

TREASURY SERIES No. 3.

Excelsior and Other Addresses.

Delivered in
Wellington Hall, Kilmarnock
and Other Places.

By
W. J. Grant, M.A. Kilmarnock.

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**Excelsior
and
her Addresses.**

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Kilmarnock

Foreword.

BEING asked to write a brief "foreword" to the "Twelve Choice Addresses" of my old friend Mr. W. J. Grant, Kilmarnock, I do so with great pleasure. The addresses which were delivered in various parts of Scotland and England, were much appreciated and owned of God to the edification of His beloved people.

We trust in their printed form they may be more abundantly blessed. Amongst specially interesting and helpful discourses are those entitled "The Word of God," "The Love of God," and "A Message for the Last Times."

May the volume have a good circulation.

ALEXR. MARSHALL.

Contents.

	Address delivered in Wellington Hall, Kilmarnock.	PAGE
EXCELSIOR :	13th November, 1921.	11.
BEHOLD THE MAN :	26th March, 1922.	21.
THE WORD OF GOD :	17th June, 1923.	31.
THE LOVE OF GOD :	29th July, 1923.	39.
THE PERSON, WORK AND LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT :	2nd April, 1922.	49.
Ditto. Part II.	9th April, 1922.	60.
THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS :	4th October, 1919.	71.
1ST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS :		
	13th December, 1920.	83.
CONFORMITY TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON :		
	5th February, 1922.	93.
A MESSAGE FOR THE LAST TIMES :		
	23rd December, 1922.	104.
Ditto. Part II.	20th December, 1923.	118.
PRIVILEGES & RESPONSIBILITIES:	17th January, 1914.	128.

“EXCELSIOR.”

COLOSSIANS 1. 9.

THE present time, is one of increasing darkness and difficulty. Never in the experience of the Lord's people now living, was their need greater than to-day. But the need, however great, can never exhaust the fulness of the supply. God has measured it all and has stored for us in a never failing Treasury a fulness of grace to meet every necessity.

Ours is an upward calling, and notwithstanding all that would depress our spirits and drag us down to the carnal things of time and sense, it is our business to go on our way yet higher and higher, and this we can only do as we increase in the knowledge of God. Please notice the expression in Colossians 1. 10.

“Increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Permit me to bring to your notice seven great realities. In the knowledge of God we must first increase,

in the knowledge of God Himself.

What a wondrous thing to increase in the knowledge of His Being and of the attributes attaching to it. There is but one self-existent Being and that one is God. What a marvellous statement is that contained in two words, “God is.” The statement of His self-existence was the introduction with which the late eminent Brownlow North opened his marvellous ministry. I have seen him sitting for five minutes on a platform with hundreds of persons waiting for him

to begin, sitting in silence, eyeing the vast congregation that were waiting on his ministry, and maintaining that attitude in order that both the speaker and the hearer might realise the solemnity of the Divine presence. And when he judged that a solemn awe had settled on all he would rise and deliver that spiritual effective ministry that was the means of bringing hundreds, if not thousands to Christ. God is what He is and has been and ever will be. And round about and attached to this marvellous self-existent Being of His are attributes in their perfection, attributes we do well to know and remember. Immediately connected with His being, is His infinity, and His eternity. His infinity, He fills all space: His eternity He fills all time. Add to these, other two great attributes, His omniscience, power to know all things, and His omnipotence, power to do all things. Add to these, moral attributes which range themselves under two heads, light and love. "God is light," "God is love." God is light, infinite holiness; God is love, infinite love. Such in brief is the One, in the knowledge of whom you and I are bound to "increase." When God had brought Israel out of Egypt—which He did by displaying His mercy towards them, and His power towards their enemies—He proceeded to instruct them in the Majesty and Holiness of His character. He gathered them at the foot of Mount Sinai, He descended on the top of that mountain in flaming fire, and from out of that fire, and smoke, and thunder and lightning, and earthquake, and trumpet sound, He spoke with all His voice the ten words, the ten commandments. So awe-inspiring was the sound that in hearing the very voice Divine the people addressed themselves in fear to Moses, and said: "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die." But Moses said: "Fear not, for God is come to prove you, and that

His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." And yet deeply impressive as the whole scene was, its effect was of but short duration, for the vast majority of them cast off the fear of God for an idol and proceeded to worship it. And later in the history of that people we read that the holy ark was brought back from the land of the Philistines, and the men of Beth-shemesh in their ignorance of His holiness dared to open the sacred box and look within and this act cost the lives of fifty thousand and three score and ten men. 1 Sam. 6. 19. And after seeing the judgment of God inflicted upon them, the men of Beth-shemesh said: "Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God?" Now, brethren, the Church has to learn His holiness as well as Israel. The Church in Jerusalem seems to have declined in their consciousness of the holiness of God and that declension made itself manifest in Ananias and Sapphira who sold a possession and brought part of the proceeds of its sale and presented the part as if it were the whole. They little knew the God that they were dealing with. First the one, then the other dropped dead at Peter's feet, and we read: "And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things." Acts 5. 11. Israel's God is our God, and to us as to them, He is a "consuming fire." Oh what need that we should work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; "for it is God that is at work in us both to will and to do as He pleases." Our Father is God, let us fear Him; but God is our Father, let us trust Him. But further, we need to grow in

Acquaintance with the Salvation of God.

Salvation is a great word. It means not only deliverance from our original condemnation as guilty sinners and our security against the wrath to come; it means a great deal more. It means present continuous deliverance, and preservation from the

power and practice of indwelling sin. It means even more; it means a coming deliverance from all the effects of sin in mind and body—and in that sense salvation is yet future—but "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." We have learned God's salvation for 'us as guilty sinners, but are we daily learning God's salvation for us as sin indwelt saints? For, mind you, unless we are continuously, experimentally and practically a saved people, we are not in the truest sense "the Saved of the Lord." It is instructive to notice that Israel is not said to be a saved people until they were across the Red Sea; until they had declared themselves dead in regard to sin and living unto God in resurrection standing. May we know this blessed continuous salvation of God Does not the very name of Jesus speak of it. When the angel announced the name of the Saviour, he said to Joseph: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus." Why? "For He shall save His people from their sins," which truly means, not merely from their penalty, but from their power and presence also. Third, we must

**Increase in the knowledge of God's claims
upon us.**

He is there standing waiting to claim us. Christ has made us and made us for Himself. Then we have His claims as our providential provider. He is giving to us life, and breath, and all things. He is putting food in our lips, and raiment on our backs, for all temporal blessing proceeds from Him, and this has been secured for us by precious blood. But the weightiest of these claims is His claim by redemption. Are we aware of that claim? It would appear from the language that Paul uses in addressing the Corinthians, that although children of God, they were ignorant of the Divine claims that God had over them. In the 6th chapter of 1 Corinthians,

he says : “ Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? ” “ Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost ? ” “ Ye are not your own.” 1 Cor. 6. 15. 19. You have been acting, some of you, as if you were. “ Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price,” and that price not silver or gold, “ but the precious blood of Christ.” Therefore, He says, glorify Me in that body that belongs to Me, and which I keep by My Spirit. My brother, my sister, let me tell you that you are entirely the property of another. Within and without, from head to foot, you belong to another. How solemn would it be to take the use of property which is not your own. Oh to be honest with God ! Oh to respond to the claims He has on us. And hence it is that the Apostle says : “ I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice.” Rom. 12. 1. His mercy in providing righteousness for the guilty sinner, emancipation and sanctification for the sin inhabited saint, redemption for this lingering mortal body. May it be the desire on the part of each of us to respond, not grudgingly, but gladly and graciously, and having placed ourselves on the altar, let us leave ourselves there as a sacrifice never to be recalled. May we increase in the knowledge of His claims. Fourth, we must

Increase in the knowledge of His purposes.

Our God has great purposes ; purposes worthy of Himself. First of all, and chiefly, His purpose to glorify His name in a fulness in which He has never been glorified before. Oh the glory of the God of redemption when He has gathered into His presence the measureless fruits of His redemptive mercy. And second, His purposes to glorify His beloved Son. To make Him the head of a new creation

and to delight His heart by seeing the fruit of the travail of His soul. He has also a purpose to glorify the Holy Spirit for He will reward the Spirit He has sent forth by seeing the great work on which He has entered successfully accomplished to His infinite and eternal delight. Further, He has great purposes concerning His Church He means to conform us fully and for ever to the image of His Son, and to associate His accepted ones with His beloved Son in His coming Kingly glory. What a purpose! How much it should influence our lives. And then further, He has a great purpose concerning His earthly people. He means to gather them from all lands; He means to bring them as one nation into their own land, and already Emmanuel's land has in measure fallen into their hands. He means, in that land, to renew His ancient favours with them and to make them the means of blessing to the ends of the earth. And He will do it. Moreover, He has a great purpose regarding the nations. His purpose is to bring them under the benign sway of the King of kings, "For the Kingdom is the Lord's; and He is Governor among the nations." (Psalm 22). And lastly, He has a great purpose regarding the very heavens and the earth, for the present heavens and the earth are defiled by sin and are doomed to fire, but He means to replace the destroyed heavens and earth with "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Let us get more and more acquainted with His great and glorious purposes. Fifthly, we are to

Increase in the knowledge of His precepts.

We often talk of the ten commandments, and well we may, for indeed they are ten great moral precepts that were spoken to Israel, and most of them

were, in reality, written in the heart and conscience of men, but these ten commandments are very comprehensive. You have got to analyse them, to break them up into their constituent parts. I was reading recently that wonderful chapter of detailed commandments, Romans 12. It is full of commandments, full from beginning to end, and each of these precepts is beyond the will and power of the old nature, but let me add this, that, each one of them while not beyond the will of the new nature is beyond its power. Thank God you and I have got a new nature, but that new nature lacks the power. "To will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not." Now, I understand why Paul opens that 12th chapter as he does. How does he open that wonderful chapter of precepts? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Only as you and I lie upon His altar as a living sacrifice is He free to pick us up and fulfil in us, by His own Spirit who dwells in us, all these precepts. God's precepts are simply promises in another form. Each precept means: This is just what I am able to do through you if you will only allow me. For this Paul prayed. Please notice the 9th verse: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Col. 1. 9. Brethren we cannot do His will unless we know it, but our God is ready to unfold to us what His will is. To exercised saints He reveals it by His Spirit through His word, and through His dealings with us in daily life. He will not fail to reveal His will, but we may fail to learn it and obey it. God grant we may so surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit that He may be free

to make known to us our Father's will concerning us, then fulfil it in us by His own Almighty power. Sixth, we must

Increase in the knowledge of His promises.

They tell me that within the boards of my Bible there are to be found more than 30,000 promises. I am perfectly prepared to believe it, but I want to say this, that however many and however precious these promises of His may be, they are all "yea, and amen in Christ Jesus." "Yea" is God saying "Yes, I did promise that." "Amen," is God fulfilling His promises. What a collection of Promissory notes from the heavenly treasury God has put in your hand. Look at them one by one and take them to the counter of His bank and present them there and the great issuer will say: "Yes, that is one of my notes, I sent it out," and in saying "Amen" He proceeds to pay it out. Promises exceedingly great and precious. May we know and believe them; may we use them. And yet once more; we must

Increase in the knowledge of the possibilities of faith.

Brethren, the possibilities of faith are limited only by the will of God, and mind you, that is a large ground for you to traverse. They are limited only by the limitation of God's own will as revealed. What has He promised to do if we will only believe? You remember what the Lord said to our Father Abraham (he is the father of all that believe). "Look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and

to thy seed for ever.” And he said something more, not merely survey, but, “arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it,” take possession of it, for I will give it thee.” And Abraham proceeded to walk; he made a move immediately after. We are in the land of the promises, survey them from Genesis to Revelation, and not only survey them, but believe them and make them your own. When William Penn, one of the pilgrim fathers, was wanting to effect a settlement among the Red Indians in the New Country (in America,) this is what the natives said to him: “Well, Mr. Penn, we will give you as much land as you can perform a circuit round in one day.” William Penn never took a bigger walk in his life, and when the natives saw him stepping it out, they said: “Well, Penn’s going in for it; Penn is taking a big walk to-day.” What was the result? Pennsylvania, the woodland of William Penn, one of the great States in the Union. Brethren, let us be like Penn, walking round, by faith, the promises of God, making them our own. Shall I give you one or two specimens? John 14. 12.: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.” Greater than the giving of the blind their sight, greater than raising the dead to life, “greater” because spiritual miracles. That is a big country over which to walk! Here is another John 7. 38.: “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Men like to use big words without meaning. The Lord never does that. If He says “river” He means a river; if He says “rivers” He means “rivers,” yes, “rivers of living water.” And the Scriptures bear it out from beginning to end. Beloved, let us not limit our God as the Jews

did on a certain occasion when we read: "And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Matt. 13. 58. Let us grow in the possibilities of faith.

Now, let us survey the track of truth we have just traversed. We must increase in (1) **the knowledge of God Himself** as to His wondrous being and marvellous attributes, remembering specially His holiness on the one hand and His love on the other. We must increase (2) in the knowledge of His great salvation. Increase (3) in the knowledge of His claims; the claim of creation, the claim of providence, above all, the claim of redemption. Increase (4) in the knowledge of His great purposes regarding Himself—His Beloved Son—His Holy Spirit—His Church—His People, Israel—The Nations—The Heavens and the Earth. (5) Increase in the knowledge of His precepts, casting ourselves upon the power of the Holy Spirit, by whose power alone these precepts can be obeyed. Increase (6) in the knowledge of His promises, those "exceeding great and precious promises." Increase (7) in the knowledge of the possibilities thrown open by those promises to our faith, and as we increase in the knowledge of these things we mount higher and higher, we glorify God yet more and more, we diffuse blessing among our fellow saints; become channels of blessing to the world, and we secure for ourselves a fuller present and eternal reward.

“Behold the Man!”

Isaiah 42.

The Spirit of God has given to the Lord Jesus Christ the name of the Son of Man, because in Him God found all He desired and intended to be possessed by man. We have Him referred to in very many Scriptures. In the 37th Psalm we read: “Mark **the perfect man** and behold the upright.” That is just Christ Himself. In Isaiah 42. 1: “**Behold My Servant**, Whom I uphold, Mine elect, in Whom My Soul delighteth.” And in the New Testament as He came out of the waters of baptism: **this is My Beloved Son** in Whom I am well pleased.” Later on, in the Mount of Transfiguration, “**this is My Beloved Son** in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.” Listen to Him! And in Hebrews 12 we read: “**Consider Him.**” Let us do so now. First, we view Him as

The Man of Meditation,

the Man of Psalm 1, whose delight was ever “in the law of Jehovah,” and “in that law did He meditate day and night.” Think of Him as a boy in Nazareth. Even then He was engaged in meditation. To Him the Word of God was the spring of His development, the food of His

spirit, the rule of His life, the text book of His ministry, His shield and strength in this hostile world, and His comfort in the days of sorrow. Who is it that speaks in Psalm 119? "Oh, how love I thy law, it is My meditation all the day." "Thou through Thy commandments hast made Me wiser than Mine enemies." Think of it, in the temptation wiser than the subtle devil himself. "I have more understanding than all My teachers." See Him sitting among all the doctors of the law, and He has more understanding than them all. "I know more than the aged for Thy testimonies are My meditation." "How sweet are Thy words unto My taste." (See Psalms 119. 97; 10. 103, R.V.). In Him that Scripture was surely fulfilled to the uttermost. Oh, that we too might be men and women of meditation in these last days when so many diverting influences are at work. Be it ours to be stayed on our God through meditation on His word. "I commend you," said Paul, "to God, and to the word of His grace." And then, second, "Behold the Man" as

The Man of Prayer.

If we want our prayers to be rich and acceptable we must saturate our heart with the Word of God. Our prayers will become shallow and formal if we do not refresh our hearts daily with God's own thoughts as spoken of in His Word. But, after we have been enriched ourselves with what God has said to us then we shall be able to speak intelligently and acceptably back to Him at the throne. The Lord Jesus had a Prayer Book, so have we—the Book of Psalms. What is the 22nd Psalm but simply a pre-written prayer for Him to use in the day of sorrow? What is the

69th Psalm but a pre-written prayer for that Blessed One: "Save Me, O God, for the waters are come in unto My soul." The prayer was made before the Praying One was prepared to use it. May we be, like Him, men and women of prayer. There is no Gospel in which we read more of this Man as a man of prayer than in the Gospel of Luke. Seven or eight times, I think, we read in Luke's Gospel of Him (Jesus) being engaged in prayer. It was in prayer that He received the full power of the Holy Spirit. When He prayed on the Mount He was transfigured. How He delighted to retire to the mountain or to the solitary place there to pour out His heart before God! Most of us, or shall I say all of us, have got a private room to retire to. I wonder what use we are making of it as a sanctuary, a place of retirement alone with God. If we had more prayer individually and secretly **in our own private rooms**, how much more power would we have in our assemblies? We are languishing for lack of individual dealing with God. There is no compensation for it. Let us by no means deprive God of His due and ourselves of the blessing we so deeply need. But, third, "Behold the Man" as

The Man of Perfect Faith and Dependence.

We, His creatures, have all been constructed on the principle of dependence, and the more absolute our dependence the more fully does the knowledge and wisdom of God enter into these minds of ours. Christ was a man of faith; the Just One who lived by faith. And so in 2nd Corinthians 4. 13, we read: "I believe and therefore have I spoken." This expression occurs in Psalm 116. Then again, in

Psalm 52 we read: "I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." The Lord Jesus is the only One that uses the expression "O thou of little faith," and only He could fittingly use such an expression. He knew the heart of God; He knew the character of God, and as the only One that knew the Father what an astonishment to His holy soul it must have been to look upon all the creatures He had made, and as He thought of the absolute trustworthiness of the Father on the one hand, and the terrible unbelief of man on the other, He expresses astonishment: "O ye of little faith!" And, mind you, if Peter was a man "of little faith" when he was sinking in the water, I wonder what you and I would be in such a case. Well may we pray: "Lord increase our faith." He was the Man of perfect faith and dependence. And, fourth, "Behold the Man" as

The Man of Perfect Social Life.

John the Baptist lived the life of an ascetic, but the Son of Man differed from him in that respect. John came neither eating nor drinking, living a life of natural self-denial, denial to legitimate blessings, feeding on locusts and wild honey. But when the Son of Man came, He came eating and drinking, a very social man, but ever eating and drinking to the glory of God. And so we find Him, not in the wilderness, but in the house of Simon, or of Matthew, or of Zaccheus. It does not in the least interfere with His work to be there. You will find Him in the home of feasting, at the marriage in Cana; you will find Him in the home of sorrow in the house of Jairus. There was a perfect adaptability about this

Blessed ^{One} to all the legitimate paths of human life. And we need to learn of Him in this respect. There is a kind of hardness, a crystallized condition about us that prevents us just beautifully accommodating ourselves to the prejudices and feelings of others, which we can do many times without the least sin, even as He did. He was the Man that had, as the hymn says:

“A mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at the Father’s side.”

And you and I must just have the same mind. Then again, fifth, “Behold the Man” as

**The Man of Absolute Separation from Sin and
Absolute Holiness to God, and Absolute
Righteousness of Life.**

“Mark the Perfect Man and behold the Upright.” Here He is at last. A man of whom He Himself could say: “Which of you convicteth Me of sin?” Complete separation from sin. That Perfect One on Whom was written “Holiness to the Lord” from His very birth to the Cross. A Man of perfect righteousness. It was His holiness that made Him intolerable to the Pharisee. The enemies of the Lord were the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees were semi-infidels, men that did not believe in angel, or resurrection, or spirit, yet they were not so guilty before the Christ of God as the Pharisees. It is a remarkable thing we never read that the Lord said: “Woe unto you Sadducees,” but He did say: “Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees.” Think of that! For they professed to be what they were not, and

they professed not to be what they were. It was the consciousness of His holiness that made Him so repulsive to those would-be holy men, those men that were self-righteous. Oh, what faithfulness to God on the one hand, and to man on the other. How perfect must have been his conduct as an artisan. Every article in wood that was placed in His hands to be constructed must have been constructed with absolute perfection. The people of Nazareth could never find fault with His slipshod imperfectness. Whether we work with our hands or our heads, then, may we commend our God and our Lord Jesus Christ to all beholders. And then, yet further,

"Behold the Man" of Perfect Love.

If He was perfect in life on the one hand He was perfect in love on the other. And just because He was the man of perfect love He was absolutely approachable to sinners. In the 14th chapter of Luke the Lord gives us the parable of the Great Supper. A certain man made a great supper and bade many, and he tells how the generous host sent out his servant first to those originally bidden, the high class citizens, the West-enders of Jerusalem, and they would not come. Then he sends him to the streets to where the poor inhabitants lived and still there was "room." Then he sends him forth into the highways and hedges, to poor sinners of the Gentiles, "and compel them," said his Master, "to come in, that my house may be filled." Oh, the fulness of Divine love! And then, in the very next chapter, you will read: "The publicans and sinners drew near to hear

Him." They were attracted by the tenderness of His love. They must have overheard some of those words of infinite grace and drew nigh to hear Him. It is love that meets the need of the poor sinner. Oh, that we might be full of the love of Christ. Yes, and to children too He had an exquisite attraction. No child was ever afraid to approach that Blessed One. If the child at the outset had any scruples about the matter the winsomeness of His smile, the tenderness of His touch, the words of grace that fell from his lips would soon dispel all these and fill the little ones hearts with the fullest confidence. You mark a man that is fond of children and you have a man that is not unlike the Son of Man Himself. Never make little of a child's sorrows. Never refuse to play a game with a child if a child wants you to do it. Dr. Chalmers was found one day on the floor with his little girls in hearty fun. He was as great a man in the sight of God when doing that as he was in the professor's chair. Real moral greatness is vastly different from what the world conceives it to be. Here is the man of perfect love, and that love of His displayed itself in various ways, displayed itself in his tenderness, his compassion, his utter unselfishness. He never said to anyone who came for His help, "I can't be troubled with you, I'm full up." If any man wanted Him to heal his child or his servant His answer or promise was "I will come and heal." Oh, the perfection of His life. May you and I have such a love as that. Think of the love that touched the bier and said to the young man "Arise!" What love that wept at the tomb of Lazarus. He wept although He knew well enough they would receive back their loving brother. We

want some of this beautiful self accommodating love. And further, seventh, we see in the Son of Man

The Man of Perfect Obedience.

I have said already that He was the man of perfect dependence. Obedience to all authority whether divine or divinely constituted. For example, He was in perfect subjection to parental authority. Or again, the authority might be legal authority. A man came to Him one day and said, "Lord, I wish you would speak to my brother that he would divide the property with me." What did the Lord say? "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" That belongs to the court of law. I am not here in that capacity at all. He was subject to legal authority. Let the man refer his case to them. He was subject to what we might call ecclesiastical authority. Never did a feast of the Jews come round but Jesus was there. He was a regular attender on the Sabbath day. None could accuse Him of failing to appear. And to those that were healed He would even say: "Go show thyself to the priests." It is for them to pronounce you clean. You remember on one occasion his critics asked Him the question: "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar?" "Show me a penny," said the Lord. "Whose is this image and superscription?" "Caesar's!" "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." An unanswerable answer. They knew, in their conscience, they were not doing it. But most of all he was in perfect obedience to divine authority. "I came not

to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." "My meat is to do His will," and at last His prayer is "Thy will be done." That "will" took an active form in His public life and a passive form in His suffering and death. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." That form of death to which God Himself had attached a curse, for "cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." And just because He was so perfect in his obedience He merited the title of the "beloved." If you will look at the Scripture in which He is called "the beloved" or the "Son of God's love" I think you will find it is in immediate connection with His suffering, in immediate connection with His work of atonement to God and redemption to man. We read at His baptism, figure of His coming baptism, in judgment; "this is my beloved Son." We read concerning the Mount of Transfiguration when the subject of discourse was His decease, "This is my beloved Son." If we follow on in the path of obedience we, too, shall receive the name of beloved ones. To Daniel, over and over again, is the word addressed, "O, man, greatly beloved."

And now, lastly, "Behold the Man" as

The Man of Ideal Human Glory.

Man as he is destined in the covenant of grace to be. Look at Him. There is the Man of God, the Man Who is the type of perfected humanity. "We look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change the bodies of our humiliation into conformity to the body of His glory" (Phil. 3. 21). For, as we have borne

the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 49). However much we may be assimilated to His image morally and practically while here, you can never, while in this body, attain to His perfected humanity. We shall have to wait till He comes to change the body of our humiliation or degradation into conformity to the body of His glory, and then, beloved, we shall be like Him fully. I would say once more

"Consider Him."

Consider Him as the Man of habitual meditation; consider Him as the Man of habitual prayer; consider Him as the Man of perfect faith and dependence; consider Him as the Man of perfect social life; consider Him as the Man of perfect separation from sin and perfect consecration in holiness and righteousness unto God; consider Him as the Man of perfect love; consider Him as the Man of perfect obedience to all authority, divine or divinely constituted; and lastly, consider Him as the Man of perfected humanity. May the Holy Spirit so fix our eye on Him that unawares to ourselves we shall be progressively transformed from this present evil world and conformed to the image of God's beloved Son.



The Word of God.

2nd Timothy 3. 15,16. Hebrews 4. 12.

I T has pleased our God, in the riches of His Grace, to bless us with

Three mighty gifts;

these are **His Son, His Spirit, and His Word.** For each of these three we may well exclaim: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" To the third of these I desire to direct your attention in this chapter. Let us look at the

Word of God

under various aspects. First

As a lamp of light,

through which God is revealed to man, and through which man is revealed to himself. Through the entrance of sin man was lost in darkness. He lost all true knowledge of God. But this blessed Book comes to us as a revelation of God, what His character is, what His mind is, what His will is. And if man by nature be blind to the knowledge of God, he is also blind to his own real condition. His heart is impure, his mind is darkened, his will is perverted, and he is utterly unable to remedy the evil. More than this, the Word of God is a revelation of the judgment, under which

man through sin lies, and the darker judgment that awaits the unrepentant. But, blessed be God, this book is also a revelation of the heart of love that determined on man's redemption and restoration, and of the way by which that wondrous purpose of His has been, and is being, accomplished. For these reasons we may well say the Word of God is a Lamp of Light. Secondly, the Word of God is

A Sword,

or, if you will, **a quiver filled with arrows of truth.** It is expressly called a sword. We read in Ephesians 6, **"The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."** And here the Word of God is a sword operating in three directions. First, it acts on the conscience, the seared and dead conscience of the guilty sinner. And in its action upon the guilty sinner it has one of two effects. It may have a gracious effect in leading to a humble consciousness of guilt, and a humble confession of it, as in the case of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, who, when they heard the Word of God through the lips of His inspired servant Peter, were "pricked in their hearts" (Acts 2. 37). That pricking by the word in their consciences was a gracious operation as we see from the gracious results to which it led. On the other hand it may have the very opposite effect. It may only arouse the hidden indignation of the human heart. And such was its effect, through the same lips at a later day, when Peter stood with his eleven apostolic companions in the presence of the Jewish Council and charged them with the enormous crime of the murder of the Son of God. In that case it only aroused their hidden hatred and opposition (Acts

5. 33). But, beloved, if the Word of God is a sword in the direction of the sinner, it is none the less a sword in the direction of the saint. Thus it is used in Hebrews iv., where the apostle is writing to believers, and he speaks there of the Word of God as **"living, operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."**... That is, separating between that which is really of nature, the "soul," and that which belongs to the new creation, the "spirit." Penetrating to the separating of soul and spirit inwardly, and of the joints and marrow outwardly. That is no mere figure of speech, for in the hands of the Spirit of God so great is the effect of the Word of God upon the believing one that even his body shows special symptoms of the power and effect of the operation. And more than that; it is a great **disorderer of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** There are not a few in these last days who have set themselves as critics of the Word of God. May God in His infinite mercy save each of us from such presumptuous sin. Rather may we subject ourselves, and that willingly, to be criticised by the Word of God. We are here introduced into a department of Divine truth little insisted upon. The mind of the apostle in his perfect ministry not only "taught every man," but he "warned every man." And warning is as essential as teaching to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. So far as my observation goes most of the texts and mottoes that the Lord's people hang upon their walls are texts or mottoes, bright, encouraging, comforting. I would to God our walls were also hung with words of divine warning.

The words of warning

are many. Let me mention a few. As to the heart the apostle John says: **"He that loveth not his brother is a murderer."** You say that is strong language. Indeed it is; but it is true; hatred is the germ from which murder springs. Take another. From the lips of Jesus: **"Judge not that ye be not judged,** for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye and seest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Thou hypocrite! There is a marvellous difference between a mere chip and a beam of wood. May you and I have grace to obey the solemn warning. The Word of God is not only a sword against the sinner, and a sword against the saint, but it is also **a sword against Satan.** Thus it was used by the blessed Lord in the wilderness when He encountered the Prince of Darkness. **"It is written! It is written! It is written!"** And thus it is introduced in the Epistle to the Ephesians: Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." Thirdly, the Word of God is also

The seed of Divine life.

The Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower says, "The sower soweth the Word." This Word of God is that mysterious seed which in the hand of the quickening Spirit of God creates life in him that believes. And it not only introduces the life of the Father into the believing child, it even introduces in measure, at once, His character. What a wonderful influence this precious Book has in dealing either with saint or with sinner. The letter kills, it is the Spirit that quickens. "The

words that I speak unto you," says the Living One, "are life." Then the Word of God which has acted as the generating seed in the soul that believes, next becomes

The Milk

by which the infant life is maintained and developed. And thus Peter uses it in his 1st Epistle, chapter 2. v. 1, 2. We like to see the infant with a vigorous appetite for the breast. And how blessed it is for the young saint to have a vigorous appetite for the pure unadulterated milk of the Word. My dear young brother and sister, if your appetite for the pure milk is to be kept vigorous beware of everything that would hinder it. Put aside all malice, all guile, all hypocrisy. Professing to be what you are not, or professing not to be what you are. It is not "some" of the evil speakings but "all." Brush them **all away**, and then, as a new born babe, you will be longing for the pure milk of the Word. But further, the Word of God is not only milk for the babe, but it is

Solid food

for those of mature years. Brethren, if there are sweet and precious sayings in this Book, there are also profound mysteries which defy the greatest human intellects. I think it is a beautiful thing in Sir Isaac Newton, that great mathematician, to turn aside from his philosophical studies and write a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. He thought it worth while to lay aside his scientific investigations to write such a commentary. He was a spiritual man as well as a scientific man, and he found in

that marvellous letter to the Romans, principles of such magnitude, so beautifully expressed that he was enamoured with them and wrote his own commentary. The Word of God is solid food for those of mature age, it is also

Water to cleanse.

In Psalm 119, verse 9, we read: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" How is he to do it? "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." And so in the Epistle to the Ephesians 5, 25-26, Paul says: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it **with the washing of water by the Word.**" The Word of God is not only food to bring into you what ought to be there, it is also water to remove from you what ought not to be there. As we move through a sinful world with this sinful nature we are constantly exposed to and liable to contract defilement, hence we need daily ablution as well as daily nutrition. We need the daily wash as well as the daily meal, and let not one day pass in these eventful lives, in which we have health and strength and soundness of mind, without having our daily meal on the Word of God, and our daily wash in the Word of God. Further, the Word of God is

The great foundation

on which our faith for ever rests. There is a beautiful picture, in the last scene in the life of the patriarch Jacob when he charged his illustrious son Joseph to see to it after he was gone that his dust was not laid in Egypt, but

duly conveyed to the land of his fathers and interred in the family sepulchre. He asked Joseph to swear to him that he would do so. This Joseph did. And we read: "Jacob blessed him, leaning on the point of his staff." Expressive of the fact that he was just leaning upon the Word of God as the foundation of his hope. The late Mr. Gladstone called the Bible "**the impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture,**" and blessed is anyone who builds on that immovable rock. And yet, once more, the Word of God is the great

Instrument of education and perfection.

It is the class book of the child of God. That is clearly shown in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, 3. 14-17. And what follows please note. "**All Scripture is given by inspiration**"—the breath of God is in it "that the man of God may be perfect—perfect in spiritual stature, and perfectly furnished—furnished unto every good work."

Now, let us run over what we have been considering. First, we have considered the Word as **a lamp** from above, showing God to man, and man to himself. Secondly as **a sword** piercing the conscience of the sinner and of the saint. Thirdly we have considered it as **the seed** in the hand of the quickening Spirit begetting divine life and imparting divine character to the soul that believes. Fourthly, we have considered it as the **infants food** for the development of life, and fifthly as the **solid food** for the older believer. Sixthly

we have considered it as **water to cleanse** from our hearts those evil things that may still be lurking there. Seventhly we have looked at it as the **immovable foundation** on which our faith rests for time and eternity. And finally, we have considered it as that **great class-book of instruction** by which the Spirit of God perfects the believer in spiritual growth and furnishes him for every good work. "I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace." I charge you, beloved, remember and obey the solemn principles of the Word of God which are essential to our spiritual safety as are the sweet and gracious promises we so delight to hear. May the Holy Ghost enable you to accept this message.



The Love of God.

Read Ephesians 3, verse 14 to end.

WHAT an engaging theme is, "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

So engaging, that our hearts may well be won by it moment by moment. Now, there are various points connected with His love to which I would ask your attention. First, this love of His is

Everlasting love.

You remember that precious word in Jeremiah 31: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Here are a company of souls that have been "drawn by love that knows no measure," love too, that was set upon us before the foundation of the world. Write this upon your memory and heart; He who loves you now, has loved you from a past eternity and will love you to an eternity to come. His love is an everlasting love. Secondly, the love of God is

A Sovereign love,

and in the sovereignty of His love God has a perfect right to do with His creatures as He pleases. In His sovereignty He has been pleased to choose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, "that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in

love, having pre-destined us unto sonship through Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1. 4-5). His sovereign love then is seen originally in our being chosen out in Him, and it runs on until we reach that eternal and complete sonship, when He returns to receive His ransomed ones to Himself. It is sovereign love indeed. He loved us because He willed to do so; because "God is love." And so we can sing:

"Chosen of God ere time began,
I choose Him in return."

We should never have chosen Him had He not first chosen us. Thirdly, this love of God is

In its dimensions, infinite.

Did you notice in the closing verses of the 3rd of Ephesians that the apostle speaks of the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height of this love? What are we to understand by these four measures? We might consider them thus: Firstly, **its breadth**, "As far as the East is from the West so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103. 12). What a separation between the transgressions and the transgressors. Secondly, **its length**, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him" (v. 17). **Its depth**, "He in love hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us after our iniquities" (v. 10). Had He done so these sins and iniquities would have sunk us to the lake of fire; but His long arm reached down, as it were, to where we should

have gone, and has lifted us up that we should never go that way at all. And then, **its height**; "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy towards them that fear Him" (v. 11). Beloved, He has not only prevented our going down, but He has lifted us far above principalities and powers, above even angels that never sinned, and set us down in the heavens, as one in and with Christ, His beloved Son. These are dimensions that are measureless, and therefore we may well say, His love in its measure is infinite. Fourthly, the love of God is

Spontaneous love.

He loved us because He would love us. There was nothing in us that merited this love. Absolutely nothing! The very reverse. Indeed it is spontaneous love. How emphatically did Moses dwell on the spontaneity of God's love to Israel, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deuteronomy 7. 7). And Moses might have added, "nor did He love you because of your creditable history." Think of the history of that chosen people before these words were uttered by Moses. They sprang from an idolatrous root. Their father Abraham was brought up in idolatry. Then coming on to Jacob; what a scheming fellow he was by nature. Think of the family of Jacob; of his daughter Dinah and the disgrace she brought upon herself. Think of her brethren Simeon and Levi, two of the sons of Jacob, who slew Hamor and Shechem. Think of the cruelty of those brethren to their brother

Joseph, and the cruelty of their hearts towards their father when they sent that coat of many colours dipped in the blood of a goat, thus deceiving him. And later on think of the idolatry that Israel practised in the land of Egypt, for in Egypt they just became idolaters even as the Egyptians. It was there they learned the works of the heathen, and for centuries they have been wanderers over the face of the earth. They had not a creditable history, so neither for their numbers nor yet for their creditable past did Jehovah choose that people. And what of you and me? Verily there was nothing in us that our God should set His wonderful love upon us. Can we not say with Murray McCheyne:

“Chosen not for good in me;
Wakened up from wrath to flee;
Hidden in the Saviour’s side;
By the Spirit sanctified.
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe.”

Fifthly, the love of God has been

A deeply tried love, yet persistent.

In Judges 2 we read that an angel, a divine messenger, came up from Gilgal to Bochim. Gilgal, the place where the people said: “We have done the works of the flesh in the past; we consecrate ourselves now to Jehovah,” and from the place of consecration came this divine messenger, and his message was: “I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you.

And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed My voice; why have ye done this?" Remember again the words of Jeremiah, "Howbeit, I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate" (Jeremiah 44. v. 4, 5). They worshipped an idol. That is the standing failure of every one of us as well as of Israel. We set up another in the place of God and worship that object. In some form or other we set up our idol. "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear." God has never been a disappointment to us, but Israel was a disappointment to Him. We pass on to a remarkable Scripture in Hosea, so remarkable that I would ask you to turn to it and read it. Hosea 11, 1, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him." Why did He love them? The Beloved one was there. The Father saw Him there, in the brick fields—His Son was there. "And called My Son out of Egypt" (See Matthew 2. 15). "As He called them, so they went from Him." The very opposite way. "They sacrificed to Baalim, and burned incense to graven images," yet "I taught Ephraim even to walk." Look at Jehovah playing the part of a father to His child. "I taught Ephraim to walk taking them by their arms. But they knew not that I healed them." And now for the conflict in Jehovah's heart, verse 8. "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I make thee as Zeboin—two cities of the plain that perished with Sodom and Gomorrah—Mine heart is turned within

Me, My repentings are kindled together." Oh Israel, this is an unendurable thought, "My heart is turned within Me." I cannot think of it! And so He arrives at His final decision, verse 9. "I will not execute the fierceness of My anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not enter into the city." What a great conflict takes place in Jehovah's heart as shown in this wonderful chapter. It reminds me of the words of that blessed man of God, even Paul. He says, in writing to the Colossians, "For I would that ye knew what a great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh" (Colossians 2. 1). Further, if Israel in the days of Hosea had been such a disappointment there was more to follow. At last the appointed hour came and God said: "I will send unto them My Son." And commissioned by the Father came His beloved Son. And what reception did He get? A Cross! Later on, God sent forth His Spirit to bear witness concerning that Son of His to show by mighty works and by the testimony of the apostles that Jesus of Nazareth was in very truth the Messiah of Israel. But, said the first martyr of the Christian dispensation, even Stephen, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." And that resistance on the part of the Jews to the testimony of Stephen has been continued for well nigh 19 centuries. Yet, in a little while the veil that rests on their hearts shall drop under the illuminating power of the Spirit of Love. They will yet recognise Him as Messiah, and say "this is our God; we have waited for Him." Isaiah 53 is the confession of their criminal blindness

and in the millenium day they will praise Him as they ought. What ineffable joy will fill Jehovah's heart. The joy that shall then take place will be commensurate, to say the least, with all the grief that people have up till now, caused. But let me come nearer home. What of ourselves? Are we better than they? Have we never tried the love of our God? Times without number! What apostacy is evidenced to-day! What practical denials like Peter, of our Lord Jesus. What grievances of the Holy Spirit of God by our very ignorance of His indwelling love. We grieve Him by our positive rebellion against His laws. Yet, though we have departed from God in our heart many times; though we have practically denied the Lord Jesus; though we have grieved that Blessed Spirit times without number, yet is His love persistent still. Let us not talk of the persistence of the saints, rather let us talk about the perseverance, the persistent love of God that will not let us go. Oh, the exceeding riches of His grace. Love deeply tried, yet persistent. Sixthly, it will naturally follow that love so persistent must be

Love intense,

and the intensity of the love of God is seen in three ways. First, we see it in the Christ paying for our redemption, and the legal accomplishment of the purpose of His love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." In Matthew 13. 44—46, we have two beautiful illustrations of His love. Jesus said to His own: "The kingdom of heaven is

like unto a treasure hid in a field"—(thanks be to His Name, He hid it. There is one who would have made quick work of it had he been aware of it.)—"and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." And again: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." What a costly investment, the price of our redemption. Second, the intensity of His love is seen in the lavish provision God has made for our present enrichment. In Christ stands open the treasury in which dwells "all the fulness of God," whilst the Spirit waits to dispense therefrom, to you and me, as we need its supplies. The Word is the divine inventory of the riches contained in that treasury. How lavish is His provision, and yet how little have we drawn from this treasure, filled with boundless stores of grace. How little have we examined the inventory that we might know the things that are graciously given to us of God! And yet in the midst of it all, what marvellous patience and long suffering has He exercised to us all. Thirdly, the intensity of His love appears in the **destiny** to which He has called us. And what have we been called to? We have been called to Sonship. Inwardly, if led by the Spirit, we are "Sons" already. In **body** we are not yet Sons of God. We are waiting to be the brethren in heavenly garb of that Blessed One who is the first begotten from the dead. Do you remember the first message that was sent by the first-born from the dead, "Go tell **My brethren**" not My disciples, not My servants—"that I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and

My God and your God." What a marvellous fellowship. Fellowship with Him in the Royal family of heaven. But this involves our being called to heirship for "if children, then heirs," therefore we are heirs with the Son of God. And heirs, what to? Heirs to fellowship with Him in the Father's love. Twice over in John 17 He brings that before us. Towards the end of verse 23, we read "that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." And again in verse 26, "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

"He and I together entering
Those bright courts above;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love."

But not merely are we called to fellowship with Him in the enjoyment of the Father's love, but we are called to fellowship with Him in the glory of His throne. "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." "If we suffer." Please remember if you want a throne you must accept a Cross. Such then are the exceeding riches of His grace. **Seventh**, this love being so intense is also a

Jealous love.

The stronger the love the stronger the jealousy of any one, and Moses, five times over, refers to the jealousy of Jehovah. "The Lord our God is a jealous God." Then again in another Scripture: Jehovah, Whose name is Jealous"; and in another: "Jehovah, thy God, is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." This

love of His can stand no rival, it will burn, and burn, and burn, until it has consumed the last effort of unbelief, of departure from Himself. It is remarkable to find that in Hebrews this passage is quoted: "Our God is a consuming fire," and so we may fitly pray, "Set me as a seal upon Thy heart"—the place of affection, as a seal upon Thine arm—the place of power. That is, "By the power of Thine arm keep me close to Thine heart." Why? "For love is strong as death, jealousy is as cruel as the grave," and I do not want to feel the burning of that jealous heart. And lastly, just because the love of God is everlasting, sovereign, infinite in its dimensions, spontaneous, deeply tried yet persistent, intense and jealous, it is an

All exacting love.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12. 30).

Perfectly reasonable is this demand. He in love has given His all, Christ in love has given Himself for us, and now He reasonably expects our all from us in return. Hence, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service."

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all."

The Person, Work and Leading of the Holy Spirit.

(PART I.).

Acts of the Apostles, chapter i. v. 1—8.

THIS subject is one of first importance and it becomes us therefore to approach it with the deepest reverence, and to cast ourselves entirely upon the power of Him upon Whom we now meditate. The present dispensation is distinctively the day of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore full of peculiar privileges and marvellous possibilities for our faith. During God's dealings with Israel of old, He revealed Himself before His people by outward manifestations such as burning fire on Sinai's top, and by mighty works He made Himself known to His people either in mercy or in judgment. In the days of the Son of God on earth, God revealed Himself more fully still. He Who formerly had "spoken unto the fathers in the prophets" now spoke to man "in His Own Son." In Him Incarnate Deity was fully revealed. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," said Jesus. But God is more fully revealed before man in the present day, than in the life and the death of His beloved Son. God had not as yet so fully revealed Himself as He had intended to do. Now, in the present dispensation,

God is revealing Himself in us,

as well as before us. This wonderful revelation inwardly of God to man is brought about through the entrance and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Hence, Jesus said regarding the Spirit of God, "He dwelleth with you and shall be **in** you" (John 14, 17). He Himself was the living temple of the Holy Spirit. At that time, He was just dwelling **with us**; in a little while, He was to be dwelling **in us**. The Apostle, in addressing the Christians, could say of **them** collectively: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God—or sanctuary—and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." Oh what sanctity this gives to an assembly of saints! We are nothing less than a temple of the Holy Ghost. In chapter 6 of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians he addresses them individually and says: "Know ye not that your body is a temple (or sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit, which ye have from God" (1 Corinthians 6. 19). With what reverence should this possess our hearts. With what godly fear should we be characterised lest any thought or word or deed should defile this temple of the Holy Spirit. Never was God so near to man as He is to-day. "He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." As you move about day by day in your homes, on the street, or anywhere else, say to yourself, "I am a child of God, I am the purchase of the precious blood, I am a temple of the Holy Ghost."

In considering this subject more closely the first point to note is

the personality of the Holy Spirit.

For the sake of younger saints it is important to dwell on this point. So often the Spirit

has been thought to be a mere influence or power. He has influence, a mighty influence, He **has** power, **almighty** power, but by the Scriptures we know that the Spirit is **a person**, and as much a person as is the Son of God. Hence the attributes of personality are ascribed to Him. For example, He is said **"to will."** In 1 Corinthians xii. 11 we read of His gifts to each one severally, or individually **"as He will."** Secondly, **feelings are ascribed to the Spirit of God.** In Isaiah 63. 10 we read: **"But they rebelled (that is Israel of old) and vexed His Holy Spirit."** The Apostle says in Ephesians 4, 30: **"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,** whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Thirdly, **judgment is ascribed to the Spirit of God.** In Acts 15, 26—28 we find the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem writing thus to their Gentile brethren: **"It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us."** Fourthly, authority is ascribed to the Spirit of God. In Acts 13 we find Him saying to the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch: **"Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."** And after the brethren had done so we read: **"So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed."** It is worthy of remark that the brethren themselves simply "let them go." Unfortunately it is translated "they sent them away." The word in the original means **"They let them go."** But of the Spirit of God we read in verse 4 **"They being sent forth by the Holy Ghost."** Then, too, He is also said **to forbid.** We find that Paul and Silas, as they pursued their mission for the Lord were forbidden on a certain occasion to preach in Asia (Acts 16, 6). Thus He both commands and forbids.

And the Lord Jesus, in introducing Him more fully to the disciples ere He departed, guards His personality in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John. In the 14th chapter of John, verse 26, we read: **"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things."** That is, as representing Me, He shall teach you all things. So again in the 15th John, verse 26, **"But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."** Again, in John 16. 8 (R.V.), we read: **"And He, when He is come, will convict the world of sin."** If then, any of us have been accustomed to speak of that mighty one under the name of **"it,"** pray do so no longer. Not only is He a person, but

He is a divine person,

and so, many times in Scripture we read "of the spirit of Jehovah," "of the Spirit of God," and in the 15th of John the Word says of Him, **"He proceedeth from the Father."** So much for His personality.

As to

the work of the Holy Spirit.

He has various spheres. The first in which we see Him at work is in

the sphere of creation.

You have only to begin reading the sacred writings when you meet these words: "And the earth was without form (or waste) and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and **the Spirit of God moved**—or was brooding over the face of the waters." Brooding over in

creative power. Then again in the 33rd Psalm there is a very beautiful expression. "By **the Word of the Lord** were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (v. 6). In that expression "the Word of the Lord" we perceive the Living Word, the Son of God, and then in the expression "**the breath of His mouth**" we perceive the Spirit of God, the living breath. In that one verse then, you can see both the Son of God and the Spirit of God at work in creation. And then in the 104th Psalm we have a remarkable and mysterious passage, verses 29 and 30: "Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." "Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth." One would almost think that here the Spirit was alluding to a future re-creation. However, that is just as it seems. So that for creation, its rise and existence, all is due to the operation of the Spirit of God in association with the mighty working of the Word of God. Another sphere in which we trace the working of the Spirit of God is

In the Son of God, as the head of a new Creation.

In the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus we see the Spirit of God at work throughout, and we have been too long in observing the wondrous part the Holy Spirit has played in the providing of a Redeemer and Saviour. Just let us examine what Scripture has to say about this part. It teaches us that we are indebted to the Holy Spirit for His incarnation. When the revealing angel came

to announce to Mary, the favoured hand-maid of the Lord, the unique honour about to be conferred upon her, and she enquired how such a unique event should happen, the angel thus replies: **"The Holy Ghost shall come upon you,** and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, therefore also that Holy Thing that shall be begotten shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35). Hence His incarnation was brought about by the mighty power of the Spirit of God. Thus did the Word become flesh. His growth as a child was due to the operation of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 2. 40 (R.V.) we read: "And the child grew and waxed strong, **becoming full of Wisdom.**" In chapter 3 we find that at the Jordan as He emerged from the waters of baptism, John saw the Spirit descending upon Him as a dove (v. 22). That moment Jesus received a message of power which as man He did not possess before, and in the exercise of that power He proceeded to face and foil the enemy in the wilderness, using as he did so, the Sword of the Spirit—"It is written"—the Word of God, and afterwards coming forth to His great public ministry of good and wondrous works, and wise and sanctifying words. All that He did in the way of mighty works, He did by the Spirit's power. **"If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons,"** he said. He spake "not from Himself," but just as the indwelling Spirit instructed Him to speak. And then, at the last, when He had completed His active ministry, He offered Himself upon the cross, a full and eternal atonement for sin, as we read in Hebrews 9 and 14, **"He, through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God."** Then in Romans 8, v. 11, we read, **"If the Spirit of**

Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." And it may be that the exaltation of the Risen One from earth to the right hand of God was also the work of the Spirit. Well may we love this blessed Spirit. To Him we are indebted for a Redeemer, for His incarnation, for his development, for the power that He received, for His wondrous victory over the enemy, for His life of gracious words and acts, for His atoning death, for His glorious resurrection, and it may be also for His exaltation.

Then, thirdly, let us look at

The work of the Spirit of God in the world.

No sooner had man sinned than he received a conscience. The moment he ate of the tree of acquaintance with good and evil, he was possessed of a faculty of power that could distinguish between that which was good and that which was evil. That is conscience.. In conscience the Spirit of God is ever operating. These are the two branches of His ministry in the world. Firstly He is present in the world as **the great represser or restrainer of evil**. Little does this poor Satan-ruled world know how constantly and how immeasurably it is indebted to the operation of the Spirit of God for the peace and liberty that it enjoys. Knowing as Satan does, that God has a special interest in man and that His delights have been with the sons of men, He, the great Adversary of mankind, has a peculiar antipathy to every human being because belonging to a race for which God has shown peculiar regard. And I verily believe that

were it not for the Almighty power of the Spirit of God, he would set every man's sword against his fellow in order to extinguish the race altogether. But, in the mercy of God a great represser has been provided in the person of the Almighty Spirit. What use for all the influence of constituted government, of armies and navies, of constables were it not that over all and through all an Almighty One is operating. In II. Thessalonians we read of the coming revelation of the man of sin. The apostle says there: "And now you know that which restraineth in order that he (the man of sin) may be revealed in his own season" (c. 2, v. 6. R.V.). And in the next verse we read, chapter 2, 7, "For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work, only He Who now restraineth will restrain." That which "restraineth" is a person, and as it is a personal restraint I cannot think of any other to answer this description but the Almighty Spirit of God. Thus He operates in the world as the great represser or restrainer of human evil.

Secondly, in the world He acts as the great convicter of sin. At the moment man sinned he received a conscience, a faculty of discerning good and evil, and with that faculty the Spirit has all along operated. But wherever the message of God regarding the claims of God to man is preached and made known, there the Spirit of God acts as the great convicter of sin. What sin? The crowning sin of man! The disowning, the disregarding, the rejecting of the claims of the blessed Son of God upon the faith and obedience of every sinner. By the work of the Cross He has acquired a further claim upon His creatures, and

the Spirit of God peculiarly brings to bear on the sinner's conscience the tremendous sin of refusing to believe in His Name. **"When He, (the Spirit of God) is come, He shall convict the world of sin, because they believe not on Me."** (John 16. 9). We do not need to waste our time in a country like this where the truth of God has been proclaimed, in proving to any who would doubt or deny the existence of God or the Deity of Jesus, or the atonement accomplished on the Cross. They know it! The Spirit of God has done His work. In such countries as ours He has assuredly fulfilled His mission as the convicter of sin. It is our business to press home on men the sin of refusing to own Jesus as the only substitute and the only Saviour, and to submit to Him as their rightful Lord. And please notice this convicting ministry has one or other of two effects. It either intensifies the sinner's hatred to God or else it melts his heart. We may call the one **judicial conviction**, the effect that the message of the Word in power has upon the fleshly heart. In this instance it only intensifies the sinner's hatred to God and his opposition to God's Christ. Thus it was with the apostles in their witness for the Lord before the Jewish authorities. After Peter had charged home upon the rulers the awful crime of rejecting the Christ of God we read: **"When they heard these words they were cut to the heart and took council to slay them"** (Acts 5. 33). There you see its effect in the way of intensifying the antipathy of the unrepenting and the resolute ungodly sinner. But in other cases it has a **gracious effect**, and this you see in the case of the multitudes that believed on the day of Pentecost. Peter had charged home on

them the same thing. Mark the difference of the effect. **"When they heard this they were pricked in their heart."** Not **"out to the heart,"** as in the case of the unrepentant. **"They were pricked in their heart and said, 'Brethren, we have committed a tremendous crime! What shall we do?'"** And in such cases, where the Spirit of God acts in gracious conviction on the conscience there is a melting and subduing effect. He proceeds from the conscience to deal with the heart, producing in the heart sorrow for sin, resulting in contrition of heart.

Then, from producing contrition in the heart he proceeds next to produce consent in the will. When the heart is won the will soon follows for you will readily seek after that for which your heart is in love with. And so, beloved friends, you have such a consent expressed in these words

"I will believe, I do believe
That Jesus died for me."

Or, again, these lines:—

"Jesus I will trust Thee,
Trust Thee with my soul.
Guilty, lost and helpless,
Thou canst make me whole."

And thus that Blessed One leads on from gracious conviction in the conscience to contrition in heart, from contrition in heart to consent in the will, and from consent in the will to the confidence of faith. And the

moment the sinner thus operated on, trusts in the Son of God, the Holy Spirit enters and abides in him.

“Soon as my all I ventured
On the atoning blood,
The Holy Spirit entered,
And I was born of God.”

At this point, He translates us from the family of the wicked one to the family of God.

We have considered the personality of the Holy Spirit, His work in creation, in the incarnation, in the growth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of our blessed Lord, in the world as the great restrainer of evil and as the great convictor of sin. We have arrived at that point in which the believing sinner is translated out of the old creation and brought into this new holy and happy family of God.



The Person, Work and Leading of the Holy Spirit.

PART II.

Read John 14. v. 16—19 and 25; chapter 15
v. 26, 27; chapter 16. v. 6 to the end.

WE have already considered three of the spheres in which the Spirit of God operates. First in creation, secondly in the whole history of the incarnate Son of God, from His miraculous birth on to His glorious resurrection. And, thirdly, in the world, in which we saw that He operates in two directions, first as the great represser of human evil, and second as the great convictor of sin. Specially the sin of unbelief, the sin of refusing to own the Deity and the atoning sacrifice of the Christ of God and to respond to the claims that redemption has acquired for the faith and obedience of every soul to whom that messages comes. Now we enter on the work of the Spirit in the new creation. The believing soul passes out of the sphere of a Satan-ruled world into a new creation of which that same Blessed One, Whom he has trusted, is eternally the Head. We now

observe that another great act of divine power takes place. This is expressed in the well-known lines:—

“Soon as my all I ventured
On the atoning blood,
The Holy Spirit entered,
And I was born of God.”

This is

Regeneration.

The blood justifies but the Spirit regenerates, that is, in the soul, hitherto spiritually dead He begets a life that is new, heavenly, spiritual and divine. Henceforth, in the soul He regenerates, He takes up His abode as, **Firstly** the Maintainer of this new life. “The water that I shall give,” said Jesus, “shall become in Him a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life.” And **secondly**, He becomes in the believing one **the Witness of His Sonship**. And so we read in Romans 8, 16, “The Spirit Himself witnesseth with our spirit that we are children of God.” How beautiful it is. He undoubtedly bears witness to our justification before God, but we read here more than that, “He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” What a comfort to any doubting saint who, after all might be left to say, “I wonder really if I am a child of God. To the heart of every such an one, who has really been born of the Spirit, but may doubt, He comes as a witness. There is the begetting Spirit and the begotten spirit, and the begetting Spirit joins in witness with the begotten spirit that you are in reality a child of God. Thirdly, in the believer, He becomes

also **a seal from God.** In Ephesians 1, 13, we read: "In Whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The order of the words in the original is striking. It lays emphasis on the words "**ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise.**" We had no holiness before, no godliness before, but now by the power of the divine seed the very character of the Father begins to appear in the begotten child; he begins to show features of holiness like God Himself. What is the good of a seal? A seal attests or bears witness to the validity and truth of the thing to which it is attached and here we have a divine attestation, a definite, distinctive, divine certification that in reality we are now members of a new family. For the grand difference between the old family and the new is this. that in the old family the Spirit of God is conspicuously absent, in the new family He is conspicuously present. "**If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His**" (Romans 8. 9). The Apostle's testimony is unequivocal; it is absolutely certain. Only upon His own does the Great Shepherd put His seal of Sonship.

"They that have My Spirit,
These, saith He, are mine."

The holy anointing oil was never to be poured on human flesh. And it is only to them that believe, that God gives the Holy anointing oil, even the Holy Ghost. He is therefore a distinctive certification that now you are begotten of God, you belong to a new family altogether, and you show indeed, by the impress of the

Holy Spirit on your hearts, the very image of Him that sealed you. Beloved, I have a word of caution here. **Take care of the impress.** The work of grace is a very tender affair. It is easily spoiled. I shall be guilty if I spoil it through sin in myself. I shall be still more guilty if I spoil it through sin in my brother or sister. Therefore, take care of the impress of the Spirit. Further, a seal confirms, gives confirmation. There are many experiences from the moment you become a child and heir, until you are in full possession of that inheritance to which, as a child, you are an heir. Many a one will dispute your possession. There are many opponents that will meet you on the way, and as one said to another, "So great is your own aversion, my brother, that after all you would not go to heaven if you could help it." "Now He that establisheth us in Christ is God Who has sealed us" (2 Corinthians 1. 21). But the Holy Spirit is not only a seal, He is also **an earnest.** In Ephesians 1 and 14 we read: "**Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.**" What is an earnest? An earnest is a pledge that the arrangement concluded will in due time be fully made good. A domestic servant may receive half a crown when she engages with a mistress. That half crown is an assurance of the full payment of the wage for which she engages. What an earnest have we received of our inheritance. God says to me, "as surely as I now give you My Spirit to abide in you for ever, so surely will I bring you into actual possession of the full inheritance." But remember this, beloved

friends, that much of that inheritance God is ready and waiting to pay down, **here** and now. Oh the riches of spiritual blessing that are now payable to the demand of faith. Go in for them! Present your cheque and you will find Him faithful to His own promise. But the full inheritance which provides for the poor body as well, is yet future; meanwhile we have the earnest. And what is called "the earnest" in Ephesians 1—14 is called "the first fruits" in Romans 8, 23. The Blessed Spirit is the first fruits of that vast harvest of blessing. It all springs from that "Corn of wheat" that once died. Fifthly, the Blessed Spirit is not only an earnest, He is also **an unction**. In II. Corinthians 1, 21, we read: "Now He which established us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God." Here comes in the anointing, and this anointing means power. When a man in Israel was anointed in the name of Jehovah with holy oil, power came to that man. The anointing then certainly is the imparting of power, power to know and power to do. First, power to know. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." And again, in I. Corinthians 2, 12: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely (gladly, graciously) given to us of God." This anointing then imparts power to know; to know the things of God. The world cannot know them, though we know them through the efficacy of the anointing oil. But then the anointing oil not only imparts power **to know**, it imparts power **to do** as well. In Acts 10,

38, the apostle Peter says of his Divine Master, **"God anointed Him—Jesus of Nazareth—with the Holy Ghost and with power, Who went about doing good."** And all that this perfect Servant did was in the power of the anointing He received at the Jordan. He was begotten of the Spirit at His birth; He was anointed of the Spirit on arising from the waters of baptism in the Jordan. What is power? Perhaps that question can best be answered by stating what it is not? Well, is it **not intellectual acuteness**, nor is it simply **knowledge**. "Though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, I am nothing." **Nor** is divine power **instructiveness**. I may be able to make the truth of God as intellectually clear as it can be made, and yet there might be no power. **Nor** is it **eloquence**. The Greeks were slaves to the admiration of eloquence, but when Paul proposes to visit the Corinthians he says: "I will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power" (1 Corinthians 4. 19). And he declared that the theme he preached was preached not in the wisdom of men, or with fine language, but "in demonstration of the Spirit and power." George Whitefield was a most eloquent man, but if his eloquence had not been saturated with the Holy Ghost he would never have brought the thousands to Christ as he did. **Nor** is spiritual power **physical strength**. I might break this table until it was a wreck, and tear this book in my hands to shreds, and yet have no power. You remember Elijah in his prostration when the Word of the Lord came unto him

and said: "Go forth and stand upon the Mount before the Lord," and the Lord passed by him in various forms—in a rock-rending wind, but "the Lord was not there"; in an earthquake, but "the Lord was not there"; but in a still small voice, or as it is in the Hebrew **"a sound of gentle stillness"** (1 Kings 19. 11—12). When the Spirit of God is in mighty power in any assembly of saints or sinners there is little noise, little outward demonstration, yet the power is over it all. The Spirit of God, like electricity, is a mystery. "The Spirit breatheth where He listeth, you cannot tell whence He cometh or whither He goeth," so too is he that is begotten of the Spirit. Both the begetting Spirit and the begotten spirit, to the world and the flesh, are mysterious. I have stated what spiritual power is not. What then is it? I am afraid that is indefinable. Oh the strength and the beauty, and the fragrance of a Spirit-filled saint—his strength is invincible. A godless world may make its vigorous attack but the Spirit-filled saint is invincible. What charm and beauty it imparts, in countenance even. And what moral beauty. In the north of Ireland they have in one of their halls printed in large letters, the words, "Be courteous." Oh the beauty of one charged with the blessed Spirit of God. Do you not think that the ointment with which Mary anointed the Lord's head and feet, did not make itself felt. I believe every soul in that gathering felt its fragrance. You bring me a man or a woman charged with the Holy Spirit; they may say nothing, they may do

nothing, but I shall feel the aroma. It speaks for itself. Well now, let us just glance for a moment at what this power, if possessed, does. You have power over the feelings of your own heart, over temper, bitterness, wrath, and so on. Have you got that power? My brethren and sisters,

Can you control your own temper?

Is it master of the situation? If it be master you are very weak. "Thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory." This anointing gives power over the tongue. How do you stand, my brother, my sister? Is the tongue under the rule of the mighty Spirit of God? You know, the tongue, small as it is, has a tremendous power either for good or for evil. Indeed, its power is so great that it is only controlled by the Almighty Spirit. Are you master or mistress of your movements, looks, or gestures? There is a wonderful word on this subject in Ephesians 4, 31. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." "Let all bitterness and wrath," that is the inward feelings; are you master there? "Anger"; that is the explosion of that inward wrath. Are you master there? "Clamour," or loud talk; this follows in moral succession; are you master there? Then the "evil speaking" or railing, after the din and talk has somewhat subsided; are you master there? "Be put away from you, with all malice"; lingering ill-will. And instead of that "be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." How lovely.

What do you say to that my brother, my sister? That is what the Spirit of God can do in me or in any other sinner saved by grace. Some years ago, I met a brother who, in my judgment, had spoken very severely and unwarrantably. I said to him afterwards: "Might it not be well to speak to your brethren more graciously?" His reply was: "Righteousness! righteousness! righteousness!" I said to myself afterwards, though I did not say it to him: "I should call it rudeness! rudeness! rudeness!" Be kind one to another, tender, dealing graciously one with another, even as God, in Christ dealt in grace with you (v. 32).

"Be imitators of God."

If you have this power it will give you power over sin within, and every advance of Satan from without. Satan advances in two forms, either in the craft of the serpent, "the wiles of the devil," or "as a roaring lion," but in whichever character he approaches, the Spirit-charged and filled soul is essentially victorious, he is impregnable. Further, this power will impart **power to walk with God**. In Romans 8. 2, the apostle declares, "For the law of the Spirit (the government of the Spirit) of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In verse 4, he adds: "That the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." More than this, if we have this power we shall bring forth

fruit unto God, and fruit in two forms, either **fruit in the virtues of the Spirit** or **fruit in the ministry of the Spirit**. Please note Galatians 5, 22 23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." The flesh is inactive now and the Spirit is in operation. What beautiful fruit! God has various kinds of fruit in nature, apples, pears, plums and all the rest of them. But we have a still better variety of spiritual fruit, of which the highest of all is Love. Then, too, we shall bear **fruit in the ministry of the Spirit**, and we minister in various ways.

Godward we minister in the way of adoration.

worship, praise, thanksgiving, prayer. In speaking of worship, Jesus said to the woman at the well: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth." Not in eloquent language; not in scriptural diction merely, but in Spirit. Not a note of praise can I sing, not a word of effective prayer can I offer, except in the leading and gracious power of the Spirit of God. Then there is the

Ministry of the Spirit one to another.

The Church is a self-edifying thing, and if He be dwelling in us we shall strengthen one another, consolidate one another, comfort and gladden one another. And then towards the world our ministry will take the form of witness bearing, and as with the apostles, so with

us, with what gracious power shall we give our witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Dear fellow saint, have you got this power? If you have not, give neither sleep, nor slumber to your eyes until you have. God has directed me along this line of truth for 40 years and my testimony at the end of that time is that there are quite a goodly number of God's people, otherwise well instructed, that are very much in the mist here. Let us intelligently and experimentally learn what growth and service in the power of the Holy Ghost really is. And therefore I pray that God may lead us to examine ourselves, to ask ourselves the question, do I really possess that power which for growth, fruit bearing, service and blessing is so indispensable? Apart from it you and I are powerless.

May the Lord bless our meditation on this all important matter, that His Name may be glorified, and His people saved, yes, saved and sanctified, and made meet for the Master's use.



The Mystery of Godliness.

READ : 1st TIMOTHY, 3—16.

THE theme before us, is that contained in 1 Tim. 3. 16, which is declared to be ' the mystery of Godliness.'

What is a mystery in the inspired sense
of the Word ?

It is something undiscoverable by human reason, but which God may by his own Spirit reveal to man. There are various such mysteries mentioned in Scripture. For example, there is the mystery of resurrection : " Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep." And there is the mystery of the one-ness of husband and wife. " This," says Paul, " is a great mystery," even the natural unity, not to speak of the Spiritual. Then again, in the Book of the Revelation you have the mystery of " Babylon the Great," but in the writings of the Apostle Paul, this word, which occurs frequently, seems to be applied specially to one great secret of God now revealed by His Spirit to His holy Apostles and prophets and to the saints ; namely, the mystery of the Church. Who are they that compose this marvellous heavenly society ? They have been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. They have been redeemed by the blood of Christ ; they have been linked with Christ by faith through the Holy Ghost ; they have been knit together into one great corporate system, united by the one Spirit, and they are

destined to be the complete "body of Christ"; the full development of Christ in all His love and glory in its members, and to be His eternal Companion above, and to share with Him the glory of His government. Of this mystery the world knows absolutely nothing, and we, His people, are indebted to the gracious Spirit of God for His revelation to our minds, and for making it in any degree precious to our hearts. Now, there are

Two Great Mysteries

that run on in parallel development. The one is the "mystery of Godliness" mentioned in 1 Timothy, and the other is the "mystery of lawlessness," or iniquity, mentioned in 2 Thess. 2. 7. When Paul wrote they were both at work. To-day, as we consider the subject they are both at work still. It is the policy of Satan to counterfeit God in every respect so far as he may. If God has set Himself, the Divine One, to be worshipped, "the god of this age," seeks worshippers too. If God has His sacrifices, His priests, His Temple, so has Satan. Sacrifices, Priests, and Temples are common institutions in a Pagan world still. If Jehovah had his tabernacle in Israel, Moloch had his tabernacle too. Acts 7, 43. And so we are not surprised to know that the "mystery of lawlessness" is developing, parallel with the "mystery of Godliness." We have only to open our eyes and look around us to-day and see the manifest development of lawlessness. And according to the word of Truth we expect it only to increase until it culminates in the so called Christ of Satan, for if God has His Christ, Satan has his Christ too. Is it not a remarkable thing that both the "coming" and the "revelation" are predicted of both. (2 Thess. 8. 9.) Well now we are not going to look into the development of the mystery of lawlessness, but by the grace

of God we will look for a little into the development of this

“Mystery of Godliness.”

Paul has a great deal to say about it, and we do not wonder, because to Paul was given the singular honour of being that vessel to whom this secret of God was peculiarly revealed. Even the other great Apostles did not seem to have received so full a revelation of this truth. Made known to Paul, it may be, when he was caught up into “the third heaven.” Naturally, therefore, according to the Spirit he clung tenaciously to it and his writings are full of it. In Romans 16—25, he refers to it as the **“revelation of a mystery that had been kept in silence.”** “Kept in silence” is the word here. Then in Eph. 3, he speaks of it as **“the mystery of Christ.”** The expression occurs most frequently in these sister Epistles, namely: Ephesians and Colossians. And naturally so, for the theme of Ephesians is **“the Church the body of Christ,”** and the theme of Colossians is **“Christ the Head of the Church,”** so the one is complementary to the other. We have **“Christ”** in the one and the **“Church”** in the other. Christ the **“head,”** the Church **“the body,”** and the whole put together **“a mystery.”** In Ephesians 1, Paul calls it the **“mystery of God’s will,”** because it is an arrangement on purpose made by the Sovereign will of God. **“The mystery of His will”** is the highest view to take of everything. The will of God is a higher view than the Grace of God. In grace He looks in tenderness upon us, but in will He asserts His own sovereignty as God alone. Then in the 3rd Chapter of Ephesians it is called **“the mystery of Christ”** because Christ is the sum and substance of it. All members are lost in Christ. When you come

to 2 Peter and read there the account of the transfiguration, you look in vain for Moses and Elias. They are mentioned expressly in the Gospels, they disappear in the Epistles; Christ is all. In the Book of Revelation you search in vain for these great patriarchs and prophets. Moses is mentioned but only incidentally, so to speak, "the Song of Moses and the song of the Lamb." We are hastening on to absorption. There is a doctrine in India called "absorption," and there is much truth in it. We are being absorbed into Christ. Our personality is maintained, but our distinctive existence, character and glory, are lost in Christ. And we rejoice that it is so. Then in the 6th Chapter of Ephesians it is called "the mystery of the Gospel," because the Gospel in its full scope is that message from God in which this mystery is revealed; and through believing and obeying that message, it is actually accomplished, for God does nothing in the accomplishment of this mystery apart from the written word. The word is the seed that begets; it is the milk that sustains in spiritual infancy; it is the strong meat that tends to mature development, in fact, from beginning to end of this development the Word of God is in use in the hand of the Almighty Spirit of God. And then in Colossians 2, it is called "the mystery of God, even Christ." It is God's supreme secret, supreme development of Divine power, wisdom, and grace, and now unto principalities and powers He is making known the wisdom of his inscrutable will. In 1 Timothy 3.-9, it is called "the mystery of the faith" because this secret is now revealed in all its fulness, to faith. So it passes under various names. It is the "mystery of God" because He is its author. It is called "the mystery of His will"

because it springs out of His own sovereign pleasure. It is called "the mystery of Christ" because Christ is the sum and substance of it, and we all disappear in the person of that ever glorious One. It is called "the mystery of the Gospel" because the Gospel is the message from God in which this mystery is made known, and through believing and obeying the message it is actually realised. It is called "the mystery of the faith" because it is the very thing that faith now delights to feed upon. And even in this passage here the

"Mystery of Godliness"

is still the same, for it is only the godly heart that apprehends and enjoys this mystery.

"Great is the mystery of Godliness." That is without dispute. It cannot be denied. It must be confessed that the mystery is a great one. What then, are the elements of which this mystery are composed? The Epistle mentions six. The first is,

"He Who was manifested in flesh."

Brethren, we begin the consideration of the mystery with a most profound mystery, the mystery of Incarnation. It is interesting to notice how the Messiahship of Jesus was only gradually grasped. Let us begin with an outside circle. In one Scripture we hear some of the people say, as they saw His mighty works, and heard His wonderful words: "Can this be the Christ?" There His Messiahship was just dawning upon the minds of the people. Then you come into the inner circle, the circle of the Apostles, the twelve, and on witnessing the power of His word over wind and wave they exclaim: "What manner of man is this!" He is a man, but what manner of man! They had not yet really grasped his Deity

And we go into a yet inner circle. We come to the case of Mary. Even she but gradually apprehended the grand foundation of this mystery of Godliness, even Incarnation. She had indeed been visited by the revealing angel. He had declared to her most explicitly what was about to take place. He does not refer to the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel." He makes a new statement by divine authority, and He says: "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," for she naturally enquires how such a thing is to take place. It never hath taken place. An aged woman called Sarah had indeed borne a son, and a woman called Elizabeth "well stricken in years" was about to bear a son, but both sons, after all, were of human generation; but here is absolutely a new thing upon earth. "A virgin shall bring forth a Son." And so the angel explains: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee . . . that Holy thing shall be called the Son of God." Meekly and mysteriously she received the revelation and said: "be it unto me according to Thy word." Well, after the Child was born, and when the shepherds came, on the announcement of the fact, to see this mystery, we read: "Mary kept all these things, pondering (revolving them) in her heart." She was only enquiring into these things. And then, as for the Apostles, they were all led to apprehend His being the Christ, the Son of God, by the moral atmosphere, a combination of majesty and holiness and grace that surrounded His person, so that they were just overwhelmed with a sense of His Deity in Himself, and thus the truth that He was indeed the Son of God was made known to them. Peter gives an expressed confession to his faith. "Whom say ye that I am?" said Christ to him. That is the first question to be settled, the very first element for faith to lay hold upon. Peter responds

to the challenge: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." His Messiahship was expected, was believed, but it was only a reigning Messiah. A suffering Messiah is not yet apprehended, indeed it is resented with indignity, Matt. 16. 16. So when the Lord brought forward this mystery, a sacrificed Messiah, the thing was intolerable; it would need a further revelation from God to reveal to His own true disciples the fact that that blessed One, Son of God as He is, should ever suffer. Think of how the Cross must have staggered them. He was forsaken by His very own, those who had been His companions in tribulation. They all forsook Him and fled, and now in His hour of darkness the Council declare Him worthy of death, and that on three grounds. First, as a blasphemer because he claimed to be the Son of God. Second, on account of Him presenting Himself in their judgment as a rival to the authority of Cæsar. Third, as a deceiver of the people. On these three grounds, blasphemy, rebellion, and imposing on the people, he was sentenced to death. The sentence was assented to by Pilate, and the Christ of God was crucified. What thoughts must now have filled the minds of those bewildered followers of His. They must have thought that, after all, they had been enjoying a delightful dream. All those blessed words that we have heard from the Master have only been good words and fair speeches by which He has attempted to deceive the simple; like Absalom, hoping to steal the hearts of his father's subjects by his kisses. And as to those mighty works our Master has done, can it be true after all that He did them, as His enemies alleged, by the power of the Devil. They must have been thoroughly bewildered. Yet, something more was necessary in the development of this mystery, and that brings us to our second point.

“Justified in the Spirit.”

Now comes the Holy Ghost into action to settle all disputes. The life-giving Spirit of the Father raises Him from the dead. The sentence of man is reversed in a higher court. God raised Him from the dead; “Thou art My Son, this day (of resurrection) have I begotten Thee.” Acts 13. 33. His identity is confirmed in resurrection by the marks of the cross, both in His hands and His feet; confirmed too by His eating before them; confirmed by the fact that He now opens their understanding to understand the Scriptures, and thus all doubts created by the shock of His death would gradually be removed. Not indeed, until His ascension, was the last lingering doubt exploded. We read in the last chapter of Matthew that the eleven Apostles went away into the mountain that Jesus had appointed them, and it says: “When they saw Him they worshipped,” but the inspired writer adds, “but some doubted.” Luke 7. 24. Some even of the eleven doubted the identity of this mysterious One; but these lingering doubts would be dispelled by ascension, and therefore it may be to this that the Lord alludes in John 6, where he says: “You do not believe that I came down from heaven, but what will you say when you see the Son of Man ascending up where He was before?” I do not suppose there was ever any human being seen ascending, shall I say, in human appearance, unglorified, until the ascension of Christ Himself. As for the ascension of Enoch, that was unseen by the world of his time. They sought for him but they found him not, and as for Elijah, I think the splendour of the Chariot and horses with which he was borne up from Elisha must have been so dazzling that Elisha, however intent his gaze, could not fully or accurately discern his beloved Master. But be that as it may, the blessed Lord did not leave His own in the splendid

attire in which He appeared in the mount of Transfiguration. "While He blessed them, he was parted from them," and they could follow His ascent with undisturbed vision until a cloud received Him out of their sight." And the moment that that blessed One was lost to sight in the cloud of heaven, the last lingering doubt of His disciples must have fled forever. But this was the work of the Holy Spirit. It was by the power of the Holy Ghost He was exalted in ascension and seated on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. This brings us to our third point.

"Seen of Angels";

Appeared to messengers or angels. The word "angel" here does not mean those glorious beings we speak of usually by that name, but simply "messengers." It is used in the Scriptures in the latter sense elsewhere. See Luke 9. 52. We read that John the Baptist sent angels to Jesus (or messengers) to inquire if, after all, he was the Christ. When the time approached for His being received on high, we read that He sent messengers before His face to prepare the way. "Messenger" in the Greek is "angel." He appeared to messengers. We have only to turn to 1 Corinthians 15, to find this truth confirmed. Read from verse 1 to verse 8. It is interesting to notice the very same thought expressed here. He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to over five hundred brethren at once, . . . and last of all "as to one born out of due time." that is—Paul. That was part of the Gospel of the mystery. Thank God for the abundance of testimony, historic testimony to the resurrection of His beloved Son. But the mystery is not yet completed. The fourth element is

“Preached unto, or among, the Nations.”

Thus the addition of this other element unmistakably shows that “the mystery of Godliness” is not the personal Christ, but the mystical Christ. If it had been the personal Christ then the next element would have been, “received up into glory.” The next in chronological order is “preached unto the nations.” And this is exactly what was the outcome. They were charged to begin their testimony at Jerusalem, but they did not stop there. Peter is sent to open the door with one of these keys that had been placed in his favoured hands. He was sent to Cæsarea to open the door of grace to the Gentiles. Then later on we find that some Jews that had been born in Gentile districts, and were not so exclusive as their exclusive brethren of Judea, ventured to preach the Gospel to Greeks also. And the hand of the Lord was with them at Antioch and a large number believed. Acts 11. 2. Now the mystery is extended as far as Antioch, and after that you have Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles, taking these three great missionary journeys of his, so that from Jerusalem and round about He had fully declared the Gospel of Christ. Thank God “preached unto the Gentiles.” How far this element may have been accomplished within apostolic days, I know not. These were days of intense energy notwithstanding the want of free communication such as we ordinarily enjoy to-day. And yet notwithstanding all the hindrances of distance, climate, and poverty, I have no doubt the Gospel of this mystery extended far and wide before John passed from off the scene. And thank God it came all the way to this land. The favour conferred upon Europe has been marvellous, therefore it is just in this favoured Christendom we may look naturally for the development of that “mystery of lawlessness.” Thank God this Gospel has come to us, the Gospel of His grace, the Gospel of our salvation, the Gospel

of this wonderful mystery. "Preached unto the Gentiles." That is not all! Just look at the fifth element;

"Believed on in the World."

Now we enter into the realm of the Holy Spirit in the inner life of every believer. The effects of faith may be seen in the life. Faith itself is an invisible principle. Here the Apostle passes right into this deep mysterious realm of the human soul where the Holy Spirit ever works to the Divine plan, carrying out progressively the sovereign will of God, producing love, joy, hope, long-suffering, kindness, and every other grace, completing in the exercised believer, the image of Christ. Self decreasing, Christ increasing. We know that God is at work there. We do not understand it, but we know that God is in us, that our dead hearts have warmed up into life evermore. May we stand aside and let that great executor of the Divine will proceed unhindered. And now comes the last element of this mystery of Godliness.

"Received up in Glory."

Not merely "into glory" but "in glory." The dead saint's body is raised incorruptible. It passes into a glorified state constitutionally in being incorruptible, and the moment that the living saint's body passes out of mortality into immortality it is glorified. It may not be rendered dazzling with heavenly radiance at once, but even the change from mortality to immortality is glory begun, and therefore the Apostle says, speaking of the body, "it is sown in corruption and raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." But to this glorification must be added also the external splendour, the visible radiance, that no doubt will clothe these

bodies, even as Moses and Elijah appeared in glory. Glorified, we shall ascend up into glory, into a glorious realm, to be assigned a share in governmental glory as well as constitutional glory, with Christ, and that for ages to come. Words cannot but convey an imperfect vision of this marvellous mystery. We must confess that this mystery is great, but thank God for what we do understand of the mystery of incarnation, the mystery of that blessed One raised from the dead, being justified by the Spirit, justified by ascension, and indeed justified by all the facts that follow thereon.

If you and I have a reverent consciousness of the fact that we are members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, it will assuredly lead us to see "what manner of persons we ought to be."



1st Epistle to the Thessalonians.

THERE are saints and saints, there are assemblies and assemblies. There are individual saints who stand precisely on the same Divine basis of acceptance with God and yet in character and walk widely differ. Abraham and Lot are alike declared to be righteous before God, but the character and walk of Abraham is in complete contrast to the character and walk of Lot. As with individuals so with assemblies. There are some assemblies heavenly, spiritual, fruitful; there are others earthly, carnal, barren. What a difference between the Thessalonians, for example, and the Corinthians, or the Galatians. The Thessalonians were spiritual, the Corinthians were carnal, the Galatians were legalised, and in the Church of God to which this epistle and the following are addressed we have a Church that may well be called moral and spiritual. The very form in which the Apostle addressed it is very significant. Just notice the first verse. He says there, "Unto the Church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." That was their address. Not unto the Church at Thessalonica, but unto the Assembly "of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." And so too in the 2nd Epistle and the 1st verse you have precisely the same address. That at once indicates that by marvellous

grace they had landed in a region heavenly, spiritual, divine. It would be interesting to know the cause of this peculiar prosperity, and first I would offer in explanation

the condition of the messengers

of the Lord on their arrival at Thessalonica. They had just come from Phillipi where their backs had been lacerated with cords and their feet had been crushed in the stocks. (Suffering for Christ is ever a good investment; it yields a good return). Because of the sufferings there endured, they merited, in the Grace of God, a full endowment of spiritual power. In that power they came to Thessalonica. In the 5th verse you will notice he says: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power." "Our Gospel." Paul, Silas and Timothy had made it their own, and you and I are not fully qualified to minister a Saviour to sinners, or saints except in the measure in which we have entered experimentally into the enjoyment of the truth we preach to others. They were living illustrations themselves of what the grace of God could do, and he says of this Gospel, "it came to them not in word only, but also in power," and he also adds, "and in the Holy Ghost." It was no mere intellectual power. Men of evident intellect carry a certain influence and power with them, but it is not in itself spiritual. It is not power of the Holy Ghost. A man could be ever so highly endowed mentally, and be perfectly destitute of that power which God can use for the conversion of sinners or the blessing of saints. "Their gospel came to them in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance." I call it convictiveness. That is to say, there was that element in the preaching which gave their hearers to feel that God was speaking and that it was imperative to listen. And if he and his fellow

messengers preached the Word of God in that power, their hearers received it in power "and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Passing from that condition, let us think now of a second, namely,

the condition of the recipients of their message.

If one person is going to communicate with another by telephone there must be a hearing ear at the one end of the wire as well as a speaking mouth at the other. The message they brought with them fell upon hearing ears. Like the heart of Lydia, in Phillippi, the hearts of these Thessalonians were opened to hear what these messengers had to say, and mark you, they so drank in the truth of God that they actually became "followers of them and of the Lord." They became imitators; they impressed upon them their high spiritual character. George Muller tells that when he was in a weak spiritual condition himself, the children that he had begotten in the faith were weak also, but when he was strong spiritually the children thus begotten were strong also. This is according to nature and according to grace as well. These blessed men came to them in the fulness of the power of the Holy Ghost, and the result was they were thoroughly converted, properly saved, "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." They became imitators of those who had brought them the Word of life. And not only imitators of them, but, mark you, imitators through them of the Lord. It has been said that we should never follow man. That is hardly a correct statement if the man that is being followed is leading on after the Lord. That is just what they were doing. But mark what the Apostle says: "Having received the Word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost." Christian experience is an extraordinary affair. It seems

contradictory. There was affliction on the one hand, and fulness of joy on the other hand. But these things are perfectly compatible; in fact, they are inseparable, for the more you suffer for Christ, the fuller you will be of heavenly joy. It was so, you remember, in the experience of the saints at Antioch in Pisidia. There were great things done in Antioch. The triumphs of the Gospel were wonderful. The jealousy and envy of the Jews were raised to a terrible degree, so much so that they got Paul and Barnabas expelled from their borders. But we read: "the disciples were filled with joy." And thus it has ever been. I am persuaded of this that those blessed men and women who suffered martyrdom could never have passed through that experience, but for a mighty charge of the Holy Ghost. The nearer they got to the stake the greater the joy. Coming nearer home it was even so with the godly Covenanters. Believing Covenanters were taken as ranking among the finest specimens of christians you could find. Of such stability of heart towards the Lord, such assurance of the truth they believed, such determination to die for it if need be. Their sufferings developed in them the muscle and bone of a strong manly character. Let me ask you, brethren, how much does your christianity cost you? It is very easy to repose our heads upon a crucified substitute who suffered for us, **but are we suffering for Him?** "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." It is a gift of grace to suffer for His sake. We often speak about the rending of the veil; unless the veil of our flesh be rent as well, unless we be crucified with Christ, **by experience**, and die to self, Satan and the world, we shall fail to respond to the grace of God. It is a great benefit that has been bestowed upon us. Another condition of this remarkable spiritual development among the Thessalonians was the

unhindered power of the Holy Spirit.

For a time it seemed to be unhindered. That power had free course and was glorified. And how does it appear? It appears in the faith and love of which the Apostle speaks in the 1st and 2nd Epistle. In 1 Thess. 1, 2 and 3 we read: "We give thanks to God remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love." And in II Thess. c. 1, verse 3, "We are bound to thank God." Not merely "we give thanks" as in the 1st Epistle, but now still more emphatic. He seemed under holy obligation to do it. "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of everyone of you all towards each other aboundeth." These graces were more fully developed when he wrote the 2nd Epistle than when he wrote the first. How intensely individual and yet how comprehensive. How much more valuable "graces" are, than "gifts." We do not despise gifts. The "gifts" manifested in the Church at Corinth were given by God, but the "graces" of the Spirit in the heart are far higher, because they are highly moral in their character. That was the work of the Holy Spirit, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. Then further, His wonderful power appears in their enduring of suffering. They were a suffering people. Will you please look at the 1st Epistle, 2nd chapter, verse 14, "For ye, brethren, became imitators of the Churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." They soon began to suffer. A man that had received them into his house was brought before the authorities for complicity with those insurrectionists that were travelling the country. Acts 17. 5-7. Their sufferings soon

began, and I am pretty sure if their love was maintained, as it was at the beginning, their sufferings would continue. "Ye also have suffered the like things of your own countrymen." Now look at the 2nd Epistle, chapter 1, verse 4. "We ourselves glory in you in the Churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure." We are spiritually proud of you; we glory in you in the assemblies of God for your patience and faith. These trials were not too weighty for you to endure; they did not shake your faith in the living God; and we glory in the grace that has been bestowed upon you. How beautiful that is! Instead of destroying their faith, this experience only intensified it. Let us pass on to another condition and that is

**their exuberant hope in the promised return
of the Lord.**

There seems to be no company of saints that grasped so heartily the truth of the Lord Jesus returning. The hope of His coming, charmed their hearts. It gave character and walk to each one of them. It was a living power in their experience. "They turned from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." They seemed to have maintained the attitude of waiting in a marvellous degree. It was this that caused such distress when some of their number fell asleep in death because they imagined that they would be at a disadvantage when the Lord came. So Paul has to give them further instruction on this subject in order to comfort their hearts, so that when we think of what the Grace of God made those beloved children of his at Thessalonica, is it any wonder that they were his glory and joy.

What a disappointment to a farmer if, after his sowing, the harvest turns out a failure; and what a disappointment to every true servant of the Lord when he fails to see in those to whom he has ministered, be they saint or sinner, that result which grace would lead him to expect. In the case of the Corinthians he was vexed; in the case of the Galatians he was even more vexed, but of these dear Thessalonians he says: "We need not to speak anything." c. 1, v. 8. The report of your exalted character and walk has spread through all Macedonia and Achaia. Macedonia and Achaia were great countries, and yet the spiritual name of those beloved Thessalonians had spread over the whole region, and even beyond. The work speaks for itself. If you will go into St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and get up into its magnificent dome, you will see inscribed upon the walls there, this sentence: "If you want to see the monument raised to the name of Sir Christopher Wren, who was the gifted architect that planned the Cathedral, look around." What does it mean? Sweep your eye all round that magnificent dome and building, and there it is. Known by the work he accomplished; remembered by the Cathedral he had built. Paul could look at these Thessalonians and say: "The thing speaks for itself, look around." And they could say to Paul: "You had a splendid entrance into Thessalonica; the Lord gave you great prosperity there; we all rejoice with you." In the 2nd chapter of the 1st Epistle, verses 19-20, Paul adds: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming; for ye are our glory and joy." You will be that then, for you are that now.

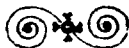
Earnest prayer is constantly needed, and that is the reason why this Epistle is so full of exhortation,

and so full of prayer. Just take one or two examples of this. Look at the 1st Epistle, 2nd chapter, verses 11-12. "As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged everyone of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His Kingdom and glory." Mind what he says: You are the children of God, walk worthy. Then again, take the 4th chapter, and verse 10. "And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia but we beseech you brethren, that ye increase more and more." "That ye study to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." These are two or three examples of the many exhortations contained in this wonderful Epistle. All these short words, "rejoice evermore," "pray without ceasing," "in everything give thanks," "quench not the Spirit," "despise not prophesyings," "prove all things," "hold fast that which is good," these are all words of exhortation. Look at the 1st Epistle, chapter 3, verse 11. "Now, God Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men." To the vilest sinner? Yes! "Even as we do towards you, to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God." Take another. Chapter 5, verse 23. "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly (not "in some degree," man's measure), and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And so again in the 2nd Epistle, chapter 1, verse 11. "Wherefore also we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling." We often sing, "We shall ever reign with Thee." Stop a moment! Are we going

in for the "suffering"—the highway to the Throne? We had better pull up and see. "If we suffer we shall reign." These Thessalonians were on the main line for the Throne. "If we endure we shall also reign." These are specimens of the many prayers that occur in this wonderful Epistle. Now, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Here we see something of the possibilities of the grace of God. We see a company who used to worship idols now sons and daughters of the living God, living in the very presence of their God and Father, dwelling in Him, "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." When we speak of a "refuge" we only speak of a passing danger. We take refuge until the danger is over. But a dwelling-place is a permanent thing, our usual abode.

We have sought to look into the causes of this wonderful prosperity, offering as the first cause the highly productive generative power of those blessed men of God that brought the Gospel to them. They were strong because of the strength begotten through their spiritual fathers. And secondly, we have seen that another great thing is the condition of the recipients of the message. They received the messengers with heart opened and attentive. They received the message with much affliction. And thirdly we have seen that the Spirit of God had free course amongst them as appears in the brilliant display of their faith and love, and in their manly endurance of persecution and affliction; persecution at the hands of men, affliction at the hands of Satan direct. And lastly, we have seen that they were saints who had an experience of hope in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Nothing else seemed worth a thought." They were living in heart in the future

instead of living (like many of us) for the present. Another thing, we cannot give ourselves too much to prayer. We cannot pray too much for each other. The greatest service a fellow saint can do is to be in communion with God and remember his brethren in prayer. I solicit that of every dear child of God. Now, may the Lord intensify our faith and hope. May He be increasingly precious to us as individuals in these last days. And may there be many assemblies like the assembly of the Thessalonians "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."



Conformity to the Image of His Son.

READ : EPHESIANS 1. 3-23 ; ROMANS 8. 28-31.

WE have here brought before us the great purpose of God in our redemption and salvation. Great as the purposes of God are with respect to Israel and the nations, still greater is His purpose concerning His heavenly people. We are informed that we are predestinated, or foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son. The fact is that out of this earthly and sin-broken family of man, God is forming for Himself a holy and heavenly family, every member of which is predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, "that He might be the first-born among many brethren." But in forming for Himself, this new and heavenly family, He is, at the same time forming for His beloved Son "a body" and "a bride." A body which is destined to be the completion of the mystic Christ. And not only to be His body as the mystic completion of Himself, but to be His bride, a companion for His heart, in whom He shall find the fullest response to that amazing redemptive love of His. And His body, the Church, will be the full development of His glory, and the medium of His administration over creation, as His bride the Church is destined to be the companion of His heart. But further, in forming a

family for Himself and a body and bride for His Son, God is forming a Temple for the Holy Ghost in which He shall delight to dwell, which he shall animate with power and make beautiful with His presence. How amazing is the purpose of our God. And now let us look very specially into this aspect of God's purpose concerning us, our own "conformation to the image of His Son." That "image" is both inward and spiritual, it is also outward and physical. With regard to the outward image we shall have but little to say for we are far more concerned with our present conformation to the image of Christ spiritually. It is deeply instructive to analyse this conformity, that is to separate it into its parts, all that this conformity comprehends. And there are seven, if not eight, points that enter into the composition of this wonderful conformation. First of all

We were destined from a past Eternity

to be conformed to the Son of God in life, for the life that you and I have received is nothing less than the life of the risen Christ of God. In Eph. 1. 19, we read: "What is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." "and you who were dead in trespasses and in sins." c. 2. 1. Our translators, long ago, thought it necessary to supplement the original by putting in "hath He quickened" but the real language of the Spirit of Truth is "raised from the dead." Ephesians 1. 20. and you from the grave of moral death. The moment you and I were linked by faith with the risen Son of God, we received His resurrection life. Conformity to Him in point of life; life beyond judgment, life divine. And hence it is that on the very day of His resurrection He changed His language concerning His own, and He said to Mary Magdalene, "Go to

My brethren"—not My disciples, not My servants, but "My brethren." "and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father," for now you enter as never before the family of which I, the risen Son of God, am eternally the first-born. And to the features of that first-born of the heavenly family every member thereof is destined to be conformed. Second, we were predestined to be conformed to Him

In point of Character.

In Matthew 11. 29, Jesus says: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here we are graciously admitted into a vision of His inner character. I am meek as regards My attitude towards man, gentle, unvengeful, and lowly before God. We must not suppose that this is a complete description of His moral character. The fact is the Lord Jesus is the completion of all excellence. Holiness and love, righteousness and grace, wisdom and knowledge, all in Him are in perfection. Meekness and lowliness is but a partial description of His character. But the reason why He selects these features of character here is this, He is addressing a restless world and telling them that the reason why he has found rest to His soul is that there is nothing in Him but meekness manward, and lowliness before God. He is in complete subjection to the Father. Unlike us who by nature hate our fellows and would take revenge if they do us wrong, or exalt ourselves over them if we could, and who by nature are proud and cannot bow to be ruled by God. These are the manifestations of sin and the secret of unrest in the human heart. Pride Godward, and violence manward. When the soul is delivered from the pride of nature and brought into subjection, like Christ taking His yoke upon our neck, in full subjection, all is rest, and as long as we continue so, rest for ever. We are pre-

destined, then, to be conformed to the image of Christ in character. We have also been predestined to be

Conformed to His image in Education.

We must remember that Christ in incarnation became a perfect man, a dependent Being, One who should develop from the very dawn of knowledge as an infant into the knowledge of a full-grown man. We read of this blessed One in Luke 2. 40. "And the child grew, and waxed strong filled with wisdom," or becoming filled with wisdom. There was development in Him, and in the 52nd verse we read: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature." As He grew inwardly in wisdom He grew outwardly in stature. And I am rather inclined to think that it was His perfect inward development in heavenly wisdom that was the secret, or part of the secret, of His perfect physical development too. We should increase in wisdom too, and even in favour with man as well as God. Then with regard to His development in spiritual wisdom, between these two statements of Luke, comes another, recorded by Luke alone. What is it? "The youth Jesus tarried behind, His so called parents, in Jerusalem." Up till 12 years He was the child, at 12 He became the Youth, and having reached that age He remained behind His parents, to their distress, but to the Father's delight. And He comes from His home, for the time being, into the midst of the doctors and teachers, "both hearing them and asking them questions." And we read of them: "They were astonished at His understanding and answers." Then was fulfilled in a very marked way the 99th verse of the 119th Psalm: "I have more understanding than all My teachers." Here are all the teachers of law sitting around and I have more understanding than them all, "because Thy testimonies are my meditation." Away yonder in quiet

Nazareth, when the hammer and saw were laid aside, how he must have delighted in the Roll of Isaiah or some other Roll of Old Testament Scripture. He meditated on Jehovah's testimonies and was so taught of the Spirit who had begotten Him, that even at the age of 12 He surpassed all the conventional teachers of the day. How wonderfully proficient you and I might become in the school of the Holy Ghost were God's testimonies, our meditation too. But more than this. In Hebrews 5. 8, we read a wonderful statement : "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." One thing He never needed to learn ; He never needed to learn the habit of a spirit of obedience. He had it always. One thing He did as a man, need to learn ; He needed to learn what full obedience might involve. As man He knew not that at once. He had to learn it experimentally. You and I, beloved, have got to learn the spirit and habit of obedience, for by nature we are disobedient. And we have also got to learn as we go along the road how much faithfulness to God may involve. I am sure those of us who have travelled the heavenly way for thirty years and more will be ready to admit that they never expected to have had such lessons of conformity to the Father's will as they have actually experienced on the way. There are other two beautiful scriptures in connection with this point, the one in Isaiah 54, speaking of Jerusalem restored : "And all their children shall be taught of God." And in the New Testament in 1 Thess. 4. 9, the Apostle says : "I do not need to write to you of brotherly love ; ye yourselves are taught of God." Think of it ! What a wonderful thing, "taught of God to love one another." That is a big matter. But we proceed. We were predestined to be

Conformed to Him in Walk and Conduct
here and now. One day John the Baptist stood and two of His disciples, and Jesus passed along.

Looking on Jesus as He "walked," John said: "Behold the Lamb of God." As much as to say, there is your pattern, there is your model, a perfect practical walk. One of the two that heard him was John the Apostle. Long after John himself writes: "He that says he abides in Christ ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." 1 John 2.6. And his brother Apostle, Peter, goes into it even more in detail and he says: "He has left us an example that we should follow His steps." Not merely His walk, but the very steps of which that walk was composed. 1 Peter 2.21. That precision is for you. Fifthly, we are foreordained to be conformed to His image in

Point of endowment of power for Service.

In Luke 3. 21-22, we read: "Now when all the people were baptised, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon Him." He was there and then endowed with additional power to what He had ever had before. He had never ministered publicly, so far as we know, during His residence as the Carpenter in Nazareth. Begotten of the Spirit He had the Spirit of wisdom that could penetrate into the words of God, but we do not read that He taught publicly. And we are very sure of this: He never wrought any miracles in those private days, but now He is about to enter on His public ministry, that marvellous ministry of power and wisdom, of deed and word, and for this He needed a special endowment as man, and He had it that day. It was immediately afterwards He was tested by Satan. The temptation tested His spiritual power for the mighty adversary could simply make no impression upon Him whatever, and after He had been baptised in Spirit at the Jordan and in the fire of trial in the

wilderness, we read: "He returned in the power of the Spirit." Luke 4. 14. And if He as the perfect man needed this endowment surely we need it too for the ordinary service of daily duty, for, mind you, everything can be rendered as spiritual service. And as regards spiritual work, such as meditation, prayer, ministry of the Word to saint or sinner, publicly or privately, all the more do we need it. And so Jesus said to His own: "Ye shall be witnesses of Me, but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem till you be clothed with power from on high." Luke 24. 49. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts 1. 8, We may be children of God without power for this kind of service. Sixthly, we have also been predestined to be

Conformed to His image in service itself.

Even while the Lord was with them the twelve, and the seventy others also, had power to work miracles on mind or on body; on mind in casting out demons, and on the body in the healing of all sorts of disease. In John's gospel we are led into a higher form of miracle; we are led into the performing of a moral miracle. What was it? The great God laying aside His ordinary garments, taking a towel, girding Himself, pouring water into a bason and washing the disciples feet. What a display of humility! He has never done such a thing before, and He does it just on the eve of departing from them. And after He had washed the feet of them all and was set down again, He says to them: "Now, do you know what I have been doing?" "You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am." "If I then your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13. Brethren, that is a greater miracle, if you and I have grace to do it, than it would

be could we order a demon out, or cause a fever to fly at the very touch of our hand. In the ordering of a demon out, or the curing of a disease, or the shadow of Peter overshadowing the sick ones, there was a kind of majesty about it. The flesh might have taken occasion to say, "Why! Peter, you must be a great man when your shadow is all that is required to heal." There was majesty about that, but where is the majesty of bowing on your knees and washing the filthy feet of a fellow man. This is a moral miracle, brethren, and it is one that you and I are expected to perform. "Do as I have done unto you." If we would render life's little service, we must humble ourselves as He did. "The disciple is not greater than his teacher, nor the bond servant than his Lord." Matt. 10. 24.

Seventh. We have also been foreordained to be

Conformed to His image in Suffering.

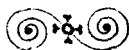
Not merely in service but in suffering as well, physical suffering of the body. Isaiah 50. 6, "I gave my back to the smiter," and in fulfilment of that prophecy we read in the New Testament scripture, John 19. 1: "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him." Enough for the bond servant that He be as His Lord." There are two bond servants away yonder in Philippi. The magistrates take action and command them to be flogged, and they laid many stripes upon Paul and Silas. They suffered like their Master before them. Or the suffering may be mental, and remember mental suffering is more severe than bodily suffering. And this mental suffering may take different forms. For example, it may take the form of disappointment. How much the blessed Lord Himself suffered in the way of disappointment. He looked on Jerusalem and said: "Oft would I have gathered thy children

together—but ye would not !” He looked at His own disciples and said : “ What is become of your faith ? ” On another occasion when the question was asked “ What really defiles a person ? ” the Lord said : “ Do you not yet understand ? ” When He tells the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, they say : “ This is because we have no bread.” Jesus answers : “ How is it that ye do not perceive ? ” How disappointed His blessed heart was with the stupidity of His own disciples. Again, another form of mental suffering is solitude. Some of us know a good deal about solitude. To persons of a very social nature it is suffering indeed. It may be the appointment of God but it means mental suffering. The Lord Himself says to His own in John 16. 32, “ The hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone.” Did He feel it ? There may have been a necessity about it but He felt it keenly. He was left alone so far as man was concerned. “ It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher.” Paul writing to Timothy says : “ All they that are in Asia have turned away from me.” 2 Tim. 1. 15. And in that same Epistle he says : “ At my first defence no one took my part.” 2 Tim. 4. 16, Here is the prisoner standing before the ruthless Emperor Nero, and he had to say : “ No one took my part.” But he had grace to add : “ Lord, lay not this to their charge.” Dear George Wishart, one of our four Scottish martyrs, when the day of his trial was nearing, he was counting on the presence and help of the men of Ayr, who were his real friends, but somehow they failed to appear, and the dear man was left alone and suffered yonder in solitude at St. Andrews. We are predestined to

**Be conformed to the image of Christ in
Glory and Honour.**

Here we go over the border into the other land. But remember, the glory and honour is not confined to the other side. It begins here. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God is resting on you." Even before Stephen's spirit passed into the keeping of the Lord Jesus his face shone like an angel's, and his enemies were cut to the heart. But they could not deny it. Jesus said to His own in the upper room: "The servant is not greater than his Lord" and He said it with a "verily! verily!" John 13.16. Very shortly after, on the same evening, the Lord again says: "Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also" John 15.25. Here is honour now. You will not only share in My cup of suffering, but you will get a drink even here, of My cup of honour. "If they have kept My saying they will keep yours also." What do we read of the three thousand that believed on the day of Pentecost? "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles teaching." They kept their sayings. But Peter wants full possession. A rich young man comes along who wants to have a share in eternal life. The necessary conditions are set before him, but he cannot accept them. And Peter begins to think and expresses himself thus: "Master we have left all, our fishing and all its proceeds, a very lucrative trade yonder on the sea of Galilee; what are you going to give us? What compensation are we going to get." And the Lord answers him: "Verily I say unto you" that is all of you, "who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve

tribes of Israel." Matt. 19. 27, 28. We do not often think of the Apostle Peter as a Prince upon his throne, but it is coming to that; and for all the twelve Apostles a throne for each of them. "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." v. 29. "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." "If so be that we suffer with Him that, we may be also glorified together with Him." If we suffer we shall reign. See Rom. 8. 17. and II. Tim. 2. 12.



"A Message for the Last Times."

Read 1st Thessalonians, chapter 5.

SOME time ago the question was proposed in a large meeting in Glasgow, "**What line of ministry would you suggest as best fitted to perfect in us the work of God, and prepare us for the coming of the Lord?**"

Almost instinctively there came before my mind this last chapter of 1st Thessalonians. It is full of reference to the return of the Lord, and it is full of instruction as to the present will of God, our Father. Under these two heads therefore, let us consider this chapter. From verses 1 to 11 the Apostle is referring to a future day, closing that first section with the practical application of it to the present. Little wonder that this Scripture occurs in 1st Thessalonians for you remember that, from the very outset of their spiritual history they were marked by three things. Their heavenly dwelling place, for there is no trace of them as an assembly with any earthly locality, as other Epistles are, but the apostle addressed them as "residing in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." What a magnificent address by which to send this letter! Nor are we surprised to find that saints who had found

their abode already in such an exalted residence were engaged in two other things that marked them, **their service to "a living and true God,"** and **their "waiting for His Son from heaven."** And so this last chapter contains just truth as we should thus expect. Now, in the first verse the apostle refers to the "times and the seasons," and let us understand the difference between "a time" and "a season." A "time" is a rather prolonged period, answering, in measure, even to a dispensation. A "season" is a brief and suitable opportunity for certain events taking place. For example: A year is a time, but Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter are seasons. The word time covers the whole year, but Spring is the appropriate season for the revival of nature; Summer is the appropriate season for the production of flowers and early fruits, Autumn is the appropriate season of reaping the later fruits of the earth, and Winter is the appropriate season for resting nature and so preparing it for resurrection and reproduction. "Now," says the Apostle, "of the times and seasons there is no need that ought be written unto you; yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord will so come as a thief in the night." **The coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord** must be distinguished. **The coming of the Lord** is an event that will take place when He comes for His own. **The day of the Lord** is that period during which He will execute judgment on His enemies. The Apostle is referring to

The Day of the Lord,

the period of the judgments, beginning with the Judgment Seat of Christ, and including the

judgment of the beast, the false prophet and his followers, yea, the judgment of all that shall lift up their heel against Him. And the apostle says that at the time this Day of divine reckoning breaks upon the world, the world will be soundly asleep. They will be saying "Peace and security, we are all right, no need for any fear." Just then sudden destruction will come upon them. But in contrast to the world, the Apostle says, "You, the sons of light and sons of the day, are not in darkness as the world is, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

How does a thief come?

He comes suddenly, unexpectedly, deceitfully, so the Lord's impending judgment on the world will be sudden and unexpected destruction. How solemn! Now, says the Apostle, "you are all the sons of the light, sons of the day." Here are other two words that need to be carefully distinguished and clearly understood. When I was young I began to find out that a very great difficulty in pursuing a subject of study arose, in measure, from a lack of clear apprehension of the words or terms in common use. I believe it is so with many. Here are two words, **light** and **day**. What is the distinction? **Light is a natural condition, day is a measure of time.** The apostle says "Ye are all sons of light"; that is your character, your spiritual condition. "Now are ye light in the Lord." But "ye are also sons of day," that is, you really belong to a day yet future. This is night, beloved. Why? Because the sun is not here, He is hidden in

God. Hence the absence of our heavenly sun makes night as to our surroundings. We do not belong to the present time. The world does. They are living in their proper season. We are in anticipation of our proper season; we are sons of day. And just because we are "not of night or darkness therefore let us not sleep as do the rest." The world is asleep, but as sons of day let us be awake and be sober. The Apostle gives us a look at this world, and he says: "They that sleep, sleep in the night." Quite seasonable and quite right. "And they that be drunken are drunken in the night." It is quite seasonable. Of course, I am not speaking of the evil of the thing but of the seasonableness of the thing. If it is night it is only reasonable to find men asleep. They are in a deep sleep. And what a sleep! Impenetrable through all that is going on. The world is drunken with the cup of money, the cup of pleasure and the cup of honour. Seeking the cup that would minister to self; they are drunken. But let us who belong to the day—the day yet to come—"be sober, putting on the breast plate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation." Why does the Apostle introduce

Military terms

here? Why speak of a breastplate? Why speak of a helmet? If this is the day for the world's sleep and intoxication, it is the day for the world's zeal, headed by the undethroned Prince. That being so we need spiritual armour, and here are two parts out of "the whole armour of God" mentioned in Ephesians 6. Here the Apostle recommends the breast plate of

faith and love, and the helmet of the good hope of **coming** salvation. In another Scripture in Ephesians 6 the Apostle speaks of the breastplate of righteousness, but, indeed, the terms are easily reconciled. Faith produces both righteousness and love. "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." He obtained the righteousness of faith. It made him righteous Godward and it kept him right with God. Faith not only produces righteousness with God, but towards man it also produces love. Have you ever studied the expression on the face of one whose soul is entering, under the quickening power of the Spirit of Life, into the Light and Life of God. The countenance tells. Love enters the heart of the believing soul, and the most out and out sinner that has come in from the street into a meeting where the Word is preached in simplicity and power, that soul may be translated from hatred to God, into love to God, and that love begin to show its effect. A new power takes possession of the soul wherever faith is exercised in the person and work of the Son of God. Brethren, let us ever wear the breastplate of faith and love. It will keep our hearts right. And put on for a helmet, the hope of coming salvation. We shall not become haughty; high-minded, not intoxicated like a drunken man, incapable of doing right. No! It will give a soundness of mind and judgment. We shall estimate the value of everything present, in the light of the coming Day. The world estimates all that they desire by that which may be attained; by getting what they aim at. It is for you and me

to measure everything seen and temporary by the standard of a coming Lord. And what is

"Coming Salvation"

but deliverance for the body from this scene of trouble and sorrow. "For God has not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation." verse 9. Thank God for the abundance of His grace. The work of the Cross assures all saints of life with Christ, **irrespective of their faithfulness in heart and life while here**, but only faithfulness to Christ and suffering for Christ will ensure "reigning" with Christ. I pray, distinguish between mere life and honour. **Life is sure; honour is conditional.** Read 2nd Thessalonians i. 4, 5. Life with Christ is granted on the ground of absolute grace, but the reward of God's people is dependent entirely upon the measure of their own faithfulness in serving and suffering for Him here. Any saint that is simply content with having their life secure, without any definite desire to glorify the Redeemer and make a worthy return to Him for all the expenditure of His love, is, in my judgment, in a very selfish state. Thus the apostle closes his first part with this exhortation: "Wherefore exhort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do," verse 11. The Thessalonians might have said, "What is the good of telling us to do what we are doing already, for the apostle says 'even as also ye do.'" Those that are already doing the right thing are the very ones that need to be exhorted to go on doing it, for they are the very ones that the devil will do

his level best to lead to discontinue their service for Christ and one another. Now we turn to

Present truth,

for, as I have said already the present must be in character, and directed by the future as well as the past. We turn, then, from the future to the present. In verse 12 the apostle writes : "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Three things are here said about the elders "of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (1) **"they labour"**; (2) **"they are over you"**; (3) **"they admonish you."** Let us consider these three ministries. First

"They labour among you."

That is tolerably acceptable. Few brethren will object to the labour. They will say he is doing a very useful work, and are glad, indeed, that he is so earnestly and faithfully engaged. "We may well recognise him and pray for him."

"Are over you in the Lord."

That is not so acceptable to human nature as faithful labour. Nature rather resents it. And then, thirdly, a still greater ministry is found in those labourers and rulers when

They admonish,

or warn their fellow saints. Warning is by no means acceptable to the human heart. And yet, brethren, the need of warning or admonition is very great. In fact, the apostle's ministry divided itself into two branches, warning

every man and teaching every man, and by the exercise of those two ministries, warning and teaching, he aimed at perfecting everyone in Christ Jesus (See Colossians 1. 28). But he adds: **"Esteem them very highly in love for their works sake."** Not only recognise them outwardly in expression but inwardly in heart; and esteem them "exceeding highly R.V." He now comes to the duty of saints one towards another, and he adds: "Be at peace among yourselves." Right well did the apostle know, through the Holy Spirit, that an amicable relationship one towards another was necessary. Peace and unity among God's people is more-over indispensable. We cannot get on without it. The wheels will break wherever peace and unity are broken. It is therefore of the very first importance to get peace restored and unity established. "Be at peace among yourselves." Then he goes on to other exhortations as to their duty to certain definite classes. "Now we exhort you, brethren, **warn** them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." verse 14. In verse 12 it is translated "**admonish**," in verse 14 it is translated "**warn**." The words are the same. Then we have "comfort the faint-hearted." Never despise the feeble-hearted, the faint-hearted, those who are easily discouraged, never ridicule them, never laugh at them, never treat their case lightly. If you do it will only dishearten them still more. I heard a very instructive statement made the other day by a lady to whom I was speaking, of the way in which a certain eminent doctor treated the inmates of an asylum over which he presided. She told

me that every case that came before him he treats with the utmost respect. He listens to the statements made by newcomers, however wild and unfounded. And what effect do you think his patient listening and his respectful consideration, has upon the patient who is pouring out his delusions before him. The fact is, that in that very treatment he is tending to remove the delusion and strengthen the mind. Would that God's people were as patient and considerate in their dealings one with another. Again I would say, then, let us never make light of any faint-hearted soul, any soul easily discouraged. On the other hand let us comfort them, let us encourage them, and by so doing, we shall strengthen them. Thirdly,

"Support the weak."

If a saint is weak the probability is that poverty will follow in the train of weakness. If a man has not physical strength to work, he will soon find himself in financial difficulties, unless assistance comes to his relief, therefore "support the weak." And still more widely **"be patient towards all men;"** No matter whether saint or sinner. "See that none render evil for evil to any man," saint or sinner, "but ever follow that which is good," both among yourselves, and to "all men" (v. 15). Now we come to a nest of plenitudes a nest of perfection. Here is one of them. "Always rejoice" (v. 16). Every moment of your life rejoice! Why? Because every moment of your life you have got abundance of cause for joy. You have got a God of infinite perfection, of love, of power, of wisdom, of faithfulness

Who is entirely on your side and places all His communicable attributes at the disposal of your faith. A Saviour, an High Priest, into whose hands God has committed all your present and all your eternal interests; One Who is ever living to make intercession for you, and will shortly come and receive you for ever to Himself. What cause for joy! And a blessed Spirit whose work it is to comfort you in sorrow, to guide you in every step. He will remain in you, yea, accompany you through the desert journey, and bring you safely to the Father's home. You have a perfect volume of divine prophecies; "exceeding great and precious promises," any one of which, if we only measured its value, might set us dancing.

"Pray without ceasing,"

verse 17. Why? Because there is unceasing need for prayer. Your own case is a case of ceaseless need, so also is that of your fellow saints. But one might say, you can't expect me always to be on my knees. No! but I can expect you to be always in the attitude and spirit of prayer towards God. God can read the attitude of your heart, and that very attitude is prayer indeed. The poor beggar sitting by the wayside holding out his hat may not move a finger or utter a word, but his very attitude is a constant prayer to the public.

"Pray without ceasing." **"In everything give thanks"** (v. 18). But you say that is simply ridiculous, it is preposterous. Does the apostle positively expect me to give thanks for this pain that is racking my body, and this sorrow that is wearing out my heart. Whether pleasing or painful "in everything give

thanks." ...**"For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."** Do you know what the will of God is? The will of God is to make you perfect, like His Beloved Son, as perfect as divine power can make you. To make you as perfectly glorious and happy as all the resources of His being can make you. That is His will. God has His eye on the end, so He brings you through those various experiences of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain with the view of accomplishing that end. Think of Job. At the very outset of the book of Job we read: "That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God." Indeed, he was so perfect that his God was delighted with him, but He saw that he could make him even better than he was, and in order that He might do this, he allowed Satan to have his way, so far, with him, for Satan is one of the servants of God in perfecting His work and sanctifying His people. And so Satan comes in and does his very best to trip up this precious man of God. But what about the **END?** He went into the furnace as gold and dross mingled, he came out as pure gold (See Job 23. 10). And as for all the losses he sustained in losing children, in losing property, he received as many children again and his property was doubled. James, that shrewd apostle and practical writer says: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." You have seen the object, the eternal purpose that God had in all His dealings with him. Keep your eye upon the **END.** Don't look at the roughness of the

road, look at the end to which God is leading you. So it was with **Paul**. He

Did not tell you and me to do what he did not do himself.

Paul says : "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4. 17, 18). Was ever any man afflicted more than he? In the light of eternity it was "but for a moment." "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Always keep your eye on the end, and as long as you keep your eye on the end, you will be able to give thanks for the roughness of the road. Next in order is

"Quench not the Spirit" (v. 19).

Give the Spirit freedom. If He moves you to do anything, do it. If He moves you to say anything, say it at once, never mind consequences. No reasoning. "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" It is obedience God wants. Results are His; obedience is ours. But then the Spirit may be in operation in your brethren. He may be prophesying. (v. 20). Well, do not despise or make light of it, or perhaps exclaim, "What is the fellow wanting now." "Prove all things" (v. 21). Test them, and if you test them in the Spirit of God you will soon find out whether it is good or evil, true or false. And then when you have found out what is genuine, hold it fast. **"Hold fast that which is good."** "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Not merely from "all

evil" but all that might look as evil. There might be the appearance of a thing of evil without evil itself. The Revised Version, however, reads: "Abstain from every form of evil." And then the Apostle finally lifts his heart to God in prayer and he says: **"And the God of Peace sanctify you wholly"** (v. 23). Peace is simply indispensable, therefore God is presented to them as

The God of Peace.

Sanctify you all through; literally through and through. Sanctify you wholly, not merely set you apart for Himself. You must be made **wholly** like Himself; transform you **wholly** into His own character. **"And may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless."** **Your spirit**, that which was begotten in you by the Spirit in the day of regeneration, for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." **Your soul**, the invisible part of the man, the heart, the will, the mind. **The body**, your "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is in the power and sanctity of that coming, and in accordance with the joy of that coming. And in the very next verse Paul expresses his assurance as to the answer of his prayer (v. 24). How does he know! What makes him sure that God will do as He has promised? Because he knows His **character** and His **purpose**. Then he closes his epistle by various requests and exhortations in his own interests, and the interests of his fellow-men.

"Brethren pray for us."

Well might they have a claim upon the prayers of their brethren. And coming still nearer one to another: "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." Then he adds: "I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read unto all the holy brethren." But, you say, "there is just that old sister who lives in the attic. We need not read this letter to her. And there is that poor brother; he is rather weak, but we need not read it to him." "I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read unto **all**," for they are all precious in the Lord's sight.

The Apostle closes with the usual benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."



A Message for the Times.

PART II.

Read 1st Corinthians vii, 29—31; 2nd Corinthians v. 9—14; Ephesians v. 5—15.

HOW solemn is the flight of time; how quickly the days, and weeks, and months speed over our heads. Even though our sojourn here below is brief indeed, yet, though brief, it is important. All eternity in the matter of importance cannot equal it. We have here such peculiar opportunities for magnifying the grace of God as eternity will never afford. Into these opportunities we shall enter and consider, but meanwhile let me say, as time advances, it increases in importance, and that for four reasons. (1) Its **extreme shortness**. In 1st Corinthians 2, we read, "the time is shortened," not short, but "shortened." Man doth not measure his life by centuries as they did in the patriarchal days. Moses said: "The days of my years are three score and ten," and now-a-days the great majority of human beings never even reach that short day. And the very curtailment of man's days has intensified its value. (2)

The End of Time is near.

We were never so near as to-day to that solemn moment when a mighty angel shall raise

his hand and swear that time shall be no longer. The end is at hand; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Do you and I believe it? Do we feel the moral effect of that mighty fact in these hearts of ours? When the Lord comes, you and I will have to render an account of how we have spent our brief day in the body. Do you think that each and all of us are making our own bliss in a coming day. Of course I refer to our bliss in the matter of patient service. How then are you and I dispensing of our **days, and weeks, and months, and years.** We should not approach time by these more or less prolonged periods. Even a **day** is too much. Yea! an **hour** is too much. It is by **the moments** our God dispenses His grace to us. You remember that beautiful word in Isaiah 27: "A vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep; I will water it **every moment.**" And as He dispenses His grace to His own by the moment, it is for us to receive that grace **moment by moment.** Oh, the preciousness of the moments definitely guarded. I appeal especially to young Christians;

Look well to the moments.

If the moments be definitely guarded, we shall build up minutes, and hours, and days, and months, and years that shall be full of glory and delight to our God and full of blessing to ourselves and others. Oh the shame of unguarded moments. I well remember a brother whom I knew and loved saying to me one day: "Oh, those unguarded moments." To what did he refer? Sin had invaded his family and made sorrowful havoc there, and as he thought of the inroads and desolation that sin had

brought into his own home he exclaimed, "Oh those unguarded moments!" Beloved, we need God to guard us. We cannot keep ourselves for one single second. And the more thoroughly we believe that, the more shall we value His grace, and the more shall be the blessing we ourselves shall receive. If you and I abide in grace just a moment at a time, and just through simple dependence, then we shall be able to buy up that precious opportunity mentioned in Ephesians 5, 16. We have to buy it up for the days are evil. And what means that expression?

"The days are evil."

So long as Satan is reigning in this scene in which we now dwell, the days we spend here, in themselves, cannot be otherwise; they have to be bought up. It is for you and I to redeem the lost time, to buy up the opportunities. If we are to buy it up it will need constant faith, watchfulness, prayerfulness, diligence, and activity. This brief life offers such opportunities for glorifying the gracious God as we shall never hereafter enjoy, **at least not altogether in the same way.** First of all we have here the opportunity of winning many a victory for the Lord. This world is a great battlefield, and to that battlefield the apostle alludes in Ephesians 6. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, spiritual wickedness, etc. And in order to face this conflict we need the strength of the victorious Lord. And thus the apostle opens this subject of conflict by these words: **"Be strengthened in the Lord."** Not "be strong," but "be strengthened." That is, we need a constant, daily,

infusion of fresh strength. **The strength of yesterday will not do for to-day.** Be strengthened or be powerful in the Lord. That is in the Lord Jesus: and in the strength of His life: that is the Holy Spirit, Who has come to dwell in us and minister divine strength to our hearts, minds, wills, and bodies. Not until we receive this divine strength through the mighty Spirit of God are we fit to face the powers of darkness. Not only so, but we need the whole armour of God. It is interesting to notice that twice the apostle mentions that **"whole armour."** In Ephesians 6, 11: "Put on the whole armour of God." If we, by faith, abide in the Victorious One that sits at God's right hand, and our faith be fed by His precious Word, and our prayer be made to Him day by day—earnest believing prayer, we shall indeed receive that strength that is required to meet and overcome every conflict, and thus glorify God through the victory we win down here in this battlefield. In heaven there is no conflict, hence in heaven there is no victory. Here alone is the place where the child of God can win spiritual victory, and delight the heart of his glorious Lord. (3)

It is only down here that we can manifest, by way of contrast, the moral beauty of our blessed Lord,

for there is no contrast above. **All** is bright, **all** is in line with the will of God, there. Here we are in a scene of darkness. Here, then, we can display the light of grace. We are in a world full of moral deformity through sin,

therefore it is for you and me to manifest the excellences of Him who hath called us out of darkness into marvellous light. May the love of the heart of Jesus shine out before all in this world of hatred. May the meekness of the Lord Jesus shine out amid the violence of the Satanic race around. May the lowliness of the Lord Jesus shine out in the midst of the pride that rules this world. May the unselfishness of the Lord Jesus be manifested in the midst of a world that ever seeketh its own. May the holiness of the Lord Jesus shine out amid the darkness of sin all around, for such a display of these virtues in heaven there can be none. All will be exactly like Himself there, where there is no dark background to set it off such as we have here. This life gives us a golden opportunity in the way of ministering and serving one another in the things of God. When the Lord has come and called us all home, our fellow travellers to the better country will have no such need of your service and mine as they have to-day. The heavenly people are a pilgrim host, and it is the intention of our great Leader that each of us, as believers, should be helpers one of another, after a godly sort. Up yonder our fellow-travellers will not so need our attention as they do to-day. We shall all be together, all at home together, and although there may be occasions for ministry one to another—and I believe there will—yet those occasions cannot have the same moral advantage as if taken advantage of to-day, because there is nothing to hinder there, whereas there is much to hinder us all here.

(4.) **The Day of Service is now.**

While God is pleased to leave us in the body, you and I have the opportunity of reaching a christless, godless world. Only **here** can you and I, by the Holy Ghost, be the means of rescuing souls that are travelling the downward road to the lake of fire. May each of us be instrumental in rescuing many from the broadway of destruction, and leading them into the narrow way of life. A dear sister of my acquaintance, who is entirely devoted to spiritual service, is in the habit of making it **a point to speak to one sinner every day on the great question of his or her relationship to God.** I heard that, one evening after she had retired to rest, the Spirit of God had reminded her of the resolution she had made. Late as it was she left the house, went out into the street and spoke to one sinner and then retired to her own rest, happy in the consciousness that she had fulfilled the purpose of her heart. She had delivered her soul from the blood of one sinner. If we had more personal energy like that, our lives might be instrumental in reaching and winning more souls for Christ. In the light of these four reasons we, surely, have substantial ground for calling the present a golden opportunity. When you and I accepted Jesus as our Saviour we came, first, into possession of wonderful privileges. But along with these privileges were incurred, at the same time, weighty responsibilities. How deeply Paul appreciated the privileges he received, and how conscientious was he to the responsibilities these privileges imposed upon him. I pray you to note the two considerations that press upon him. They are both

stated in 2nd Corinthians v. The first claim that the Lord had upon him, was **the claim of the privileges bestowed upon him.** In the 14th verse, referring to the Cross, he says: **"The love of Christ constraineth us."** And then in the 10th verse of that chapter he feels his responsibility yet further as he looks forward to the judgment seat of Christ. Where Paul stood, we stand. We look behind and we see the Cross; the Cross with all its manifested love, and happy shall we be if we feel as he did, the constraining power of that life. And then he looks forward, and that inspires him with a godly fear. **"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord"** he prays, lest he should be disapproved by that Righteous Judge. Nay, he prayed lest he should lose any of the things he had wrought, for he saw a full reward. In verse 9 he says: **"Wherefore, we make it our ambition that whether present in the body or absent from the body, we may be well pleasing unto God."** And why? **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."** A solemn prospect of immense importance, but too lightly looked upon.

There are five points in this chapter.

that I pray you to note. (1) There is the **certainty** of this judgment; **"we MUST appear."** It is a reckoning time for every saint. (2) Its **universality**; **"We must ALL appear."** No exemption ground. (3) Its **individuality**, **"that everyone** may receive recompense for the things done through the body" as the instrument. Everyone individually recompensed. (4) Its **publicity**, **"We must APPEAR** be made

manifest." Turned inside out. Our gracious Lord is not going to expose us before an ungodly world of spectators, but before the angels, and before one another. "We must all be made manifest for there is nothing covered by us that shall not be revealed," and there is nothing hid from our fellows that shall not then be made manifest or known. (5)

THERE IS A NECESSITY OF SUCH A RECORD.

I think I see the necessity of this public manifestation. First of all there are lowly hidden workers for Christ, who by prayer are setting in motion a great work for the Lord that the world knows nothing of, and fellow saints know nothing, or little, of so far as their work is concerned. We are told that the great river Danube has its source in a well in a gentleman's garden. We see, again and again, a mighty tide of spiritual blessing springing from an unknown source. It was so, we may say, in the great revival of '59. And do you think for a moment that the righteous Judge is to allow that hidden spring to remain hidden to all eternity. Of course not. The very nature of the case demands its manifestation. His righteousness is perfect, and at the call of justice it will be made manifest, to the glory of our God, to the joy of that Precious unknown one, and the admiration of the saints. On the other hand, it is quite possible to pose as being really better than we are, while here. Paul was afraid lest the fellow saints should think more of him than they ought to think. The Corinthians, indeed, thought less of him than they ought to have thought, and hence it is said: "I ought to have been commended of you." I have been struck for many years with the lack of commendation on the part of

God's people regarding those that really have pleased the Lord, and been the means of blessing to others. That is the one side, but on the other side our fellow saints might think more of us than they ought to think. **The Lord is going to put every man in his place that he has legitimately won for himself by the faithfulness of his life and the sincerity of his heart.** The question is not, "what do my brethren judge me to be?" but "He that judgeth me is the Lord." I might labour for publicity. I might labour to win the regard of my fellow saints and mine own glory, and so far as I do so I gain nothing. I am losing all the time. How shall you and I stand in that day when He arranges us in the order of merit. The first may then be last, and the last may then be first. When rearrangement in respect of merit has taken place, all God's people will be absolutely satisfied, and that for ever, that their Judge has acted in perfect righteousness. In this scene, alas, there are contracted moral debts which again and again are left unpaid. One saint has injured another, and the injury committed is never confessed. The injurer and the injured pass off this scene. Such cases have to stand over until the Judgment Seat of Christ. Can a righteous judge allow these moral dislocations to remain unadjusted for ever? Never! never! Then at last, late as it is, the injurer and the injured shall be brought face to face, and the required confession shall then be made, and the two hearts shall then be re-adjusted to the joy of the Judge and the unspeakable deliverance of both parties involved. Alas! that ever such duties should

remain over until then. Why not get the matter settled at once to the glory of the Lord's present grace, and to our own and others present deliverance and blessing. Reader, I speak solemnly on this matter. If there be such cases between yourself and another even unto this day my prayer is, may the Spirit convict you and melt your heart to confession and re-adjustment. Please carry these five points with you. They are of immense importance. **"The certainty, the universality, the individuality, the publicity, and the necessity** of the Judgment seat of Christ.



Privileges and :: Responsibilities.

IT is of the deepest importance that saints should clearly apprehend, and ever keep before them the object of their redemption. The world speaks of the grace of God as being simply to rescue us from God's coming judgment, or, at most, to bring us into rest and peace; but, these are very insufficient statements of the grand purpose of our God in His grace concerning us. Let the Holy Spirit Himself supply the answer. "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," Romans 8. 29. This conformation, **now** spiritual, and **hereafter** in body as well, will complete the purpose for which God gave His Beloved Son, and for which His Beloved Son gave Himself. The execution of this purpose covers the present as well as the future. This conformity unto the image of Christ may be divided into two parts, (1) **conformity to Him in character**, (2) **Conformity to Him in life**. You and I have been called to be made as like as possible to the Holy Son of God. This, and nothing less is the end, the object for

which our God has called us by His grace, and for which Christ has redeemed us by His blood. When we consider the peculiar privileges of the present dispensation; when we remember that we are living in a day when the Son of God is on the throne above, in all the value of His accomplished work below; when we remember that we are living in the day of the Holy Spirit who has come to abide in the saints in all the fulness of grace; when we remember that we are living in a day when the Word of God in all its completeness, is in our hands; in a day when we still have so many opportunities of meditating on that word, privately and collectively, then in the light of all this, must we not honestly confess that the years have been largely years of failure. We have failed in growing more and more into the likeness and character of that blessed One. Think of His character, the embodiment of holiness and love, of meekness and lowliness, of righteousness and grace, of joy and peace, of power and wisdom. In Jesus you have the fulness of moral perfection, the perfect character. There is nothing weighs with God so much as character, and yet how little have we grown in conformity to that holy, loving, lowly, righteous and gracious One. Let us take for example the three leading graces, **faith, hope and love**, for the graces of heart count more with God than any other part of His revealed will. Now, pray, do not misunderstand me. I do not want to minimise any part of the revealed will of God, but I make bold to say that inward exercise of heart

towards God counts far more with Him than the outward ordinances of baptism, or the breaking of bread, and far more than the "gifts" of the Spirit of 1 Corinthians 12, precious and valuable as the gifts of the Spirit are. In moral worth these "gifts" come a long way behind these precious graces, faith, hope and love, and others which are the manifestation of the holy character of the Son of God.

FAITH.

What a wonderful development of faith do we see in our father Abraham! Think of his wonderful growth in faith from the day that, drawn by "the God of glory," he left his native land to go he knew not where. Think of its marvellous development until it reached such an elevation that Abraham even reflected God Himself in the offering up of his only beloved son. Has **our** faith been growing in proportion to God's dealings in grace with us? Is **my** faith in the Lord Jesus any stronger to-day than it was at the opening of the year. It ought to be! Of the Thessalonians Paul could write: "**Your faith grows exceedingly**" (2 Thessalonians 1. 3). Is it not our experience that we find ourselves as feeble in faith at the end of the year as at the beginning of it? God grant that there may be real growth in this precious faith.

LOVE.

I would that we had more of that attribute of love, for "God is love." Could Paul say of

you and me what he said of the Thessalonians: **"Your love towards each other abounds."** Are we increasing in the love of God? Are we increasing in love for His Word, for His people, and to sinners around us? To grow in love is to grow in the likeness of God. Is **my** love growing day by day? Do **I** love sinners more intensely now than I did this time last year?

HOPE.

We profess to believe in the coming of our Lord, but, is this hope a reality as regards its effect upon our hearts? Does this hope affect my character and direct my course? Sometimes we sing:

"No portion would I seek until
I reign with Thee my God above."

But if I begin and gather together as much of earth's goods as I can, it must be a contradiction. Is our hope ripening? Is the coming of the Lord dearer to my heart now than ever before? Do the tremendous events of the time lead me to cry all the more longingly: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Oh that we may increase in faith, hope, love, these precious features of the character of the Son of God! And what about our

Service

for the Lord? God is giving us such an opportunity now for serving him as we shall

never receive again. Can I put my finger on a brother and say "There is one who, through my instrumentality, has been brought out of darkness into marvellous light?" Can I put my finger on a brother and say, there is one whom my consistent walk and timely ministry has led into a fuller acquaintance with Jesus? May we awake and put our shoulder to the wheel. In the energy of the Holy Spirit, we **may** be used of God, not only to grow ourselves in spiritual stature, but to be the means of winning sinners to Christ, and of enabling saints to attain to a fuller conformity to

The Blessed Son of God.

In pursuance of His marvellous purpose of grace, that Blessed One who was the Companion of God in a past eternity **stepped into humanity** in the very form in which sin was first committed in the Garden of Eden—a human body—that He might make His way to the Cross of judgment, there to undo the mischief incurred by the unfaithfulness of the first man. **The Son of God has died** and by that death of His, He has exhausted the demands of divine justice. Blessed be the God of all grace! I speak only of God's claims against us as guilty sinners. The Blood of the Crucified has truly set us free, but we still linger in subjection to mortality. That will be put all right presently. A great judicial deliverance has been brought about by the death of Jesus on the Cross. God's claim against me has been met, for I have trusted in the Crucified

One. More than that; **the Son of God is risen!** Do you really believe it? In the resurrection of Jesus, God has practically and powerfully declared that all that was against me as a guilty sinner has been settled for ever. I stand in the righteousness of the risen surety. I go further, I believe that the crucified and risen One has been **exalted** "far above all heavens," and thus I receive the comfort that God has made provision for my conquest over the powers of darkness that would intervene between my soul on earth and my God in heaven. The Son of God has not only died and been raised and exalted, but He is **making continual intercession** for us. All this in itself, blessed as it is, is insufficient. Something more is needed.

The Holy Spirit has come down

from that glorified One to abide in you and me as His personal repose, there to complete, in the development of our character, and in the accomplishment of our service, all the holy will of God. Let us believe, then, in the personal presence and almighty power of the Spirit of God. And what has the Spirit of God come to do? First of all, **to convict the world** of the awful sin of refusing to believe, trust and obey the Son of God. He has come also **to lead the sinner to the Crucified and Risen One.** He has come to take up His abode in the heart

of every one who is linked with the risen Christ. He comes to witness with our spirit that we are nothing less than children of God, marking us for ever as God's own, and confirming us unto the day of Redemption. He comes as **the "earnest of our inheritance."** He gives us the assurance of a heavenly inheritance. He comes to enable us to understand the Scriptures, and thus know the Will of God. He comes to set us free from the otherwise irresistible power of "indwelling sin," for although sin still dwells in us, the Spirit of God is able to break the power of that indwelling sin, and lead us into blessed habitual spiritual victory. Yea, beloved, He comes to complete in us that character of Christ's image of which I have just been speaking, and He comes to enable us to fulfil that life of obedience and that life of service which our God desires us to fulfil to the very end of our sojourn on this earth. We have placed in our hands a volume containing every possible direction, every principle that we need to guide us as pilgrims through this dark wilderness. All this is the rich provision that God in His love and wisdom has made for us. Let us present ourselves again a living sacrifice for the accomplishment of His own purpose concerning us. Let us renew our consecration, from day to day. Let us gratefully own we entirely belong to our God. Let us take our place before Him, not only as His children, but as His servants. Let

us lay ourselves upon His altar. Let us cast ourselves at the feet of our worthy Lord Jesus, and let us yield ourselves up to the power of the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us. Some time ago a little volume was issued bearing the title: "Little is much if God is in it." How much may be done in one year, yea, in one day, if God be in it. The day our lot is cast in is full of possibilities. Now is the time to rise in the power of God to a golden "opportunity of glorifying His Grace" (Ephesians 5. 16. R.V. Margin). **"I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God"**—His mercy in justifying us from all things through the blood of His Son, in providing for our deliverance from sin's power within and Satan's power without, and His coming mercy in delivering us from the power of mortality and corruption—**"that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."** "And be not conformed to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12. 12). Only then, after we have presented ourselves without reserve, can we learn, practically and experimentally, what is the will of God concerning His people. May we fill up the minutes, the hours, the days, and the months of this present year, for God. May it be a year with a glorious record, a record of

honour to our God, of praise to His Beloved Son, of joy to the Gracious Spirit who "dwells in us"—of spiritual progress in the people of God, and of accession to the number of the saved!



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