Great Truths Simply Stated

SUBJECTS OF
PRACTICAL AND PERSONAL IMPORT
TO YOUNG AND OLD
ILLUSTRATED BY TYPE AND INCIDENT

BY
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Truth

“The Lord is good; His truth endureth
to all generations” (Psa. 100. 5).

“His truth shall be thy shield and
buckler” (Psa. 91. 4).

“Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will
walk in Thy truth” (Psa. 86. 11).

Preface



TRUTH needs to be served up differently for each generation. Some of the Great Truths dealt with in these pages were usually to be found only in ponderous works of theology which make little or no appeal to the present generation; it has been my delight to simplify and restate these things in a form easy to read and simple to understand.

Most of them are of Great Practical Importance and are such as have exercised the mind and hearts of sincere believers in all generations. Several of them represent battle fields where mighty men of God have contended for the truth, and by their love and zeal have cleared the air for future generations. As for example, "Christian Attainment," "Holiness," "Christian Liberty," "Victory over Sin," and "Guidance." Others such as, "The Judgment Seat of Christ," touch upon momentous questions that have been exercising many earnest Bible students lately.

All of them have been delivered as addresses and the majority appeared in *The Witness* from time to time. Expressions of help received from them have encouraged the publication of them in the present form.

I have noted in the homeland a falling off of attendance at Gospel meetings, but an increased interest in and attendance at conferences, meetings for teaching, and specially gatherings for the exposition of the Word of God.

Preface

This, I believe, indicates that here is a hunger not for a constant reiteration of certain elementary truths often called "the simple Gospel," but for more teaching and opening in greater detail of the glories of that Gospel and of the ways of Him who is the Centre and Object of it.

Who, for example, has not heard a hundred times the words "Jesus saves," but how far less seldom is heard clear instruction in that walk of faith through which is realised in experience the deliverance from the power and bondage of sins, or plain setting forth of *the conditions* upon which the Living Lord saves His people from their sins.

Or how often do we sing "He will guide me," and similar hymns, and how comparatively rarely hear *the principles* of guidance by the Spirit of God dearly set forth. Preachers have been prone to rest in generalities and not plough deep enough.

The papers in this volume are an endeavour to supply this lack in some small measure.

I commend them to the Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls that He may use them to enlighten, strengthen, and encourage those who desire to go all the way with Him.

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Unfolding a Prayer for the Word

"Jesus Himself drew near and went with them . . .
but their eyes were holden, that they should not know
Him" (Luke 24. 15, 16).

O UR eyes are holden, Risen Lord,
Thy form we may not see;
Yet open Thou th' engrafted Word,
And we shall walk with Thee.

Draw near, go with us on our way,
Unfold Thy Word in power;
Speak in the still small voice to-day,
And consecrate this hour

Rebuke our unbelief and fear—
"O fools, and slow of heart!"
Quicken our faith to know Thee near.
And light and truth impart.

Now let our hearts within us burn
With all-sufficient grace,
And as we to the Scriptures turn,
Let us behold Thy face.

O tarry with us, condescend
To bless and break the bread;
Our opened eyes shall apprehend
Our Lord, our Risen Head.

GEO. GOODMAN

GREAT TRUTHS SIMPLY STATED.

The Holy Scriptures.

AS the Scriptures form the basis of all that will be said in these papers it will be well to consider them first in order. What are they?

They form *the authoritative guide of the believer's life*. They are the revelation of God which, rightly used, supply all truth that pertains to life and godliness. They do not satisfy curiosity, they direct our way. They do not always explain, they guide. They make a stupendous claim, no less than this, that they are *God speaking to man*. They are God's Word as certainly and definitely as if His Voice spoke audibly and individually to each of us from Heaven.

This is certainly the claim they make, as can be seen from such Scriptures as 1 Thessalonians 2. 13, "Not as the word of men, but as it is in truth *the Word of God*, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Now, such a claim admits of no criticism. It must be accepted or rejected. The critic who rejects the claim cannot logically set up that the Bible is a good book written by good men, but not actually God's Word. He must either receive or reject the claim wholly, for if the claim is false

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then it is a lying book and must be denounced. If it is a true claim it is of course above criticism, for who shall criticise God? Think out this simple piece of logic. But we said, "*rightly used,*" they guide.

Addressed to the Sincere.

The Scriptures are addressed to the sincere. The challenge of John 7. 17 holds good at all times: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The trifler will get nothing but rebuke, nor will the wise man of this world, he is warned off (read 1 Cor. 1. 20-29). The Scriptures are spiritually discerned. The scholar cannot force his way in, the "babe" has it shown to him (Matt. 11. 25). The learned may be indignant at this, but it is quite clearly stated. The holy oracles (called "the faith") are addressed to faith, they are only for him who wills to do the will of God. He shall know. Such is their claim and promise, and we must of course take them as they profess to be or not at all.

"Lights and Perfections."

The Old Testament type of the Scriptures is found in the Urim and Thummim by which God answered His people in old times before "the faith" was complete.

The name "*Urim and Thummim*" is beautifully suggestive of the Scriptures. It means "Lights and Perfection" in the plural of superlative. This corresponds to the claim, "Thy Word is a light" (Psa. 119. 105), and "the entrance of Thy Words giveth light" (Psa. 119. 130), and "The law of the

Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psa. 19. 7). The Scriptures are to us what the Urim and Thummim were to the Israelite. They are the means of ascertaining the mind and will of God, that "good and acceptable and perfect will."

The position in which they were placed "*in the breastplate of judgment*" and "*upon Aaron's heart*" (Exod. 28. 29, 30) suggest the purpose for which they are given to us, to make known to us the judgments of the heart of God, to reveal the truth in love from the heart of our great High Priest, "who is full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

Their use, "*when he goeth in before the Lord*" (Exod. 28. 30), and to "*ask counsel*" (Num. 27. 21), indicate how the Scriptures should be used. We must carry them into the Lord's presence and ask counsel by them there. For the Spirit that inspired them can alone interpret them (1 John 2. 27).

"God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

No one must be allowed to usurp in our lives the place of authoritative interpreter. Each is directly responsible to God for the knowledge of His will. This is what is meant by the word, "Ye have no need that any man teach you anything, but the Anointing which ye have received teacheth you of all things, and is truth" (1 John 2. 27). The ultimate decision rests with you before God.

As one who had been delivered from Romanism once said, "She preferred the milk direct from the Word, as she found the Roman milkcans dirty," and she might have added, the milk woefully adulterated.

SEVEN POINTS ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE.

Let us then take seven points which you can pass on easily to others. The Scriptures are:

1. Given by Revelation. Revelation is something made known by God of which man could otherwise have had no knowledge or certainty. This is constantly asserted through the Scriptures. More than two thousand times do words of this kind occur, "Thus saith the Lord," "God said," and so on. Three-fourths of the book comes to us under such words. Paul claimed the same thing, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1. 11) One Scripture in each case must suffice.

2. Written by Inspiration. We are told that "All Scripture (that is, holy writing) is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3. 16). Not only was the truth given by revelation, but the committal of it to writing was "by the inbreathing of the Spirit."

3. Claimed by the Holy Ghost. *David* writes a psalm, and it is quoted thus, "As the Holy Ghost saith" (Heb. 3. 7). *ISAIAH* writes, and it is thus quoted, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet" (Acts 28. 25). And again we read, "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of *DAVID*" (Acts 1. 16).

4. Confirmed by Christ. His words are often quoted, they should never be forgotten: "Thy Word is truth" (John 17. 17). "They (the

Scriptures) testify of Me" (John 5. 39). "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10. 35). And after His resurrection, "He expounded unto them in all the Scripture the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24. 27); and "opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24. 45).

5. Opposed by Satan. It has been the business of "the father of lies" to reflect upon the Word of God. From his first question, "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. 3. 1); and direct contradiction, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3. 4), he has opposed the truth, and will till the final apostasy. He frequently uses the wise of this world.

6. Received by the Saints. It is a mark of the true believer that he accepts the Scripture. "I," said the Lord Jesus, "have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them" (John 17. 8). Heresy, which is a departure from the faith revealed, is a mark of God's disapproval. "There must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest" (1 Cor. 11. 19).

7. Rejected by the World. The world has its own wisdom, and with a supercilious smile it rejects the testimony of God because it does not agree with its ideas. It is sure it is right, but we are warned that "their minds are blinded" (2 Cor. 3. 14), being unregenerate, "they cannot know them," and "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8. 20).

Our State by Nature.

A BOY once asked me the following question, “Do we sin because we are sinners, or are we sinners because we sin?” There is no doubt as to the reply, “By one man’s disobedience many were *made sinners*” (Rom. 5. 19). We are sinners by inheritance from Adam, and, being sinners, we sin. What can one expect from a sinner except sin?

This truth is not always grasped by the young preacher. He begins his preaching at what is often called the A, B, C of the Gospel, with the statement, “All have sinned” (Rom. 3. 23), and often enforces it by illustrations of sins committed, and then sums up the argument in some such words as these: “One sin makes a sinner, just as one murder makes a murderer, and so we’re all sinners and guilty before God.” This is right enough, and as to the personal guilt true enough, but it is not the way in which Scripture presents it.

Look at Romans 5. 12: “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned,” or as in the Revised Version,

“All Sinned.”

How and when did “all sin?” Not, as we see from verse 14, “personally,” for death passed on many

who never sinned personally in the way Adam did (for example, innocent babes, who also die), but all sinned in Adam. Adam sinned his whole progeny and race, so that the whole became a race of sinners. Thus we are sinners, and sin.

Therefore when you preach the Gospel, begin as God does, at the beginning. Do not urge "you are a sinner because you sin," but lay this on the heart of your hearers, and do it boldly, in great plainness of speech. "You sin, and sin and sin again, because you are a sinner (a fallen creature). Nothing else can be expected. God expects nothing else, and tells you so." A sinner will sin. Why not? Do not apple trees bear apples, and fig trees figs? Listen to the Lord's simple, forceful inquiry, "*Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*" (Matt. 7. 16). Of course not. Like produces like. A sinner sins, and goes on sinning, and will do till he dies.

A rough lad came into the inquiry room, and on being asked what was wrong, replied, "I've been sinning against God." "How is that?" "I don't know." "Can you tell me what tree apples grow on?" "Yes, an apple tree." "And pears?" "A pear tree." "And what sort of person do sins grow on?" A moment's thought, and then his answer,

"A Sinner Tree."

Yes, that is the root of the matter. Man sins because he is a sinner. See, then, that you press home this great fact, after this manner:

"Oh, poor sinner! There is no hope of anything

else, except you find salvation you will sin, and will go on sinning till judgment falls on you. See your awful state, your desperate need of a salvation to meet your case? Your nature is to produce sins. It is you, and not merely your sins that are condemned. The tree, and not the fruit only, must be cut down and cast into the fire!”

But you may ask, How does that affect the question of guilt and responsibility? The reply might be given that it is a guilty thing for a sinner to sin, and each sinner who in his turn sins personally is not excused; but God in grace tells us that sin is not imputed “where there is no law” (Rom. 4. 15). So that while death passes on the innocent babe, personal guilt does not. Moreover, God tells us that condemnation is not going to be for Adam’s sin, but for the rejection of the salvation provided. This is plainly set forth in John 3. 18-21. Light is come, and the sinner’s responsibility is to receive and believe in the Light, or perish in his sin.

The Infidel’s Challenge.

Once, after an open-air meeting, an infidel took up the challenge boldly in the following way: “I cannot help being born in sin, can I?” To which he received the unexpected reply: “Yes, certainly.” “What do you mean? How could I help it?” was the scornful demand. “Friend, if you had asked me, ‘Could I have avoided being born in sin?’ I should have replied, ‘No,’ for it is true you had no personal choice; but if you ask,

'Can I help it?' I reply, 'Yes,' for long before you were so born a Saviour died, and now risen and living at God's right hand offers you salvation. Help is laid upon One that is mighty. So while you could not choose, you can help it. For just as you were born a helpless babe, needing a mother or you must have died, so you were born a sinner needing a Saviour.

It was perhaps, as Bunyan would say, "lying at the catch," but it served to astonish and awaken interest and call attention to the fact that while man was a sinner by birth, he was guilty by personally sinning, and condemned for not availing himself of the salvation provided. It will be readily seen that while a thief is not excused stealing because he is a thief, nor a drunkard drinking, because he is a besotted man, yet the real cause of his

Ultimate Ruin and Condemnation

is that when grace proffers him salvation, deliverance, and new life, he rejects it. Nor is that all, sin, the law of our fallen nature, continues with us to the end. We are delivered from its guilt and power by grace; but apart from Christ, who delivers us, are "wretched men" (Rom. 7. 24), and "can do nothing" (John 15. 5).

Look carefully at the oft-quoted Romans 3. 22, 23. It is rather disguised in the Authorised Version, but is clear in the Revised Version, "There is no difference, for all sinned (all in Adam, and many personally) and fall short of the glory of God." Note the tenses, "sinned,"

completed, past; and “fall short,” continuing, present. So our condition is not only that we being sinners have sinned, but that we do to the end of our lives fall short of God’s glory. *Christ is God’s glory*—the standard and measure of God. Is any man, even the holiest child of God, prepared to say he does not daily and hourly fall short of God’s glory, that is, in likeness to Christ? Nay, the holier the saint the more he knows and confesses the fact.

Then obviously any salvation provided for us must meet the case, not of our fallen nature and past sins only, but of our continuous failure. Such a salvation cannot be by merit, for we fall short every hour to our dying day. It must be all of grace from the first cry for mercy to the entrance into glory.

The Salvation of God

AND THE MORAL ORDER IN IT.

SALVATION is a big word. It covers the believer's experience from first to last, from the earliest conviction of sin to his entering into the final salvation "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1. 5).

But the word salvation is used in a limited meaning in Scripture as well as in the larger sense. In Romans 5 it is contrasted both with justification and reconciliation. "Being now justified we shall be saved" (v. 9). "Much more, being reconciled (by the death of His Son), we shall be saved by His life" (v. 10). Salvation here means deliverance following upon reconciliation and justification. The sinner must be reconciled before he can be delivered. Many a man would like a moral deliverance from sins that annoy, spoil the life, and disgrace him, who is not willing to submit to the righteousness of God or be reconciled to Him, or walk in His will. We must be careful not to offer a salvation from sinning that leaves the sinner estranged from God.

For example, one frequently hears a Gospel preached thus: "Trust Jesus, and He'll save you from your sins; whenever you are tempted just cry to Him," or, "Ask Jesus to keep you." Now this may be good advice to a converted man, but to an unregenerated soul it amounts to salvation from sinning, that is, a moral deliver-

ance by a system of ejaculatory prayer (a practice common amongst Romanists) without any previous reconciliation to God or new birth. It is the natural man trying to use the believer's armour.

This brings me to the point:

There must be Reconciliation before there can be Salvation.

There must be peace with God before there can be power from God. Sin (rebellion) must cease before the sins can be overcome. Salvation is proclaimed to the reconciled sinner, not to the rebel.

There is a moral order in the Gospel which must not be overlooked. The sinner reconciled by precious blood, justified by grace through faith, he, and he only, enjoys the deliverance, the salvation of God.

Let us consider a little this moral order in salvation.

1. It Begins with the Preaching of the Gospel. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10. 14). This is God's chosen means: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1. 21). But the Gospel must be preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven" (1 Peter 1. 12).

It is not a moral or logical argument, or persuasion merely. It is a *revelation* to each soul (Matt. 11. 27). It is addressed "to him that worketh not," but who hears with "the hearing of faith."

2. The Effect of the Gospel is to Produce

Repentance and Faith, as on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 37). Any presentation of the Gospel that makes either repentance or faith a kind of work precedent to salvation must be wrong.

Dr. Watts wrote:

“ Repentance is to leave the sins I loved before,
And show that I sincerely grieve by doing so no more.”

But with all respect to the great divine, is not this the result of repentance rather than repentance itself? Repentance is a change of mind.

The exalted Saviour at God's right hand *gives* repentance (Acts 5. 31). It is a change wrought by the Spirit (true, also righteously demanded, but not produced by the law) in the mind of him who hears with the hearing of faith. The love of God, the grace of Christ, the value of the blood of Calvary, brought to the heart by the Spirit through the Gospel, change the sinner's mind and he repents. He agrees with God, and condemns himself as a guilty sinner, and desires to be at peace with a righteously angry God and to leave off sinning against Him.

3. Then Follow Reconciliation and Justification, as the sinner believes the good news preached in the Gospel. It is no longer hidden from him. His eyes are opened and he sees. He looks to the Saviour lifted up, and lives. Christ has died for him. It is enough. Peace follows, and he knows himself justified freely by grace through precious blood.

“Justified,” it has been well said, may be pronounced, “JUST-AS-IF-I'D-DIED,” and its meaning becomes clear. Yes, to be justified means

to be treated of God for Christ's sake just as if I'd died, for the sinner realises that Christ died for him, and in Christ his Substitute he died, and "He that died is justified from sin" (Rom. 6. 7, R.V.).

4. Thus a New Relationship is Established between the Soul and God. The justified sinner becomes a child of God by receiving and believing upon the Lord Jesus (John 1. 12). All is changed, but it is not all. It is but the beginning of a new order. It seems much, but there is much more to follow.

Let us suppose a preacher to children offers a sixpence to "whosoever believed," and would accept it. A boy at once springs to his feet and comes for it. The preacher, wrapping it in paper, gives it to him, and then inquires, "What have you there?" The boy, answers, "Sixpence, sir." "Look and see," says the preacher. The boy accordingly opens the paper and sees, instead of a sixpence, two golden half-sovereigns. He had come for little, he received much. This is the case with our Saviour. We flee to Him for refuge, to be saved from the avenger of blood, we receive "much more" (Rom. 5. 9, 15, 17, 20). What is given at conversion?

5. The Holy Spirit and Eternal Life, by New Birth, through the Spirit (Acts 2. 38; Rom. 6. 23). Life is a powerful thing. It begins to move, to work in us, to assert and manifest itself. This life is not independent of Christ, it is "in Him" (1 John 5. 11). It is Christ in us. It is His power working in us to deliver us from the power

and reign of sin within. Keep then the distinction clearly in your mind.

Christ FOR us on the Cross for reconciliation.

Christ IN us by His Spirit for deliverance.

Now the reconciled, justified man can enjoy deliverance, or salvation from sinning, not before reconciliation, that is impossible, but resulting from it. Matthew 1.21 teaches this: "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save *His people* from their sins." They must be His people before they can expect Him to save them.

David understood this. He said, first, "I am Thine," then he could cry, "Save me" (Psa. 119. 94).

On one occasion, dealing with a man seeking deliverance from the power of drink, I reasoned thus with him: The curse and slavery of drink that is upon you is comparatively a small thing in God's sight, for He can set you free in a moment. The greater matter is your relation to Him. While you continue in rebellion, while you refuse to be reconciled, there can be no peace and no deliverance. God's first word to every sinner is, "Be ye reconciled to God." It is a simple matter then to knock off the prisoner's chains. For when reconciled:

' He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
And sets the prisoner free.'

It is important to keep this moral order of salvation in view. First, Reconciliation or Justification, then Life, and then Deliverance or Salvation from Sinning, and all the blessings of the New Life in Christ that follow.

Justification by Grace.

WHEN we add the letters “*ify*” to a word in English we mean that the person or thing is made that which the word signifies. For example, add those letters to “beauty” and it becomes “beautify,” or to “glory” and it is “glorify.” We make beautiful or we make glorious.

So with the word *just*. Do we desire to make or declare a person just, we justify him and speak of him as justified. Now *just* means to be right in God’s sight, so justify means to make a man just in God’s sight, to constitute him right with God; not inherently good or sinless, for man is admittedly a sinner with sin in him, but to adjust his relationship with God so that he is right with God, and though having sin in him, God has no charge against him. The sin fact having been so dealt with by God that the sinner is justified or right in His sight, notwithstanding the fact of its presence. “How can man (a sinner) be justified with God?” asked Bildad the Shuhite of Job. It is

The Question of the Ages,

and the answer is given in the epistle to the Romans. It is all-important, for until I am right with God, how can I begin to live so as to please Him? It is the initial step. Until it is settled I am all wrong, and shall continue in the wrong path.

SEVEN THINGS ABOUT JUSTIFICATION.

There are seven things set before us as to justification. They are worth noting.

1. THE SOURCE. "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8. 33).

2. THE SPRING. "Being justified freely by His grace" (Rom. 3. 4).

3. THE GROUND. "Being now justified by His blood" (Rom. 5. 7).

4. THE PROOF. "He was raised again for (because of) our justification" (Rom. 4. 25).

5. THE MEANS. "Being justified by faith" (Rom. 5. 1).

6. THE EVIDENCE. "By thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matt. 12. 31).

7. THE FRUIT. "By works a man is justified" (James 2. 24).

The first thing to be noticed is that man can take no steps to justify himself. It is something done for him. It is a gift given to him, the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5. 17).

Justification "Not by Works."

Man is told to "work out his own salvation," but that is after he has been justified. He is never told to work out his own justification. It cannot be done. Being justified he can enjoy and in fellowship with God work out the deliverance God works in him (see Phil. 2. 13 and Col. 1. 29), but no deliverance is wrought in him until justification is an accomplished fact. It is emphatically stated that it is "*him that worketh not*"

(chap. 4. 5) whom God justifies. God has manifested a righteousness which is apart altogether from law keeping (see Rom. 3. 21, R.V.).

The sinner plays no active part in his justification. He hears, believes, receives, and rejoices in it. It is "not of works," but being "unto good works" (Eph. 2. 9 and 10) works follow as fruit, but not as the efficient reason or means.

Justification by Faith Alone.

MARTIN LUTHER is generally credited with having rediscovered and taught "justification by faith," but the Romanist never denied this. What he denied and does deny is justification by grace; or, if you will, justification by faith *alone*. He will agree justification is by faith, but by making repentance a work and faith a meritorious thing and mixing works with it he in effect seeks to justify himself by actions of his own.

There is an old story told of two Scotch elders crossing a ferry in a boat rowed by a knowing old member of the kirk. On the way they fell to discussing the right place of faith and works, and were growing more and more emphatic and less and less reasonable as they went on.

Presently the rower put down one oar and rowed hard with the other. The boat accordingly went round in a circle. This interrupted the argument, and the elders demanded an explanation. He replied, "This oar I call 'faith,' and if I row with it alone we get no farther. This other I call 'works.' I must pull with both if I am to go forward."

Now this is a plausible bit of sophistry. We

are not justified half by faith and half by works, but by faith only (Rom. 3. 28). "See that ye bring back that little word '*alone*,'" said Luther to the delegates who went to discuss a possible adjustment with the Romanists. By faith alone.

What does *justification by grace* mean then? It means, first, that it is

By the Sovereign Act of God.

Mercy to the guilty is a divine prerogative. He has Himself declared that is in His gift. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (Rom. 9. 15).

This gives a very solemn aspect to the matter, for while God declares that He delights in mercy, yet He is not mocked, and reserves the right to make one an example of wrath and another of mercy. He made Pharaoh an example of wrath (Rom. 9. 17), and Paul an example of mercy (1 Tim. 1. 16). If you bear this in mind when preaching the Gospel you can warn the trifler thus: Mercy is God's prerogative. He may extend it to you or withhold it, and make you an example to others of His anger. Beware then and haste to His door, and seek it without delay lest He withhold it. Let your language be:

"Depth of mercy! Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?"

The light language of some beginners who speak as if the sinner could have salvation just when he pleases, and as he likes, is fatally misleading. It is according to the election of grace, not at the changeable mood of the sinner.

Justification—Gratuitous.

Justification by grace means, further, that *it is gratuitous* in the sense of being unmerited and unearned. It is given freely. Being justified “freely” by His grace (Rom. 3. 24). The word freely is translated elsewhere “for naught.” We are justified for naught, and again, “without a cause.” We are justified “without a cause” in us. There is no merit or work in our cry for it, our sense of need of it, or in the faith that accepts it. It is described by the Lord thus, “When they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both.”

Justification—Irrevocable.

It is this that makes it *irrevocable*, for merit neither gains nor loses it, and we are told “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11. 29).

Justification by grace means also that it is *a gracious thing*. There is love in it. It is according to the nature of God, who is unchangeably and eternally the God of all grace. He is “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exod. 34. 6, 7).

He was “in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” when Christ died on Calvary (1 Cor. 5. 19). His own love was seen there (Rom. 5. 8). It was He that devised that means by which His banished ones be not expelled from Him. For in order to be just, as well as Justifier, He dealt with sin at the cross, and permitted the Just to

suffer for sin, "the Just for the unjust" making propitiation. It is in this sense that we are "justified by blood."

Go and learn what that means. "*It is of faith that it might be of grace.*"

In former superstitious days it was held unlucky to give the present of a knife. In order to prevent it being a gift a farthing was handed to the giver. A farthing that it might not be of grace (that is, a free gift). But God has made His salvation of faith (for nothing) that it might be of grace. Faith has no merit, it takes and says, "Thank you."

"O bring no price His grace is free,
For Paul, for Magdalene, for me."

Assurance of Life.

THE assurance of salvation is a priceless jewel. The Roman Catholic theologians say, "Assurance of salvation is the chief plank in every heresy." Thereby they confess that they have none; but their sneer does not deprive us of the inestimable privilege of having not only salvation in Christ, but the *knowledge* of it (Luke 1. 77).

Assurance is twofold. First, that we are saved; then that we shall continue so till the end. This latter truth is called "final perseverance." We believe that the Lord never loses one of His sheep. They continue by grace. As one Puritan writer said, "I believe in the perseverance of the saints, because I believe in the perseverance of the Saviour."

Blessed assurance! "Saved by grace, and that for ever."

But assurance, like many another doctrine, has been very loosely taught, and this has caused thoughtful souls to hesitate. It is a solemn thing to say, "I know I'm saved." It should not be said without the best and most reliable ground for the assertion.

I have often been deeply distressed to hear some enthusiastic preacher say, even shout in his zeal, "Do you believe that? Then you're saved."

Now, such a parody of the truth must not go

unchallenged. No one is saved by believing *that*. Salvation is in and by a Living Person, the Divine Son of God, “neither is their salvation in any other.” Believing the greatest truths cannot take the place of receiving and believing upon the Person.

It is true my believing certain truths is an evidence that I am born again, but that is another matter. Evidence of salvation is not the same as the way of salvation. Salvation is by accepting Christ, not by believing this or that.

There are

THREE MEANS OF ASSURANCE,

set forth in the Word of God. They may be called external, internal, and evidential.

1. *External* is assurance by the Word of God.
2. *Internal* is by the witness of the Spirit.
3. *Evidential* is by the fruit in the life.

1. ASSURANCE BY THE WORD OF GOD.

This has been so much taught among us that it has almost led to the others being lost sight of. “He that believeth *hath*,” we hear repeated, with the H-A-T-H strongly emphasised. No objection can be taken to this, for it is blessedly true—a simple piece of logic. If I *believe* I *have*.

But did it ever occur to you that what troubled souls need is not persuading that *if* they believe they have, that is quite simple and clear, but *do they believe?* The question they put to their hearts ten thousand times in deep concern is not “If I believe shall I have?” but “*Hast*

thou faith?" "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Any one who has worked much among anxious souls knows this to be so. The little logical formula, "He that believeth hath—I believe, therefore I have," does not relieve their trouble. Think on this that you may learn to help others.

I am not wishing to lessen the value of the Word of God as the ground of our faith, but there are right and wrong ways of handling it. I once had a boy ask me, "How do you know you are saved?" I replied, "I can tell you in three words, I BELIEVE GOD." That is so. The Word of God assures us, but it only assures those who believe, those who are children of God. The others it assures that they are lost.

2. THE INTERNAL ASSURANCE.

This is best stated in the words of Romans 8. 16 "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;" and in 1 John 5. 10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him" (that is, I believe "in himself," as in the A.V.).

Now what is this witness of the Spirit that I am a child of God? It must be a blessed thing, and therefore I want it. I cannot rest on any logical argument merely, I want the witness within.

JOHN OWEN, greatest of Puritans and theologians, states it thus:

"Sometimes the soul is put to question whether it be a child of God or no. The Spirit comes and bears witness in this case. An allusion it

is to judicial proceedings. The judge being set, the person concerned lays his claim, produces his evidences, and pleads them. His adversaries endeavour all that in them lies to invalidate them and disannul his plea, and cast him in his claim.

In the Midst of the Trial

a person of known and approved integrity comes into the court and gives testimony fully and directly on behalf of the claimer, which stops the mouths of all his adversaries and fills the man that pleaded with satisfaction.

“So it is in this case. The soul by the power of its conscience is brought before the law of God. There a man puts in his plea that he is a child of God, and for this end produceth all his evidences, everything whereby faith gives him an interest in God. Satan in the meantime opposeth with all his might, sin and law assist him, many flaws are found in his evidences, the truth of them all is questioned, and the soul hangs in suspense as to the issue.

“In the midst of the plea and contest the Comforter comes, and by a word of promise or otherwise, overpowers the heart with a comfortable persuasion (and bears down all objections) that his plea is good, and that he is a child of God.”

Let us see to it that this witness of the Spirit is enjoyed undimmed, for if He is grieved, we may argue as we will, we shall not enjoy the rest and peace of full assurance.

3. THE EVIDENTIAL ASSURANCE

is that taught by the first epistle of John. The epistle speaks of eternal life, it is the possession of every believer, and the apostle writes to us that we may know that we have it (chap. 5. 13). But how does he proceed? Notice he says again and again, "By this we know," "Hereby we know," and "In this the children of God are manifest." He does not say we know by believing this or that, but by certain fruits which show that eternal life is in us, and is showing itself by these signs of life.

Such signs of life are given, for example, in chapter 2. 3, keeping His Word; chapter 3. 10, not continuing in sin; chapter 3. 14, love of the brethren; chapter 5. 4, overcoming the world. These, and many others, "assure our hearts before Him" (chap. 3. 19), and give us boldness and confidence, the full assurance of faith that we have eternal life, and are manifesting it in our life and walk.

A light and careless assurance not evidenced by a life of holiness may satisfy the foolish professor, but no one outside will believe him. He may shout, "I know I'm saved," but his hearers will go away saying, "We know he isn't," or, "We are not so sure of that as he is."

How different the language of John the apostle, "*Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous*" (chap. 3. 7).

Practical Sanctification.

HOLINESS is inward and outward purity. It is expressed in the word, "Blessed are the pure in heart." It is likeness to Christ in His perfect separation from all evil. He was "holy, harmless, and undefiled" (Heb. 7. 26). To be holy or sanctified is to be like Him in this, that both thought and walk are clean, unstained, undefiled.

It is true that to sanctify means to set apart, but it is to set apart *by cleansing*. "Come out, and be ye separate," is the call. How? "Touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6. 17). "If any man purge (wash) himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, *sanctified*, and meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2. 21).

Now a believer is holy in his relationship to God, because he has been set apart through the cleansing by blood (Heb. 10. 10). He is to be holy in his daily life by the purging or washing of himself (2 Cor. 7. 1).

David knew this, for in Psalm 86. 2 he prays, "Preserve my soul, for I am holy," and in another place adds, "I will wash my hands in innocency" (cleanness) (Psa. 26. 6). He recognised his position and also his responsibility in practice.

The monks made the mistake of thinking that forced separation would make them holy, whereas, in truth, holiness effects separation, and not separation holiness.

The Holy Man is Separated

because of the moral and spiritual difference in character between him and those among whom he moves. He is clean among the filthy, and this being maintained effects true separation. He will not consent to defile himself or his garments by contact with, that is participation in, evil. So the Lord Jesus was "separate from sinners," though in grace "a friend of publicans and sinners," and moving freely among them.

A young girl wrote me thus: "What is the good of my staying at home when all the rest are at the theatre, and I wish I were too?" The reply is, "Little or no good." If the heart is not holy and the spirit of the mind not renewed no abstinence from certain things will produce a really sanctified life.

So that to be practically holy is to be pure in heart, to be clean, as it is written, "Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7. 1).

The law had many a shadow of cleansing. Type after type is set before us to show how nothing is acceptable to God that is not clean. No one might draw near to worship or serve Him who was stained or defiled. Nothing is beautiful in God's eyes that is dirty, therefore we must worship Him in "the beauty of holiness."

I propose to set before you

Three Great Types of Cleansing

from the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

I. *The cleansing effected at the altar* (see for example Lev. 17. 30), where atonement was made, "That ye may be clean from all your sins."

II. *The cleansing by the ashes of the red heifer* as described in Numbers 19, and

III. *The cleansing by the water of the laver* taught in Exodus 30. 17-21.

Let us call these, for the easier remembrance, cleansing by blood, cleansing by ashes, and cleansing by water.

The first is a *completed* cleansing, the second an *occasional* cleansing, the third an *habitual* or daily cleansing. Each of these represents, in figure, a cleansing needed by the sinner saved by grace.

I. CLEANSING BY BLOOD.

This is the initial "once-for-all" cleansing of the guilty soul from condemnation and the guilt of sin. It was effected at the cross when the holy, sinless Son of God became the Sin-bearer, the Lamb of God, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9. 26) for all who are found in Him.

This cleansing is not repeated, for "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14).

What a cleansing! What a wonder of grace! Whatever cleansing of the feet may be after required, the one "once bathed" in this precious blood is "clean every whit" and "perfected for ever." We need not dwell on this, but look next at

II. CLEANSING BY ASHES.

Will you read Numbers 19 carefully? It is

worth while, that you may more perfectly appreciate how “the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified” (Heb. 9. 13). It was God’s provision for those who had *consciously defiled themselves* by touching dead things.

It typifies the provision made for the believer who has been overtaken in sin, and has a conscience troubled by known and conscious defilement, who is in that state spoken of in 1 John 2. 1, “If any (Christian) man sin.”

“Touching the Dead”

is, in figure, having to do again with those things from which we have been saved. Those “dead works,” that is, works practised by those dead in trespasses and sins from which the Lord Jesus purged us (Heb. 9. 14).

How shall the believer’s defiled conscience be cleansed? By the ashes of the heifer. Thus he needs no second cleansing by blood, but that faith should recall that once-for-all atoning. Ashes speak of the remembrance of a completed sacrifice. It is in the remembrance alone, in its continued power over the conscience, that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses (goes on cleansing) us from all sin” (1 John 1. 7).

But these ashes must be sprinkled with

The Water of Separation.

This water of separation is the application of the Word of God to the defiled conscience in self-judging and self-cleansing and separating from the evil thing. The sevenfold godly repentance of 2 Corinthians 7. 9-11 is an illustration of the

application of the ashes with the water of separation. It effects a purification from sin, a clearing of oneself after a godly sort.

For a believer to go on with unconfessed, unjudged, and unpurged sin on the conscience is to invite chastening of the Lord (1 Cor. 11. 32). But "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11. 31). This is the washing with the ashes of the heifer. See to it that whenever your conscience is consciously defiled you apply the water of separation.

III. CLEANSING BY WATER.

But there is beside conscious sin *the unconscious defilement* that comes to us all as we walk in this sin-stricken world. The hands and feet become contaminated, so that they often need washing. Although we have not touched pitch, or wilfully, or even knowingly, any unclean thing, yet our hands get dirty without our perceiving it.

Who would go long without washing because they have not knowingly dirtied the hands, even when sitting down to a meal it is thought desirable to wash first. So a believer, if he would keep clean, must often wash, though not consciously troubled by sin or an evil conscience.

This washing is typified by the laver, wherein the priests were bidden to wash their hands and feet "that they die not." Whenever they went into the Tabernacle or came near to minister it must be so.

What does the Water in the Laver Represent ?

Water in Scripture, when living or flowing, is

a type of the Spirit ; and when still, of the Word of God. To wash at the laver represents the “washing of water by the Word” (Eph. 5. 26), by which the Lord sanctifies and cleanses His Church. It is that whereby a young man cleanses his way (Psa. 119. 9). It represents the daily meditation in God’s holy oracles which, applied by the Spirit to the heart and life, effects the cleansing of the mind, heart, and way. It is the sanctifying of John 17. 17, for which our Lord prayed, “Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth.”

As the Word of God passes through the mind, and is applied by the Spirit, it washes away unholý conceptions, wrong ideas, and unclean desires. It effects the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12. 2), which transforms. It reveals Christ to the heart, so that beholding His glory we are changed into the same image (2 Cor. 13. 18). Thus the inner man is

Purified and Sanctified.

Would you then be holy, see to it that you are clean through the blood, recognise that by one offering you have been sanctified and perfected, then keep a good conscience in all things, never allowing unjudged sin to remain there, and see to it that daily you wash yourself in the pure water of the Word before you attempt to serve the Lord in the holy place. The floor of the holy place was the common earth. To serve in the holy place, then, is to walk the common round, to perform the trivial task in holiness of life.

Recovery from Moral Evil.

“CAN the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?”

These words are often quoted to show the hopeless state of the natural man and his need of regeneration, but a careful reference to the context shows us that the words refer to the power of evil habit. “Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil” (Jer. 13. 23).

Now many, when they first turn to the Saviour, have been accustomed to do evil. Habits have been formed that are of great strength, so that they are the “servants of sin.” The mind habitually turns to evil thoughts, the will has often become morally weak, and yields readily to what is felt to be shameful, so that the man cries out, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?”

Any one who has had to deal with a convicted drunkard will recall the sad cry, “It’s no good, I can’t,” or with one who is under the power of evil conception, so that of their eyes it is said they are so full of evil that they “cannot cease from sin,” will not easily forget the solemn and bitter confession, “I have tried,

Only to fail again and again.”

I once slept on the Derby Course with a Chris-

tian worker who had been a gambler at horse-races, and he assured me that no power but that of Christ could ever break the strength of the gambling habit. "It is the worst of all," he said, "It is awful." But it has been the glory of the Gospel that it is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Millions have been saved from the chains of habit. All down the ages men have testified with joy unspeakable, "Jesus saves." No case has proved too hard for the risen Lord. Glory be to His holy Name!

Yet we must not rest in generalities. Many who read these pages will, while gladly confessing the truth of this great fact, yet welcome some teaching on the subject. How shall this be? On what conditions may I know this deliverance from the power of evil habit and thought? When Paul instructed Timothy how to deal with those that oppose themselves, he added, "If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may *recover themselves* out of the snare of the devil." It is this "recovery" of the sin-entangled soul of which I desire to speak.

The moral is like the physical. Each obeys certain fixed laws, and these must be followed if the desired results are to be obtained. Moral health is as much a matter of discipline as physical health. Recovery from disorder in one is as recovery from the other, the outcome of precaution and care.

There is no royal road to the mending of a broken leg, or short cut to the straightening of

the crooked limb. Time, patience, and wise conduct are required in each case.

But one may object: Did not Jesus heal immediately, and does He not save men from moral infirmity instantly they call?

May I Not be Free at Once?

Now in this matter again the physical and moral are on the same level. Christ healed physically immediately all who touched Him. Does He do so now? "He can," you reply. "True, but is it always His will? Did not Paul (of whose miraculous power there can be no doubt) leave Trophimus at Miletum sick? Was his advice to Timothy as to his "often infirmity" sound, if no sickness was of the Lord's will? Or the illness of Epaphroditus, and his own thorn in the flesh, do they not teach that the Lord's will is that often the discipline of illness is one of His ways of spiritual strengthening?

So with the moral. The recovery of moral strength and self-control is often a matter of slow discipline. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 23) that is the result of a habitual walk in the Spirit. It is to be added to faith by all diligence (2 Peter 1. 6).

Do not let me seem to limit the power of God. There is no limit to the possibilities of faith. "Nothing shall be impossible to you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." He can, He will save at once where the conditions are at once observed and maintained. But how many learn the obedience of faith and the walk in the

Spirit at once? The stern discipline of failure is often needed, as in David's case. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy law."

The outcome of these things may be summed up under

FOUR POINTS CONCERNING RECOVERY.

I. The Lord delivers at once those who call upon Him. He says as of old, "Thou art loosed." But to walk in and maintain that liberty is the discipline of faith. In Ephesians 6. 13 (margin) we are told, "Having overcome all, to stand." Get free and keep free. Let faith rise and shake off the shackles, and then let grace be sought not "to turn again to folly."

II. In order to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus we must understand our standing in grace. We read: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace." The promise is grand, but the reason, do you understand it? Because "under grace."

Unless I rest in this fact that my acceptance with God is not conditioned on my walk, but is absolute and eternal through the blood of Jesus, I shall never be strong. The word in Hebrews 10. 14, "By one offering perfected for ever," O wondrous truth! must be fully grasped, for only then can the soul be disentangled from the guilt that would prevent its rising from the dust and recovering itself.

III. There must be a godly walk, an apprehension, a laying hold daily and hourly of Christ

as the occasion demands, that His power may rest upon us. This is called "walking in the Spirit," and the promise is, "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

There is no other way of recovery, there is no deliverance for the trifler, or for the sluggard who desires and has nothing; it is for the real and the sincere only. I cannot enlarge, but will treat of this in another paper.

IV. Old habits must be displaced by newly acquired ones. The formation of godly habits of thought, of will, and mind require time, but oft repeated effort by faith will result in the habit of faith, in the blessed regularity in holiness that is the greatest earthly blessing. It is what Paul described as "For to me to live is Christ." So habitually did his mind turn to his Lord and Saviour that it was his life, his ordinary and habitual way of living.

"Overcome Evil with Good."

Overcome evil habits by forming good habits. This is the plain meaning of the word. "Make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame (morally lame) be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed" (Heb. 12. 13).

Some years ago a young man consulted an older worker on this solemn subject. He found himself morally weak against the power of evil, and sought counsel and advice. The case was one of a will weakened by habitual yielding to evil, and the lameness needed to be healed. The worker

bade him arrive each morning at the office a little earlier, and together they sought the recovery that is alone to be found in Christ. Failure was confessed, and each morning grace for the day sought to bring every thought into obedience to Christ. Gradually the mind was renewed, the will strengthened, the heart established in grace, till at the end of six months the older brother was satisfied that the lame was healed, the habit of overcoming acquired, and the recovery complete.

So real is this deliverance given by the Lord that another said to me, "I can hardly believe I am the same person. It seems like a terrible nightmare from which I have awakened."

Walking in the Spirit.

IT is a good thing to know the correct answer to a question. It is like a formula in mathematics. Once you are sure it is right you can give yourself diligently and safely to its working out and application.

Now the inspired answer to the question, “How may I cease to fulfil the lusts of the flesh?” is, “*Walk in the Spirit*” (Gal. 5. 16). This is God’s great formula for His saints. Let them apply it, and the result will be a holy life.

But many find themselves at a loss here. It is foreign language to them. What does it mean in practice to walk in (or by, R.V.) the Spirit? It shall be my part to define, explain, and illustrate this great word.

The Definition.

A safe definition would be, “To walk according to the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit of God.” “According to the Word of God,” as stated in Psalm 119. 9, because that word is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and contains His mind for us, and in the power of the same Holy Spirit, because even with a “perfect law of liberty” we shall fail in keeping it if we have only our own resources.

It is also called, “Walking in Christ,” because

it is Christ in us by His Spirit who leads, teaches, and enables us to walk in the revealed will of God.

The Holy Spirit of God is said to work in us in three ways: He *convicts* (John 16. 8, R.V.); He *lusts* (Gal. 5. 17); He *shows* (John 16. 14)—of course among many other blessed operations, but these shall suffice to explain what it means to walk by the Spirit.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS.

Most of us know by experience what “conviction of sin” means, because we have experienced it either before, at, or after conversion.

See, here is an unawakened sinner. You read to him God’s judgment of man, “All have sinned;” “Guilty before God” (Rom. 3. 19, 23). “Oh, yes,” he replies glibly, “we’re all sinners, I know that,” and goes his way as careless as before. His head knowledge has not become conviction. But later you meet him again. He looks worn, restless, and distressed. You ask, sympathetically, “What is the matter?” He answers with a groan, “I’m such a sinner.” “Why, what have you been doing?” He replies in anguish, “It’s not that I’ve done any particular thing, but I’m conscious that I’m an awful sinner in God’s sight. I’m lost. What must I do to be saved?” At once you recognise the work of the Spirit. He is convicted of sin.

Now the Spirit who first convicted us of our need of a Saviour as lost sinners continues the same work in the hearts of His people. Wherever there is sin, wherever the flesh manifests itself by

the motions of sin, then the Spirit convicts of sin and warns the believer of its presence and of his danger.

To walk by the Spirit is to obey from the heart, to *take the warning* at once, to yield prompt obedience to His voice who dwells within our body.

David stayed at home from the war (idle times are dangerous times) and walking on the house-top saw that which excited lust in his heart. The Spirit warned him (Psa. 51. 11). "David, you are in danger. Cry to Him whom you so often called 'My Rock, my strong tower, my salvation, the strength of my life'" (Psa. 27. 1). But, no, David refused to heed the warning, disregarded the Spirit's call of alarm, did not walk according to it, and the lust conceived (as all unmortified lust will) and brought forth sin, with its following of shame, disgrace, and reproach to the Holy Name. To walk by the Spirit, then, is to walk by His warning voice, and when warned, to call upon the Name of the risen, saving Lord.

II. THE SPIRIT OF GOD LUSTS.

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" says James. In Galatians 5. 17 we read, "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh."

What is this "lusting" of the blessed Spirit of God in us? It is the creation in us of holy and right desires, and the urging of us to fulfil them. Just as the flesh lusts, soliciting us to evil and creating unholy desires, suggesting and urging

upon our minds every form of wrong conception and imagination, which if yielded to will produce in our lives any or all of the sixteen horrible works set out in Galatians 5. 19, so the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit of Truth gives to us desires of a godly sort, solicits and invites us to holy things, specially persuading us to resist the flesh and its invitations, for it is against the flesh that the Spirit lusts with such jealousy and envy. He is jealous over us as a husband who might see the affections of a beloved wife drawn to another object.

You have perhaps seen children make a see-saw by placing a plank across a log of timber. You have also seen a boy stand on the centre of the plank and by a motion of his body give his weight to either side, depressing either end as he will. That boy represents our will. On either side there is a call, an invitation, a solicitation. On the one hand by the flesh to fulfil its lusts; on the other by the Spirit to obey His holy voice. Your will must decide. If you walk by the Spirit you will throw your whole weight in the full and glad surrender of heart obedience upon Him whose you are, and will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but walk according to the holy lusting of the Spirit.

III. THE SPIRIT OF GOD SHOWS.

Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you," and again, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14. 26).

This He continues to do in our hearts. When we are tempted He reminds us of the all-powerful One who is our Saviour, who is able to succour them that are tempted. He brings many a precious promise to our minds in power. He enforces many a word of power in our enlightened conscience and spiritual mind. He shows us the way of escape (1 Cor. 10. 13). He witnesses to us, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30. 21). "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man" (Job 33. 30).

Our part is to walk by His guidance and to yield obedience to the light given. Walking in the Spirit is called

"Walking in the Light"

(1 John 1. 7), because as God is Light, so the Spirit of God is Light, and sheds light on our path, we are to step out in it.

One said to me once "When I was saved God gave me light so quickly that it was difficult to keep up with it." It is ever so. The Spirit shows the next step. Walk in it, for it is the way of deliverance. Light disobeyed is to go again into the dark and all its sorrow.

Walking in the Spirit is called

"Walking in Love"

(Eph. 5. 2), because as God is Love, so is the Spirit Love, and sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5. 5). He shows us what is the loving thing to do, to say, to act. Let us walk by this love.

This walking in the Spirit is the only way of holy life, of sure and complete deliverance from the flesh and its lusts. It is the walk with the eyes to the Lord. As one has described it: "It is the difference between a true abiding in Christ and the pursuit of what seems to ourselves the way of right."

It is not living by a legal code, but the life of liberty in a living, loving Saviour, who by His Spirit dwells ever in us. John Newton put the same thing into rhymn thus:

“ By various maxims, forms, and rules,
That pass for wisdom in the schools,
I sought my passions to restrain,
But all my efforts proved in vain;
But since the Saviour I have known,
My rules are all reduced to one,
To keep my Lord by faith in view,
This strength supplies and motive too.”

Godly Habits.

“JULIUS is very fearful of missing prayers; all the parish supposes Julius to be sick if he is not at Church. But if you were to ask him why he spends the rest of his time by humour or chance? Why he is a companion of the silliest people in their most silly pleasure? Why he is ready for every impertinent entertainment and diversion? If you were to ask him why there is no amusement too trifling to please him? Why he is busy at all balls and assemblies? Why he gave himself up to an idle gossiping conversation? Why he lives in foolish friendship and fondness for particular persons that neither want nor deserve any particular kindness? Why he allows himself in foolish hatreds and resentments against particular persons without considering that he is to love everybody as himself? If you ask him why he never puts his conversation, his time, and fortune under the rules of religion, JULIUS has no more to say for himself than the most disorderly person: . . . and if JULIUS were to read all the New Testament from beginning to the end he would find his course of life condemned in every page of it.”

The above will be recognised as a quotation from “Law’s Serious Call,” with its inimitable fancy portraits. We at once recognise

Julius as a True Type.

Precise in his narrow legality to the “religion”

of his “church,” and utterly careless as to the government and control of the rest of his life. He is ignorant both of the nature of true worship and of godly living.

But while we smile at the skilful caricature, let us ask our own hearts how far they are guilty of the double mistake of the foolish Julius. How far is our exactness in “religion” (I use the word in its generally accepted meaning) mere legality and bigotry, and to what extent our lives and conduct are ungoverned and lived in a loose hap-hazard way? Both are displeasing to God—*legality* on the one hand, and *lawlessness* on the other.

To reduce worship and devotion to a system—a settled round of performance—is sooner or later to have the form of godliness but to deny the power. Almost the whole of Christendom has gone back to law in this matter, and generally the stricter the persons in the religious observance, the repetition of liturgies, creeds, and prayers, and the keeping of fasts and days and seasons, the more bitterly opposed they are to the Gospel and spiritual ministry of the Word. They love their legal bondage and resent any interference with it. Such see no objection to the whist drive (even on Sunday after service), the theatre, the novel, and the dance. They are not narrow, they say, but we must except their religious observances, for in these no bigot could be narrower or more intolerant.

Now the Scriptures are clear that both the one and the other are wrong, the

Legal Religion and Lawless Living.

Worship must be "by the Spirit" (Phil. 3. 3; John 4. 23), Spirit taught, Spirit led, but then so must life and walk, for as clearly as we are told to worship in the Spirit, so we are bidden to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5. 16). Both the walk and worship are to be of a piece, both are to be subject to, led and controlled by the Holy Spirit. And just as Spirit-led worship will be done "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14. 40), so will a Spirit-guided life.

"Decently and in order" has been wisely rendered "*in a becoming manner and according to the divine order.*" Let our lives as well as worship be "as becometh saints" (Eph. 5. 3), and be lived "according to the divine order."

"So let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace."

There is a divine order, or rule. It must not be reduced to a legal bondage, or a formal round, but neither must our lives be irregular, erratic, occasional and careless.

Order, Rule, and Habit

have their place in godly living. Habitual godliness is godliness regularly and wisely maintained so that it becomes the habit of our lives. Indeed it is because of the absence of godly habits or habitual godliness that there is so little growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The heart is not habitually established by grace, but only occasionally and in fits and starts, and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is

not regularly cultivated, so that no divine intimacy is acquired. "The people that do *know* their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Dan. 11. 32). Grace and peace are multiplied to us in the knowledge of Him, but how fitful and with what long intervals is our fellowship with Him!

A habit is formed by an effort regularly made and constantly repeated. It should be our ambition to become regular in godly ways so that they become habits. Every occasion missed delays the formation of the habit and weakens it. There should, therefore, be a persistency in our efforts to be godly—a "patient continuance in well-doing" (Rom. 2. 7), an "all perseverance," a losing of no opportunity.

Let me by way of example name

THREE GODLY HABITS

that we should do well to form.

1. Feeding Upon Christ.

There is no habit we are more regular in; naturally, than taking our meals. We never miss them without some unusual and urgent reason. Now we are told again and again in the Word that our souls are fed upon the Bread from Heaven—Christ, the Heavenly Manna (John 6. 53-58)—that pondering the Scriptures He is therein so revealed to faith that we are enabled to eat and drink of Him, to believe upon Him and appropriate Him, so that we live by Him. But, alas, how irregular are these spiritual meals! How often are we faint from want of food and hungry and thirsty in a land of plenty. When will our

foolish hearts learn the necessity and the wisdom of godly regularity, of persistency in this matter until the habit of communion and a blessed regularity in feeding upon Christ is formed.

2. Godly Conversation.

It is written, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4. 6). A really spiritual man is discovered in this, his conversation is habitually sincere, earnest, and godly. He shows a constant and habitual occupation with the things of God, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaks. He loves profitable interchange of holy thought. To be with him at any season is to be brought into the presence of the Lord, and to go away refreshed and profited. He finds no time for jesting, idle stories, or light talk. He is not constrained, his language is free and unaffected, but grave and gracious. He exemplifies the Word, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in every place" (2 Cor. 2. 15).

Is it not in this very matter that the present generation differs from the saints of former days? The quick change from holy exercises to hilarity and joking, as if the former were a strain imposed upon the mind, and when released the mind reverts to its easy carelessness rather than continuing habitually in gravity and spirituality.

No serious effort is made to direct and continue the conversation aright, to guard against its degenerating into trifling small talk so that unconverted listeners gather that after all we are much the same in tastes and conversation as themselves.

Is it not worth while to cultivate a more spiritual and guarded talk, to acquire by repeated effort in Christ the habit of holy conversation? The world looks for it in God's people, the Lord's people lament its absence and go hungry away from many a table which they hoped had proved a feast of good things from lips that should be the lips of the righteous that feed many.

3. To Love and to do Good.

TO SEEK THE HAPPINESS AND PROFIT OF OTHERS BY KINDNESS AND THOUGHT. What a blessed and desirable habit! But how many are set on practising kindness, on doing good as and whenever we have opportunity! How beautiful is goodness, that fruit of the Spirit! How blessed to follow His steps of whom it is said "He went about doing good" (Acts 10. 38). Do we practise it? Do we make repeated effort to this end that we may acquire the habit of love, kindness, and goodness? Some do; their very faces show it. Their habitual, ready, unaffected self-denial in little things show that they have learned of Him and practised what they learned of the One of whom it is written "even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15. 3).

Such are the habits of an ordered life. A life when care and purpose are taken by repeated effort in Christ to acquire regularity, constancy, and habit in holy living. It is by such well ordered effort as leads to acquired habit that we shall attain to a holy life.

Guidance—How Known.

THE mark of the sons of God is that they are “led by the Spirit of God” (Rom. 8. 14). Many of them were formerly “Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led” (1 Cor. 12. 2). God’s children are no longer independent, they are “guided where they go;” faith is submission to the leading hand of God, and they walk by faith. But while this is one of the first principles of the new life in Christ in practice it is not always easy to know the will of God. It often requires much exercise of heart, and those who are older in the way will tell you that herein lies the greatest discipline of life, to know and walk in all the will of God.

Importance of the Choice.

Some one tersely said, “The unconverted are called on to choose between Heaven and Hell, but the child of God to choose between Heaven and Earth.” It is often that a decision has to be taken between the way of the world and the path of faith; the way of life that is “above to the righteous.”

Let me then state some general principles of guidance for the help and encouragement of beginners.

I. GUIDANCE THROUGH THE WORD.

The Spirit guides through the Word. The Spirit that inspired the Word dwells in our

bodies (1 Cor. 6. 19), and witnesses to us in power to the truth of that Word.

Hence the first great rule of guidance is never to admit anything, as leading, that is contrary to or inconsistent with the oracles of God.

To say "I felt led" to do a thing not sanctioned by Scripture is to lie, and not to have the truth or light in you (Isa. 8. 20 ; 1 John 1. 6).

The Young Lady and Her Lover.

Some years ago a young girl came to me saying she wished to know God's will on a certain matter. After some hesitancy it appeared she was engaged to an unconverted man, and wanted to know what to do; she was not sure of God's will. "But," I replied, "have you never read 'Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers'?" (2 Cor. 6. 14). "Yes," she knew that. "Then you do not need further guidance; there is no difficulty. That is the Lord's will. You know it; you have but to obey."

II. GUIDANCE BY CONSCIENCE.

Yet guidance is not always so clear as to have a Scripture directly in point; but in addition to Scripture God has given us other means of knowing His will. They are two.

1. In all matters of moral right and wrong **conscience** rightly instructed will direct us; and,
2. In all matters of discretion **judgment** will be a guide.

A believer must never sin against his con-

science. He should be able to say with the apostle, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience (a good witness to have on your side), that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our walk" (2 Cor. 1. 12).

It is true, conscience needs enlightening by the Word and Spirit of God, but so enlightened it will prove increasingly a sure guide in right and wrong. Keep then a tender conscience and you will do right.

A watch is a good time guide on a cloudy day, but it needs adjusting from time to time by the sun that it may be kept as a safe guide. Notice the number of men who stop and adjust their watches by the synchronised clocks in the city, and you will see how they value a well adjusted timepiece.

The Horse and the Ass.

Then judgment will guide you in matters of discretion. "The meek will He guide in judgment" (Psa. 25. 9). God has given us "the spirit of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1. 7). He bids us "be not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding" (Psa. 32. 9). It is sound advice to a young believer not to behave like an ass! that is, without good judgment or common sense. He is expected to pray that his "love may abound yet more and more in all judgment" (Phil. 1. 9). "God has no pleasure in fools" (Eccles. 5. 4).

There are many things in which God's way may be clearly known if in subjection to God a sound mind is brought to bear on the matter.

III. GUIDANCE BY THE SPIRIT.

But there are matters in which the Lord's people need guidance where no definite Scripture is in point, and conscience and judgment cannot decide. Such, for example, as a father seeking a school for his son, a mother looking for an opening for her girl, a young man or woman seeking the will of God as to marriage (of course to a believer, but not to any believer, for marriage must be "in the Lord," that is, in the will and under the guidance of God), or a young believer exercised as to going to the foreign mission field. In these, and all such cases, the heart cries, "Show me Thy will, O Lord!" How shall the answer be known and recognised?

First and foremost there must be a *willingness* to go either way as God shall direct. Unless there is an honestly open mind with God it is but mocking God to ask with a predetermination as to what you will do.

This is to try and persuade God to give you your own way, not to seek His. It was Balaam's sin (see Num. 22. 12-22), and nearly cost him his life. If you insist God may give you your desire, but send a leanness into your soul (Psa. 106. 15).

When GEORGE MULLER sought guidance on some step in his path of faith he tells us he spent the first part of his time before the Lord in self-examination as to whether he was willing to receive God's answer "Yea" or "Nay" and abide by it. He tells us, moreover, that having once received clear light

on a step, and decided his action, he never altered that decision, but went forward in faith.

The Gipsy and Her Stick.

A gentleman once saw a gipsy woman walking in front of him till she came to where two ways met. She then threw up her stick and let it fall on the ground. This she did three times. Curious to know why she acted so, he asked her, "Why did you throw your stick into the air?" "Oh," was the reply, "that's the way I decide which road to take." "But you threw it up three times." "Yes, the thing would point that way, and I wanted to go this."

Given then this open mind, and simple, sincere, desire to know and do God's will, how shall it be ascertained?

The Pillar of Cloud and Fire.

Let us look at the great type of guidance given us by the Holy Spirit, that of the pillar of cloud and fire. Turn to Numbers 9. 15-23, and read the portion carefully.

No simpler figure could have been chosen. There before them was the cloud turning to fire at night. It was a covering from the heat by day and a light in the night (Psa. 105. 39). Wonderful figure of the Holy Spirit, both Comforter and Guide! He never took it away (Exod. 13. 22), even in their most rebellious days. They had but to look up to resume their path of guidance. Wonderful grace! Note that in Numbers 9. 15-23 there is seven times repeated "*At the commandment of the Lord*" they journeyed or stayed.

The Secret of the Lord.

The believer who is guided receives a command from the Lord. How? Ah, that is "the secret of the Lord" that is "with them that fear Him." But God does make His will known, and when He does it comes with the power of a command to the heart.

The child of God cannot always say *how* he knows, but he knows. He knows so surely that if he steps out in the path indicated he does so with joy and assurance; if he does not he feels that he grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit.

It was so with Paul and Silas when they "gathered assuredly" they were to come to Europe and preach the Gospel there for the first time (Acts 16. 10). Dreams are unreliable, but here the dream given to Paul indicated God's will, not by itself, but with all other things considered.

"How He has guided; this, they cannot tell,
Only they know He doeth all things well."

Guidance cannot be reduced to a mathematical formula or a legal code. *It is the path of faith.* It is a revelation, an indication of the mind of the Lord.

IV. GUIDANCE OF EXPERIENCE.

Several other principles are learned from the great type of the pillar of cloud and fire. *Faith must learn to wait.* It must not go without or before the Lord. "Whether two days, or a month, or a year" (v. 22). Faith must wait. Many a young man would rush to the mission field in the

energy of the flesh, but let him see to it that the pillar of cloud moves or he goes to sorrow and disappointment.

Discipline, teaching, experience may be needed before the cloud moving says "Go." "When the cloud tarried long . . . they journeyed not."

ABRAHAM wearied of waiting for the promised heir, and resorted to expedients. He only thereby begat a persecutor for the heir of promise, an Ishmael to mock Isaac (Gal. 4. 29; Gen. 21. 9).

SAUL, tired of waiting for Samuel, "forced himself," and offered a sacrifice, thus sinning in his haste. Do not force yourself to do that for which you have no clear guidance. "Though it tarry, wait for it."

Faith Must Obey at Once.

When God makes His will known, then act, and act at once. Delay is dangerous. David said, "I made haste; I delayed not to keep Thy commandment." Abraham rose up early the day he had to offer up his only son. Whose faith follow, for "in keeping of His commandments there is great reward." Thus, watching, waiting, and following, we shall be led on safely.

Christian Attainment.

A CHRISTIAN of old is said to have prayed, “Lord, make me as holy as a saved sinner can be!” And how holy is that? This is a question that has exercised the hearts and minds of the children of God all down the ages. They have observed that in Scripture no limit is put. “All things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9. 23), and “Nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matt. 17. 20), are the words of our Lord. Is it any wonder, then, that those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, whose hearts have been ravished by His dying love, should long intensely to cease from sinning and thus grieving Him, and should strain every muscle as they reach forth and press toward this prize?

At every revival that has swept over the land the question has been raised afresh and fiercely contested. Those converted and carried along in the stream of the enthusiasm gendered by such revivals have generally been found contending for sinless perfection, for perfect love, for full consecration, or entire sanctification. The phraseology has differed on almost every occasion, but the contention has been the same, the young life, new born and vigorous, has urged that

Great Heights of Experience

are to be known; the older and soberer have

hesitated and called for caution. Daring language has been used by the one, and no doubt unbelief has often limited the other. On both sides were giants and holy men.

In Cromwell's days we find JOHN BUNYAN rebuking GEO. FOX for his claim to direct revelation and sinlessness. In the revival in France FENELON and Mde. GUYON suffering persecution and the Bastille at the hands of BOSSUET for their doctrine of perfect love. In later days WHITEFIELD and TOPLADY contending with JOHN WESLEY and the saintly FLETCHER of Madeley for their teaching of perfection. And JOHN ANGEL JAMES repudiating the teaching of the great revivalist, CHAS. G. FINNEY, who only allowed what was wilful to be sin.

In our own day "eradication" and "advanced" holiness teaching have caused much exercise of heart. What shall we say to these things? Perhaps two points may first be noted, one that much lay in the faulty expression and use of language, and then that whatever there was of failure in expression must not discourage us from seeking

' The Highest and Best ;

from aiming at the enjoyment of all that the Lord has for us in Christ. There is no doubt that the Lord Jesus can do far more for us than we have yet known.

Perhaps the case of Wesley furnishes us with the best illustration of differences arising from the use of language. As is well known, John Wesley taught that a believer could be perfect. These are

his words: "They are now in such a sense perfect as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers." He did not himself claim to be perfect, but in a letter written in 1762 he tells of "forty or fifty people who declare (and I can take their word, for I know them well) each for himself, 'God has enabled me to rejoice ever more, and to pray and give thanks without ceasing. I feel no pride, no anger, no desire, no unbelief, but pure love alone.'"

But he states that they are not perfect in the sense of being free from ignorance, mistake, infirmity, and temptation, and never in a state not admitting of increase, and in another letter he includes "negligences" and "omissions."

When, however, he comes to discuss this freedom from evil thoughts he says in his sermon on "Wandering Thoughts" (No. 41, the very next to that on "Perfection"):

"To expect deliverance from wandering thoughts occasioned by *evil spirits* is to expect that the Devil should die; . . . to expect deliverance from those occasioned by *other men* is to expect that men should cease from the earth; . . . to pray for deliverance from those which are occasioned by *the body* is in fact to pray that we may leave the body, otherwise it is praying for absurdities and impossibilities, praying that God would reconcile contradictions by continuing our union with a corruptible body without any of the necessary consequences of that union."

Now, no one questions the godliness or sincerity

of John Wesley, a man greatly beloved, but that his words

“Perfect” and “Sinless”

allowed for all these things, negligences, omissions, mistakes, ignorance, and evil thoughts suggested by demons, men, and the body, shows that it is not the perfection others thought he contended for. As to those forty or fifty who felt no pride, etc., we would suggest that perhaps they scarcely distinguished between having pride and feeling it.

But the controversy is history now, intensely instructive to read, and valuable as exercising the heart on the subject of attainment.

Mr. SPURGEON'S clever remark as to one who claimed perfection is true of these old saints:

“We all thought our brother was perfect until he told us so.”

To claim perfection is but to confess a deficiency of spiritual discernment or to make a misuse of terms.

But let us not be satisfied with imperfection and habitual failure. God forbid. We are called unto holiness, and it is not how much sin may be excused or failure expected, but how full a deliverance from it may be realised. Let us ask then

WHAT MAY WE EXPECT TO ATTAIN TO?

1. We may expect to attain to

A Full Assurance of our Acceptance

in Christ, of the forgiveness of all our sins, and the consequent peace with God.

Many of the Lord's people enjoy that peace unbroken and undisturbed year after year.

A peace:

“ Perfect, yet it floweth, Perfect, yet it groweth,
Fuller every day; Deeper all the way.”

2. We may expect

A Complete and Perfect Deliverance

from some forms of sin.

Thousands testify to the fact that whereas they were drunkards, hopelessly bound in the slavery of that degrading habit, yet the very taste for drink has been removed. The wicked habit of getting into debt, the foolish habit of swearing, the practice of stealing, of cheating, of lying, of fornication, and other unclean ways have become things of the past. “Such were some of you, but ye washed yourselves (middle voice in Greek); ye were sanctified” (1 Cor. 6. 9-11). Look at the list given. We can, may, should, and must attain to a complete deliverance from these.

3. We May Keep a Good Conscience.

Paul repeatedly stated that he had walked in all good conscience (Acts 23. 1; 24. 16; 2 Cor. 1. 12; 2 Tim. 1. 3). He could say, “I know nothing against myself” (1 Cor. 4. 4, R.V.), and there can be no doubt that many of the Lord's people can lie down habitually at night with the consciousness that they have not wilfully grieved the Holy Spirit. This is far from being perfect or sinless, but it is no doubt what many saints in past ages claimed as such. The change from revelling in sin to that of unbroken peace with

God, and “the testimony of their conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity . . . they have walked” (2 Cor. 1. 12), has been so great that it has seemed like perfection and sinlessness to them, and in their joy they have testified to it though in faulty terms. Let us seek to walk thus as others do.

4. In other matters where the absolute is not to be expected

A Very High Degree

may be attained.

Some things are a matter of degree only. Such is the realm of thoughts. So long as we are in the body and the flesh in us, the flesh will lust. There is no Scriptural ground for believing that Galatians 5. 17 is a past event with any saint of God. The above quotation from John Wesley shows that he realised it. There will be the lusting of the flesh. Where it begins to be a guilty thing, at what point lust conceives so as to become sin (James 1. 15), it is impossible to say, probably when the will or the affections are involved in however slight degree. A thought passes through the mind, have we yielded to it before mortifying it by the Spirit in some degree? It is often a matter of degree, and who can say he has always and only and perfectly dealt with every such lust by the Spirit that it never became sin. If our abiding in Christ were perfect we should perfectly cease from sin (1 John 3. 6), but who shall say that this is continuously so.

Yet that many do attain to a high degree of

spiritual mindedness, which is life and peace, we must not deny.

5. We may Walk in Love.

This is a matter of degree, for no love of man is perfect. Yet many have attained a great degree of this first of graces. If compared with 1 Corinthians 13 they are not perfect, yet there is such a sweetness, a gentleness, a courage, and strength in their self-denying love that they are a sweet savour of Christ.

We look at one of Raphael's masterpieces. It is acknowledged to be the most lovely picture ever painted by the greatest artist that ever lived. The artistic mind is overpowered by it, and any attempt to copy it shows its outstanding beauty, and the distance at which it keeps the feeble effort of the copyist. Yet it is not perfect; even a novice can see that. So while we must confess that the holiest men "fall short of the glory of God" as manifested in Christ (and they are the first to own it too), yet we praise God for the faith, the love, the power, and the beauty of holiness and devotion seen in many such a saved sinner.

It may be our portion also. Let us then press on, for we are far behind, many of us. Let us not be satisfied with low levels. Let us more habitually walk in Christ that His power may rest upon us.

The Fellowship to Which We Are Called.

THERE is perhaps nothing that has destroyed the fellowship of saints so much as the reduction of worship to a form or liturgy and the ministry to a monopoly. By far the greater number of believers in this land find themselves going to a service performed for them and coming away totally ignorant of their fellow-saints.

Thus one of the great purposes of God in the calling out of a people is frustrated. We are

“Called into Fellowship,”

but however truly the Lord's people may enter into the set service for themselves, they still fail of any true fellowship, since they know nothing of what their fellow believers think or feel. Worship for them is performed by a class, and they are only concerned to attend and follow. Some, it is true, are not content to do this, and find happy fellowship with other Christians outside; they are, however, the few of the vast number who attend such services.

No truly spiritual life can be cultivated and maintained without fellowship. An isolated Christian is generally a poverty-stricken one, except, of course, where he is divinely led to a post of service away from the possibility of

fellowship, then he is miraculously fed as was Elijah by the ravens, but God's common order is otherwise, we are called to fellowship.

It is fellowship with the *Father* and the *Son* (1 John 1. 3). It is with all the *saints* as members of the same body (1 Cor. 1. 2). It is "in the *Spirit*" (Phil. 2. 1), for He it is who maintains and fosters it in the saints (Eph. 4. 3). It is manifested by love, sympathy, and help one to another in all the activities of the Christian life.

"Sharing each other's sorrows,
Sharing each other's joys."

Symbols of Fellowship:

This fellowship is set forth in symbol by the bread and wine upon the Lord's table. "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not fellowship in the blood of Christ?" Does it not teach us and indicate to us that we are one of, and so one with, all the blood-bought redeemed ones? "The bread which we break, is it not fellowship in the body of Christ?" Does it not show us that we are one with, all who are Christ's, "for we being many are one bread and one body?" (1 Cor. 10. 16-17). Now this, while it speaks of untold blessing brings with it solemn responsibility.

We must cultivate this fellowship. We must live up to that to which we are called. We are not isolated items, we are members of a body. We sin if we say either by word or conduct, "I am not of the body," or to another believer, "I have no need of thee" (1 Cor. 12. 15, 16, 21).

Let us then consider some expressions used in

The Fellowship to Which We are Called. 75

Scripture of this fellowship, showing us how it manifests itself. It is called

Fellowship of Faith

(Philemon 6). Even our faith is a thing we hold in fellowship. It is not enough that I believe. I need to be a helper of my brother's faith and he of mine. When Apollos went into Achaia we read he "helped them much which had believed through grace" (Acts 18. 27). This help is to be given by prayer (2 Cor. 1. 11) and by exhorting one another (Hebrews 10. 24) by the interchange of thoughts over the Word, by thinking and speaking often one to another of the Lord (Mal. 3. 16).

As a boy I walked one Sunday evening to a village with the one who had led me to Christ. Almost the first thing he said on joining me was, "Do you remember how two disciples walked to Emmaus and the Lord Himself drew near and went with them? I think He will do that with us to-day as we walk." That evening walk is now forty years ago, but the memory is vivid still of how my heart burned within me as we spoke of the Lord. How faith was strengthened and the pain of the earnest desire awakened in me to know the Lord better seemed almost physical. How much we might do toward building one another up by remembering this fellowship of faith. Then we read of

Fellowship in the Gospel

(Phil. 1. 5). One who has been saved through the Gospel may surely be expected to show practical fellowship with those who are seeking to save others by preaching that Gospel.

As an illustration see how Paul valued and commends those who showed their sympathy and helped him. In the last chapter of Romans he mentions by name many such, and among them nine or ten sisters in Christ. He tells of Phebe who was his succourer, of Priscilla and Aquila who laid down their necks for his life, of Mary who "bestowed much labour on us," of Persis who laboured much; Timothy, his workfellow; Tertius who wrote his letter for him; Gaius who entertained him. In this chapter we see something of the fellowship the saints showed in the Gospel.

In how many ways might this be shown? How well-pleasing to the Lord. One important way is indicated in the

Fellowship of Giving

(2 Cor. 8. 4), or of the ministering to the saints. It is often a long time before young believers realise how great is the obligation and privilege of giving. It is one of the most practical ways of showing fellowship with the Lord's people in their ministry.

I heard recently a remark that the difference between Christianity and Socialism was this: Socialism said "You must give me some of yours," whereas Christianity says "I must give you some of mine."

2 Corinthians is largely taken up with teaching on the practical side of this fellowship. Let there be a *purpose* wisely formed. This is comparatively easily done, but, says the apostle,

The Fellowship to Which We are Called. 77

as each has purposed so let him give—let there be a *performance*—a much more difficult thing. How much money has the Lord's work lost between the purposes and performances of His stewards?

“Now, therefore, perform the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have” (2 Cor. 8. 11).

“The Fellowship of His Suffering”

(Phil. 3. 10). In some measure all believers walking in the Spirit know this fellowship. They are grieved at the ungodly, they suffer as they view the increasing darkness, they sorrow when Christ is dishonoured, when men, nominally preachers, deny the Lord that bought them. In some degree His sorrows are theirs, His grief and His pain are shared by them. But who is willing to suffer with Him, deliberately and by choice? Here our hearts faint and shrink. Nevertheless to this we are called. It is “given us in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Phil. 1. 29).

“A Holy Fellowship.”

Let us read of those who suffered (Heb. 11. 25-40): “with the people of God” (a holy fellowship). Let us ponder the exhortations, to be ready to regard the honour of being “reproached for the Name of Christ” (1 Peter 4. 12-14), not to be ashamed (v. 16), but “rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.” One never invites suffering, but realising that it is part of our honourable and high calling we should present

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our bodies a living sacrifice, seeking grace to do all the good and perfect and acceptable will of God (Rom. 12. 1-2).

The Full Meaning of Fellowship.

Then when we find others suffering for the Lord's sake, how tender should be our hearts toward them, for in this fellowship if "one member suffer all the members suffer with it." If they do not it is because they have not entered fully into the meaning of fellowship.

Christian Liberty.

THE exhortation to “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (Gal. 5.1), and not to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage” at once raises the question,

What is that Liberty?

How does it affect my relationship to my fellow-believers and the fellowship I enjoy with them, and the responsibility I acknowledge to obey those that are the guides in the Assembly?

The apostle speaks very plainly and seemingly in great fear of the consequences of losing that liberty; of subjecting oneself to “the law,” and thereby making oneself “debtor to keep the whole law” (v. 3), and “falling from grace” (v. 4), and the “faith which worketh by love” (v. 6), and so not “obeying the truth” (v. 7).

Liberty is not in any way disobeying the truth, or it becomes mere license—lawlessness—and an “occasion to the flesh” (v. 13); nor is it disregard to the need of others, merely going my own way alone, but rather manifests itself in our “by love serving one another” (v. 13).

Liberty is the right of walking by the Spirit (v. 16) irrespective of the yoke of the law, without regard to “the commandments and doctrines of men” (Col. 2. 22), and fearless of the petty judgments and criticisms of those who spy out our liberty (Gal. 2. 4) and would restrict our enjoyment of it (Gal. 4. 17).

“If ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5. 18), and all the rules of men, such as “touch not, taste not, handle not” will not help but hinder those who fear them (Col. 2. 21).

This liberty is a very precious thing. It is a full deliverance from the spirit of bondage, the fear of man, and the legal precision that robs so many children of God of their joy and makes their Christianity a heavier yoke than that of Moses.

There is a form of

Christian Legality

(if an expression so self-contradictory may be used) which is most depressing and has spoiled many bright lives. It is contained in *unwritten laws* far more terrifying to tender hearts than any tables of stone, since there is uncertainty, suspicion, and fear that some tradition may be broken. Let us not be entangled again in this kind of thing, but “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.”

Let us consider this liberty under two heads.

I. PERSONAL LIBERTY

in Christ is the right of each child of God to decide for himself from the Word of God how he shall act. He is not to be bound to accept another’s judgment, nor another’s guidance against the light the Holy Spirit has given him. He is not to fear another’s criticism or censure in any matter where the question is one of expediency (where otherwise lawful) or of discretion: “To his own Master he stands or falls” (Rom. 14. 4).

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?” “Why dost thou judge thy brother?” (vv. 4; 10). Let us take three oft recurring cases:

1. What Books shall I Read?

The Romanist prints an “*ex purgatoris*,” a list of books a Romanist must not read. Shall we submit to “law” of this kind? No, a thousand times, No! I am free to decide such a question before the Lord. Not to read anything, but to read anything my Lord approves; and as to that approval it is given to me personally and not to another as a lord over my conscience. I have one Lord—all sufficient, all gracious, all wise—I want no other. I will please Him and not man, for no one has authority to interfere with my liberty in Christ.

2. What Amusements shall I Allow?

Here again I am free to decide and act before the Lord. Many things have to be considered. All things are lawful, but neither expedient (1 Cor. 10. 23) nor edifying. I must not get under the power of any lawful thing I allow (1 Cor. 6. 12), as some do with smoking, and I must not so use my liberty as to stumble a weaker brother (the whole of Romans 12 should be read on this) or act with uncertainty, and thus feel condemned (v. 23). But having weighed all these things I am the Lord’s free man, and must refuse to be bound by another’s mind.

All cannot wear the same size in shoes; I must not pinch my brother’s toes into my boots. So minds

are small and great, weak and strong, and we cannot and must not judge, set at naught, or speak against another.

A vegetarian eats herbs because we are told he "is weak" (Rom. 14. 2), but I shall not strengthen him by judging him. "God hath received him" (v. 3). Let me not offend him, but if it will prevent him falling rather "eat no meat" (v. 22) myself. Yet try and help him to be strong.

3. What Associations shall I have

with other believers who do not see the systems of men to be unscriptural and continue in them?

I love them; I hate to seem to be a Pharisee, sticking out for trifles; I want to avoid unnecessary division lest the world enjoys the spectacle of two Christians afraid to walk together. What a difficult question it is, but how constantly arising in the present day!

There is no "law" to be laid down. We must go to the Lord in each case and act before Him; but (and here is the important point) we must have liberty to decide the question there in His presence and not be obliged to ask "what will So-and-so say?"

Who gave So-and-so authority to decide this for me? Who art thou, So-and-so, that judgest another man's servant? In this I must be free to serve the Lord Christ.

If there is a Godly teacher, a guide, a wise counsellor, by all means let me give him diligent attention, but let me search the Scriptures to see if these things be so, and let me remember that the

decision rests with me before God and not with him. If he is a Godly man he will fear to usurp such an authority; he will advise me to settle it before the Lord, and when I have done so, will not judge or condemn me.

II. ASSEMBLY LIBERTY.

The principles above laid down apply to Assemblies, *mutatis mutandis*. One Assembly cannot settle for another its course of action. One Assembly has no authority to excommunicate another Assembly or to pass judgment upon it in any matter. Not that often things are not to be seen wrong in another Assembly, but because God has not invested another Assembly with jurisdiction or authority. It is not a court, nor has it the judicial ability or apparatus to sit in judgment over another Church of God. Let us suppose

Two Common Cases.

A brother visiting a new country, worships with an Assembly in a certain town. He then seeks to do so with another Assembly in another town. Now it happens that the Assembly in the latter believes much allowed in the former to be unscriptural, and therefore some would refuse to receive the brother because he went to it. But two questions of liberty arise. Who made the second Assembly a judge of the first? And who made it a judge of the brother's liberty to go where he will before the Lord? They may guard their own flock from error and evil, and possibly consider carefully how far the coming

brother brings error with him, but they are no court to sit in judgment upon the liberty of either the brother or the Assembly.

Again, an Assembly for the sake of the testimony to the world of the oneness of all believers in Christ decides, after careful and prayerful consideration, to join with other Christians in some joint effort (as for example, the purging of the streets from open evil or a united reply to a Spiritualist campaign). Who shall judge them in this? To their Lord alone they answer; before Him they stand or fall. Perhaps some weaker brother (or, perchance, a stronger) may see differently. Let him in the exercise of his personal liberty refrain from the effort, but let him not judge the action taken by the Assembly in the exercise of its liberty.

Above all, let him not form a discontented party and split the Assembly of God, for this is to use his liberty as an occasion to the flesh. How does

The Use of this Liberty

fall in with the commands to obey them that have the rule over us and to submit ourselves to them? The answer is that in all matters to which their authority extends, the direction of the Assembly; in the arrangements for suitable ministry; in the appointment of all matters affecting Godly order, and in the decision of difficulties arising from time to time, let our hearts loyally submit. "Yea, all of us, let us gird ourselves with humility to serve one another, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5.5, R.V.).

Spiritual Worship.

AT a conference held some time since the question was raised, "How do you occupy your mind during those solemn moments when you partake of the bread and the wine at the Lord's Supper?" Replies were invited, and these displayed a sad ignorance of the privileges of that hallowed season. Such answers as these were given: "I confess my sins, and ask for grace to do better;" "I pray for my friends," and so on. But right and desirable as it may be to confess sins, to seek grace to do better, to pray for friends, it is surely not at such a time our minds should be so occupied. It is a season for worship?

Worship has been well defined as

**"The adoring contemplation of God
as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ."**

It is not merely thanksgiving for what He has done, though this has its place, but the ascription of praise to Him for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways with His saints.

Look for example at the worship we have described in the Revelation. The four living creatures cease not day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come" (Rev. 4. 8, R.V.). The elders fall down before Him that sat upon the throne, and worship Him in these words as they cast their crowns before Him:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive the glory and the honour and the power, for Thou didst create all things” (v. 11).

And again, Revelation 5. 12 and 13, “Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” And every created thing responded: “Blessing unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and . . . unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

WILLIAM LINCOLN, of Beresford Chapel, London, says of worship: “To worship God we must be quite conscious of His love and grace. The more conscious we are of this, then the easier and better is our worship. So we must sit at His feet and learn the story of His love. We must have the Spirit to show us the things of Christ. We must sit at His table and partake of the fatted calf. Then we can be merry before Him.

Worship is the Overflowing,

and *only* the overflowing of our hearts when under His eye we admire and adore Him. For in ‘Thy presence is fulness of joy’” (Psalm 16. 11).

Here then is the true secret of worship. The Spirit brings before our hearts the glories of Christ, so that admiring and adoring we overflow with praise and worship.

Two ladies were bidding good-bye. Their fellowship had been very happy, and they were parting with great reluctance. One, as she bade farewell, added, “Thank you for being what you are.” It was gracefully said, and O to turn with

gratitude and love to the Lover of our souls, saying, "Blessing unto Thee for what Thou art—for Thou art WORTHY!"

We love the Lord for what He *has done*, and cease not to give Him thanks, but we adore Him for what He *is*, and pour out our hearts in worship.

"One thing," said David, "have I desired, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, *to behold*

The Beauty of the Lord,

and to inquire in His Temple" (Psa. 27. 4).

God delights to display Himself (John 17. 24). He has given a wonderful display of His majesty and power and beauty in nature (Psa. 19; Rom. 1. 20). As we stand before a wide view or a brilliant sunset and watch its changing beauties we exclaim, "How wonderful! How beautiful!" So as the Spirit reveals to our faith the glories of Christ; the beauty of the Lord as manifested in grace, salvation, holiness, love, we "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 29. 2), exclaiming, How wonderful art Thou; How glorious in holiness! "How great is His beauty." Let us notice

**SEVEN THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH
WORSHIP.**

1. The first is: "Let us draw near" (Heb. 10. 22). Full provision has been made. The Blood on the mercy seat—the rent veil—the new and living way—the High Priest over the house. Then draw near. The fourfold condition of soul is given (v. 22). So when we sit at the Lord's

table let the first effort of faith be to draw near. Draw near to worship—with reverence and godly awe—into the Holiest to contemplate Christ, to be occupied with Him. Remember that in order to worship we enter the Holiest (that is Heaven). Worship is no longer a thing of forms and ceremonies “as though living in the world” (Col. 2. 20), or as having “a sanctuary of this world” (Heb. 9. 1., R.V.).

2. Surely then the second thing will be to **give thanks** (1 Cor. 14. 16), and to **offer sacrifices of praise** (Heb. 13. 15). Let there be fruit from your lips—a basket of firstfruits—a broken alabaster box of very precious ointment poured upon His feet.

3. **Let memory be active**, for He has said, “This do in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11. 24). And here the Spirit will help our infirmities and bring to our remembrance, and will take of the things of Christ and show them to us, so that the display of His glory and beauty in grace may overpower us, and our love flow out.

We are forgetful, ungrateful creatures; how gracious then this provision that thus we may “worship by the Spirit of God” (Phil. 3. 3).

4. As we do this we “**show His death.**” We manifest and declare the ground upon which we stand, not only for our own heart’s joy, but for all who look on, angels or men (1 Cor. 11. 16 and 14. 24). We show that by the one offering we have been perfected for ever (Heb. 10. 14), that we stand on redemption ground.

5. Our worship is moreover not an individual act. **It is fellowship.** We are one with all the saints of God, the one loaf on the table sets forth the one body (1 Cor. 10. 17).

How precious is this community of worship! We are a household of faith, a family of God, and are all one in Christ, as we together adore Him, "Speaking (not only to Him and ourselves, but see R.V.) *to one another* in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5. 19). What a beautiful word "making melody with your heart" to Him!

6. But worship is also associated with **giving**. We do not come empty handed; we rejoice to give to Him, and He graciously accepts our poor gifts. They are little bits of love He is grateful for as tokens of that He values most, our love for His love.

Remember "the collection" (1 Cor. 16. 1) is part of our worship. Let it be freely, cheerfully given with the delight of love.

The first mention of worship in the New Testament is this: "They fell down and worshipped Him, and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto Him gifts" (Matt. 2. 11). Let us go and do likewise.

7. Worship is an anticipation of Hope. "Till He come!" (1 Cor. 11. 26). For has He not said, "SURELY I COME QUICKLY," and does not the worshipping soul reply, "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

The Lordship of Christ.

THE Salvation of God is found in Christ, “neither is there salvation in any other.” With this all agree who believe the Scriptures. It is evident that a sinner cannot be saved except by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, it is clear that the faith by which the sinner believes to the saving of the soul must be more than the acceptance of certain facts, the confession of great truths. These are important, but anything that stops short of contact with the Divine Person will not save. Salvation is in a Person and not in truths only.

Thus it is possible to give assent to the facts of the Gospel, but never to turn to, receive, and put faith in the Person of whom the Gospel speaks.

Let us give two examples. I knew a man who thus argued: “The Bible says, ‘He that believeth hath.’ I believe, therefore I have.” Now this particular man returned like “a sow that was washed to wallow in the mire” (2 Peter 2. 22), and evidenced clearly that he had never been born again.

Again, I knew one who would tell you he was “resting on the finished work of Christ.” He was sure he could never be lost. He showed no evidence of any change of heart or life, and was soon offended with Christians, and is now in the world and evidently of it.

What are we to say? Is it possible to profess these things and not be saved? It is indeed.

I.—LORDSHIP IN THE GOSPEL.

Wherein is the mistake? It is here, that men want Christ as Saviour who refuse Him as Lord. That is to say, they seek to have all the benefits of His work for them, while rejecting His claim to reign over them and reserving their independence. In other words, they would receive His salvation but not Him. This is impossible, since we read that “(Eternal) life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (1 John 5. 12).

To say I have the life because I believe certain great facts, blessed as they are, while I reject the Person, is to deny the Scripture. In other words again, such would have faith without repentance, and both are demanded in the Gospel (Acts 20. 21).

Repentance is a change of mind concerning Christ. The sinner in rebellion against God is bidden to repent and be reconciled to God in Christ. But how can there be reconciliation while submission is refused! That many have this false hope is evident from the number of professing believers whose lives reveal no evidence of a change of heart. The Gospel presents Christ as Lord and Saviour. To those who receive Him as such, salvation is assured. It is evidenced by the new life in the Spirit which God hath given to them that obey Him. This new life is the proof that Christ has been received as Lord, and is by His Spirit exercising authority.

The way of salvation is thus stated in Romans 10. 9 (R.V.): "If thou shalt confess

Jesus as Lord,

and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." If care is taken to examine the Gospel appeals in Scripture, it will be found that the Lordship of Christ is an essential feature of the way of salvation.

Let us consider a few.

In Psalm 2. 6-12 God sets His king upon His holy hill in Zion and declares the decree, "Thou art My Son." He bids the kings and judges of the earth to serve the Lord, to kiss the Son, and tells of the blessedness of all that put their trust in Him. Here are submission and faith demanded to and in Him who is Lord as well as Saviour.

When Jesus was born the angels sang "Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ *the Lord*."

At Pentecost the Gospel was preached to the Jew first in these words, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye crucified,

Both Lord and Christ'' (Acts 2. 36).

Peter opening the door of faith to the Gentiles preached peace by Jesus Christ, adding, "He is *Lord of all*" (Acts 10. 36).

Even in the well-known case of the Philippian jailer the object set before his faith is "the *Lord* Jesus."

The Lord Jesus Himself made this clear. "Ye call Me Master and *Lord*, and ye say well, for so I

am” (John 13. 13). Then upbraiding those who refused submission He said, “Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say” (Luke 6. 46).

In Philippians 2. 11 we are told that the day is coming when “every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.”

The last figure we have of Christ in the Revelation is where He comes forth on a white horse, leading the armies of Heaven to smite the nations, and “on His vesture and on His thigh is a name written, King of kings, and *Lord of lords*” (Rev. 19. 16).

It is evident from these and other Scriptures that the Lordship of Christ is an essential part of the Gospel. That God hath exalted Christ as

“Prince and Saviour”

to be received as such (Acts 5. 31), and that repentance and the forgiveness of sins are His gifts to those who believe upon Him as both Lord and Saviour.

But it may be objected, “Does this not give a legal aspect to the Gospel?” Is not salvation the free gift of God, and is it not “to him that worketh not, but believeth that faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4. 5). By requiring submission to Christ as Lord is one not insisting upon the fruit before the root?

This would be so if any works were insisted on as a condition precedent to life. Faith must be faith that works, though “no works precede faith.” So

repentance must be true submission to obedience though no works of obedience precede it.

For example, let us take the case of the man who professes that he is "resting on the finished work of Christ." Has he a right while still rejecting Christ as his Lord, while still continuing his enmity by wicked works, to claim such a resting place?

A Subject in Rebellion.

A king has part of his kingdom in rebellion, and in order to show his grace causes mercy to be proclaimed to the rebels on their yielding to him and seeking reconciliation on the ground of the proclamation. He threatens destruction to those who continue to defy his authority. One of the rebels is warned of his danger, and replies: "I am in no danger, I am resting on the proclamation; I am sure the king is faithful; he will never break his promise nor withdraw his proclaimed mercy." "But you are still in rebellion, you are continuing in the course he condemns, and are indifferent to his commands, and the mercy is offered to those who yield." "True, but the mercy is free, there are no conditions, and to make conditions would be to make it no more of grace," is the reply.

What should we say to such reasoning? Alas, is it not in effect the language of some who, while refusing Christ as Lord yet profess to trust in Him and His work for salvation.

The true nature of repentance and faith is submission of the erstwhile rebel to his Lord and confidence in Him as Saviour.

He confesses with his mouth Jesus as Lord, and

believes in Him as raised from the dead, a living Saviour who, having put sin away by the sacrifice of Himself, is now at the right hand of God, a Prince and Saviour.

The Lordship of Christ in the Gospel is followed by

II.—LORDSHIP IN THE LIFE.

The believer, having confessed Christ as Lord, desires to see that Lordship an effective reality in his daily walk. To this end he seeks to obey the Word. "*Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts*" (1 Peter 3. 15). In the secret throne-room of the heart Christ is given the place of Master, whose precious rule of love is the constraining power in the life.

1. This Lordship of Christ is that of an **Owner**. The blood of Christ that redeemed and sanctified is represented as a purchase price. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 20). This the believer fully recognises. The house is under entirely new management and he desires in nothing to dispute the rule of the One whose by right of purchase he is. "Whose I am," said Paul, and therefore, "Whom I serve" (Acts 27. 23).

2. The Lordship of Christ is that of a **Governor**. Every thought is to be brought into obedience to Him. To disobey is to rebel against Authority. Even a thought that is lawless is a traitor in Mansoul.

3. The Lordship of Christ is that of a **Saviour**. He comes in not merely to reign, but in reigning to save. When David cried, "I am thine," he

confessed the Lordship of Jehovah when he added "Save me" (Ps. 119. 94). He recognised that his Lord was his Saviour.

It is told of a negro that in the stress of temptation he cried, "Lord, your property is in danger; look after it." It is David's prayer in effect, "I am Thine, save me."

Submission and Salvation.

Submission is salvation, for to yield to Him is to realise His deliverance. Rebellion is to invite sin, the archtraitor, again to reign; to allow it to dispute the reign of grace, that grace which is sufficient for all our needs; that grace that reigns through righteousness where Christ is allowed His undisputed control as Lord.

So the Gospel bids us confess Him as Lord and trust Him as Saviour, and the life of holiness is realised where He is sanctified in the heart as Lord, and yielded to as the Deliverer of His own—Jesus who saves His people from their sin.

The Lordship of Christ in the Assembly.

ALL Christendom professes that Christ is Lord, the Head of the Church, which is His body. We see, too, there are “lords many,” none of whom it is true profess to usurp the Lordship of Christ, nor to detract from the truth that there is one Lord, but Scripture warns us often against the profession that “in works deny” what is alleged (Titus 1. 16), while the Lord Himself speaks of those who call Him Lord and do not the things He says, not giving Him in fact what they acknowledge in theory.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to judge how far the Lordship of Christ is given effect to in the Churches of the saints, and to consider whether indeed the Churches of Christendom have not repeated the folly of Israel in choosing a king, so that of them it is true as of Israel, “They have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Sam. 8. 7).

The Lordship of Christ in His Assembly is manifest in many ways, but principally in five matters which may be fairly stated under the following heads.

I.—Authority.

The question may be raised thus: Is the revelation of our Lord’s will in Scripture sufficient under the guidance of His Spirit for all direction

of the Assemblies, or is it allowable or necessary that laws and orders should be made for their government? In other words, Is the Lord in our midst in fact as Lord, so that we may habitually refer to Him and expect His guidance, and is His presence sufficient?

RICHARD HOOKER (died 1600), upon whose polity the Church of England is largely based, says:

“A number of things there are for which Scripture has not provided by any law, but left them unto the careful discretion of the Church; we are to search how the Church in these cases may be well directed to make that provision by law which is most convenient and fit, and what is so in these cases partly Scripture and partly reason must teach to discern.” And this has accordingly been done.

Has the Lord directed that in matters not specifically referred to in Scripture the Church is to make laws? Or does the Lord continue with us so that His guidance is realised on each occasion as it is needed and sought?

Surely to turn to the commandments and doctrines of men is to refuse the personal rule of Christ and to appoint authorities who shall make such laws is to deny in practice the Lordship of Christ.

Israel had never found God forsake them or refuse to deliver them when they cried to Him, then why require a king? And shall the Church of God say, “Our Lord does not answer us, let us make us lords and invest them with authority to make us laws?”

The Lordship of Christ in the Assembly. 99

Colossians 2. 19-23 is clear. "Why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men." This is not "holding the head." This is denying Christ His Lordship, refusing to believe and act upon His Word. "There am I in the midst" (Matt. 18. 20).

II.—Unity.

Where believers meet in the Name of Christ they form a flock around the Shepherd. The Lord in their midst is their Centre of Unity, by His Spirit He keeps them in harmony and sympathy. This is "the unity of the Spirit" we are bidden to keep "in the bond of peace."

Is it sufficient? Are not other bonds needed? Must not some organisation be devised that will prevent disruption and disunion? Christendom has said yes, and has devised many schemes. Systems, trust deeds, or Acts of Parliament, each seeking to be more specific and precise than the last have caused endless sorrows and divisions while they sought to bring about unity or uniformity.

The Centre of Unity became a system, a declaration, a trust deed, or a central governing body of some kind. The Lord Jesus Christ in the midst as the Living Bond of Union is thus practically denied. Where disunion has been threatened, instead of the saints turning with one accord to Him for guidance, for deliverance from wicked men, and thus proving His presence and power to heal any breach and maintain the unity

of the Spirit, they have quarrelled over rights and wrongs, over the meaning of words, and disputed about rival men and systems.

However feeble and failing we may be, let us not seek unity elsewhere than in Him who is Lord in the midst, a unity maintained by a living present Saviour.

III.—**Truth.**

The Lord by His Spirit in the midst is all-sufficient to guide His people into all truth. "Ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2. 27). "Ye have an unction from the Holy One" (v. 20). "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you."

There is no mistaking the meaning of these Scriptures. The Lord by His Spirit is present with His people, and will direct and enlighten them in all their need and reveal the meaning of His Word in all cases in which they call upon Him. Is this recognised and acted upon? No; men have feared for the truth, and setting aside the Lordship of Christ on this matter have sought to embody the true meaning of Scripture in creeds and confessions of all kinds.

How fruitful of sorrow, strife, and division these creeds have proved all down the ages history shows. The sword has been drawn and blood has been shed in defence or defiance of these man-made definitions. They have not preserved the truth, but by seeking to crystalise it have rendered it a dead thing.

A crystal may be beautiful, but it is a dead,

The Lordship of Christ in the Assembly. 101

lifeless thing—truth is living, it effectually works in those who believe (1 Thess. 2. 13). Truth in its living vital application to the present need of the saints is only to be found in Christ, who by the Spirit applies His Word to the condition of His people. In this let us acknowledge His Lordship, and with one accord seek the true application of His Word at His hand in every case of need. He will not fail us.

IV.—Ministry.

The Lord gives gifts to His Church. He sets each one in the body as He will. He guides and directs them in their work. An ever-present guide by His Spirit. He uses whom He will, blessing one here another there, silencing this one, opening the lips of that one, shutting this door and opening that wide and effectual one.

But can He be depended upon to prevent disorder? Will not every one be doing what he pleases? Is it not better to take the matter in hand and ordain a special ministry and appoint them their work? Had not the rest better be kept in order by rule and law and penalty?

What shall we say to this? Is it not to suggest that we can do these things better than He? It is true there are deceivers, wolves, and disorderly persons, but these have not been found only among the "laity," we are warned to expect them "from among yourselves" (2 Peter 2. 1).

The remedy is not to take the matter out of the Lord's hands, but to seek each to walk in closer fellowship with Him that it may be more

effectively in His hands. To recognise His Lordship in this matter more and more truly, turning away alike from man-made ministers as from self-appointed disorderly persons, and each to yield ourselves to Him.

V.—Worship.

In nothing has the Lordship of Christ been more definitely denied in practice than in this. The Spirit, who is not the author of confusion but of peace in all our Churches, cannot by many be trusted to guide and control the worship of the saints. Man must prescribe the very words to be said, the forms to be used, the requests to be asked, even the praise to be rendered.

But the remedy for lawlessness, for any evil that arises, and for disorder in the Church does not lie in this limitation but in the saints of God more definitely recognising and submitting themselves to Him who is "Lord in the midst" and who by His Spirit inspires, directs, controls, and guides their worship. In other words, giving true effect to the Lordship of Christ in His assembly.

Be Ye Holy, for I am Holy.

HOLINESS has been defined as spiritual “wholeness.” It is the believer enjoying the new life he has in Christ with good spiritual health. It is “life and peace” resulting from a spiritual mindedness (Rom. 8. 6). It is accordingly an unaffected and *beautiful* thing. The beauty of holiness is the beauty of the Lord our God upon us. It is “His comeliness put upon us” (Ezek. 16. 14). It is also a *happy*, or blessed, thing. “Blessed are the pure in heart,” the Lord said.

All forced and artificial piety is sad and gloomy. Monks and nuns are typical of this. It is best defined, I suppose, as inward and outward likeness to Christ. The “mind that was in Him” exhibited in the “walk as He walked.”

You will observe that the exhortation to holiness is based upon the fact of His holiness: “Be ye holy *for I am holy*” (1 Peter 1. 14). We cannot, then, do better if we wish to study holiness than see what is written about Him, the Holy One of God. He was essentially and eternally holy as the Son, God the Son “blessed for ever,” but in relation to His walk and work upon earth there are four things said about His holiness:

I. God the Father Sanctified Him.

“Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world” (John 10. 36). The Father did not, of course, add anything to His perfect impeccable purity and sanctity, but in view of the mediatorship He had undertaken, He *set Him apart*, or sanctified Him, for it. This is the first idea we have, then, of His holiness: Separated and anointed for His office and work:

II. Christ Sanctified Himself.

“For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth” (John 17. 19).

In what sense did Christ sanctify Himself? To understand this aright, we should turn to Leviticus 27. 28, 29, where we read: “Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.”

Recognising that God had sanctified and sent Him into the world to die for sinners; and anointed Him as Prophet, Priest, and King, He devoted Himself a whole burnt offering to do the whole will of God. “Lo, I come,” He said; “in the volume of the book it is written of Me to do Thy will...by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10. 7, 10).

Thus He sanctified or devoted Himself that we might be sanctified, or, as it is written: “That He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13. 12). So the Father sanctified Him, and He sanctified

Himself. He was, even in this sin-stricken world,

III. "Holy, Harmless, undefiled,
and separated from sinners."

Here we have in view His holiness of character. He was the Lamb of God, "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1. 19). Neither inward blemish nor outward spot; no stain inherently nor by contraction.

IV. He Walked Holily.

"He did no sin." That, of course, is negative only. He did always those things that pleased God, and "He went about doing good" (Acts 10. 38). What fine words are these, how charmingly simple, but how rich and perfect in their description of a life that satisfied God! Here we have holiness in walk and conduct. These are the four aspects of His holiness: Sanctified by the Father, devoted wholly to God, holy in character, and sinless in walk doing good.

Would we Learn Holiness?

Let us seek that these things may be true of us. The first is true of every real child of God. Every Christian has been "sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10. 10). The blood that justified (Rom. 5. 9) also sanctified (Heb. 10. 10, R.V., and 13. 12). We are not only in Christ "righteous," but "holy."

When our hearts are truly impressed with this solemn yet blessed fact, we shall more sincerely shrink from sinning. Like David, we shall pray, "Preserve my soul, for I am holy, O Thou my

God” (Psa. 86. 2); and with Joseph, “How, then, can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen. 39. 9).

We shall feel the awful indignity of such a one whom God has sanctified so acting as willingly to defile his holiness. We shall take words such as Nehemiah used: “Shall such a one as I,” note the dignity of the expression, I, God’s servant, I whom Christ sanctified with His blood, “shall such a one as I sin.”

Secondly, we, too, should devote ourselves to God in response to this separating and sanctifying grace. In such spirit as this:

“ In full and glad surrender
I give myself to Thee;
Thine utterly and only,
And evermore to be.”

If we do so we shall be “vessels unto honour.”

There is a verse in Romans (6. 13) which helps us to understand this act of devotion: “Neither yield (a continuing act, do not be presenting or yielding) ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield (a once for all act, a presentation of absolute devotedness) yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.”

Note well the Two “Yields.”

Cease the continuous sinning, and present yourself to God. You are “alive from the dead.” To come to life is a once for all act. Since you are then “alive,” present yourself as such to God. “Thine for ever, God of Love.”

In these two things let us be holy as He is holy. Sanctified and sanctifying ourselves. But holiness is not only separation and devotion, it is *personal purity of heart and mind*. The state of the heart must be seen to. Sin allowed in the secret inner life, in the hidden man of the heart has two deadly effects. (1) It grieves the Spirit of God; (2) It paralyzes all right action of the soul.

What instruction have we as to this? Turn to 2 Cor. 7. 1: "Having therefore these promises (compare 2 Peter 1. 4), dearly beloved, let us

CLEANSE OURSELVES

from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Notice a few points about this exhortation.

1. The promises will help us. Let us resolve to see them fulfilled in our case.

We are to cleanse ourselves, not to keep asking God to cleanse us, but laying hold of the promises to purge ourselves (1 Cor. 11. 31), and put away wrong things.

2. Both flesh and spirit are to be clean. Bodily habits and the thoughts of the mind.

"The burden of an impure heart
Thou too hast taken hence;
And Thy salvation is to me
A blessed present tense."

3. Holiness is to be perfected. That is, developed until we are in full exercise of it.

4. It is done in the fear of God. No trifler was ever yet holy, nor slacker, nor habitually forgetful person. Fear must be upon us; not the

fear that hath torment, but the reverence and godly awe (Heb. 12. 28) in which alone we can serve God acceptably.

5. The walk that results from character must be holy. It will follow as surely as light follows sun rising. Moses face shone because he had been with God on the Mount, and we shall be changed into the image of Christ if we often and habitually behold with open face the glory of the Lord in the mirror of the Word (2 Cor. 3. 18). In this verse perhaps more than in any other in Scripture are we let into the secret of practical Christlikeness.

Diligence will be needed and the obedience of faith and love, that as we see how He “pleased not Himself,” but “went about doing good,” we, too, may shake off our self-indulgence or indolence and “**FOLLOW HIS STEPS.**”

Working Out Salvation.

“THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL” is a striking expression. It is used only once in the New Testament, that is, in 1 Peter 1. 9, where it is said to be “the end of our faith,” the end (*telos*) in the sense of the fulfilment or realisation, the object faith has in view. The “SAVING OF THE SOUL” is referred to in Hebrews 10. 39, “We are of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” It will be seen from these Scriptures that the saving of the soul is a matter for believers.

Salvation and Justification.

The “salvation of the soul” must be carefully distinguished from the “justification of the ungodly” (Rom. 4. 5). The one is an instantaneous act when the sinner repents and exercises faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. He is then justified gratuitously without works. The other is a process—the deliverance of the soul from sin, evil habit, entanglement, and a thousand other grave clothes.

Justification may be likened to the call into life: “Lazarus, come forth.” The salvation of the soul is the fulfilment of the command, “Loose him, and let him go.”

It is good to have the soul (life) saved. To be free and happy in the light and life of Christ. It is this that we have set before us as the

End or Object of Our Faith.

The Epistle to the ROMANS deals with the justification of the sinner and his new position as

united to Christ. It is the epistle of death and resurrection.

The Epistle to the HEBREWS begins where the Epistle to the Romans leaves off. Christ is seen in Heaven, a great Priest. He has in hand the salvation of the believer. It is assured because, having an unchangeable priesthood, He is able to save to the uttermost (to all ends) those who come, that is, are "comers" (Heb. 10. 1), habitually.

So to have the soul saved is to be free and disentangled from everything. Especially the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of deliverance from "all that would attach us in a religious way to the earth" (J.N.D.) We are a heavenly people, and must not be entangled with carnal ordinances "as though living in the world."

This salvation of the soul then is a serious business, to be worked out on our part with fear and trembling. Justification cannot be worked out, for it is "to him that worketh not" (Rom. 4. 5), but our own salvation we are bidden to work out "with fear and trembling."

Let us look at Philippians 2, where this exhortation meets us.

THREE IMPORTANT THINGS.

Notice some things in verses 12 and 13, where the command to work out our own salvation comes.

1. It can only be done because **God works in us** both to will and to do of His good pleasure.
2. It is **accomplished by obedience**, "as ye have always obeyed."
3. The exhortation follows on the wonderful

example of Christ who, taking the form of a servant, became "obedient unto death."

Let us consider these three points a little.

I.—God Worketh in Us.

"It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." What is this "in working?"

A Christian is not one who, having been forgiven up to date, is bidden go and try to be better in future. No, indeed this is the meagre idea of the uninstructed mind. At his conversion the believer received the Holy Spirit, who indwells his body as a temple (1 Cor. 6. 19). That indwelling Spirit is likened by Christ to a living spring of water, ever welling up "unto everlasting life." A beautiful and graphic figure.

In what way does this life within spring up? The answer is that He works in you "*both to will and to do.*" Note the words "to will." He creates a desire—desires after "His good pleasure." Every true child of God will recognise this experience. How with David he has often cried, "My soul followed hard after Thee" (Psa. 63. 8), or, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God."

The Spirit and the Word.

The SPIRIT maketh intercession for us (and in us) with groanings that cannot be uttered, so that we groan with true Spirit-begotten desires that are "according to the will of God" (Rom. 8. 27).

The WORD OF GOD (the Spirit's sword) becomes more to us than our necessary food. We find that we "live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8. 3), and "hunger and

thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5. 6). It is thus God worketh in us "to will." But He does not stop His work in us here. It is also "to *do*." He effects His purposes. He gives ever more enabling grace. He stirs to action and gives holy resolve and "full purpose of heart." So that again we can cry with David, "My heart is fixed (purposed) O God; my heart is fixed, trusting in Thee" (Psa. 112. 7). The purpose and resolve of faith to do the will of God is the distinctive mark of the spiritually healthy believer. Of course the believer may "quench" or "grieve" or refuse to "be filled with" the Spirit, hence the exhortation to work out that which is wrought in.

II.—Our Response of Obedience.

The working out is accomplished by obedience. It is not a working apart from God in the energy of the flesh. That is no good. It is a working that is "wrought in God," or, as Paul explains it, "I labour, striving according to His working which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1. 29). Paul knew "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe" (Eph. 1. 19). He once spoke of it as the "Word of God which effectually worketh also in you who believe" (1 Thess. 2. 13).

So as the Spirit reveals step by step through the Scriptures the will or good pleasure of God, creating with it the desire and giving with it the purpose and power to perform, so we are to work it out.

We are to "walk in the light" thus given, to "obey from the heart" with the obedience of love and faith. And in so doing we have

III.—The Glorious Example of our Lord.

Why do those who read this wonderful passage of the Lord's gracious emptying of Himself and high exaltation stop at the 11th verse. Surely the "wherefore" leads us on to the earnest entreaty to work out our salvation. May we say, to work out our allotted portion of service as "He did His?" Ours is to be saved from "the sin which doth so easily beset us." His (who was free from all possibility of sin) to obey even to the death of the Cross.

But the example is set before us that we may have "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2. 5). What mind was that?

"He Emptied Himself."

He took the place of dependence and faith He asks us to take. He would do nothing of Himself—it was inconceivable—He could not act independently (see John 5. 19 and 30; 8. 28; 12. 49). Alas! how often we can and do; but let us run our race (our "agony" or conflict) looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith (not *our* faith). He walked the path of faith He began; He finished it. He set us the great example that we should "follow His steps."

Would we have our souls saved then? Our lives delivered from all evil, let us work out what God works in us in the obedience of faith and love we see exhibited in Him, of whom the Father bore witness, "In Him I am well pleased." Our part is to will and to do (as He works in us) "His good pleasure."

Scriptural Separation.

THERE are few things which exercise the hearts of true believers so intensely as the matter of separation. Their sympathies and love draw them towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ of whatever creed or name, while the desire to honour their Lord and be separate from evil and walk in the truth whole-heartedly inclines them to avoid doubtful associations that may involve them in the appearance of countenancing ungodly doctrines or uniting with those who dishonour the Lord.

The Lord has left us no code of laws upon the subject, some things are not labelled “worldly” and others “holy,” but the believer has to exercise spiritual discernment on each occasion and in each circumstance, and in doing this will show himself approved or otherwise, according as he is spiritually minded and obedient or not.

All agree that separation from evil and the world is not the physical separation of the monastery or the narrow and unsympathetic separation of bigotry or small-mindedness.

True Separation

will never lessen our sympathy, but rather widen it, for it must be the mind of God that our hearts shall be enlarged and not cramped. What is called separation may be but bad temper or selfish pride.

There is grave danger in hastily condemning what is new, not as to truth, but in method or

manner of expression. We need to remember that all great movements of the Spirit of God, while old in the sense of reverting to the Word of God from the traditions of men, are always new in the sense of not being a repetition historically of what has gone before.

God is a God of infinite variety, and as to methods, seldom if ever repeats Himself. The gifts of the Spirit, the manifestations and operations are different and diverse though of the same Lord (1 Cor. 12. 4-6). In condemning that which is not according to our preconceived ideas we but limit the truth of God and quench the Spirit by our traditions, for tradition is man stereotyping his own conception of God's truth and seeking to impose it upon others.

We do not settle the question of separation by isolation. Isolation is an easy way out of the difficulties in the path of true separation, but it avoids difficulty and much exercise of heart by shirking the responsibilities. Instead of strengthening and enlarging the heart it narrows its sympathies, weakens its courage, and destroys true testimony (John 17. 23; 13. 35).

It is possible to carry isolation to such an extent that the spirit of the monastery may exist notwithstanding apparent liberty to walk abroad, for that liberty never being used, no wall is needed to contain the self-constituted prisoners of the narrow mind.

It has been well said that we should be wide enough in our hearts to include all truth, and narrow enough to exclude all error.

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It is a grievous thing to withdraw from that which our Lord would have us show sympathy with, encourage, and help. It is a sad thing to be involved in that from which our Lord bids us come out.

In our zeal to show sympathy we must not compromise the truth; in our zeal for the truth we must not offend against the royal law of love. And love must be in deed and not in word only, with active sympathy and help that really and honestly does its best for the one loved,

Truth Evenly Balanced.

In Scripture the balance of these things is wonderfully maintained. Compare, for example, the two Scriptures, "He that is *not against us* is on our part" (Mark 9. 40). How wide is this in sympathy, and "He that is *not with Me* is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Luke 11. 23). How insistent this on faithfulness to the Lord!

Again, consider these two Scriptures, "I am made all things ("as a Jew," "as under law," "as without law," "as weak") that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9. 22). How large-hearted and generous this, and "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (of Christ), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed" (2 John 10). How zealous of the truth this!

Notice how little the Lord accepts as "on our part." A negative merely, "not against us." Does our love and sympathy widen to this?

On the other hand, consider how little the Lord accepts as indicating "against" Him, merely the negative "not with Me." Do we insist on this searching test? There may be much missing in the one who claims our fellowship, as, for example, gross ignorance, much bondage to tradition, even superstition, but if in fact he is "not against" the Lord, we must accept the Lord's verdict that he is "on our part." So wide must our hearts be.

Again, there may be many things that are excellent and attractive in another, but if he is in fact "not with the Lord," "gathering not with Him," he is against Him, and must be avoided.

Spiritual discernment must discover the truth in each case. There is no rule of thumb method, no legal code. Certainly we must not submit to the traditions of our fathers in order to decide. Each case must be dealt with on its merits, must be earnestly brought to the Lord, and wisdom from above sought to discover if it is "with Him" or "against Him."

Two Cries To-day.

It is because of these things that we find among us two cries. On the one hand, "We want more sympathy with other Christians 'who follow not us;' *we are too narrow.*"

On the other hand, "We need to be more faithful to the truth and separate from evil, *we are too loose.*"

It is possible, even probable, that each of these represents a measure of truth. We stand in need

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of both—more sympathy and more zeal for truth. They are not inconsistent one with the other. The most exclusive are often very loose, as, for example, in their charge of error against others, offending more against truth in such charges than the supposed offender himself does; while the broad-minded man is often a bigot of the narrowest judgment against such as he considers too precise. You will hear him denounce the narrow-minded in very strong terms.

There is another consideration to be borne in mind. Truth is not unmixed with error, nor good with evil in any of us. "In many things we offend all" (James 3. 2). *It is a matter of degree.* Moreover, these elements cannot be separated by us in others, therefore to enjoy the sympathy and love of such persons we must take them as they are, and they must take us as we are, or not enjoy the fellowship with one another that is desirable. As much as lieth in us let us live at peace with all men, not judging them, yet feeling ourselves at liberty to help them from what offends, considering the beam in our own eyes while we seek to remove the mote in theirs.

The Balance of Grace and Truth.

was found in the Lord Jesus Perfectly, in us how imperfectly! He could go to the Pharisee's feast (being disposed to go, 1 Cor. 10. 27), and yet remain separate from sinners. He could join the gladness of the wedding at Cana and be undefiled. Separation is a thing of the spirit. The body may be in the narrowest circle while the spirit

is full of worldly thoughts and indulging pride, vanity, selfishness, and every like thing.

Let us so love the Lord Jesus Christ that all that honours Him wins our hearts, and all that grieves Him causes us pain, and this will settle the question of separation more quickly than all argument, and we shall enjoy the spiritual discernment that can detect who are "for" and "against" the Lord, and show grace and truth in a way that does not exalt one at the expense of the other, but each in its due proportion. Let us covet the grace that welcomes all *for* and truth that rejects all *against* the Lord.

The Judgment Seat.

READ Rom. 14. 10; 1 Cor. 3; 2 Cor. 5. 10.
In these Scriptures the great fact is stated —“We (believers) must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.”

There are real difficulties raised by this subject.

Does not John 5. 24 tell us that the believer “shall not come into judgment” (*krisis*) but is passed from death unto life? How then must he appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ and of God (as the R.V. of Rom. 14. 10 has it)? Again, has not God promised to remember his sins and iniquities no more? How then shall the deeds done in the body whether good or bad be brought up at the Judgment Seat? Are they not cast into the depths of the sea—behind God’s back and blotted out as a thick cloud? Imagery that leaves no doubt that sins righteously dealt with at the Cross are no longer imputed to the believer.

Before attempting to discover the Scriptural answer to this problem, let us review

The Foundations

upon which we stand.

1. We are **justified freely by grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So complete is that justification that we are said to have died, and “he that died is justified” (Rom. 6. 7, R.V.). No charge can be brought against the

dead. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect since God has justified?

2. The work of Christ on the Cross, which is imputed to us, is so complete that we are said to have been **perfected for ever** by that one offering.

3. We have received the free gift of **eternal life**—are born again a new creation. We can never perish. This life was not earned or merited, but gratuitously given.

4. Immediately we depart and are absent from the body we are **present with the Lord**. Hereafter we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. We shall all be changed in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump.

5. At the **Coming of the Lord** we shall all be caught up to meet Him in the air.

These are the eternal verities of the Christian faith. They are its distinctive features, its unique characteristics. We must not allow any construction to be put upon any other Scriptures that would rob us of the priceless treasure of

JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION BY GRACE.

To go back to law is to fall from grace. To get on to legal ground is to lose the great motive of Christian conduct—reigning grace—standing in grace—constraining love.

Grace has produced what law failed to do. The law made nothing perfect; we dare not return to it. Yet it is abundantly clear that

We must all appear before the Bema—a word used 12 times in the New Testament, and, with two unimportant exceptions, always translated *Judgment Seat*.

How shall we reconcile this fact with the great verities before named?

1. It is clear that a distinction must be drawn between the tribunals—the **Bema** and the **Great White Throne**. Before the one “we” (that is, all Christians) must appear and be manifested; before the others all nations (*panta ta ethne*) or all the world. These two tribunals are probably separated by at least a thousand years. The one is for the justified; the other is for the condemned.

2. We must distinguish between the **nature of the Judgments** taking place at these tribunals. There is a *judgment unto condemnation*. There is a *judgment unto victory*. In the one the sinner is condemned. In the other the saint comes through saved—a victory of grace. In some cases with honour; in others saved “so as by fire.”

The statement of John 5. 24 that the believer shall not come into judgment clearly means condemnation. This is confirmed by Romans 8. 1. “There is therefore now no condemnation, etc.” and Rom. 8. 34, “Who shall condemn . . . etc.”

Whatever the ‘Bema’ shall mean, it cannot mean final condemnation.

3. A distinction of the utmost importance—a distinction of a fearful and tremendous character—little, I fear, grasped or understood.

It is the distinction between *forgiveness* and the
Governmental Dealings of God.

In other words, Forgiveness, Mercy, Justification cover much, but *not all the sanctions against sin*. An illustration from ordinary everyday life will make my meaning clear. A poor wretch whose health, character, and life have been ruined by drink and vice flings himself down at the penitent form and finds mercy. We glory in the fact that Christ receives the Devil's castaways. He rises forgiven and recreated, a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Is his health restored? Is his ignorance, vulgarity, and deficiency in every noble characteristic of true manhood made up? No, indeed. Is the lost opportunity of life recovered? No. We recognise that while the penalty of sin (eternal death) is remitted, the consequences of sin remain in the enfeebled body, in the unformed character, and ignorance, and the lost opportunity of life. For these, like Esau who sold his birthright, he finds no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. It is written in the order of God that he can never be what he might have been.

The example of David's sin carries us further than this. The prophet had said, "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. 12. 13). Here was forgiveness. Yet not only the consequences remained in the disgrace to the Name of Jehovah and in the loss of strength (2 Sam. 21. 15), but God did not remit the govern-

mental dealings with David that righteousness demanded. "The Sword shall never depart from thine house because thou hast despised Me" (2 Sam. 11. 10).

Thus forgiveness does not exempt from some forms of judgment. Righteousness must be done though the sinner is spared. Mercy must be extended to the guilty, yet justice must be done to the injured, and God's holy name vindicated. The Cross allowed God to extend mercy to the guilty on righteous ground, but righteous Government has other demands as well.

There are

**SEVEN THINGS WHICH ARE NOT
AFFECTED BY FORGIVENESS,**

After the sinner has found mercy they still remain to be dealt with. They are:

1. The Consequences in His Own Case.

Have we any justification for believing that the solemn message addressed to saints, "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is limited to this life? Does not *character survive the grave?*

Is the result of careless walk, of forgotten duty, of dishonourable behaviour, all wiped out by death? The whole trend of Scripture teaches the contrary. Is the reward of patient continuance in well-doing, the steady growth in grace, the knowledge and wisdom acquired by the obedience of faith of no avail? Is there no distinction between the man of sterling worth and character, and the wretch saved so as by fire? There is.

The consequences in character and of conduct survive the grave, and will meet us in the Land beyond.

2. The Consequences in the Lives of Others.

In John Wesley's journal, 6th March, 1738, is the following entry: "I began preaching the 'new doctrine' (that man is justified by faith alone) though my soul started back from the work. The first person to whom I offered salvation by faith alone was a prisoner under the sentence of death. His name was Clifford." On April 27th he adds: "Prayed with the condemned man. After a space he rose up and eagerly said, 'I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins and there is no more condemnation for me.'"

Mr. Wesley accompanied him to the scaffold. "In his last moments," he writes, "he enjoyed perfect peace in confidence he was accepted in the Beloved."

Who doubts it? The glorious Saviour refuses none. That is why He chose to take the dying thief, who was crucified beside Him, to Paradise. A murderer may find mercy. But what of the one murdered? Is there no concern for him? Slain, perhaps, in his sins, with no interval to cry for mercy.

I heard a preacher once tell of visiting such a murderer in prison, and he added, "I believe he went from the scaffold to the 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'" This was shocking.

Such is the common ignorance of things spiritual. Mercy? Yes. But "Well done?" No.

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There must be justice done as to the other soul robbed of life.

3. Disgrace, Reproach, and Dishonour Brought on the Name of Christ

by unfaithful Christians will certainly not be undone by forgiveness. These survive and to speak as if they would be remembered no more is but to forget the honour due to that worthy Name.

4. Debts are not Paid.

Broken promises are not fulfilled, and dishonest business transactions are certainly not righted because the transgressor finds mercy. We have heard of the man who, having professed conversion, refused to pay his debts on the ground that they had all been forgiven with the rest of his sins.

Wesley was once asked to pay an account twice, and when given the receipt wrote on it, "to be reopened on the Day of Judgment." This must most certainly be so if justice is to rule.

5. Quarrels are not Made Up.

Slander is not recalled, nor are enmities reconciled necessarily because either of the parties to these is a believer and has found mercy. Angry words wound, untrue words injure just as much (if not more) from a believer's lips as from an infidel's.

A believer lay dying. His spirit had been broken by the persistent and unsparing slander of a fellow-believer. On his death-bed his enemy came to ask his forgiveness, alarmed at the result

of his persecution. The dying man asked him first to do him a last favour. Would he take his pillow to the housetop and shake out all the feathers to the wind, and this was done. "Now go," said the dying man, "and gather the feathers up again." "That is quite impossible," was the reply. "Even so," said the dying man. "It is easy for me to say I forgive you, which as a child of God I willingly do, but you cannot recall the cruel words nor gather up the malicious lies that have gone abroad. Only at the Judgment Seat of Christ can all that be made right. Only then shall my name and character be cleared of the defamation you have heaped upon it."

6. Neglected Opportunities

are not recovered on forgiveness.

7. Privileges Forfeited

do not return. Is no account to be taken of these? The suggestion that no justice is to be done in such cases, no inquiry made into these evils, no adjustment of these quarrels, no loss sustained by the lost opportunities and forfeited privileges, because the offender has found mercy, is unthinkable!

God has the government of the universe to think of, and is Judge of all the earth. He will do right. It is these and such things as these that will be dealt with at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The language used of

The Judgment Seat and the Coming
of the Lord is very significant in this relation.

128 Great Truths Simply Stated.

We are told:

1. We shall **all be manifested**—revealed in our true character there. Everything hidden will be openly shown. The real truth will come out.

2. We shall **receive the things done in the body**—whether good or bad.

3. We shall **give an account of ourselves**, and, Christ adds, *of every evil and idle word spoken*.

4. We may **“suffer loss”** though saved, our works being burnt up.

5. We may be **ashamed before Him** at His Coming.

6. We may **lose our crown**.

7. We may have **no treasure laid up in Heaven**.

The world has a foolish idea of “Going to Heaven when we die;” that is, to an indiscriminate Heaven of unvaried bliss, into which all Christians are swept irrespective of all else. Grace to such is merely another word for *Irresponsibility*. Forgiveness wipes out everything—character, injustice, cruel and continuing wrongs, and leaves all on the dead level of no responsibility and no accountability. It’s all right, for we go to Heaven—nothing else really matters. Let us fear lest we conceive the same folly in our hearts—man is never irresponsible. Grace does not relieve him of accountability. We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. What takes place then before that solemn tribunal? There are

Three Great Passages

that bring that scene before us:

They may be contrasted thus:

1. 2 Cor. 5. 10, which has the review of our **personal conduct** in view. "We must all be made manifest (R.V.) before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad." "Manifest" means appear in our true light. "Receive" is the common word for being paid wages. "In his body" is by means of the body—the body used as an instrument. "Good or bad" makes it quite clear that it is not only rewards but also righteous retribution that is intended. Col. 3. 25 confirms this: "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons."

Our character will be seen; all false pretences will fall off; all vain show, all disguise, and we shall stand what we are actually before Him.

Our conduct will be reviewed. Approval or censure will be meted out as each has deserved praise or blame.

2. Romans 10. 14. Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (R.V., God).

Here our **attitude to and treatment of our brother** come under review. "None of us liveth to himself," we read in v. 7. Our influence upon our brother, whether deliberate or unconscious, is a serious matter, and will be brought into judgment in that Day.

Several expressions help us to understand what is intended. "*Judging thy brother.*" All the harsh, unkind words, false statements, and cruel reflections and slanders are included. "*Setting at nought thy brother.*" Here the proud and contemptuous treatment of another; the discouragement, the injustice that despises his efforts, are in view. "*Putting a stumbling block or occasion to fall,*" v. 13, by careless example, so that he is stumbled or made weak and possibly defiled. *Grieving him* is also included, v. 15, and such strong language as: "*Destroying him for whom Christ died*" (v. 15).

I suppose the quarrels and differences among saints will form a large part of the Judgment Seat inquiry. What evils have they wrought, what appalling havoc—yes, what destruction! Tens of thousands have fallen under the burden that might have lived and served Christ happily but for the pride, anger, cruelty, and malice of fellow-believers.

3. 1 Cor. 3 evidently refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ, and here the **reward and judgment of our work and service** is contemplated. All will pass through the fire to ascertain, not the amount or the success of it, but of what sort it is. The fire is doubtless intended to mean the searching glance of the holy eyes of the One who sits upon the throne. They are said to be "as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1. 14). It must refer, too, to the test of His Word, for is not His Word like a fire? All that will not bear that searching glance, or that is not found to be in accordance

with that holy Word, will be burned up and perish.

Rewards will play a great part, too.

1. Nothing will be forgotten: The cup of cold water (Matt. 10. 42); The feast given to the poor will be rewarded at the Resurrection of the Just (Luke 14. 14).

2. *The rewards* will possibly take the form of honourable position and dignified service in the future life. Thus differences of character and qualification will be rewarded; those who have patiently and diligently grown in grace will be given rulership over ten cities; those who have neglected their opportunities will suffer loss.

The summing-up of the whole matter, dear saints of God, is in one word,

RESPONSIBILITY.

Grace must never be so used as to lose the sense of this. We are responsible to our Lord. *Two final considerations:*

1. He who sits on the Bema

is our Divine Lord, Whose perfect love has cast out all fear. Whatever be His Word, His love to us will not change. We can never forget that He redeemed us by His own Blood. We shall welcome His judgments, shall realise their truth and grace, whatever they are.

Moreover, none will be present but our fellow saints, with whom we shall spend eternity. This will prevent us falling into a slavish fear of that Day. We can never forget that He has promised

132 **Great Truths Simply Stated.**

we shall be with Him and see His glory and be conformed to His image. Nevertheless, it will be a great loss in that day to know that we have not merited His “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

2. We can Anticipate that Day.

“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 Cor. 11. 31). The Apostle Paul, after stating that we must all be manifested before the Bema, says, “But we are made manifest (using the same word) and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences” (v. 11). Thus by self-judgment and walking in a good conscience he anticipated the Bema, and could even say with confidence later, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that have loved His appearing” (*epiphaneia*) His manifestation. May we be among such!

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