

LIGHT  
FOR THE  
PILGRIM PATH.

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By W. T. TURPIN.

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LONDON :  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.



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# THE FAMILY OF GOD.

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ADDRESSES TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

BY  
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# THE FAMILY OF GOD.

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1 JOHN ii. 12-29.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same

hath not the Father ; [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.* 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him ; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

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I SHOULD just like to remark, in order that it may be more simply understood in speaking of it afterwards, that the word in the latter clause of verse 13, translated "little children," should be rendered "babes." It is quite a distinct expression from "little children," in verse 12. I will explain the difference presently.

You observe there are three classes in verse 13, fathers, young men, and babes, and "little children," in verse 12, includes all of them. I do not say anything about the "fathers" now, because that is not our subject. I will only speak of the two classes which I suppose will take in every soul in this room. I suppose every one here stands under one of these heads—babes, or young men. Of course, I need not explain that a "young man" does not mean simply young in years, but the Spirit of God is pleased to borrow these terms



from the ordinary use which we make of them, and to apply them to spiritual things. It is a "babe" and a "young man" *spiritually*, not *naturally*. And you will remember that I only speak to these to-night. I do not regard in the least the presence of any others.

Now there is one remark I desire to make at the start, one thing I have definitely upon my mind to-night, and that is, I shall seek to shew you (the Lord helping) what is the foundation, the grand and blessed foundation, upon which God, in His mercy, sets us, so as to secure the practice that His own heart looks for from His children, even the very youngest, in these last times; because it is impossible to have true practice, real christian practice, or christian testimony, if there is not an understanding of christian position. When I say that, I do not mean merely understanding it in your head, but in your conscience; and mark this, there is no way by which the Spirit of God imparts a divine understanding of anything, except through the conscience; and if the conscience is not reached, and is not, in the first instance, worked upon by what God is pleased to communicate to me from His word, all I may gather up is worse than useless. It is positive mischief, because there is nothing more injurious than to assent to the truth, and yet not to be affected by it. It is a total setting aside of every principle of God, if I take any portion of God's word, and study it as I study history, or an interesting book. I am studying, let me tell you, God's revelation of His mind, and my *conscience* is to be acted upon by it, and that is an all-important thing at the present moment, and for no one more than for

young Christians. Oh, beloved, let me say this to-night—do cultivate an exercised, tender conscience. It is a wonderful thing, when I read this blessed book of God, to think that *there* I have something from God that deals with my conscience, and brings me into His presence. That is the blessedness of the word of God. The scriptures are intended by God to act thus upon us, and that is very solemn! See what a different thing that is from my mere intellect or understanding working upon certain things. I may take up the most wonderful truth of God, and my understanding may work upon it, and my mind may act upon it, and the result will be simply nothing, but if I understand truly and really what this blessed book is, that it is the veritable, positive voice of God, written down by the Holy Ghost, it brings me directly into God's presence, and then I have to deal with *God* as to what He is pleased to speak.

Now, the first thing that is spoken of here, which is true of the youngest as well as of the oldest, is, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (Ver. 12.) That takes in all the classes, as I have already explained. There is no question, and we do not raise any question now, as to the fact of the forgiveness of our sins. I trust that is a settled question with every one of you here to-night, a distinct, settled fact and reality in your soul, that all your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. Because, remember, if you are not clear as to that, if there is the smallest lurking doubt in your soul as to that, how can you really walk as a forgiven person? It makes a vast difference. A person who really knows he is forgiven

has motives, reasons, for acting, which, under other circumstances, he could not have. We cannot have really right motives, unless you know that. I am not speaking now, remember, as to the question of the happiness of your soul, but as to what is intended as a *motive* to act upon your path. That is what is before my mind, and I may say in passing, that I am speaking to-night a great deal with reference to what I propose to take up next week, when I intend to speak of what is *practical*. I speak to-night of what gives all its power to that which is practical, and I say, unless you know these great foundation-truths, these blessed facts of scripture, in your own soul and conscience, it will be impossible for you to have the motives that spring from them. Therefore the apostle starts with that as a settled thing, "I write unto you, little children," that is, the whole family of God, taking in fathers, young men, and babes, "because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

Now we come to the classes. We will begin with what scripture speaks of as the very lowest class, the first class, that is, the "babes." Mark what is said about the babes in verse 13. "I write unto you, babes, because ye have known," not the forgiveness of your sins, not because you have known your acceptance, but, "because ye have known the Father." Now, beloved friends, you may think this a very elementary thing I am pressing upon you to-night; but, oh, I know so well how very little there is known about the effect, the blessed, wonderful power of a Father's love realised in the soul, and how few there are, alas! that really do know it. I do not raise

any question about the forgiveness of your sins, I take that for granted, but do you know the Father? and have you the sense in your soul that you are a child of the Father? Not simply that you are pardoned, but that you are positively a child of the Father. I believe there are many that really do not know that; and they have not the motives which should characterise a child of the Father, because they have not the thing that gives spring and force to them. Because, supposing I do not possess the sense of the Father's love in my heart, if I am ignorant that I am a child of the Father, and that I have a Father up there whose eye is ever upon me, and to whom I am an object, well, then, I have no motive to *live* and *act* for the One to whom I am an object. That is the effect of it, and that is the reason why people go into the world. What are they looking for there? They are looking to find a satisfaction for their desolate hearts, which the knowledge of the Father would be to them, if they had it. If you had that, and knew it, you would not go into the world.

It is this that makes so many young Christians unsteady in their course, in their christian path; what makes them dissatisfied in their hearts, is, that they have not found an object for their affections. That is the reason of it. They are not conscious that they are objects of the Father's love. It is a wonderful thing to think of. Do you mean to tell me that you would not walk about this great city in a different way, if you had the sense in your heart, "I am the Father's child, I am an object to Him, and His eye is upon me, and He is thinking of me, and

caring for me, and doing His best for me"? What wonderful motives! And that is not an advanced state. Some might think it wonderfully so, but it is the *infant* condition, the very simplest, the very first, truth that the blessed God would have known in His family, that there is not a babe there but is supposed to know the Father's love. "I write unto you, babes, because you have *known* the Father," that is, not merely the relationship, but the knowledge of it. There is all the sense that, from having been *outside* the family of God, a poor, wandering prodigal, away from His affection and His heart, He has brought me back to Himself, to know the Father's love. I ask you to-night, Have you the sense that you have been kissed? Have you the sense in your soul that you have been greeted by your Father, that He has kissed you, that you know what the affection of your Father's heart is? I do not turn to the world. Why? Because I have a Father in heaven. I do not turn to an arm of flesh. Why? Because I have a Father in heaven. Think of the wonderful, the immense motive which is connected with that. I have a Father up there, and He cares for me, and thinks of me, and I am His object. A most wonderful thing even to think of. It is the most blessed fact that could be announced, that a poor creature, a poor, weak, feeble, failing creature on this earth, could be an object of interest, and an object of affection, to the blessed God—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But so it is, and, beloved, it is not a mere matter of information, but a divine revelation, and it is given to us with immediate reference to the temptations of the world, as we see from a verse later

on (26th), where the apostle says, "These things write I unto you concerning them that seduce you." The Holy Ghost had that in His thought. He had all the seductions of the devil before His mind, and it was in view of these, as well as of the weakness and feebleness of the poor things into whom God had put this "treasure," it was in view of the dangers and of the besetments that we find ourselves confronted with at the present moment, that the Spirit of God gives us this wondrous revelation.

What is the security for a "babe"? That he has "known the Father." And in your cares, for I suppose some of you have your trials and anxieties, your moments of heaviness, your griefs, what is your solace? Where do you go to be soothed? Where do you turn for cheer in pressure and difficulty? Oh, what a wonderful thing it is to be able to look up, and say, "There is my Father!" I could not describe to you the blessed, wonderful glory of that divine reality for a soul, "I have a *Father*, I am His *child*, I am in relationship with Him, and know His love. He is doing His best for me. There is nothing He would not give me, if it were good for me. He withholds nothing that would be for my blessing. If there was one thing that would minister to the real blessing and prosperity of His child, my Father would give it me. He keeps back nothing from me that is not according to His infinite wisdom and the love of His heart." What a thing that is! How it steadies one's heart! I am not cast down because I am in the presence of difficulty or trial, and I am not intrigued away by Satan for some wretched, miserable thing in

this world. Why? Because I have my Father, and His heart, His hand, His love, His solace, His cheer, His smile, all sustain me now, and I shall be in His home above. What a blessed thing that is!

You may say, all this is very simple, but it is these simple things that souls really are ignorant of. Let me ask you, Are you clear as to your heart's acceptance of all this? Do not be disheartened because you find the little, feeble answer in your heart as to the *fact*, but allow the *fact* its due place, and your sense of it will be wonderfully increased. If you begin with *your sense* of it, you can never work yourself up to the *fact*, but begin with the *fact* itself, and it will tell wonderfully in the way of realisation in your soul. It is this fact of the Father's love, and the relationship into which He has brought me to Himself in His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that enables me to give a bold front to all Satan's opposition. God says to me that He has brought me into that relationship, and that is enough; and, remember, it is not as a *pardoned criminal*. I am pardoned, and yet I am not a *pardoned criminal*. This is the idea that people entertain, and I have no doubt there are some here to-night who have never got beyond it. They *are* pardoned, they have it free, but they are going out into the world just as a man who has been a criminal in Newgate: he has a free pardon, but if he goes out, and walks the world, *branded* as a man who has been in prison, nothing, not even his pardon, were it ever so plenary, could efface that brand. But God has not so pardoned us. It is true, blessed be His name, "when we were enemies, we were

reconciled to God by the death of his Son," but the same death that atoned for the criminality, if I may so say, is the basis upon which we are taken out of the position in which we were as criminals, and brought positively into a new place, even His family; and it is on that ground that you and I to-night, yea, every babe here, is a child of God, born into His family, in relationship with Him, in the very same relationship before Him that His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is; for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our God and Father, and, I tell you more than that, loved after that measure too! Do you believe that? Oh, beloved friends, do you believe that you are positively loved after the measure of the love of God to His Son? "Hast loved them as thou hast loved me," are the words of the blessed Lord Himself. If you had the sense of that in your soul, would you condescend to take up anything out of this poor world? Tell me, would a man who was a millionaire stoop to pick up a penny off the dirty pavement? What God has done for us is this—not only has He paid our debts—He has done that, blessed be His name—but by that which paid our debts we are brought into the very same position that His own Son occupies before Himself, to be the objects of His love, and loved after the measure of His love to Christ.

I say this is for a "babe." It is not an advanced state, it is the "babe's" position. It is wonderful how people think it an advanced state. The reason is, Christians have dropped so fearfully low, and so far beneath God's thoughts about these things. They think that the beginning is the finish,



because they have such a feeble sense of Christianity. I know what it is myself very well. I can remember well enough what it was to me when it first burst upon me, that I was a child of the Father. And I knew many a thing before that. I knew that my sins were forgiven me, and preached it too, preached the forgiveness of sins, and never knew what it was to be a child of the Father! Never knew what it was to be in relationship with the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; yet so it is. It is like a new day, if I may so say; and when it enters the person's soul in the power of the Spirit, it is like the dawning of the day. It is the opening of a new era to a person when first of all he gets the wonderful sense in his heart, "He is my Father, I am His child;" and we can never please Him better than when we are living out that relationship before Him, giving Him His place of Father to us, and seeking to walk as His children. You can never please the blessed God so much as when you give Him credit for being what nothing but His love could make Him be to you. This is the infantine state, this is for a "babe," for the very feeblest. Supposing you were only converted yesterday, if God, in His mercy, picked you up only an hour since, you are entitled to know not only that your sins are forgiven, but that you are a child of the Father. It is not a question of intelligence. A person may not understand the prophecies, or the dispensations of scripture, or the wonderful purposes of God that are unfolded in scripture, and yet have the conscious relationship known in the soul by the Holy Ghost. The expression of that relationship is "Abba, Father," and the manifestation

of it in the path, is, "I renounce everything that is not of the Father." Thus we see there are two expressions of this infantine condition: the one is confession, "Abba, Father"—the very language of the Lord Jesus Christ; not only the position of the Lord Jesus Christ—"joint-heirs with him," as the apostle says in Romans viii., but His language, "Abba, Father," His own relationship, His own expressions; and there is another testimony besides the confession of the mouth, there is the *life* testimony. And what is that? With Christ it was this, "I do *always* those things that please him." That was the expression of the life of the perfect Man in His relationship of a Son with His Father. He was, we know, from all eternity the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, the Son of the Father before all time and worlds, but He was also Son of God, as born in time. With Him, in His blessed path, it was always the Father. It was the delight of His heart, His life, He retreated into the Father, He walked with the Father, He lived with the Father. That is what God intends for us, beloved, in our measure.

Let me say a little about the *practice* as to this, without departing from the line we are taking this evening. A person may say, "Well, now, supposing I had the full sense of all that in my heart, how would it act upon my conduct?" I will tell you. In everything you did, in every thought, in every action, in every undertaking, you would consult your Father's pleasure. That is the way it would tell upon you. Let me be affectionately personal with you this evening; do you consult your Father's pleasure in everything? Do you

raise that question with your own heart about all your undertakings, path, ways, conduct? Would you be afraid to bring everything to the test of that to-night? Is there anything in your heart inside, or your ways outside, that you would not like to bring to such a test as this: "Would it please my Father, is it after the pattern and fashion of Him who said, 'I do always those things that please him'?" What a solemn test that is! What a searching of hearts it raises! How many things are laid bare by it! What a light it casts into one's inmost soul before God! Does it not search us? I feel it searches me as I speak of it. I feel my own heart searched to the very quick as I think of it. Is it my Father's pleasure, my Father's will, His way, that is before me at this hour?

The Lord help you just to apply the truth to your own hearts. That is the way to read the scriptures, to walk through this world bringing everything, the very smallest thing, into the full, searching light of the truth. Take, for instance, your relationships in life, your home. Some of you have a difficult home, and, oh, do let me say this to you, beloved friends, you have, perhaps, a home where there are many eyes upon you, and perhaps you are the only one belonging to God in that home, the only one standing outside of everything in that home. That is a critical place for any one. It is a solemn and responsible place for any child of God to be located, but let me say this, there is a divine fulness, and a divine resource, in this truth that I am pressing upon you to-night, that will meet all that. You will never fulfil your home responsibilities, or your home duties, or your

home relationships, so well as when you are studying your Father's pleasure. There would be no unevenness then. I have often seen young people, in whom, perhaps, there may have been a great deal of energy, and a great deal of true-hearted desire, but not inward brokenness of spirit, and very often things were done in a way that did not commend Christ. Very frequently a sort of boasted superiority, as it were, because of having the truth, and looking down upon everybody else that did not know it. There is nothing of Christ in that—nothing of that blessed One who could go down to Nazareth, and be subject to His parents, and who knew how to discern what was due to them, as well as to His Father. What a wonderful thing it is when the heart is *with* God! You get wisdom from your Father, direction and guidance from Him, your path made clear by Him, His light shining through the whole course of it. It is, in fact, just like a child with a father. You have seen a little child coming in all the sweet consciousness of the relationship, and in all the sense of the dependence and trust that he or she may have in the parent, and leaning upon him, and there is no time that a child comes with more simplicity than when there is a difficulty. Whom should the child lean on but the father? Do it with your Father! Consult your Father, look to your Father, study Him! You will find it will save you from many a difficulty; and you know you cannot set down any given set of rules as to what is to be avoided, and what is to be practised. That would make you really independent of God, but you must keep continually in the place of dependence, cast upon God as His child, needing

Him each stage of the journey. And you never consciously wanted Him, but He is consciously beside you. The conscious want brings out the conscious presence; because He does not manifest His presence to independence, but He does manifest His wisdom and His power to dependence; that is the proper, true, natural position for a child. You will find this will tell upon many things in your daily path.

But there is another side to what I have been speaking of. I have seen some in a family who, instead of being as I have described, go to the other extreme, they surrender the truth of God. They are not valiant enough for the truth, they are compromisers. There are the two things, beloved young friends, that we must steer clear of in home relationships, *ungraciousness* and *compromise*. They are the Scylla and Charybdis, as it were, the two great dangers. What would help you in both these? Simply this—your Father's pleasure, because that would keep you subject to Him; and, on the other hand, you could not yield, in the very smallest degree, what was for Him or for His honour.

Well, now, I pass on to the next class, where we shall find also an immensity of truth brought out. The resources of a "babe" are the Father's love and the Father's care, His heart, His hand. All these are for a "babe," therefore the apostle says, "I write unto you, babes, because you have *known* the Father." Going to the next class, we find a difference, we have a little advance, a class beyond the "babes." "I write unto you, young men,

because ye have overcome the wicked one," and then, in verse 14, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." The divine energy and power of faith characterises a "young man." You know perfectly well the difference naturally between the babe and the young man. What the difference is naturally, so it is spiritually. I do not look for energy in a babe, I look for confidence. What marks the infantine state is *confidence*, clingingness, if I may use the word; but what marks manhood is energy, strength, power. And so it is in spiritual things; and the Holy Ghost Himself suggests the analogy. He says, You are strong, there is divine energy, divine power, divine ability; and how is that ability shewn? You have mastered Satan, you have overcome the wicked one.

I should like to say a word about that. There is no way to overcome Satan, and no way in which divine ability and power is more shewn than in keeping the sentence of death upon yourself. Now I do not speak of that to "babes." What they need, and what I have been endeavouring to speak of, is that full confidence in the Father which befits a "babe." But now we have another class before us, and I have no doubt that there are many in the position of "young men" here. There are many such here to-night, perhaps more that answer to the description of "young men" than to that of "babes." Do you know what it is to keep the sentence of death—the death of Christ—upon yourself, to apply that death to yourself? I will try to say a little as to that, because it is important to us all.

Many, when they speak of keeping the sentence of death—the cross—upon themselves, think of it as if it were something that they have to die to, in their own hearts. It is not that at all. It is not *my* dying. Very often people say, “I do not feel that I have died; I have all this desire after the world, and all this longing after the things of the world; I feel all that in me. I feel I am uncommonly alive and sensitive to it, just as much as ever I was.” But that is not what the Holy Ghost speaks of at all. What He is speaking of is the practical application of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ to myself; that is, everything that Christ died to is to be *disowned* by me. That is applying the sentence of death to myself. That is simple, yet solemn. Everything that He died to, I am to disown, though it be at cost and loss to myself. That is the meaning of keeping the sentence of death upon myself, disowning everything within me and outside of me that Christ died to. That is, I disallow self and sin because Christ died for me, and I disallow the world because Christ died to deliver me from it. There is a line or two in one of our hymns which expresses this:

“From sin, the world, and Satan,  
We’re ransomed by Thy blood.”

Just because I *am* ransomed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ from sin, the world, and Satan, I disallow all these things. I disallow sin, although I find it here in me; I do not allow it, I am under no obligation to yield to sin, I am under every obligation *not* to yield to it. Then, as to the world, He has taken me out of it, and I am under

every obligation not to yield to it. I am under no obligation to Satan, but to Him who broke the power of Satan. You constantly read the words, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." That is, you disallow every thing that Christ died to, and you do it in faith *because* He died to it. It is not a question of *your* dying ; you will never die—that is, you will never really be out of circumstances of temptation—until you leave this body ; but you are entitled and privileged to hold yourself to be dead simply because Christ died. That is the reason, and I disallow all these things in faith, because Christ died to them.

There must be this to overcome the devil. You can never get the mastery over Satan unless you keep the sentence of death upon yourself. And remember, that this is not an act that a person jumps into once and for ever. It is a daily, hourly, momentary thing. Do you remember what the Lord said to the young man in Mark x. ? He says, "*Take up* the cross, and follow me." And elsewhere we get the taking up of the cross *daily*. It is a solemn thing for us, yet blessed, seeing that we owe everything that we have, and everything that we are, and everything that we shall be, to that blessed One who died upon that cross. This is what gives the motive-power to it. I will tell you the effect of all this. When the devil meets one who keeps the cross on himself, or a dead man, he has no power, because then the platform upon which the devil acts is taken away. You cut off occasion for his acting. That is the secret of it. And, beloved, it is a wonderful thing to remember it was by *death* the Lord Jesus destroyed Satan. He broke the power of Satan in His death ; He



won the victory through *death* ; and Satan now is become a worsted foe, a beaten enemy, and that which puts the child of God, a " young man," in the position of a conqueror of Satan is this, that he uses the cross, where his power was broken, to take away the occasion of the flesh in him for Satan to act upon. Christ broke Satan's power in death, and *that* death, when it is applied to myself, takes away occasion for Satan to deceive me, which he could otherwise do, on account of the weakness of the flesh.

There is another word here that is very important with reference to this. You can conceive how a person might imagine, " Well, if I have overcome Satan, the evil one, the wicked one, then it is all over, now I have no more to fear." But observe, to the very people that overcame the wicked one, to those who have got power over Satan, the apostle says, " Love not the world," that is one thing, " neither the things of the world," that is another. That is very solemn, beloved friends. I cannot go into it this evening, as it would be departing a little from the line I am taking. I will explain to you next week, as far as I can, what the world is, and how it affects us. I will only now just call your attention to this—that though I have the mastery over Satan, though I have overcome the wicked one, still, I am in danger from the world. This world is a reality, with all its snares, allurements, deceits, set by Satan, of course, who is the god and prince of it, the god of it *religiously*, and the prince of it *politically* ; there it is, with all those things in it which make it attractive, which Satan uses to *beguile* those who have already got the mastery

over him. And therefore it is that the apostle gives this warning.

Let me ask you this, plainly and yet affectionately—Do you love the world, or the things that are in it? Harken to what follows: “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Nothing could be more definite than that which the Spirit of God gives us here, and all this is said to a “young man,” to one who has spiritual power and energy, and spiritual mastery over Satan, even to one of whom it was said, “ye have overcome the wicked one.” Notwithstanding all that, he is in danger of this awful, ensnaring, entrapping world, with all those things in it that minister to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye. I will speak of that, if the Lord will, more particularly next week. I believe many have fallen under the power of it to a very solemn extent. Young people, of course, are especially prone to it; yet not only young people, but old people as well. We are all wonderfully little sensitive as to that one thing—the thing your eye lusts after, the thing your flesh lusts after, and that the natural pride of your heart craves for, *it* is of the world, and not of the Father. It belongs to this evil scene, that would not have the Christ of God, nor the God that gave that Christ. So you see how solemn it is to get such a word as this from the Spirit of God.

I will only now, in finishing for this evening, press these two things upon you: first, what it is to have the Father’s love, the *sense* of the Father’s love; to be in the confidence of a child, to study the Father’s pleasure, and to have it before you in everything, no matter how small or trifling it

might be. What a different path ours would be if it were so! How different it would be with many of us to-night, if we studied our Father's will in what we did, and where we went, and what we had, and if that were the gauge of our whole conduct! Supposing that it brought us into suffering, into a little bit of self-denial, is He worthy of it? Is He worthy of any little trial of our poor hearts? He who gave up the costliest jewel of His own heart's affections, that we might be children before Him—is He worthy? See what a wonderful motive that is for you; and it is not only that, but there is this along with it (the Lord give you to prove it), the blessed, holy joy of being *allowed* to please Him. The very thought that I am *allowed* to please my Father, contains in it that which takes away everything like the sense of loss, and, after all, what I *seem* to give up is only a miserable bit of pleasure, or folly, or pride, that I am a positive gainer in surrendering. But the greatest thing of all, is, the sense that in taking a certain course, I am of one mind with my Father. Who could ever fully tell what that is? the blessedness of being actually of one mind with our Father about things; to think that I am *allowed* to have the same mind as He about the little things that relate to me down here. I say that is compensation at once, and instead of speaking of the suffering, it is all gain, no loss at all, all real gain, gain to me to be allowed to be of the same mind, to be on terms of such wonderful intimacy with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord bring these things, in all their importance, before your hearts to-night. All I ask

is, as you go to your homes, take what I have presented to you—take it before the Lord to-night, and let your consciences and hearts be under the power of it. Do not let any one tempt you to turn off the edge of it, but let it bring you into the presence of God, there to search your own hearts as to all this blessed, wonderful reality, and as to how far you have in your soul the sense of your relationship, and whether you have walked out the sense of it in this world.

The Lord command His blessing, and thus may He secure more childlike confidence and divine energy in our hearts for Him, and for His Son, in these last times, to the praise of His glory!

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## II.

WE have been looking at the three classes which the Spirit of God brings before us in this chapter, passing over the first class, which does not concern our present object or purpose. We will now look a little further at what is said here about the two classes, "babes" and "young men," these terms being understood (as I explained before) spiritually, not naturally. Just as there are babes, young men, and fathers, in an earthly family, so there are in God's family. I should like, before we proceed, very briefly to bring to your remembrance the speciality of each of these two classes, and what belongs to each.

A "babe," which is the lowest class, the infantine state, "knows the Father." "I write unto you, babes, because ye have known the Father." (Ver. 13.) It is a most important thing to be assured in our souls, no matter how feeble we may be, or how short the time since we knew the forgiveness of our sins, through faith in His blood, that the blessed work which has secured the forgiveness of our sins for us, has likewise brought us into God's family. I have a Father, and a blessed thing it is to know, to be assured of the fact, that I have One to whom I can tell my troubles, to whom I can go with my griefs, to whom I can pour out my sorrows, under whose wings I take refuge in difficulty and temptation. This is part of the blessedness of it—the sure

sense of the Father's love ; and there is not merely comfort in it, but immense practical power as well. For I do not find, as a rule, that those who are ignorant of the Father's love have the security, the solace, the stay, the stability, which keeps them from the world. What can keep a "babe" from the world is the knowledge of the Father's love ; and, beloved friends, let me assure you, that, if you know the Father, you do not turn to the world for help. To have some one to whom we are an object, is inseparable almost from our very nature. This is what we long for ; and whoever makes an object of us, we make *our* object. The two things are closely connected together, and I doubt not, if you have not the sense in your heart that there is One up there in heaven to whom you are an object, you will be looking for some one on the earth to fill up the deficiency, the blank. Thus it is a "babe" is enticed into the world. Now the knowledge of the Father provides against that. Suppose I have difficulties, or wants, or cares, or troubles, I do not go to the world to help me out of them, or to get solace in my sorrows. I have a Father. And that is the simplest thing the soul knows. I have a Father who knows all about me.

Do you know in your hearts what that is ? Can you who are "babes" in Christ here say, "I know the sweet, unspeakable blessedness of being able to say, "My Father knows"? You will remember how the Lord Jesus speaks to His disciples ; and I suppose the state in which they were at the time would correspond very much to this infantine state we are speaking of. He says to them, "Fear not, little flock." Why ? "It is your Father's good

pleasure" to be a Father to you, for that is the meaning of "to give you the kingdom." That is what takes the fear out of one's heart. I am not afraid of want or care. Why? Because I have my Father, and, more than that, my Father *knows*. I may not, and do not, know what is before me, but He does. People say, "If I do that, if I adopt such a narrow path as that, I do not know the difficulties I shall be in, and the troubles, and trials, and losses. How can I ever meet them all?" Just this—"your Father knoweth." Now that is the infantine condition.

One thing more: a person may pass from that condition of infancy into the next stage, or even into the highest condition, that of a "father." But the blessedness of the infantine state is not lost, though he may be, as I say, even a "father," though he may know "him that is from the beginning." And that is the very highest thing. The highest knowledge in the things of God is the knowledge of Christ. It is not the knowledge of things *about* Christ, but of Christ Himself. And the most excellent of all sciences is the knowledge of Christ. There is no science like it.

Well, the person who knows "Him who is from the beginning" is a "father," but such a one has not lost the sense of the Father's love. You do not lose anything that you ever learned; but it remains still true that the *characteristic* of a "babe" is confidence in the Father's love, the *characteristic* of a "father" is knowledge of "Him who is from the beginning," and the *characteristic* of a "young man" (what I shall now speak of) is divine strength, power, and vigour to overcome Satan. That is the characteristic of this second class in God's family,

and perhaps represented more than any other class in this room this evening. I suppose that though there are many who come under the designation of "babes," yet there are many more who, in some little measure, answer to "young men."

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." (Ver. 14.) Note those *three* things. Now, you perceive a "babe" is not exposed to meeting the devil in this form. Such a one is sheltered in a way just as in our earthly homes. The law of love in our Father's home above is that which ought to exist in our homes on earth. The infantine state is protected by the love that occupies itself with the very infirmities and feebleness, and exposure and inability, so to speak, that are found in infancy. A little infant, in any of our families, is the object of the parents' special consideration and care. But when you come to manhood, there you have to meet and encounter the positive obstacles of life; and in God's family, the first thing that meets a person when he gets into this manhood state is the devil—Satan.

The question of meeting Satan is a solemn one for everyone of us. It is most important to look at it well, because it brings up the question of temptation. Now the great point presented here is, that "the word of God abideth in you." I do not know anything that is more important for young Christians than that—to have the word of God abiding in them; because, let me assure you, if that is not the case, you will not be able to use that word against the devil as occasion demands. The real secret of being able to use the word



of God against the devil is this, that the word of God is keeping your own soul. If your own soul is not commanded by the word of God, if it is not abiding in you, you cannot use it *offensively* against Satan. Now, how is it with you? Does that word govern *your* ways, *your* affections, *your* hearts? Do you ever prayerfully say, "I must search and see what the word of God, as the expression of His mind, says about this or that?" If you do not, how can you meet Satan? Satan will deceive you, because he is wily. He knows exactly how to dress up counterfeits, and I will tell you one of the greatest counterfeits of the devil now. You may often hear it said, "I do not feel that so-and-so is wrong; I do not see that there is any harm in this or that." Now, where did they get that thought? What guided them as to that feeling? Where did it come from? You say, "Well, my conscience does not reprove me." Neither did Saul's conscience, when he was persecuting the church on earth, and hating Jesus in heaven. Oh, believe it, there is nothing at this present time that is a greater counterfeit, and a more dangerous power of Satan than this, that he makes what people call their conscience the guide of their actions. If you make conscience the *umpire* to which everything is subjected as to your ways, you will fall into the snare of the devil. There is nothing that can pilot us according to the mind of God, except this blessed book, which is the revelation of His mind: conscience is a witness, that which keeps the record, so to speak, as to how far this word acts on me. It is a witness; a true witness, if it is divinely informed, a false witness if it is not. It is thus all the more dangerous.

Why is that? Because, to speak of a person's conscience not condemning this or that, *sounds* exceedingly fair and good, and it is because of this it is to be so carefully guarded and watched. There is nothing so dangerous now as the thing that wears the appearance of truth, but is not the truth; because Satan knows quite well that it is by that saints are most easily caught—the perversion of that which is right in its place. And I say it is a thorough perversion of conscience, and of the place God intended it to occupy, to make it the standard of my actions.

It is this word that is to be the guide in everything; and I commend it to you to-night, and I can speak of it, thank God, as knowing a little of the blessedness of it for myself. And that, you know, is the only ground upon which we ought to speak, “I believe, and therefore have I spoken.” David said of Saul's armour, that he had not “proved” it, and so he had it taken off him. It is the thing you have proved that you can speak of for a certainty; and how blessed it is that when you come to divine things, it is, “we *know*,” “we *believe*, and we *know*.” The one is the objective power of faith, and the other the conscious knowledge in the soul by the Spirit.

But, as I was saying, there is nothing like making that word the test of everything, subjecting all to that word. It does not matter what it is: my position in this world, my occupation, in fact everything. And the question is not what I *may* do, or *may not* do, but, “What saith the scripture?” Because the scripture is the embodiment in writing of the mind of God. If the word of God abide in you, you are strong; there is

the energy of faith, and you have overcome the wicked one.

Now, beloved friends, I trust you see the blessedness of the word abiding in us, it makes us *subject to God*; and when the devil meets a person that is subject, he meets a person that he has no power over. The secret of getting power over Satan, of overcoming Satan, is, that we are, in all our affections and ways, governed by the word, *subject to it*. You have a perfect instance of it in the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, there was nothing in Him that answered to the temptations of Satan outwardly, as there is in us, because we have a fallen nature, but see how He acted with Satan. Satan came and said, "If you are the Son of God, and have power as the Son of God, take yourself, by the exercise of that power, out of the place of dependence." You see Satan allowed a certain amount of truth for his purpose. But the Lord Jesus Christ *kept* the word, and He *used* it: "It is written;" and we can never *use* it, unless we *keep* it. I think we often forget these two things in the account of the temptation. It was not only that our Lord *used* the word against the devil, but he *kept* it. There is immense power, beloved friends, in using the word against Satan, when that word is kept in our own souls, *abiding* there, and deciding for us as to everything that God would wish us to be and to do.

What is Satan's great power now? Have you ever thought what the peculiar characteristic of Satanic power is now? Is it not this—in *concealing* himself, and acting in such a way that you do not know he is present? If he can persuade you, by keeping behind, so that you do not see that it is

Satan, he will get the mastery over you. The power of a saint—of a “young man”—over Satan now, is being able to say, through this word abiding in him, “That is the devil.” The moment you are able to say, “That is Satan,” you have the victory, you have mastered him; but until you can say that, you are in danger. That is the character of the warfare at this moment. I note it for you, because it is important. Supposing a person is tempted; well, if his *conscience* says, “I do not disapprove of that, I do not think there is any great harm in keeping that company, or going to that place, I do not see what harm that can do to me;” that is the devil, beloved friends, concealing himself, and working through that which makes something of *you*, because it exalts your conscience. That is a terrible wile, it exalts something in you, putting your *conscience* in the place that the word of God ought to have over your soul; and the consequence is, you fall under the snare. I know many who have fallen in that way. They have made *their* good, *their* prosperity, the touchstone of their conduct, and their conscience the guide of their ways, consequently they have fallen.

Now, what scripture proposes, in contradistinction to this, is, the pleasure of *Christ*, the touchstone of what we ought to care for, and the word of God the chart to guide us along. Those are the two things. If I say, “I think this will do me no harm,” I make *myself* the measure of my conduct, and my conscience the guide of what I ought to do. But it is a totally different thing if I kept this before me—“Would this please God? Would this minister to the pleasure of Christ? Would

this suit Christ? Would it give Him delight? What does the word of God say?" This brings in true motives and a divine object, and, I say it distinctly to-night, our only security at this time is in having the incarnate Word as our object, and the written word as our chart. The man who has the incarnate Word as the one object of his affections, and the written word as the chart of his conduct, is able to unmask the wiles of Satan.

I shall not dwell on that longer, but I turn now to the point that I did not touch upon much last week, which is very important. As I observed then, there is another danger even to those of whom the apostle writes, that they have "overcome the wicked one." From whence is that danger? From the world. Now, what is the world? That question is constantly asked. Well, I believe it is a far more insidious, a larger, and more diversified thing than many of us have the least conception of. I will give you a general definition, as far as I understand scripture, of what the world is, and you must apply it for yourselves. I cannot give you details. "Happy is the man that feareth always;" the person who is most afraid is the person who is most safe.

The world, then, or age, as the scriptures speak of it, is that ordered system of things around us, not the *literal* world, that, of course, God made. There is a great difference between the world that God made and what He calls "the age of this world." (See Eph. ii. 2.) God did *not* make the world in this sense. He made the literal world; there is not a tree, or a leaf, or a creature, on the literal world that He did not make. But He did not make the *age*, that is, this ordered system that

is called "the world." That is what the apostle is speaking of here. Who is the author of it? The devil is the author of this age, this "evil age." What is it made out of? This age is made out of man's rejection of God's Christ! just as Cain went out from the presence of God, and manufactured *his* world, after he had killed Abel. There was no world of Cain until after Abel was killed; and the man that slew his brother went out from the presence of God, and became the father of every one who was prominent in the things that characterised Cain's world, and which made it comfortable, and all without God. It is just the same now. Do you know this, that Satan is "the prince of this world"? He was displayed in that character when he had driven on man to crucify Christ. Then the world was manifested as it is, and Satan was displayed as its prince. Where is Christ? Did you ever think of that? I ask you, because it is a solemn question for every one of us. How is it that He has gone out of this world? I read in the scriptures the account of His death and resurrection, and I know He died as the Lamb of God, but let us never forget that He also died as a martyr at the hands of man. He was murdered. Who murdered Him? The world, the age, and that which goes to make up this world morally is not one whit better now than the world of that day, which crucified the Lord of glory. They would crucify Him just as much now. There is just as much hatred, enmity, bitterness, dislike of Christ and God to-day, expressed in a different way, it may be, but the elements, the principles, the seeds of it are just the same. Now this is the world, and

I ask you, is it not a solemn thing to think that we are left in this very scene, the world that hated Christ, scorned and rejected Him? What is the object of everything in it? The three things you find here—"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." There is nothing in this world that has any other motive than one of those three things. Point out to me, if you can, one thing in this world that has any other motive. All that which goes to make something out of man—something to elevate man—something to please his senses, his flesh, his pride, where does it come from? "It is not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." That is the divine answer.

Well, now, the reason why the apostle puts this in here is this—because those who are "young men" (in God's family, I mean) are especially prone, and especially tempted in that direction, and that notwithstanding the energy, vigour, and power which they possess. And you know very well there are attractions in the world still—I mean for young Christians. There is something about all these things which addresses, and appeals to, and suits our nature. I remember, not long ago, a person said to me, "I can go here or there, and I can listen to that, or look at that, and I can go into that scene—but none of it addresses itself to me." Now I say that person has yet to learn what flesh is, and I say further, that person is in great danger; because there is nothing in this world that does not find an answer, and an echo, in our nature. There is a response in every one of us to those three things I mentioned just now, and in none more so than those whose energies are least

crippled, least subdued, who have not been tried as others, have not gone through testings and siftings, have not learned what death is. What our Lord said to Peter illustrates it: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." A person who as yet is in unsubdued and unbroken energy—all the freshness of youth, so to speak, without anything of ballast or balance of any kind—is especially prone to the attacks of Satan through the medium of the world, and thus it is we get such an admonition addressed to the "young men" in this chapter. If you have escaped the *pollutions* of Satan, then take care lest you fall under the *attractions* of this world.

But many will say, "I do not love the world." Do you love anything in it?—that is the question. Let me say a word about that. I purposely omit going very much into details about it, and I will tell you why. Because what I find, is, that souls are a great deal more alive to how a thing bears upon themselves than they are prepared to admit. They say, "Give me details about this," but all the time they know quite well how a thing bears, and their very uneasiness, the way they try to palliate, shews perfectly well that they see the bearing of the thing, but they want to turn aside the sharp edge of it. All I say is, and this especially to my younger brethren and sisters to-night, cultivate a tender conscience, not as a standard or guide, but as a witness. There is nothing more blessed than to have conscience as a witness, tender



and susceptible. What I long for myself, and for you, is, to have a conscience like a sensitive plant—you know what that is—the least touch makes itself felt. How is that to be secured? Just in this way, living by every word of God, that word loved, looked to, trusted in, held fast. That will give you a tender conscience. The more you have Christ before you, and the more the word of God is that to which you appeal, the more your conscience gets tender. What tends to make a man's conscience *not* tender, is, making it his guide. That inevitably, sooner or later, stupefies conscience. It is marvellous what your conscience of itself, apart from the world, will let you do; but if you make Christ the touchstone, and the word of God the guide, you will have a tender conscience, and you will find that the least deviation from His pleasure and His word, will have the same effect upon you as a person's hand would have upon the leaf of a sensitive plant—it will shrink.

There is another thing in connection with this—we should walk in *fear*. I do not mean slavish fear, but the holy, blessed, proper, right fear which comes from the affection of the heart, "I fear to grieve the One that loves me with such a love." That is proper fear. I am afraid. Why? Because I am in the midst of a world that is full of pitfalls and snares. If you see a man walking through a place full of traps, and snares, and gins, and pitfalls, you find him walking cautiously, circumspectly: he would be alive to the dangers. We ought to walk like that, without, however, getting into any kind of bondage about it. I fear the mode in which many have been converted in these days does not secure this holy fear. I tell

you why. Because deliverance from this present evil age is not preached, as well as forgiveness of sins; and the consequence is, people are not taken out of it. The character of the testimony that has reached them has not taken them *out* of the world: They have not the sense of the Father's love, and the consequence is that too many have their consciences made easy to go on with the world. I speak of it, because I have seen it. I am giving facts. I know young Christians—I have such before my mind now—who, whilst their consciences were not relieved, were timid, careful, watchful, vigilant, afraid lest they should be tripped up. There was in them a zeal, an earnestness, a desire to answer to the mind of God, although, as yet, in bondage. And what then? Why, a kind of testimony reached them which took their consciences out of the power of bondage, but did not bring them consciously into a new position, with a new object before them; and the consequence was, that the burden being off their consciences, without there being an object for their affections, it was an easy and natural thing to go on with the world which they were afraid of before. I know it well. I have an instance before me now, and therefore I say to you to-night, that the mere fact of the forgiveness of sins, though *relief*, is not in itself *power*.

I will give an illustration of it. Suppose a man to be involved, having a large and increasing debt, or liability, hanging over him, which he cannot discharge. Some one comes in, in large-hearted benevolence, and pays the debt. That debtor is relieved from the pressure of his debt, but he has nothing to live upon. The mere fact of his having his debt paid will not keep him.

Thus you see, beloved friends, the importance of the very youngest of us knowing not only that our consciences are relieved, but that we are positively brought into a place where there are divine resources, and that we have a new object before us in that blessed Christ who has done all this for us. We have now One to please. Have you the sense of that in your heart, that you have One to please up there in heaven? Do you say, "I have relief in my conscience, I have my sins forgiven me"? Then, I ask, what are you doing? Do you say, "God has given me everything here to enjoy, and I am enjoying myself now. I have this world, and I am to enjoy the world. I am, of course, to keep myself from the grossly evil things in it. I would not go to the theatre, or to the opera, or to a ball, or a concert, or anything of that kind"? But do you think, that, because you have obsequiously abstained from all that, and have kept away from those gross things, you are out of the world? Oh, be not deceived. You may have abstained from those things because they offended your conscience, but you are not necessarily apart from the world, because *all* that is in the world, that comes under either of these three heads, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

I trust you see what an important thing it is to have this brought before you, that it is Christ, and not yourselves, that you have to study. If you act upon that before God, honestly and in faith, you will find it a wonderful help for your soul in every detail. Suppose you were tempted to do something, or there were some company you would like to keep, or some association you would like to get

into, and you were to sit down, and say, "Would this please Christ? would this suit Christ?" Oh, how different the result would be! Surely it is a knife that cuts all round, it cuts in a circle. "Would this please or suit Christ? He has left me here on this earth to be His representative. Would this be a representation of Him? Would this be giving a true character of Christ, a true expression of Him?" Now, beloved friends, do you know anything of such exercise of soul? Does your heart ever go through that testing process before God? That alone can keep a person from the world. That alone can give you a holy horror of this age, with all its defilements and snares. Perhaps you say, "I like to look into the shop windows as I pass along." Yes, one's nature likes it, but do you ever see anything there that makes Christ in heaven more precious to your heart? On the contrary, there is a great deal that takes your thoughts and affections away from Him. There is no use in denying it, beloved friends, there is nothing in the world *itself* that helps a person spiritually; but, on the contrary, everything tends to hinder. The things that you see as you pass along affect you in this way, if you yield to them, that you lose your taste for what is spiritual. Your taste becomes soiled. If a person lies amongst the pots, does he not get blackened? If you touch pitch, will you not be defiled? Or can you live in a place, the atmosphere of which is entirely saturated with impurity, and not suffer from it? Oh, yes, a great deal more than you think. We are not aware of the soiling influences which this world has upon us. All the things that are in it tend to drag and keep us

down. They are not of the Father. The Father is against the world, the Son is against the devil, and the Holy Ghost is against the flesh.

"The world passeth away." Do you know what will become of this world? It is very solemn. This "age" will receive the devil's man. That very world that people like so much, that very world will receive Antichrist—will welcome Antichrist. Is that the world you love? Is that the world you want to have your pleasure in, or your recreation, or your gain in—the world that hated Christ, and that will receive Antichrist?

Now just look at verse 18, which goes further into this point. I do not offer any apology at all for specially dwelling upon this. The apostle addresses himself again to the "babes," to the infantine state, to the lowest class. "Babes, it is the last hour." Now, beloved friends, how important it is, even for the youngest, to know the time we are in! Many might say, "Why do you speak to babes about that? Why do you talk to them about the character of the days?" I answer, Because God does so. He does not address Himself to "fathers;" that struck me very much when I looked at it first, or to "young men," but to "babes;" because He would have all His children, all His family, every member of it, the infant as well as the old and the middle-aged, to know that it is "the last hour." To my mind that is very solemn. Oh, eternity will never give us back this moment. You will never get in eternity the opportunity you have now. To me, when I reflect, it is a most wonderful thing, the most wonderful favour and grace conceivable, to be *allowed* to live for Christ in a day like this. You will never have it

in eternity. You will never get the opportunity then of shewing that your heart appreciates the love of Christ. You will never get the opportunity then of standing out in the presence of the haters of Christ, and saying, "He is my Saviour and my Lord." Now this makes this hour very solemn. It is the only opportunity that God will give us of casting in our lot with His own Son, who is hated and rejected by this world. Are you casting in your lot with Him, rejected as He is? Is Christ worthy of it at your hands? Is He worthy of your life, of every power of your heart? Is He worthy of your every affection? Suppose you had a thousand worlds, and could lay them all down at His feet, would even that be an adequate expression of what He is worthy of from you? Supposing you had a thousand lives, and could spend them all for Christ, would that be an adequate expression of what He is worthy of? Oh, beloved friends, how I wish I could awaken your hearts to a sense of what it is to be *allowed* to live in such a day as this! How blessed it would be, if only one soul, as a result of these two evenings we have had together, could say, "Well, I have a greater sense of the wonderful nature of the place I am in, and what it is to live for Christ before men, and to be *for* Christ, and to study His pleasure."

Yes, *it is* "the last hour," and "it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; the night *is* far spent." We are, as it were, in the passing of the last grains of sand out of the great hour-glass of time. We are in the last hour, and it is not the beginning of the last hour, no, nor the middle of it, but the

closing seconds of it. Let me urge upon you, on the very youngest here to-night, the feeblest and most youthful, here we are, in the very close of the last days, on the very eve of the archangel's voice, and the trump of God !

One word about this, and then we separate for the present. Let me ask you, what is the state of your heart as regards the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ ? I ask, if you were informed by an angel from God, that before midnight the Lord Jesus would come, that He would come before midnight to-night, if such a positive, distinct intimation reached you, what would you do ? I ask you affectionately, would that create a tremendous revolution in your hearts ? Would you listen to such a statement as that, unmoved ? Are there not some hearts here that are challenged even by the thought ? Would you not say, "I should like to be free from this ; I should like to be done with that ; I should like to put that on one side ; I should like to sever all connection between this and what I am in, in order that I might, with joy, and with freedom, and with undivided affection, go forth to meet Him" ? Now go, and get free at once ! If there is anything in any of your consciences or hearts that His coming rebukes, if you have lost the sense of His own blessed presence and love, and of the worthiness of His Person ; may God use the coming of that blessed One to kindle this afresh in your hearts ! There is everything in God's word to point to the fact that there is nothing to hinder Him coming *at once*, and if this is so, whatever in your hearts prevents your living in perfect comfort in prospect of it, go and put it away this very evening ! Sever yourself

from every connection with it, that you may go forth *free*, that you may be able to go out with affection of heart, and say, "There is nothing now to hinder me, now I can say with joy, Come, Lord Jesus! and whilst I wait for Him, it is my delight to be in circumstances that minister to His pleasure. I have now but One, and One only, to please." Thus you can take up the words of the hymn we often sing :

"From various cares my heart retires,  
Though deep and boundless its desires,  
I've now to please but One.  
Him before whom each knee shall bow,  
With Him is all my business now,  
And those that are His own."

Oh, the liberty of that! The liberty of only having Christ to please! The liberty of being free from all else! The greatest bondage, the greatest slavery, that ever a man lived in, was to be committed to minister to his own pleasure. It is wondrous liberty to have only Christ, to live for Christ, to walk with Christ, to serve Him, to please Him, in this world.

May God, by His Spirit, whatever your condition in His family be, whether a "babe" or a "young man," teach you the value, the blessedness, the preciousness of His own Son; that Christ being so consciously your treasure, you may not think anything too great a sacrifice to express what a treasure He is to you, for His own blessed name's sake!



# DELIVERANCE AND SERVICE.



NOTES OF A LECTURE

BY

W. T. TURPIN.



LONDON :

G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



# DELIVERANCE AND SERVICE.

JONAH III., IV.

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I do not propose to look at the subject which the book of Jonah brings before us either in its historical or its dispensational, but in its moral aspect; and taking the history of the prophet as an illustration simply of a double kind of exercise, through which you will find souls pass some time or other: and, in fact, without such exercise, it would be impossible for us to know what are the resources to be found in God for every one when brought into the circumstances here detailed. Now you will find a simple illustration of the first exercise in chapter ii.—that is, the way in which God dealt with the conscience of the prophet—the exercise through which he passed—before he knew what real deliverance from God was. This is a very common kind of exercise to find amongst those who really are the Lord's. I do not raise the question now for a moment as to the many who understand perfectly what it is to have the forgiveness of their sins. I allow that to be an established fact—I raise no question about it. There are many who know this, but who, notwithstanding, do not know what it is to be delivered. They have not got *deliverance*, they have got *relief*. Now relief is a blessed thing to have; it is the first thing that meets one, in that sense. You have your conscience burdened with the sense of guilt, and relief is absolutely

necessary to free you of that, to take the weight from off your conscience ; but many who have got that are not in the position of *delivered* people. You will find that God allows a person to pass through exercise before deliverance is found. I will point that out to you in the New Testament ; I am simply going to the Old Testament for the *illustration*. I do not expect to find the *doctrine* in the Old Testament, but in the New. My statement then is this : that persons in their consciences are subjected to all the painful throes and agonies of exercise, until they are brought to a condition of absolute *powerlessness* before God. Then deliverance waits that moment. Allow me to repeat it, deliverance from God waits the moment in which the soul is in the position of absolute powerlessness before God.

Now if you will turn with me for a moment to that well-known scripture, and often read, Romans vii., I will point out to you the exercise there. I see three things distinctly in that chapter—though there are many more. If I were asked, as far as I know it myself, to state what are the characteristics, the salient points of the exercise which is unfolded in Romans vii., I should say they were these : First of all the fact is learned, namely, “I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” (Ver. 18.) That is the first thing ; and, beloved friends, many a day passes over our heads, before we come to the acknowledgment of that in our souls before God. I know that all *say*, “There is nothing good in me,” but when it comes to the practical abnegation of self, it is another thing. Many a one who is holding it with his lips is denying it *practically*. But it is an immense thing when the soul has really

reached that point, "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing"—to have acknowledged that the death of Christ, which has purged my conscience from all the stains of guilt that attached to it, has not altered, in the smallest degree, the question of what I am by nature—that my nature remains the same, that it is not changed, not ameliorated.

I know very well many a one has a secret lurking suspicion in his soul—"Well, there is some little change that has passed over me; at any rate I am not so bad as I was." Many think so, and it is not that they are insincere about it, but there is sincerity mixed with ignorance. This is a thing that you cannot learn *doctrinally*. No person ever discovered what his nature was, *doctrinally*. It must be learned *practically*. *Forgiveness of sins* is known when your heart rests upon the testimony of God outside yourself altogether; knowledge of yourself is reached only by practical experience. A person who wants to get the forgiveness of his sins has the testimony of God that *comes to him*, and his faith resting upon that, he is entitled to know that his sins are all forgiven. But, beloved friends, when it comes to the question of finding out what sort of a person I am in nature, I must taste practically *what* that nature is. That is the first thing that is reached in Romans vii.

The exercise I have referred to leads to the second, namely, to the discovery of a nature entirely distinct from the old nature. In verse 19 of Romans vii., you find these words: "The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Then in verse

22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." There you find a nature, which is entirely distinct, totally apart, from the old nature which goes out after the things that belong to it; a new nature which "delights in the law of God."

Now the third thing is (and I ask your attention specially to it, because it is the point connected with which there is the greatest difficulty), that that new nature (creature of God though it is) has no power to hold down the old. That is the point where many are hindered. They think, "I have got a new nature, and I will keep down the old in the power of the new." This is a total mistake, as I shall presently shew.

Going over the three points again: first, there is nothing good in us naturally; secondly, there is a creature of God in us that is distinct from the old nature; and thirdly, that new nature, that creature of God in us, has no power over the old. Well, when a person comes to that last point, then I say, deliverance is at hand. In verse 24 of the chapter, ("O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?") the exercise comes to its climax. There is the three-fold discovery made, and the moment that the third point is reached, namely, that although I have a new nature within me, altogether apart from the flesh, yet I have no power over the old nature—then a person says "I can do *nothing*." That is the moment of deliverance; because, the instant that the soul expresses itself before God in the acknowledgment of its total powerlessness in the condition in which it is, it has looked out of itself, and that is the simple secret of it. One may speak, and preach, and lecture, and if one is a pastor, one may watch and seek to help people, but no person has ever

got out of that exercise until he has thoroughly gone through it from beginning to end, and, beloved friends, it would be positive injury to souls if he could do so. It could not be really effected, but there may be a sort of attempt made to get people out of it—and if it were possible, it would be at the expense of true blessing to them. The only illustration that I can find to convey my meaning is that of a medical man who stands by watching the course of a fever—he may help the constitution and so on, but the thing has to *run its course*, and there is utter powerlessness until it has. So it is with regard to Romans vii. The question is, who will take me out of this terrible condition of absolute powerlessness?—not simply where I do the thing that is wrong, but where I own I have no power to do what is right, than which nothing is more humiliating. Every one says, “I do what is wrong,” but the thing is, when you can say, “I cannot do what is right.” All who have gone through it know what that moment is—it is a wonderful moment in the history of each of us; that moment when, having passed through that tremendous exercise, we have come to the acknowledgment of this fact, “Here I am, and though I have got a creature of God in me distinct from the evil nature which I derived from the first Adam, I have not got the power to do the thing which I know to be right.” This is the moment when a person loses everything like self-respect; and no one is able to walk steadily as a Christian until that moment is reached in the history of the soul. I believe the reason why so many unstable people are found every day is, that they have never had thorough establishment through this process. It enhances the value of Christ to a person when he

can say, "I was lying in the bottom of a deep quagmire, out of which I had no power to extricate myself. The more I floundered, the deeper I got; the more effort I made, the more helpless I became; until at last I lifted mine eyes to heaven and said, I cannot get out of this! who will deliver me?" Then you "thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (ver. 25) which is the expression of a person who is delivered.

Beloved friends, let me ask you this simple question—then I will point out why I read the chapters in Jonah—Have you learned that? How many of us here to-night have learned this? How many of us know it deep down in our souls? How many of us are the manifestation of these facts before God—that it was nothing in us, no good in us, and that we had not power in ourselves (with the new nature and all) over the old, but when we came practically to know and own this before God, and looked out of self, then He delivered us.

The simple reason of all the misery witnessed, beloved friends, in many true souls, is this, there is not *deliverance*, and that is also the secret of much of the half-heartedness and want of devotedness to Christ on every side of us. People are not *delivered*, there is no motive outside of self, no liberty. What a wonderful thing it is when I can say, "This is my deliverer, who took me out of the quagmire," and take up the words of the Psalmist, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." (Ps. cxix. 32.) Look at the alacrity of his heart, the liberty, the freedom he is enjoying?

The reason of the unevenness in christian character, and unsteadiness in christian walk is in this simple fact, souls have never thoroughly stood outside the old man, and rested on Christ, and known



Him as their deliverer. The Lord give our hearts to know what a wonderful thing it is to be taken by Him out of that condition, so that we can feel we have done with it—that we do not expect to better our flesh, to improve it in any shape, but that we have got a clean deliverance out of it.

If you turn back to Jonah you will find the illustration of all these things in chapter ii., the figure of a man who was *delivered* from all the consequences of his sin. Taking Jonah as a type of a sinner, you will find in chapter i. of his history *independence, indifference, distance, disobedience, death*, all those in connection with Jonah's history in chapter i. Is not that the history of man? First, independence, then disobedience, then distance, then indifference, then death.

Jonah is cast out of the ship, and God in mercy intervenes and delivers him by that which is really a type of the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. God prepared a great fish which swallowed Jonah. Jonah owes his safety from the consequence of his sin to that fish, he is saved in the life of another. But mark, it is in that condition that he is exercised. It is as a *safe* man that he is exercised, not as one *unsafe*. If he had not been swallowed, he would simply have gone to the bottom and been lost—but God comes in and saves him. In chapter ii., you will find how he is exercised. Let us look at it, because it is interesting to see the exercise he is passed through. In verse 4 Jonah says, "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." Now that is all the *man himself*, "*I will look toward thy holy temple.*" That does not bring him deliverance; he is not delivered because he says that, because that is

the *man*, that is *Jonah*, *Jonah* looking towards God's holy temple.

If you will cast your eyes a little further down, you will see he says in verse 9, "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving, I will pay that I have vowed." That is *Jonah* still; that is the man still going through this exercise as to himself, and he gets no deliverance for that. But when you come to the last part of this verse, you find this escapes his lips: "Salvation is of the Lord." He has given up *himself* now, and he is delivered. God spoke to the fish, and Jonah is vomited forth upon dry ground. "Salvation is of the Lord" is exactly the counterpart of, "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" "Salvation is of the Lord," out of the lips of the prophet in the belly of the fish, corresponds exactly with the cry that comes up from many an exercised heart, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" Deliverance, I repeat, waits on that cry; God spake to the fish, and it vomited Jonah upon dry ground.

Now I have referred to this history, because I have found it often helps us if we search out these *illustrations* in the Old Testament. Let no one think I am finding any *doctrine* in the history; that is in the New Testament, quite clear and distinct; but I do find in the history of the prophet, and in what he passes through in his outward circumstances, a remarkable illustration of the exercise that souls pass through inwardly in order to discover to them what sort of a nature that is out of which, in God's mercy, they have been delivered through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here lies the secret of the misery of so many. It is simply because they have never said, "Salva-

tion is of the Lord," in their *soul*, I mean. They have never stood practically outside of every single thing that belongs to them, as pertaining to the flesh, and nakedly before God with the confession, "Lord, everything must come from you now; it is all closed up on my side, every avenue and every entrance and every egress is closed up on my side, but, Lord, there are doors on your side." "Salvation is of the Lord."

There is another consequence that follows besides deliverance. Look for a moment and you will find that the prophet is spoken to by God. See the beginning of chapter iii. The word of the Lord, after all that exercise, "came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose and went." The man is free to go now. Will you look at another scripture in the Old Testament as a further illustration of this point? That is in Isaiah vi. You will find that it was the same with Isaiah as it was with Jonah. It was no question of Isaiah being a prophet, or a servant of God, or being the one whom God wanted to send. There never was such a question as that raised by God with him. On the contrary, you will find in chapter ii. that he knows the message of God—and yet he cannot run, he cannot go upon the business that God sends him. Why? Because he has not learned himself, beloved friends! That is the reason why—and I say it boldly, that of all persons least fitted in any shape to be a messenger of God is the one who has not learned his status; every one must, but it is indispensable in a messenger. Trace the history in the sixth of Isaiah. It begins with Isaiah's acknowledgment of the greatness of

God. (Ver. 1.) He was "high and lifted up." The moment Isaiah views himself in the light of God's glory and of His holiness (ver. 3) he judges himself and cries (ver. 5) "woe is me, for I am undone." When he finds his status, what do you see? It is very beautiful. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Ver. 8.) Who answers? The man who has learned himself! "Here am I, send me." He could not go before—but now God sends him out with the most solemn message that was ever committed to any man to carry—and that was to go to announce God's judicial sentence upon a blinded nation, a disobedient people—and he rises in the force and power of deliverance to carry it.

Just in passing—look at one other scripture on the same subject in the New Testament. See Luke v. The very same thing occurs with the apostle Peter. Peter learns himself to be a sinful man. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Ver. 8.) Not that he had done wrong things, or said wrong things, but he was "a sinful man." That was the testimony of his conscience, brought home to him in the light of that glory, which shone through the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ commands the treasures of the deep into Peter's boat. Who could do that but the Lord of glory? Who could influence the fishes of the sea and bring them into Peter's net but the Lord? When Peter sees it, he says, "I am in the presence of God"—"I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Now I believe the normal character of God's work in souls is this—they find out that God is Light, before they discover that God is Love. Love has provided the blood which removes what-

ever the Light detects. The Light detects and exposes to you what you are in its own presence—and then you find that the Love has provided what will take away all that is unsuitable to itself. No matter where I turn in scripture, I see it. When we have found out that God is Light, and that He has penetrated down and shewn us in that Light the nature that we have received from the first Adam, and in which we stood as men before Him—then, I say, the love which has completely taken me out of it, stands out vividly before my adoring gaze.

Look again at Peter—we find that the moment he makes the discovery of his own condition, he forsook all and followed Christ. In the history of Jonah I find the same thing. Jonah now runs his errand, he is now free. He rises as a delivered man who has passed through death, and goes to Nineveh.

And now I come to another exercise, through which you find that souls are passing. I will not dwell long on it, because the other has been upon my mind most, and is most needed. I will say only a few words about it. It is an exercise, not of conscience, but of heart. Souls pass through both. It is interesting just for one moment to see how Jonah passed through this. We find it in chapter iv. The exercise was in Jonah's word being set aside apparently—that is, as to his testimony that God would overthrow Nineveh—by reason of the repentance of the guilty city. The Ninevites, from the king down to the very beasts, were clothed in sackcloth—God's title is owned, and God is not going to destroy the city. Jonah is so grieved, so wounded, that his word should be, so to speak, set aside by God's having compassion

on the guilty city, that he sits down in a sulk. Now I am struck with the fact that, where *conscience* is in the ascendancy, there is a great tendency in the direction of righteous severity. Where there is much conscience, and the heart has not been correspondingly exercised to know what the compassions of God are, there is a temptation to undue severity. You see it in Jonah. He is positively angry with God because Nineveh is not overthrown. No one disputes the fact that Nineveh *deserved* to be overthrown; yet so rigorous is Jonah, and so demanding is his conscience, and so righteously severe is he with reference to this, that, because the city was to be spared, he sits down and prefers to die, rather than be left in the world with his word, as it were, set aside. How does God bring him to his bearings as to this? It is very interesting and very blessed. God prepares that which was agreeable to Jonah in his circumstances—that is, He makes his outward circumstances to soothe him—to soften the grief he had in his heart because his ministry was set aside. God prepared a gourd, and under this gourd Jonah sits down and finds shelter. It soothed him. Do you not know what it is to sit down under a gourd that has soothed you? It was not something that you made for yourself, but that God prepared for you.

But God equally prepares that which deprives Jonah of the shelter; and oh, beloved brethren, if we had the sense of it in our hearts! the same hand that raised the gourd, raised the worm that smote it. The same hand that sent the one sent the other. God prepared a worm which smote the gourd, and it withered; and then what does God do? He allows the whole pressure of outward cir-

cumstances suddenly to bear upon His servant the prophet just when he is deprived of that which really suited him in them. And there is the east wind, and the burning sun, and the pressure of everything upon him, and he lies down and faints and is ready to die. What does God say to him? "Look at you—you never laboured for the gourd, you never toiled for it, it came up in a night, and perished in a night; and you have compassion on it. Will you not allow me to have compassions? Am I not to have a heart? Am I not to have affections? Am I not to exercise them?"

That, beloved friends, is the wonderful lesson that Jonah learns in his second exercise—what the sympathies of the heart of God are. He learns what deliverance from God is, in chapter ii., and what the blessed sympathies of the heart of God are in chapter iv. He finds an exit out of his troubles in chapter ii. by the delivering hand of God—and he finds solace amid the agonies of a broken heart in chapter iv. in the fact that God has sympathies that no one could fathom or comprehend. I often think of that beautiful word, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

Beloved friends, what a wonderful thing it is to know Him as our *deliverer*—to be able to lift up our heart and say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Lord give you to know Him also in the other character—as your solace when everything fails around you. There is a worm at the root of all you prize in this world, then where can you turn? There is only one spot where your heart can find solace in the break-up of everything, and that is in the affections of God Himself. That is where I get comfort, and a

wonderful thing it is to find it. I feel that we all want to know it more fully, that God has got a *heart* (I say it with all reverence), that He has got affections. It is the very thing that was denied in Eden. His *power* was not called in question there; Satan never challenged the *power* of God, and the man or woman did not fail in connection with the power of God. But what was insinuated into their minds in Eden, and what has passed down to every generation of man since, is that God has not got affections or love for man or interest in him.

The Lord lead our hearts by His mighty power, and by His Spirit, to know what it is to pass through these exercises. We shall all know it some time. Perhaps I am speaking to somebody to-night who says, "I am a witness to the withering of gourds, and to the break-up of things that are round about me." If so, the Lord give you to know where there is solace, unbounded confidence and consolation.





# OUR PILGRIMAGE

AND

## HIS REST:

NOTES OF LECTURES

BY

W. T. TURPIN.



LONDON:

G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.



THESE addresses were taken down in shorthand by one who heard them, and at his desire the author has, as far as it was possible, revised them ; at the same time he did not think it well to change in any way the style or expression of extemporary address, which it is well known is so different from what is deliberately written. Many will no doubt wonder that they should ever appear in print. The author can truly say that no one could ever be as conscious as he of their feebleness and weakness ; but the truth sought thus to be ministered and set forth, will, he trusts, screen from view the poor vehicle which thus carries it. If the Lord shall be pleased to help or comfort any of His own through these addresses, and give thus a fresh instance of how He can take up that which is foolish, weak, base, and despised, to His name shall be all the praise and glory.

W. T. T.

*Malvern, 1875.*



# CLEANSING AND COMMUNION.

JOHN XIII.

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THERE are two subjects, beloved brethren, that are on my heart to speak of for a little this evening, in the very order in which you find them in this scripture; not merely the moral order, but the literal order as well. The subjects are the following: first, the practical positive *cleansing* to which we must be subject in order to have part with Christ; and second, the *rest* which follows.

Now, anyone who is a careful observer of the state of the people of God at the présent moment, cannot fail to observe how little positive *rest* exists among them. I do not deny for a moment that there is earnestness, activity, zeal, knowledge, and intelligence; but you may possess all these together, or any one of them, and yet be destitute of positive rest, real repose. The rarest thing, at the present instant, is to find one who is consecutively restful. Now why is it? Have you ever asked yourself the question why it is that among the saints, the contrast to all around us in this respect is so little observable? My present object is to furnish, if possible, a true answer to this question.

Now, there are two great things working at the present moment amongst professing Christians, and each of them is vying with the other to give

rest. One is *activity*, earnest incessant activity ; occupation of heart with that which is perfectly good and right in itself, but which does not and cannot give rest. On the contrary, beloved friends, you will find it a matter of fact, that very often the amount of the activity is in consequence of the destitute state of the soul with reference to rest. You will frequently find that a person who has not this rest of heart and this repose of soul, is driven into activity in order to get out of self.

The other popular effort at the present moment, is a kind of—I must say it, though with all kindness—*bettering* of the flesh in order to give it rest. That is, to express it simply, it has been said, and widely accepted too, it has been put forth and received on every hand, by earnest Christians, true children of God, that the *surrender of your will* by the force of your will gives you rest ; that the moment your will gives up your will (an absurdity it looks on the face of it), the moment that your will surrenders ~~itself~~, puts itself to death, so to speak, the act of doing it gives you rest.

Now, my present earnest desire is, to state positively what I see *in scripture* as that which stands in the way of the soul having this perfect rest which I find here—a man putting his head on the bosom of Jesus—what that rest consists in, and what the consequences of it are.

Now I believe, beloved friends, that the first and simplest reason why there is not rest is, that the feet of saints are not washed. There is practical unfitness for communion with Christ *where He is* ; because, observe this at the outset, this is the great truth set before us, I believe, in John xiii. It is not primarily, though that be true in itself, that the

blessed Lord removes the defilement which we contract as we go on from day to day. I believe that here there is a far deeper thing than that, namely, fitness of heart for Himself where He is—a cleansing in order to have part with Him in glory. It is not, I repeat, the fact that He washes our feet as we go on from day to day. I do not deny that, but here is a far deeper thing, even suitability for common interest, fitness for a part with Christ where He is. This, I believe, is the great thought in John xiii.

I take the liberty, without in the least pretending to be a critic or a scholar, of altering that word, which anyone knows must be an entire mistake, viz., “supper being *ended*.” There would be no sense in saying so in connection with what followed, but there is every sense in the words “supper being *come*.” Instead of carrying on the association which He had with them down here in this world, He breaks it, and shews them how He can fit them for *another* and better one; and hence the passage really reads “the supper being *come*,” as much as to say, I have had association with you heretofore on your ground, but now I will shew you how I can fit and qualify you to have association and communion with Me on My ground, and in the new sphere, and in the new place, into which I am about to go.

Well, beloved friends, you see He takes the basin, and the water, and the towel, and in the conscious sense that He “came from God, and went to God”—that was God’s side of it, and His own too—He stoops to perform this act of service for those whom He loved, and there you get the root and spring of all His action towards them. “Having

loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end." Oh, what blessed love and wondrous grace of Thyself, Lord Jesus! There was in His heart an affection, in His bosom a love for them, that could live through changing times and circumstances. How blessed it is thus to get simply at the spring of the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ! And how little our hearts really apprehend it that the motives of everything are *in Himself*! The simple fact stands out in prominence that all the motive-springs which set in action every movement of His grace towards us come simply from His own heart. This, therefore, it is which leads Him to make them as fit morally for His own presence and for communion with Himself in that new sphere that He was about to take as He Himself could make them. Nothing would suit the heart of Christ but that. Have you and I the sense of that in our souls? That nothing would suit the heart of the blessed Lord but to have us as fit for His presence as it is possible for Him to make us? Have you the sense of that in your heart and in your soul? That it was in His heart to make a poor worthless wretch like me as fit to have communion with Himself in that new place that He has gone into, as it is possible for Him to have me? It is not merely a question now of my need, of the deficiencies that are in me, but of the affections of His heart, the motive-springs of His own bosom, that He desires to have me fit for Himself there; and therefore it is that He takes this basin, and the water, and the towel, and begins "to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."



Now, beloved friends, let me ask you this: Do you know what that action of Christ is with reference to you? I am speaking of simple things to-night, and I do so purposely; I speak of what perhaps many here know well. But the oldest things are those that need to be revived most in our hearts, as these are they which, although so well known, are most likely to slip through our souls, and all the more because of the busy scene that is around us. I ask you this evening, are you conscious of the blessed Lord having your poor feet in His hand? Do you know what it is to be subjected to that action of the Lord Jesus, so that He removes every bit of soiling influence that could possibly unfit you for communion with Himself, in order that His heart may have a deeper joy in having communion with you, than yours in having communion with Him? Are you conscious of that? And do you submit to it? Do you submit your feet to be washed? Do you *allow* Him to wash your feet? Do you *allow* Him to gird Himself in your behalf, so that He may remove by this action of His everything that would unfit you for Himself, as well as for having communion with Himself?

Why do I put those questions? Because I believe that action of Christ's is most *unsparing*. You will perceive, if you look at it for a moment, it is an immensely solemn thing; and that it is exactly there lies the deficiency in hearts at the present moment. I do not believe, I say it boldly now, that, as a general rule, we are subjected to the piercing, separating, penetrating, power of that word, so that every single thing that would be unfit for Christ is judged and removed. There is

a passage to which I would like to refer for a moment, Hebrews iv. 12. It will bring out clearly what I want to impress upon you. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Here we have the divine record of the way in which the blessed Lord removes everything that would unfit us for communion with Himself, namely, by *the word of God*. The word of God is the water; and you will find that nearly everywhere in scripture the word of God is spoken of as water. That water is the purifying power by which everything unsuitable is removed; and when that word is brought in its living, searching efficacy to the conscience and to the soul, they are brought into the presence of God through it, and the judgment of God with reference to all that is there is brought into action through that word. I also refer to it for another reason, that you may see how entirely the Incarnate Word and the written word are placed together in those two verses. Just observe the verse again: "The word of God is quick, [living] and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword . . . . Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." "His sight." Whose sight? God's sight! But then that which is true of God is true of His word, and the very prerogatives of God, the

penetrating, searching power of the blessed God, who reads the thoughts and intents of the heart, are referred to His word. I press it solemnly this evening, beloved friends, because I do not think we have in our souls the sense of the solemnity of that word, or how it would act if allowed to bear upon our consciences; and I doubt very much—I say it with all respect, and with all affection—I doubt greatly, whether the word of God has really in our hearts the place it had in the hearts of saints of God in days gone by. I grant you there is an increase of intelligence to a remarkable degree, and moreover there is an increase of earnestness, but I question as to whether the powerful place which the word of God had over souls fifty years ago, holds good to-day with those who are reaping what others sowed; and I doubt as to whether there is the apprehension of what a blessed thing it is, to submit every thought and motive, and every action of our life, to the penetrating power of that living word.

Well, I say then, if that is the case, no wonder there is not rest. If there is an absence of that water which purifies us from everything that would be unfit for the presence of Christ, I can understand how there is not rest, and I can see also the goodness of God in keeping us out from rest until there is that *fitness* for Himself by which we can *enjoy* it.

Now, when I speak of His washing our feet, let me also speak of what I do not think we sufficiently enter into, viz., not merely the removal of positive unfitness for His presence, but the *anticipation* on His part—on the part of the blessed Lord—of that which, if it came in and were allowed, would

hinder communion. And, beloved friends, I have been struck with that lately in looking at another scripture in that light. I know we admit the fact of His *restoring* grace.

“ My soul He doth restore,  
Whene'er I go astray.”

We admit that He washes our feet ; but there are hundreds of instances in our history as saints of God which we should look on in a different character, and in a different light, if our hearts intelligently entered into how He *anticipates* in us the working of principles which *would* bring in moral distance between us and Him. He *anticipates* as well as *removes*. I will ask you to turn to the scripture to which I refer, namely, 2 Corinthians xii., “And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” In this, you see, distance had not actually come in between Paul and Christ. The flesh had not wrought in Paul. The flesh was present to work in him ; that is, there was the *basis* on which to rest distance from Christ. There were all the materials in the man, though he had been in the third heaven, on which the flesh could work. What do you find ? Why this : “ Lest I *should be* exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.”

Now, I do not believe that occurs to our hearts with the force that it ought to have. I think we confine our thoughts to the removal of distance, when flesh *has* wrought and distance is the result, and that we do not sufficiently think of how often He prevents distance between himself and us. It

would throw light, I feel assured, on many circumstances in our history—many a path that we find ourselves in—many a sorrow, many a trouble, many a pressure, many a weight, many a grief, many an untoward circumstance that we had wished otherwise—if our hearts were in the divine consciousness that there was One who had gone on high, who loves us with an eternal love, and thinks of us, and knows that there is in us a material to be worked upon, so that distance would come in, and knows exactly when to interpose. What light would shine upon us in many a dark day! Oh! what a blessed sort of love that is which not only can stoop to remove the defilement when it is there, but anticipates the working of that evil nature in me, which would introduce distance, and puts a hindrance in the way of it, and gives me the blessedness of learning what the flesh is, in communion with *God*, instead of learning it in company with *the devil*: and you must learn it in one of these two ways. If you do not learn what sort of a creature you are, in communion with *God*, as Paul did, then you will have to learn it in company with *the devil* as Peter did! How very solemn! There was then, on the apostle's part, the learning of himself, in communion with God, as you get in 2 Corinthians xii.; and there was the *anticipative* love of the blessed Lord. "There was given to me a *thorn* in the flesh." Blessed Saviour, watchful shepherd, unfailing friend of poor, worthless things like us, but valuable to Thee as thy Father's gift, and fruit of Thine own unchanging love!

Well, now, let me ask the question again. Do you know what it is to be *fitted* now? What have

we got in our hearts as to the question of this communion with God? Do we know what communion is? I fear we know very little of what real communion is—and it is wonderful how little it seems to affect us. If I were to ask you what you know according to scripture, of common interest, common thoughts, with Christ in glory, oh, how little we should be compelled to say our hearts know it! A person may say, “I am happy every day.” It is all quite true, but that is not John xiii. It is entire fitness for His presence, so that everything that could hinder is removed, everything that could promote reserve completely put away through this washing of our feet by the blessed Lord. There is no hindrance now to my having perfect communion with Him where He is, and having the *rest* which follows it.

I believe, then, this accounts at once for the restlessness of saints—they are not cleansed so as to have part with Christ. Their feet are not washed; there is moral distance between them and Him. Is it so with you to-night? Is there moral distance between any of your hearts and Christ? Are you conscious that there is a reserve between you and Christ to-night? Beloved friends, be assured of this, very little will produce it. The smallest thing unfit for Christ brings in moral distance between us and Him—the *very* smallest thing! And what is so solemn is this, that I *may* withdraw my feet from His blessed hand, I *may* hinder, for the time being, His taking my feet, and so washing them, and applying His word. That is His part and not ours at all. I do not deny our side. I am speaking of Christ’s side to-night. There must be on our part self-judgment, and all

the rest, but I am speaking of the blessed Lord's side. You may so withdraw your feet from His blessed hand, so thwart and hinder that action of His love, that the distance remains between you and Him, and He has to allow you to learn it in another way. What a wonderful moment it is for poor creatures like us! Oh, the grace of that Lord who stoops to wash our feet from everything unfit for Himself! What a wonderful moment, beloved friends! There is not a single thing, even the most trivial, that He does not remove; and this is the blessedness of His love, that it does not *pass over* anything. You can see the *selfishness* in us which passes over things, but His *love* overlooks nothing. Selfishness travels within its own circle; love sets itself to carry out the good of its object, and devotes itself to the good of its object; it thinks of its object for the best, and allows nothing, no, not the very smallest, to remain upon it, that would be unsuited to the affection. For what purpose? In order that it may gratify itself in having it according to itself! And oh, the joy of His heart—how can one speak of it!—how little one knows of it! the joy of His heart in having us *where* and *as* we can have communion with Him, and His a deeper joy than any joy of ours. Are you conscious of that? That it gives the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ greater pleasure to have you where He can have communion with you, than it ever could give you to be there with Him? It is this which is at the root of that simple action in John xiii., the washing and wiping away of every soil which would not suit His presence and His heart. I press it, because I believe these are days

when, with all the activity that is going on outside, and there is much of it—there is every danger of our forgetting what is due to the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, remember that this is what His heart looks for. I feel it, I am satisfied of it in my soul, that what the heart of Christ longs for, as to testimony in connection with His people in these days, is, to find them here upon earth, not a people that are signalised by doing great things, performing exploits, but a people whom His God and Father can point to, and say, There are hearts that are proofs of the sufficiency and power of My Son to do everything for them. He is looking for specimens of the grace and power and sufficiency of Jesus, so that He can point poor, weary, desolate hearts to such, and say, “My Son can do for you what He has done for them.” Have you got a divine sense within you that God has left you in this world to be specimens of what Christ is able to do for poor things like us; that He is able to take our hearts and fill them to overflowing, to fit them so as to enjoy Himself in that bright place where He is, and to be their eternal satisfaction and rest? The Lord give us grace, not to take ourselves out of His hand, but to be so perfectly before Him with this blessed word of His, searching every motive of our souls, that the full and blessed rest of it may be ours. Do not take your conscience from under the edge of His word! Do not be afraid to subject every thought of your heart and every movement of your soul to its penetrating power! Do not fear to let that word cut you through and through! Be afraid of that which would keep that word from you—be afraid of all that would hinder you from subjecting yourself



to the scrutinising test of that word, but never be afraid of the word of God. Never fear that love which thinks of nought else, but how it can do its best for you. That is the love of Jesus. The thoughts of His heart are set upon your blessing, His object we are, and how He may have us so that His joy might remain with us, and our joy might be full. Now, you observe, following this, and as a consequence of it, there is *rest*; because now there is nothing to hinder, the obstacle to it is taken out of the way, and there is *rest*. I take the fact in the record simply. There you find John putting his head upon the bosom of Jesus. Have you ever put your head upon the bosom of Jesus? Are you conscious that He has taken your feet and washed them, in order that you may rest on His bosom? You cannot rest on His bosom if your feet are not cleansed. If your feet are washed there is nothing to hinder your resting there. What a wonderful thing it is to lay the weary head there! And, beloved, let me say this, there is such largeness, such comprehensiveness in Christ, that there is room for every head of every saint.

Now I am not pressing the thing beyond its proper limit. This is a figure, I know, but I take the fact recorded, and use it as an illustration; and what I mean by putting your head upon the bosom of the Lord Jesus is this—that you are brought so close to Him, so near to Him, that He is the perfect rest of your heart, and that you find your rest in being near Him. It is not what I get *from* Him, but Himself is my rest. If there was anything between you and Him, you could not have rest as long as it was there. The thing that your

heart would dread, if there was anything between you and Christ, is, that when you got into His presence, there must needs be explanations. Therefore you find, beloved friends, how few there are really who can bear to be *alone* with Christ and God. You cannot bear to be alone with Him, unless everything is settled between you and Him. That is the reason why people dread being alone. It was when Jacob was left alone there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. It was when Joseph was alone with his brethren, and no one stood by, that he made himself known unto them.

I doubt not herein is the reason why people seek relief in the ten thousand things around, in order to avoid this solitary hour with Christ or God. But when there is nothing between us and Him, we can be alone, and we can find our rest in His company. His presence, then, is the rest of our hearts. Now that is what I mean by putting your head on His bosom. Do you know what it is? How many of us here to-night can say, "I know what it is to be *near* Him?"

There are two marks of a true soul. You will find them in Luke vii. One is, I must get near Him; and the other is, I must make everything of Him. But when I speak to-night of being near Him, it is being near Him *where He is*. It is not like what we have all around us. It is not bringing Christ down here to make us comfortable with the world. That is the real effect of all that is going on around. You will find that the consciences of both saints and sinners are getting relieved to go on with the world. Oh, it is not bringing Christ down to us here, into our circum-

stances, to make us happy in them, but it is Christ cleansing my feet, and washing me from everything that would be unfit for the presence of God, that there may be no hindrance to my going into *Christ's circumstances*. And if your heart ever tasted the blessedness of what it is to have company with Christ where Christ is, in those wondrous circumstances of His, you could go back, and say, "I am independent of things here." The possession of the good would fortify your heart against all the counterfeits that are around you. Another reason why people are taken in, is, they have not possessed the good. If you had the good, you would know the measure of all that is against the good, and you would not desire it. No one can truly tell, or divinely know, what is false, unless he knows what is true. You must have a standard to judge it by, because there is no such thing as knowing anything in the abstract. If you do not know the truth, you cannot know the thing that is inconsistent with it, and neither are you fortified against the error; but if you have the best, you know what is bad, and you do not want it. If I possess this wonderful common interest with Christ, I am brought into His company, His presence being the rest of my soul, and my heart knowing what it is to lie down there, according to the words of Psalm xxiii., which do not describe any spot in this world. There are no "green pastures" here; I should like to know where they are! You must go to heaven to find such; and, as to "still waters," here there are none. Ah! no, there is no quiet amid the tumultuous storms of things here. There is neither *verdure* nor *quietness*—nothing but unrest and unreality. But the mo-

ment my heart knows that it is in His company, because there is nothing to hinder me from being there, then I can turn my back upon the very best things of earth; and the wares of this poor world, and the counterfeits of Satan, and all his intrigues, are at once unravelled for me. Why? Because I possess the good, and the possession of the good fortifies my heart against all that is inconsistent with it, and nothing else will do.

“Then rest, my long divided heart,  
Fixed on this blissful centre, rest;  
With ashes who would grudge to part,  
When called on angels' food to feast?”

Let me point out one thing further. When you are near to Christ—when your head is on His bosom, when you have that rest—this necessarily flows from it, we are in the place to receive His communications. Do you know what it is to receive communications from the blessed Lord? Do you know what it is to be sufficiently abstracted from self and its surroundings, the world and its restlessness, and to be in the presence of Jesus, so that Jesus can communicate to you His thoughts? Let us look at it here for a moment, turning to verse 21. “When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter, therefore, beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then, lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?” There was confidence, and there was rest, to get the answer of confidence.

Now what can be more simple or blessed than that? It was the one that was nearest to Christ to whom was accorded by the others the right of intimacy as a friend. Peter in the distance uses John's nearness, not only to quiet the doubts of their own minds, but also to get secrets from the heart of Christ. Peter knew well it was the one that was lying on Jesus' breast who would learn the secrets of His bosom—the one to whom Christ would communicate. And, beloved friends, here is a matter of the utmost moment; He will not communicate to you in the distance. If you are at a distance from Christ, you can neither know His secrets nor hear His longings. I do not say He does not love you; but what His heart is set upon with reference to you, if you are in distance, is to bring you practically near, so that He may have the joy of communicating to you. This is ever His action. But when you are near, then He can communicate to you. He delights to do so. The others were not near enough to know the secrets of Christ. John was, and moreover he had confidence enough to say, "Lord, who is it?" and he was restful enough to hear Jesus give the answer. There was *nearness, confidence, and rest*. Do you know what these are? I am assured in my own heart, I feel that we make communications *to Him*, but how seldom we are sufficiently quiet, and near, and restful for Him to make communications *to us*. Alas! how seldom it is, and how little we seem to know how suitable to His nature it is, and how it delights His heart, to have us near Him, that He may keep nothing that is in His heart back from us. The Lord give us that quietness of soul before Him, and that rest of heart, that upturned ear, to catch

the communications which His heart delights to make to those who are thus so nigh unto Him !

As we have had one instance of this, I will ask you to look at another, namely, chapter xxi. of this gospel, and verse 7, "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith to Peter, It is the Lord." There is another effect of being near to Christ, beside what I have spoken of already, namely, that you are able to interpret every action, because you know the Person that does it: and you know the Person who is the author of the action so well, that you can link the action with Him.

But now, beloved friends, let me say this plainly, with reference to these two things. It is not being near Him *for that purpose*, or on account of that. It is not being near to Christ *in order* to get communications from Him, or *in order* to be able to say, "That is Christ," or "This is Christ;" it is being near Him for His own sake, no other motive in the heart; to put the head upon that bosom, the bosom of One who finds His pleasure in having it there, with no other motive than that which His person inspires.

I feel I have spoken feebly, beloved friends, far more feebly even than I feel; but the Lord give our hearts to have everything so entirely removed, to subject ourselves to Him, to allow Him to take our poor soiled feet in His blessed hands, and to wash them by His word from everything that would unfit us morally for His presence in glory, and for communion with Himself in that bright scene into which He has entered, so that there may be nothing between us and Him, and in order that we may come simply, and put our heads where He delights to have them. Remember this, there are no

favourite children in God's family. There are no *special* ones who have that place above or beyond others. Remember that it is open to all, and there is room enough for all. The bosom of Jesus, the heart of Christ, the affections of Christ, are toward all His children, and there is not a single one that is shut out from placing his or her head where John rested his. The Lord give us, beloved friends, in this day of unquiet and activity, and when it is *quantity* instead of *quality* that is in men's minds, the Lord give us to think of what would suit the heart of Christ, of what would suit the affections of Christ, and the Lord give us to rise to the dignity of our calling, and to taste the sweetness of being allowed to minister to them after our little measure, and to be kept, it may be in a solitary path and in a shady place, to be kept with this one simple thought in our soul—my joy is to minister to the affections, and desires, and yearnings, and longings of that heart that spent itself for me!

The Lord add His blessing to His own word, supplying what is deficient, and forgiving what has been said amiss, if He sees it so, for His Son's sake.



# THE GARDEN OF HERBS AND THE CARED-FOR LAND.

PSALM LXXXIV.

THERE are two great subjects, beloved brethren, that I desire to speak about, as the Lord may help me at this time, namely, the heavenly dwelling-place, and the earthly pilgrimage.

Now one of the peculiar features of Christianity, or rather of a Christian, is, that he combines the experiences which are connected with both of these during the term of his natural life here upon the earth; whereas with a Jew, with an Israelite, they are learned separately. That is, he had the experiences of the wilderness at one particular time in his history, and he had the experiences of the land at another. The experiences which flowed from both these did not go on at the same moment of his natural life on earth, but they do with us. And that is the reason why it is important to have both of these in their true place; because, observe, the tendency with us all is to be narrower than the thoughts of God in everything. I believe that is the natural proclivity of our hearts, to be taken up with something *less* than God has given us. It is the case with regard to every truth, no matter which, and hence it is (if I may be allowed to say it), that we have our pet truths, and our pet doctrines; whereas, if we were really walking with



God, we should have nothing less than *everything* that God has been pleased to give. We should find that all had a place, and was suited to us in our circumstances. But mark this, we would have them *in the order of importance in which they stand in His mind*. I believe it is a wonderful thing to have the truth of God *as a whole*, and to value it as such, and at the same time to give it the order of importance in our hearts that it has in His thoughts.

Now, I will speak for a little, first of all, of what is unquestionably the lower side of the truth (if you can call one truth lower than another), and that is, the earthly pilgrimage. I repeat it, if you can call one truth lower than another; I am not sure that it is correct so to speak. But I speak of it for a moment as a truth which is certainly better grasped and better understood than the other. Now turn to Deuteronomy viii., which brings this side of our subject prominently forward. The verses (2-5) in that chapter present the history of the pilgrimage, what I have called the earthly pilgrimage; the passage through the world, which has become a wilderness to me. The moment that I have been won over to *God* and to His truth, I am in the wilderness, and I have a pilgrimage as my journey. This is our proper history, and our proper pathway through these poor scenes. There are two things in that chapter I should like to point out to you. From verse 2 to 5, He brings out these two great facts, that the history of the wilderness was a necessary one to us, and (I say it with reverence) a necessary one to God. Now, we all own, every Christian owns, we cannot deny, that it is necessary to *us*; but

I am not sure, beloved, whether we see, or have received the comfort in our hearts of seeing, that it was necessary to *God*; that it afforded Him an occasion which His heart looked and longed for, in the very circumstances in which we find ourselves in this world.

Now, with reference to *us* for a moment; there are two great things that are learned in the pilgrimage, in the wilderness, in our wilderness history, two things that are not natural to us, namely, *dependence* and *subjection*. Now dependence and subjection are two qualities that never belonged to any man naturally. On the contrary, what pertains to man in nature is *independence* and *insubjection*. These are the two great features that mark fallen man as such; they came in in the garden of Eden, they were as early as that. But when we are brought to God, and have a nature suitable to God, the features, the characteristics, the special salient qualities, of the new man, are *dependence* and *subjection*; and the circumstances through which we pass in this world are occasions whereby this subjection and dependence are tested, exercised, and brought into play, and that too by means of the difficulties, trials, and temptations of the way. Hence the blessedness of having the wilderness, and its ups and downs, and all the contingencies which happen to us as we pass along through it. If the heart is really exercised before God, and if we are walking in the power of the new man, energised by the Holy Ghost, every circumstance, every part of our history, trials, pressures, difficulties, griefs, the straits that we are brought into, afford us an opportunity for exercising dependence and subjection.

Now, allow me to call your attention to it, because it is exceedingly blessed — these two features came out most wonderfully in the history of Him who condescended to become a man; you see them in the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if you remember (you can look at it at your leisure), in Luke iv. (I allude to the history of the temptation in the wilderness), the very first feature which was presented by Him to Satan in that temptation, was this, I stand fast as a *dependent* man. “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” And mark this, He quotes this very Deuteronomy viii. which we are considering to-night. I believe He does so purposely. I believe the Lord had a distinct object and a special reason in quoting from that scripture, namely, because that scripture recounts the history of Israel’s wanderings through the wilderness, the purpose in God’s heart being to teach them dependence and subjection. He presents the picture of it in His own Son, the perfect man. And I understand that as casting an immense light upon another scripture which sometimes presents a difficulty, namely, “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” (Matt. ii. 15.) What is the meaning of that? Have you ever thought of it? The meaning of that scripture, as I take it, is this, that that blessed One recommenced in His own person the moral history of Israel. Israel, as the people of God, broke down in their trial, in every circumstance in which they were placed; they failed in the wilderness, they failed in the land, and afterwards they failed in successive administrations of

God. Wherever they were placed, they failed. Well, He recommences in His own person the history morally of the nation, and in every position in which they failed, He was perfect. He was perfect in the wilderness, perfectly dependent, perfectly subject, and, I need not say, perfect all through. But it is exceedingly blessed to see that God presents in a man One who was very man as well as very God, perfect man. He presents in His person the characteristic features that belong truly to a man before God. He shews them out in Jesus. You must never forget that side of it. Christ shewed out in this world what God was towards man, but He was in His own person the very exemplification of what man ought to have been to God, and was not.

There was the manifestation of God to man, but there was also the expression of what a perfect man before God ought to be. And here is the very first feature of it, namely, dependence. And that is the good of straits and difficulties, beloved friends, herein is the blessedness of trial. If you are dependent, they become a matter of exercise with your heart. That is the reason why so many of the saints of God do not know what this dependence is, they have never been in a strait. I pity the person that has never been in a strait. I know it will come, beloved friends, it will surely come! I know the moment will come, because God is too true to us, and to the thoughts of His own heart about us, not to give us an opportunity of knowing the blessedness of having no one but the living God. Here is the good of it, to be brought into this position that I see none before me but the living God. And what a moment that is for each

one, I have got no one but the living God ! God becomes known to my soul in a way I never knew Him before, now I have tasted what it is to have my dependence exercised. I will tell you what to me it seems like. You have seen, perhaps, a mountain ash growing upon the side of the hill. The more the winds and storms blow upon that little tiny tree, feebly planted on the hillside, if it has got true, genuine roots, the deeper those roots stick. The tempest really strikes the root of that plant deeper down into the soil. That is the blessedness of it. Observe, I am speaking now of where the heart is truly exercised before God, I speak now of one who is walking with God. The effect of straits on one who is *not* walking with God is, that the straits intervene between the soul and God, and then there is a collapse spiritually. That is the effect of it. It is exactly what is recorded in Numbers xiii. and xiv., namely, when the children of Israel were on the point of entering the land, they got their difficulties between them and God, and what was the result ? They lost the sense of subjection. " And they said one to another, Let us make us a captain, and let us return into Egypt." They murmured and wept, and were insubject. But when the heart is really exercised, when the soul is really walking with its eye upon God, the effect of straits is, that God becomes known in a peculiar way, and there is a secret, oh, how can one speak of it ! there is a secret understanding between you and God, known to none else. Did you ever know what it was to have such a secret ? I believe that is what the apostle meant when he said (Phil. iv.), "*My* God shall supply all your need." He does not say,

“*Your God.*” Why? No doubt He was the God of the Philippians just as much as of Paul, but it was because he was speaking of God as he knew Him *for himself*. It is quite true that Jesus said, “My God and your God;” but if I am speaking of God as I *know* Him for myself, I can say, There are secrets between God and me. “*My God shall supply all your need.*” Now that is the good of the wilderness, that is one of the blessed effects of our pilgrimage through it, and there we find straits which exercise our dependence on the living God.

Well now, let us look at the other lesson it teaches for a moment, namely, subjection. This is blessedly presented in Christ’s history as well. If you remember that magnificent Matthew xi.: “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” (Ver. 25.) Then we have, I believe, the most wonderful utterance that you have recorded in the whole of the word of God: “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” What wondrous words from His lips, the Eternal Son of the Father! Consider; what is the history of that chapter? Why, beloved friends, simply this—everything in His outward circumstances was a complete desolation to His heart. John doubted Him, the cities where His mightiest works were done had not repented; Israel were like children, they were piped to, and did not dance; they were mourned to, and did not lament; Capernaum, exalted to heaven, should be cast down to hell. “*In that hour,*” when there was not a solitary star to light up the darkness of

things around, what was it that His heart found its solace in? Was it not this? In being perfectly subject to His Father's will. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." He retreats, He retires, into the subjection, the perfect subjection, of a perfect man, and finds His satisfaction there.

And God presents all this in a man! As surely as He presented what genuine dependence was in a man, so He presents what true subjection is in a man. And think of the wonderful grace of presenting it in a man! It is not merely that we have the revelation of it as suited to God, but it was manifested in the person, ways, walk, and circumstances of that blessed One—God manifest in the flesh. He came down here into this world—oh, let us never forget it—not only to tell out to our poor hearts what was in the heart of God about us, but to manifest, both before God and men, what a perfect man ought to be before God, and in these two great features and characteristics, namely, dependence and subjection.

Now, you will note this little word in Deuteronomy vii.: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these *forty* years." Think of it for a moment. It cost Israel their forty years' pilgrimage. Forty years they wandered through the wilderness, and they were not subject or dependent. Have you learned the lesson? Have not we gone, some of us, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, perhaps eighty, years, and the lesson is not learned yet! Now, observe this—Christ *began* His history with it as a man, herein is the difference between Him and us. We require the forty, fifty, sixty, or eighty years, as the case may be,

and we are not perfected in it. He *starts* with it. He commences with it, the perfect man, God over all, blessed for evermore : let not our hearts lose the sense of this, who He was that condescended to become as truly man as He was truly God, perfect in the very things that we break down in. It is blessed to get it before our hearts. I feel what a cheer it is to one's poor heart to turn away from all else, and look at Him. The distance is no doubt immeasurably great between Him and us, and hence it is an immense comfort to the heart to see that God has found in a man, His own Eternal Son, all that His heart longed for ; and though we have failed to present it to God, God has had it in perfection manifested in Christ. His God and His Father found in that blessed One, in all the perfection, of His path, everything that the heart of God desired to find in a man ; and that blessed One, in all His perfectness, in His perfect dependence and subjection, is set before us as the pattern, the simple pattern, of what, through His grace, and by His Spirit, God would have us to be. I am not speaking now of the *power* by which it is accomplished, but of the *fact*. The Lord give us to use the wilderness for that purpose, not merely as the place where we get our difficulties met, and our trials smoothed and softened, but as the very school where God, in the infinite riches of His grace, is perfecting His own creation in us ; and wondrously blessed it is to apprehend that it is His creation that God is carrying on in us, and that He can make the untoward circumstances—the thorns, briars, griefs, pains, and pressures of the way—accomplish His own blessed purpose in us, for His own name's sake. It is an immense thing when



our hearts are imbued with the sense of it by the Spirit of God.

Having spoken of that, let me refer for a moment to another, and, to me, a more blessed object than our need of the wilderness. You remember I said that *God* wanted it. There is no question whatever about the fact that *we* need it. But then (I say it with reverence) *God* wants it—*God* needs it. You say, What do you mean? In what sense can it be that God needs the wilderness for us? It sounds a very strange thing in our ears. I say His affections claim this wilderness as our path, that therein they may attest their reality. Do you say, how? I will tell you, beloved friends. Because it is the only place that gives Him scope to *exercise* the unchanging love and affections of His bosom. That is the reason why He wants it. When we come to speak of it presently, I will point it out more fully; but you know that in *heaven* we shall have neither care, nor sorrow, nor tears, nor pressure, nor pain, nor trial. All these things belong to this scene, and they are necessary to the blessed God to display Himself. It is a wonderful thing to occupy thought: divine power waiting on human weakness; human misery arresting divine compassion and divine tenderness: truly, such a world is the very scope wherein God displays the tenderness and care of His heart for His poor tried saints. He draws near to them, He comforts them, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Do you not think that while the apostle Paul had a sense of the power of God, that God had a special delight, and Christ a special delight, in drawing near to him, and saying, "Fear not, Paul?" I am bold to say to-night, that if

that circumstance in the apostle's history had been wanting, there would have been some other created by the blessed God, not only on Paul's account, but to shew how Christ could draw near to His servant. He would not have been without an opportunity of sustaining the heart of a faithful disciple who was standing fast for Him, and suffering for His name.

That is what I mean by saying that all those circumstances give Him an occasion to come near to us. Think of it, beloved friends. But let us be clear about this point: these things are not the *spring* of His actions. God has not a motive—let me say it decidedly to-night; there is not a motive in the heart of God that has not its spring in Himself. He does not get His motives from *us*. He finds the occasion to manifest His mercy. He finds in our misery the suited time to display the tenderness of His heart; in our sorrows He seeks to unfold His comforts; in our difficulties He displays His inscrutable wisdom, that can carry us through: but the motives are all in His own heart. What a blessed thing to know that—that God has His affections, and in His heart the motives for everything that He does. All the springs—every one of them—are in God Himself; but in the circumstances in which we are placed is revealed what was in His heart already. Oh, the blessedness of this! Oh, the infinite grace that can stoop so low! Have your hearts the sense of that this evening, beloved friends? Am I speaking to any one in sorrow, or trial, or temptation? The blessed resources of God wait upon your circumstances! Oh, if our hearts could only get the sense of that! If our hearts could only get the sense that He

waits upon us, and that it delights His heart to draw near to us, and to minister, not according to what we think, but according to the infinite wisdom and deep affection of His own heart, because it is His own heart that guides His hand!

This I know, I do not understand His ways always, where I might and ought, and I see this on every hand, that there is nothing which makes people practically infidels more than judging of God by His ways; multitudes in the world at the present time are caught and stung by infidelity. It is a growing monster. I know those who have lost their balance through it. They have looked at their circumstances, at the ways they were led in, and they knew enough of God not to separate their ways from Him—that is, they did not believe in the horrible doctrine that things happen by chance; but they judged of God by His *ways* with them, and the consequence is they have lost their spiritual balance, they have made shipwreck of faith. He has not made known His ways after that fashion, but I delight to tell you what He has made known. There is not a secret chamber of His heart that He has not manifested—not one! I say it with reverence, yet with confidence, there is not a single chamber in the heart of the blessed God that He has not opened; the beloved Son has manifested all the Father's affections. I know His *heart*, and what a blessed thing it is for us when we can fall back on that!

As to His ways, there may be clouds and darkness about them, I may not see the end from the beginning, and God may purposely keep it from me, but if I start with this fact—there is nothing but love in that heart, nothing but infinite good-

ness in that bosom, "I know it, I believe it, I say it fearlessly, that God, the highest, mightiest, for ever loveth me." Then I am measuring His ways by His heart, and not His heart by His ways. I remember hearing of a person once who objected strongly to the truth of the gospel of the grace of God, and the only way by which a sinner can be brought to God. "Well," said this caviller, "I do not understand that everlasting preaching of blood, blood, blood. What kind of a God must yours be? I hear you always talking of blood and death. What a God must such a God be!" What answer would you give to your own heart if that thought suggested itself to you? Now, it is well that our hearts should be *furnished* with a reply. Nothing makes a man secure against all the various storms and blasts of the devil that are sweeping this poor world, except thorough settlement in the truth of God. What answer, then, would you give to such a suggestion or thought as I have referred to? I will tell you the answer that was given. It was in the shape of another question, namely, "What was the relationship between the God whom you speak of in those terms, and the Victim whose blood you thus slight? What was the relationship between the Victim and the One who provided Him?" Oh, wondrous grace! the Victim was the Son of His bosom!

"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love!  
 Thou maker of new morals to mankind!  
 The grand morality is love of Thee.  
 As wise as Socrates—if such they were;  
 Nor will they bate of that sublime renown—  
 As wise as Socrates, might justly stand  
 The definition of a modern fool."

Knowing God's love settles everything. It meets the sneer of the infidel on the one hand, and it steadies a poor feeble heart, that might be a little affected, on the other. Oh, consider it! He gave His only-begotten Son, His *own* Son, the Son of His affections, of His love, the Son that was ever in His bosom, and *is* in the bosom; and even when He was on the earth, we find it still "the only-begotten Son, who *is* in the bosom of the Father." He never left it. He was from eternity in the bosom of the Father. That Son God gave in the inscrutable, infinite, wonderful, nature of His love, to prove to you and me that He had a heart! Such is the way He proved it. He gave the object that was dearest to His own affections to prove to us that the devil had insinuated a lie into our hearts, in denying that God had any interest in His creatures. And, beloved friends, if we start with that, what a thing it is for us! Then we measure His ways by His affections. We know His love is perfect. Ah, I know well how that gilds trying circumstances. I know well, beloved friends, how that comforts the heart in days of sorrow, in hours of difficulty, in moments of pressure. The soul can retreat into the one heart that is changeless, the unalterable, eternal, affection of the blessed God, who needs these very trials in which we are to manifest that He is everything to us that He delights to be. That is why He wants the wilderness, to shew that He can come down to meet us, to sustain and comfort us here.

And, beloved friends, as I have before observed, it is not merely a question of His coming and meeting us in the circumstances where we are, but further still, there is nothing more blessed than to

fall back upon a little word in Luke xii. "Your Father *knoweth*." He does not say, "Your Father will come in with help," or, "with sustenance." Both are true. But He throws their hearts upon His *knowledge*. "He *knoweth*." Is that enough for you? Is it enough for you in every circumstance that He *knows*, that your Father *knows*, that your Father has an eye that is never dim, an ear ever open, and an affection that never alters. "He *knows*." Is that blessed reality enough to keep you? Can you retire on that? "He *knows*." Wondrous blessedness it is! The Lord give our hearts, beloved friends, to get the abundant comfort and the full solace which may be reaped from our wilderness history, from the fact that it is necessary for us to be practised in dependence and subjection on the one hand, and that it affords the blessed God an opportunity for the display of the affections of His heart to us on the other hand—to shew that He can feel for us in weakness and weariness, and that He will draw nigh to us. Who is there that can draw nigh to us in moments like these but God? Human sympathy is the expression of its own helplessness; surely I have often felt it. It is at best but the expression of its weakness; but when God draws near, how blessed! "The *Lord* stood by me," says the apostle; and in another place, "There stood by me this night the angel of God, *whose I am*, and whom I serve."

The Lord give us, by His Spirit, to taste the sweetness of these exercises as we pass along through this weary land, exercised in full dependence upon Him, and in the conscious sense that it is necessary to His heart to meet us, and to display the affections that are there!

Let us now look at the other side of the truth for a moment, that which I said was not so well understood, namely, the heavenly dwelling-place. I believe that the heavenly dwelling-place as a present thing known to the soul, is far less apprehended than the pilgrimage I have been dwelling on. I know many who understand the first, but who have not the least conception of the second. We ought to know both. The Lord give us to abound in both.

Now the exercises that I have already spoken of will be nothing to your heart if you do not know what I am going to set before you. I must ask you to turn to Deuteronomy xi., because there you have the divine description of the land, the dwelling-place, and its character. Observe those verses for a moment in chapter xi., and you will see the contrasts (I particularly call your attention to it). He contrasts Egypt with the land. This world is to us both Egypt and the wilderness; it is Egypt in its moral character, it is the wilderness in its experimental character. Look at verse 10 for an instant. "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." What does that mean? I believe the first part of this passage points to the fact that everything you have in the wilderness has trouble connected with it. There is no such thing in this

world as a day without clouds. Take, for instance, seed-sowing, or harvest; there is trouble connected with both. The farmer will tell you he has trouble with his crops in every stage and season. He has trouble before he prepares the ground, he has trouble in sowing the seed, and abundance of anxiety and care before harvest comes. It was doubly so in Egypt, because I believe what the Spirit of God alludes to when He speaks of their watering the land with their feet, is this—that the only source from whence ancient Egypt derived its fruitfulness was the Nile. It was necessary to construct channels for the river, when it overflowed its banks, to run into and irrigate the soil. This was done with the foot. But what trouble and labour all that entailed! This, therefore, you see, is the first contrast between this scene and that blessed place of which I hope to speak more particularly. Right well many of our hearts here know what sorrow's night is. I am satisfied I am not speaking to a single saint of God within these walls this evening that is not certified in his heart that there is nothing, even the very best thing in this world, that has not trouble connected with it. I care not what it is, be it the costliest treasure your heart delights in here, trouble lies at its root. Take the relationships of life, are they not exposed to trouble, trouble, trouble? "Enlarge them," as was once said, "and you only make a wider target for death to shoot at." Ah, that is all. No matter what it is you possess in this world, the costliest jewel of your heart, the very best thing, there is no immunity in regard to it from the common lot of men in a world where death and



sorrow both find their natural home. Hence, this is the first contrast. The second is like unto it, namely, that in the best thing here there is a deficiency, a lack, there is scarceness. Therefore He says (chap. viii.), speaking of the land, "A land wherein thou shalt eat bread *without scarceness*, thou shalt not *lack* anything in it." First of all, then, there is trouble with reference to the best things in this world, and secondly, even the best thing is deficient. It is like John ii., the wedding feast, and the wine out! There is no such thing as absence of scarceness, it is all want here.

These are the two great contrasts, beloved brethren. Have not our hearts proved them? Now let me tell you what I regard as a mournful thing. Whilst I admit that hundreds of saints of God freely and fully own that there is trouble and sorrow and difficulty connected with the best thing here, yet they do not know that this of itself will *not* wean the heart from this scene. I see those who are left like a tree that was blasted by lightning, from its remotest stems to its very roots. I have seen those who are without a solitary green spot; there they are in that state, *but they are not satisfied elsewhere*. They are scorched by the fire of trial here, but the heart is not invigorated elsewhere. I believe that God works both ways with us. He rolls in death on us here as to our circumstances and as to our history; He makes this very scene where our hearts would fain strike their roots, too hard for us; He makes it to be the corrective of itself. But mark this, whilst He does that on the one side, He holds out an intensely attractive object on the other; and when both these things go together, the heart weaned because it has found

an object outside the place where we are, and death being upon the very best thing in it; I say both these things work blessedly, wonderfully, together. I mean that when we have an object outside this world of want and desolation, and, at the same time that we are in the desolation, our hearts are kept from looking at anything but the object outside that satisfies us. I understand the apostle to mean that when he said, "Death worketh in us, but life in you;" that is, the effect of death working in *him* here, was that there was the manifestation of life going out towards *them*. There were the two things. Never let us forget that a person may die, or have everything blasted around him for his own sake; or he may die and have everything withered for Christ's sake. There is a vast difference there. I do not believe that knowing we have everything in Christ will secure us against the blast of death here; but if our hearts are found in this heavenly dwelling-place, with an object that is ineffably precious beyond everything here, *then* God subjects us to trial here for *His* sake, for *Christ's* sake, for the *Gospel's* sake, in order that He may exhibit in us and to others, what He has done, and can do for us: and what He can be to us. This is a higher order of trial that I am speaking of, namely, that we die to *exhibit* the good of what is in heaven, in place of dying to *find out* the fading nature of everything on earth. Oh, how great is the difference! Many are obliged to die in order to *find out* the excellency of that spot where death never enters; but on the other hand, they may begin with that spot first, and come down here into this scene to display it, to be the specimen to which God can point, the canvas as it were on which He

can paint the blessedness of that place, on which His eye continuously rests.

Look at this other point a moment, where He contrasts the wilderness and the land. He says (chap. xi.), "The land . . . . is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven." It is supplied from its own sources. It is not dependent upon anything that is here; its springs are in itself. "It drinketh water of the rain of heaven." "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year." I ask you to-night, What is the spot where God's eyes are always detained? Where is it? ~~It~~ It is not the one spot where Jesus is? I know no other place upon which His eye rests always save that. That, then, is the place He gives you and me for our home. He gives it to us to be the dwelling-place of our hearts; the land that he careth for is the spot that detains His own affections.

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not

Now, meditate on that for a moment. Think of the blessed condition of that into which He brings us rest—in the very sphere where *His* affections have found their perfect delight, and where *His* eye rests with eternal complacency. "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it." Oh, beloved friends, think of what it is to taste it now in any little measure, be it ever so feeble! I grant it is very poor and feeble with us all. May the Lord, by His Spirit, awaken a desire in our hearts to taste it *now*, to taste the blessedness of living there *now*; and of living in it, not merely as a *refuge* from the storm and trials, but as a *home*; to know the joys of *home*! There is a great difference between a shelter and a home. A shelter is not necessarily a

home. You can readily perceive a *shelter* is a place into which you run and hide from the storm, but you may come out again when the storm is past. *Home* is the place where your affections are detained; and if Christ is *only a shelter* to you, you will not of necessity abide there. And hence the feebleness of presenting Christ only as a shelter. It does not secure the permanent abiding of the heart with Him; but if He is a *home*, if there are the joys of home, the delights of home, the comforts of home, the fellowship of home, the affections of home, then I say, let me tarry there, that is the dwelling-place; that is where I am furnished, where I am satisfied, where I am comforted. I have to go through this world in all its varied scenes, yet *there* is my home.

“ High in the Father’s house above  
 My mansion is prepared;  
 There is the home, the rest I love,  
 And there my bright reward.

With Him I love, in spotless white,  
 In glory I shall shine;  
 His blissful presence my delight,  
 His love and glory mine.”

Let me give you an illustration of it. Many of you have been in the mining districts, and you have seen how and where the miners earn their daily bread. They go to their mine and work in the morning, and there they toil and labour all the day long; but their home is not down there. Their work, their exercise, is there, but not their rest. There is a quiet spot that each man has, which is consecrated in each heart, under the name of “home,” and he goes forth from thence day by day to fill

his allotted niche in the labour of life; and unto that you and I are also called. We are appointed to pass through this world with all the blessed consciousness in our hearts that we *have* a home. I know it may be said But we are going on to it; true, yet this does not in the least invalidate the other. I know we shall be there in body by-and-by; but the Lord gives us to have it in faith *now*, as the sphere where our hearts rest. It is this likewise which will impart a *character* to us. Be assured, if we walk through this present world with the blessed air of that goodly place about us, it surely imparts a *character*. A person who has found a home and rest for the heart in heaven is as easily recognised as a person who has not. Activity will not procure it for you. There is no use in deceiving ourselves about it: we may toil and labour all the day long, and be most energetic, but that does not ensure any rest for your heart. Your activity is restless, your service is restless, your work is restless. Everything that you do is coloured by what you yourself are. Be assured that being in the company of Christ, makes you like Christ. The company you are in, the associations that you live in, tell themselves out in everything to which you put your hand.

If you have not the rest of *home*, and quiet of heart, you may be over-laborious and active, but it is restless. It has the stamp upon it of unquiet and unrest. God looks at this present moment for a heart so satisfied, restful, and quiet—because it has found an anchoring ground, a solid certainty, in the One on whom His own eye rests with ineffable delight—He looks for those who can go forth here like the sun out of his chamber, and

like a strong man refreshed with wine to run his course.

The Lord teach us to possess that place, and to be in the company of His Christ now!

One word further, because the question may arise, and very properly, What occupies us there? That is a very important question. Is there any occupation there? Is there aught to engross, absorb the soul there? Most surely there is. May I ask you to turn to Deuteronomy xxvi.? I believe in that chapter the *first-fruits*, the *place* and the *priest* are all typical of Christ. Christ is the great anti-type of all these things. It is Christ then who occupies me. It is Christ who engages, Christ who absorbs, Christ who rivets my affections, Christ who commands my powers, my tongue, everything. Everything connected with that place is connected with Him, and it is upon Him that my eye adoringly rests, and it is with Him my heart is everlastingly occupied—what blessedness! what glory!

But remember, you cannot be engaged with Him until you get there. Mark those words—"It shall be when thou art *come in* unto the land." Then it is you are occupied with the One who has brought you there; not with your blessing, but with the *blessor*—with Himself, who has won this place for you with His affections, with His Person. When you have come in and possessed the land, and when you have dwelt in it, when it is the home of your heart, the One that has made it so to you is the one that engrosses you in it.

There is a scripture in the New Testament to which I would desire to refer: you remember that beautiful chapter Colossians iii. In chap-

ter ii. the Apostle throws us out of *man*, and in chapter iii. he puts us in association with the last Adam risen from the dead. You must be somewhere. You are out of *man* in chapter ii.; you have died with Christ. If His death has thus closed all my history as connected with the first Adam, where am I? Surely in association with Christ risen. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

Beloved friends, it is more blessed to see that the apostle does not define what "those things" are. He does not tell you. It is the *Person* that gives them character. It is the *Person* of which they are the surroundings which makes them objects of acquisition. If you say to a heart that is set on Christ, "Christ is there," that answers every question. It is the fact of His presence that secures everything, and explains everything for the devoted one. There is no need to go into details if it is *Christ* your heart is looking out for, because He it is who makes your heart at home amid such things.

The Lord, by His Spirit, give us to excel in both these exercises; may we know what it is to find this rest, this blessed, wonderful rest, in this heavenly dwelling-place, where, as He says, "The sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." I take those two birds to be symbols exactly of what our poor hearts are naturally. The sparrow is a worthless bird; it is valueless because it is so plentiful. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" says the blessed Lord. The swallow is a type of ceaseless activity and unrest; but both sparrow and swallow have found a home. Where? "Thine altars, O Lord of hosts; my King and my

God." Then mark this, "Blessed are they that *dwell* in thy house, they will be *still* praising thee." They are detained, engrossed, occupied "praising thee."

The Lord give us, beloved friends, to know these truths I have been setting forth, in their divine and proper order in our souls, and so fortify and strengthen us, that we may go forth, in the dignity of our calling, to present in this poor world, where there is not a particle of rest or quiet, a bold front in the midst of all its ceaseless unrest around us. May He give us hearts that can be undisturbed amid its storms, proofs of what being brought *into His presence* and finding a home there can do for them. He would have us be like ocean steamers, whitened it may be up to the very top of the funnel, by reason of the sea and storm, the severe weather we have encountered, but commanded so well, and guided so skilfully, that all who see us must say, That vessel has weathered all the gales : how well manned and skilfully piloted she must have been ! Thus no wave can be too strong, no tempest too crushing—thus we shall not desire one trial less, or one sorrow mitigated !





## “A THREEFOLD CORD.”

JOHN xiv. 16—31.

THERE are three subjects in John xiv. to which I will direct my observations this evening, as the Lord may help me. It is a scripture familiar to us all, and thoroughly read and beaten out, one might say, except that it is the word of God, and that in which there is always something fresh. I shall not travel through the chapter, but just glance at three distinct facts—blessed facts—which the Lord brings before the hearts of His disciples in the way of comfort. The first which is not recorded in the verses which I have read, but earlier in the chapter, is the blessed truth that the earth no longer affords a resting-place for His disciples—us, His own. Now this is a truth that we are not so familiar with as we ought to be, at least those of us who understand something, through the grace of God and by the power of His Spirit, of what God has brought out in these last times.

I feel confident I am correct in saying, that side of the truth is not nearly so well understood or known, either outwardly or in the heart, as this, namely, that we have no standing whatever in man, looked at as man in the flesh. I suppose the great majority of those listening to me this evening, however little their hearts may have really grasped the fact for themselves, nevertheless admit

this truth, that the history of the first man was closed in the cross of Christ. I will explain that term, because it is well perhaps, not to use expressions that every one would not understand. There may be some here to whom such terms are new and strange. What I mean is this—that man, looked at in his natural condition before God, was tested in a variety of ways by God Himself; and the end of the testing, the result of it, was that he was entirely set aside, and that man, looked at as natural man, or man born into the world, has got no standing whatever as such before God. The moment a person is a Christian, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he stands, not now as connected with the first man at all; he is not looked at by God, God does not regard him as having any connection with the first Adam, but he is looked at as standing entirely in a new position in Christ risen from the dead.

Now this truth, beloved friends, through God's mercy and grace, is brought out and known, however little or feeble the effect may be seen in any of us. It would have an immense power over souls if it were really felt and known in our consciences. Wondrous fact it is, that I have no standing in Adam before God, and that we have a new place altogether in Christ! "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." You could not go back, if that truth had really possession of your soul; and that is a better way to put it than to say, "if you had a hold of it." If it had a grasp of you, you could not go back to anything that was connected with the first Adam, without doing violence to poor conscience and the truth;

and in proportion as you walked with a good conscience before God, your conscience would be kept in exercise, and would be a quick witness to you as to when and how you passed the line.

This, I believe, is where there is a grand mistake. Many of us are a great deal too anxious to get hold of truth, in place of being sufficiently quiet before God, so that it might get a hold of us. If it seizes hold of us, it is the *truth* that is operative, and not us. Now I know that is a very humbling thing. We naturally do not like it, because we all prefer *doing* something. We like to be occupied in working on the truth; but what *God* does is, He takes and places us before Him in the quietness of His presence, so as to secure for the truth simply its own effectual working by the Spirit upon our consciences. I will give you an illustration of it. When Moses went up to the mount to get the tables of testimony the second time, was he working upon anything that was up there before? Did Moses get the colour of the glory by any working of his own when he was up in the mount? Moses was quiescent before Jehovah, and the glory of God both left its impress, as well as reflected itself, in Moses's face; and when he came down, the only man of the company who did not see the glory that was reflected there, was Moses himself. Everyone else saw it—everyone else witnessed the effect of Moses being in the presence of God. I feel that this is a day, of all others, when there is immense need for that quietness of soul before God; that restfulness of heart, so as to allow the truth to form and fashion us according to itself. The moment you allow your mind to work on the truth, you bring in one of the most effec-

tual hindrances thereto. There is all the difference between the truth of God, wielded by the Holy Ghost, producing certain effects upon our conscience and our mind working upon that truth; because, you perceive, your mind may work upon the truth, and, after all, the devil may get hold of you in a way you little think. I know how Satan might get advantage of a person through the mere fact of the outward intelligence working upon the truth, when the conscience has not been sufficiently exercised before God for the truth to work upon *it*.

The moment I accept my true place, viz., that I am outside of the first Adam altogether as to standing, and that my place is entirely in Christ risen from the dead—as soon as ever that has a hold upon my conscience, then everything connected with me, everything concerning me, is to be ordered to suit that. There is an immense difference between trying to make things suit us, and God fashioning us to suit Himself by the truth. He delights to have us so as to answer to the place He brings us into. It is not ours to order things so as to suit ourselves; we are brought into the most wonderful position before God that it was possible for a human heart to conceive, and God says, Now I am going to have everything about you suited to that position, and therefore everything else must go. And the more my heart is in the affections of the blessed God, the more willing they are that everything else *should* go.

Now, the other truth is not so well known by any means, either in the outward understanding or in the affections, in the conscience or in the soul; namely, not only do I not belong to the first man

at all, but I do not belong to the earth. I know many people here to-night will not like that. Everyone is glad enough to say, "I do not belong to the first man, thank God; I have got a new place in Christ risen from the dead; I belong to glory, to Christ; I am in the risen One;" but the question is, Are you ready to say, "I do not belong to this earth?" I do not say the earth does not belong to you, for it never did. If it did, be good enough to produce your title-deeds to it. God never gave it to you; but there is a deeper truth—*Christians do not belong to it.* You will find the two things in Ephesians i. and ii.; you can read them at your leisure. You will perceive a Christian is out of man, out of earth. We do not belong to the first man as to standing, and we do not belong to this earth as to place. We are here in the body—I do not deny that; but then it is an immense thing to know we have no *place* on this earth. The earth is closed to us. You have not got a place in it, any more than Christ had. Oh, how blessed, yet how solemn! Now here is the truth that falls with such immense power upon a person's heart that yearningly asks, Where is my *place*? Where is my home? Tell me where my heart is free to go in and out?

This, then, is the first thing recorded in John xiv. He says to His own, I have a place for you outside this ruined earth. There is a definiteness in the words "unto myself." Is there not likewise definiteness in Colossians iii.? "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Is that not locality? There is a definiteness about it to a believer's heart—it is a dis-

inct place which He has for me, outside all the ruin and wretchedness which is around. That is the first thing—a positive, distinct place, a mansion. “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Now, mark this for a moment, how the two things run closely together—the truth in Colossians iii., and this first truth in John xiv. You observe when the apostle is speaking in Colossians, after throwing them out of man in chapter ii., and shewing them their new place in chapter iii., then he says, “Seek those things which are above.” To give a distinctness to “those things above,” in their hearts and to their affections, he puts in this little word, “*where* Christ sitteth.” And, beloved friends, those three little words in Colossians iii. are the same in scope and meaning as the precious three in John xiv., “where I am.” They supply everything that is necessary to a heart that is simply set on Christ. I do not desire to adopt the fanciful definitions or descriptions I have heard about heaven. I do not believe in such things; and I am struck with the silence of scripture on this head; it is wonderful how little is said about heaven. I suppose it is natural to us all to indulge in fancies concerning it, but there is hardly anything said about it in scripture. But this is said, that we shall be where Jesus is—it is the Person that gives character to the place. It is the blessed fact that He will have us with Himself; and the heart that has Christ for its object is satisfied to know

that He is there; that is, it is His presence that gives definiteness to it—this meets every longing affection. With Him, for He is there! Anywhere with Him!

Now I wish to point out another blessed fact. I see this, beloved friends, that, no matter where the presence of Christ is spoken of, that determines our place—that is, His position, the position of Christ, determines ours. It is impossible for Him to be anywhere where He will not have us. Oh, wondrous glory, to be able to say that! An amazing thing it is to get such a sense of the affections of that heart that delights to have His own eternally with Himself, so that one can boldly say, He would not be satisfied if He had not us where He is! And therefore, the moment I find Christ's position, I have also found ours. "Where I am, there *ye may be* also."

Will you turn with me to another side of this very same truth in Hebrews xiii.? It is presented to my thoughts and heart just at this moment. It will serve as an illustration of the principle I am seeking to press upon you. Verse 12: "Wherefore Jesus also," (I ask your particular attention to this scripture) "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." Now observe, He tells you He has a place up there in the heavens—*mansions*—the very best place conceivable, or that our hearts could possibly desire; and that it is His being there that gives character to it, and definiteness to it, and that He wants to have us there. How one's heart delights to think of that! But what do you think of this Hebrews xiii.? Let

me, beloved friends, exercise your conscience a little. May the Lord be pleased to do it through His word to-night! Have you put yourselves into Hebrews xiii.? There is an immensity of sentimentality passing current in minds, and it is difficult, in speaking about the truth of God, to avoid treading on these sentimental thoughts that many have about heaven in these days; I desire to be both faithful and loving in all I say.

But look at Hebrews xiii. There is a great deal of what is plain and matter-of-fact about that. "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." And look at the wisdom of the Spirit of God. If you stay inside, you escape the reproach; if you go outside unto Jesus, you will get the reproach. And what sweetens it? This—that you go forth *unto Him!* It is not the bare fact that I go outside and that I protest when I get outside against everything that is inside; but I go outside (and I urge this upon you), I go outside as much from affection to Christ as from a divinely-exercised conscience. I go outside, it is true, from a divinely-exercised conscience, because I cannot stay inside, but I am attracted by a living Person outside! I look up into the heavens, and I say, Where is Jesus? Inside there. Then I go in there! Here on earth He is outside, and I go outside! That fills up the two parts of my history. I go *inside* to enjoy and share in the delights of home; I go *outside* to keep company with the One who has made the home for me up there. Do your hearts enter into that, beloved? Does that suit you? And oh, friends, there may be a great many things which this will touch. I have no doubt it is a sword that cuts in



a circle. I have no question as to that. Some of us here know *how*, and *when*, and *where* it cuts; but there is this sweetener in it—not only the fact that He is there, but the point that presses upon my heart is, the moment that the Holy Ghost finds Jesus for you, there is your place, *if your heart is true to Him*. The moment that He shews you Jesus in the many mansions which He has for you outside this ruined earth, then your heart is at once attracted into that place, and He tells you He has them there for *you*. Well, can you not bear the break-up of things here now? the withering blasts of sorrow, the rolling waves of trial? It is this which enables one to stand before the piercing arrows of death, and they are shot everywhere this side. There is not a single spot on earth into which they do not penetrate. The insatiable archer fires his darts everywhere in this poor world, and nothing is secure against them. The sunniest region is desolated by these arrows of death. But Jesus goes up there, and says, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come again.” It is not only that He has it for us, it is not only that His presence prepares it—because that is the force of the passage—but He will come and receive, and welcome us into it.

I do not believe that the activity of Jesus is exercised in getting that place ready. It is His presence there that prepares it. The activity of Jesus in that place is about us *here*—not in connection with the place, but the persons, His own here, upon the earth—keeping us fit for His presence, as fit for His presence as His blood has made us—His blood the *ground* upon which we are in His presence, and His grace the *principle* upon which we are main-

tained in fitness for His presence. But His presence in the place gets it ready, and then there is only one thing wanting, and that is, the Person to welcome us into it. He says, "That is the work *I* must have; I shall not only have a place prepared by being there, and I will not only keep you clean from moral distance from myself whilst you are here and I am there, but the first note of welcome into that prepared spot of my presence shall be from myself!" "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself."

You observe, it is the *person* here again. It is not "heaven," or "glory," but "unto myself." Oh, what joy in that! "That where I am, there ye may be also."

Now, beloved friends, before I pass on, let me ask you affectionately to-night, what kind of an influence does that exert over your hearts? I believe all of us live far too much in the spirit of the day; and now I will touch on that as lightly and as gently as I can, but I must touch it. I should be unfaithful to the truth of God, and to my Master, if I did not. What I mean is this, the tendency of the time in which we live is to make the best use that we can of Christ, and then forget Him! This is the Spirit of the day, to get all the good out of Christ that I can, and then forget Him. It is exactly the same as that which actuated the man who was very glad to use Joseph in order to have his prisoned spirit revived by the prospect of future prosperity and comfort, and who then forgot him. It is, I say, precisely the same. Very well, the effect of that reaches even to us, and I will shew you how, namely, in this way: You will find everyone looking for *relief*—relief for conscience,

or relief for heart ; for we are complex creatures. We have consciences, and we have hearts, though some appear as if they had none. A man who has only conscience, and no heart, is only half the sort of man that scripture deals with ; and the man that has only a heart, and no conscience, is only half a man, looking the other side of it. The truth is, we have a conscience to be purged, and we have hearts to be satisfied. The *blood* of Christ sets our conscience at perfect liberty, the *person* of Christ satisfies the heart's affections. That is the way things are met. This is what I mean by using Christ simply for what He is worth, and then forgetting Him. You will find it even so with regard to the truth that I am speaking of to-night—the blessed fact that He has a place for us outside this earth, and that our hearts can turn in there when the blasts of death sweep over everything here. When the storm is over, what do you do? Do you come out? That is the result, if Christ and the place where He is are nothing more than a *refuge* in the storm : you come out when the storm is past.

Now, beloved friends, what Christ says is this : namely, “ I have a *home* for you.” I do not deny it is a *relief*, a refuge, a shelter. It is the only bit of shade in all the withering, blasting, heat that is around ; but if it has not to your heart the elements of *home* about it, the attractiveness, the joys, the blessedness, of home, in company, too, with One who is skilled in putting the heart at ease—then I say you will come out when the storm is over. You have used Him only as a relief in the difficulty, and when it is gone by, you are found once more outside, where it met you. Now this is

what is found in the world around us to-day. There is no thought of having a home with Christ *outside* this scene: people think this world an uncommonly good home, and they bring down the grace of Christ, the love of Christ, the help of Christ, and the redemption of Christ, in order to make themselves comfortable in it. This, beloved friends, is the spirit of our time.

Now the effect which God intended should follow upon the redemption of Christ, His blood, and His grace, is this—to *unsettle* us as regards this world, but to unsettle us *here* by settling us *there*. If we are settled in that wondrous place where He is, because we are at home there, we are unsettled here.

Now I will try to make this plain to you by an illustration; and those who are, perhaps, more advanced in these things will bear with me while I speak to many this evening to whom these things are fresh and new. Suppose a man were to drop into this great city to-night from the antipodes: that man does not need to *make* himself a stranger here, he need not seek to *get up* the spirit of strangership, nor the temper of a stranger. That man *is* a stranger here. What makes him so? Simply that he comes from a spot where he is *at home*. There is a country where he is not a stranger, a place where his heart delights to say that he is at home, where his interests and all his belongings are; he drops into a place which is not that to him, and he is necessarily a stranger in it. The surest mark of a person not really a pilgrim is the effort to be one. You will always see people *trying* to be what they are not; but if one is genuinely and really a pilgrim, there is no effort about

it—it is just the simple product of life and nature. There is no effort about the plant, or the herb, or the tree, as it grows in the field. All it wants is heat and light. It wants the light of the sun and the heat of the sun, and with them it grows, and asserts its nature. And it is the same here ; there is no *effort* at being a pilgrim on the part of one who is such.

Beloved friends, there are two things you can never do. You can no more *acquire* the spirit of a stranger than you can fit yourself for the presence of God as a sinner. The one is just as impossible as the other. You cannot, by any possible means in your power, give your conscience a title to be in the presence of God, and you cannot *acquire* the spirit of strangership ; but the moment that your heart is set at rest and at home in Christ, where He is, you are drawn out of the *current* of things here, and they *become* strange to you ; they cease to be your interests or concern.

There is not one of us here to-night that would not be obliged to confess to God, if He inquired of us, how little awkward we are here in this world. It is not uncongenial to us, as it ought to be. We do not find ourselves out of gear, as it were, in it ; we do not find our spirits burdened by all around, as we should if we lived on high. We do not suffer from the uncongenial nature of the atmosphere, as a plant out of its true sphere. Alas, we have become acclimatised ! We have lived so much in the spirit of the things around us, that we have become hardened. Is not this the real and true state of the case ? We can face this world now, because we have been under its frosts and winters so much, that we have settled down—

are we not settled? are we not *dwellers* on earth rather than *visitors*? The Lord make us rather *visitors* here, by making us *dwellers* there! If we dwell there, we visit here; and if we dwell here, we are only at best visitors there. I fear this is where most of us are. I fear the history of most of us might be so described and written.

But, beloved friends, is not this the purpose of God, that we should so *dwell* there, as to find the circle of home joys so attractive to our poor hearts, in connection with the blessed Person who makes them at home in the place which He has opened to us, that we would be only *visitors* here? and that we should *visit* here, in all the grace, blessedness, meekness, strength, and power of Christ?

And (let me say this word) you see the same spirit in the way things here are met: people try to fortify themselves in prospect of trouble. They scan the supposed trouble, they measure it, and they try to get themselves prepared. You can never do it! I never saw any try that plan yet, that they were not worsted, when the moment came. You cannot do it: why? Because He gives fresh strength for the need when it arises, according to His riches in glory. It is not *accumulative* strength. He never gives you anything *in store*. He gives everything as you want it. Oh! how wise and good He is in this. He knows well if He gave us anything in store, we should use His gifts to become independent. He keeps the thing in His own hands in infinite mercy, and He keeps our hearts dependent upon Him for the things we need. All we have to do, is, to go on with God for *to-day*: the more we have to do with Christ in that place where He is, and the

more our hearts delight themselves in the circle of home joys that are there, the more we meet the things that come up every day simply and naturally, without effort, without trying to fortify ourselves beforehand. Oh! to go on simply in the patience and quietness and joy of Christ *to-day*, and when trouble comes, to meet it in the grace and power of Christ. It is the way in which we enjoy that blessed place where Christ is that fits us for hardships here. We cannot face these troubles unless we come back from that place and thus meet them. Oh! to come back in all the *dignity*, the *ease*, the *quietness*, and the *power* of Christ, to face the things here, where we are but heavenly visitors. Oh! to dwell amongst our own people more, and from thence to be militant in an enemy's country! And remember the grace of Christ is as much *magnified* in enabling us to tide over the difficulties that are here, as it was *manifested* in giving us the place with Himself there.

This then is the first point that was on my heart in speaking of John xiv. Allow me now to direct your thoughts to our side of it, and I should desire particularly to fix your minds on one verse. I want, if I can, to address your conscience for a moment; look at verse 23. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my word." I take the liberty of changing a word here—it is "word," not "words." The meaning of it is, he will keep my revealed counsel: further on, you find the plural, and properly so, "my sayings," that is, the actual words of Jesus: but here it is in the *singular*. "If a man love me, he will keep my word." Are you up to this test of affection for Christ? Observe, it is not

*working*, it is not "If a man love me he will work."—this great gospel day in which we live men would fain have it thus. God forbid that I should say a word detrimental in the smallest way; far be it from me to speak so, of anything that God, in His infinite sovereignty and mercy, may be pleased to use as an instrument for His purposes,—but I must accept the word of the Lord as I find it; and the test to-day is, not how much you can do, but, Are you keeping the word of Jesus? Look at that verse again. "If a man love me, he will keep my word." May God write that word on your hearts to-night!

It is not the ceaseless activity that runs hither and thither, seeking for some great thing to do; there may be all that, beloved friends, and more even, which I will point out as most solemn in connection with it. There may be zeal and labour, and yet not one single particle of genuine affection for Christ at the bottom of it! "How extreme!" people will say. "What an extreme statement!" I shall prove it. I will not ask you to take anything that I cannot prove: turn to Revelation ii., at the opening verses. This very same Jesus, who walks in the midst of the candlesticks, with penetrating eyes of fire, and who hears everything, reads everything, detects everything, judges everything—observe what He says now, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write . . . I know thy works, and thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted." Where could you meet to-day a



condition of things that would be as favourable under eyes like a flame of fire? Search Christendom, if you please, and find it if you can. No, beloved friends, nowhere can such be discovered.

What does He say about it? "Nevertheless," allowing it all, giving full credit for the labour, and He mentions it first (what He can allow He names first); "I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love!" Now that, beloved friends, we are familiar with; but I am not so sure that we take into account the solemn, most solemn, possibility of doing the works, *when the love is not there*. Did that ever occur to you? On the face of the thing, it is plain that He valued the affection a great deal more than the works; but it is immensely solemn for all of us to think how possible it is to labour so as to get like credit, even from Him, when the heart is not genuinely true to Himself. Surely it is not a small thing for us to beware lest we are doing the works, when the motive-spring of affection is absent. I take and test things as I find them about me to-day, and I take the simple word of the Lord Jesus. "If a man love me, he will keep my word." Have you affection for Christ? I speak to you, friends, in the name of the Lord; do you love Him? Is your heart towards Him? Have you expressed your affection for Christ? Do you say, Yes, I love Him? It is a day when people tell out their feelings pretty freely. "If a man love me, he will keep my word," and if you are not keeping His word, His counsel, His revealed will, is it not vain for you to say you love Him? You remember what Delilah said to Samson. She understood love, poor, wretched, polluted woman though she was; a miserable, guilty woman, yet she

understood something of the nature of genuine affection. She said, "How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?" "If a man love me, he will *keep* my word."

Now, in contrast with that for one moment look at Revelation iii. When He looks at Philadelphia, there is not a word about the works except this, that *He knew them*. And I believe the reason is that *nobody else* recognised them. I am perfectly satisfied that the "*works*" of Philadelphia were of that nature that there was no eye that scanned them or understood their character but the eye of Jesus. "*I know thy works.*" No one else could. They were too insignificant, too much below the surface, too much hidden from the gaze of the world, of too different a *character*, from too different a *motive*, with too different an *object*, to be recognised by any eye but the eye of Christ. "*I know thy works.*" What else does He say? "Thou hast a little strength, and hast *kept my word*:" the same thing as "my counsel," the very same thing as John xiv. "Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." The difference between Philadelphia and the church that comes after—though I will not speak of it now—is that, in the one, divine power energizes human weakness; whereas, in the other, there was the power of Satan energizing man. Oh! what a wondrous thought, divine power energizing human weakness; and how immensely solemn to think of the power of the devil acting on man! Then it is most comforting to see that as you get the reward in John xiv., so it is in Philadelphia.

I will speak for a moment of the reward as presented in John xiv. "If a man love me, he will

keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him." Now this is the same thing exactly as mansion or dwelling; the Greek word is identically the same as "mansion" in verse 2. "We will take a *mansion* in his heart." Oh! it is a wonderful thing to say, "He has a mansion for me up there," but it is a great deal more wonderful to think He will come down and take a mansion in my poor heart here! Is it no marvel to think that poor things like us can make a mansion for Jesus and the Father in our hearts? That He will condescend, in the infinite grace of His nature, whilst He waits to take us into the mansion that His heart has for us in glory, to come down and take a mansion in our poor hearts here! Oh! how little is thought of that to-day on every hand! Where are the hearts that covet His presence? Where are the hearts whose delights are that Jesus should have His mansion there? The Father and the Son coming down to make their abode in them! Who could credit a fact of such surpassing wonder, if Christ had not said it—this poor, little volatile heart, a mansion for the Father and the Son! Oh! friends, what do you think of that? If the first subject we have been dwelling on is the best *place*, is not this the best *company*? Do you suppose one would mind being alone, if conscious of such company as that? The best company. Oh, what company! The Father and the Son! The Father and the Son doing what? Visiting? No, but *dwelling*—positively taking a mansion in the heart of a poor creature like you and me down here; in a heart too, perhaps, in which the world, or the devil, or the flesh, once reigned triumphant. The Lord, by His

Spirit, give us to be exercised, beloved friends, as to whether we really have a desire that they should take up their dwelling-place in us!

Does it give you exercise? Did it ever give you a night's trouble, or reflection, as to how the word of Jesus is set aside? We talk of our love to Christ, of our affections for Him, of our desires for the word of Jesus; does it, I ask, grieve our hearts well nigh to breaking, to see how consistently and systematically all seek their own, and not the things that are Jesus Christ's?

We talk of our love, of our affection—it is a poor, wretched, miserable, polluted, selfish thing! If our hearts and minds were genuinely and really in keeping with the affections of Christ, could we take as easily as we seem, the total indifference to His desires? Would it not afflict us to see how lightly esteemed is the longing of His soul, that for which He died, “to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad,” and for which He desires “that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us?” Is that purpose and prayer of Jesus regarded or slighted by professing Christendom? “If any man love me, he will *keep my word*.”

The last thing I shall speak of in our chapter is (vers. 26–28) *the best circumstances*. We have been dwelling on the best place and the best company, and now we turn to the best circumstances. I give you the three things together, as it may help you to remember them. The best *place* in the heavens with Christ the best *company*, “outside the camp” with Him here, and His taking a dwelling-place in our hearts; and now the best *circumstances*. What are they? First of all, this *double peace*. I will

only say a few words upon the peace, because I presume most here are familiar with it. The first peace is that which He made by the blood of His cross, and the second is that which He enjoyed as an obedient and dependent man, as Son with His Father. I am not speaking of Him now as the eternal Son. I am speaking of Him as the Son of God born into this world. The first peace which He leaves, is, as I said, the peace made by the blood of His cross. The second is that which He gives us, which He had Himself, which flows from *dependence, subjection, and obedience*. One passing word upon both. Has every one here this double peace? It is not an uncommon thing to find many who have not peace. It is too common, I grieve to say, to find many amongst the professing people of God who have not peace. Now the first peace, I will tell you in simple words what that is: simply this—that there is no enemy to shew himself. That is the meaning of it. There is no enemy to lift up his head. If you see that every enemy has been disposed of, you have got the peace that Jesus made by the blood of His cross. I put it to you to-night: I speak to any one who has not got it: will you dispute this? Is there an enemy that Jesus has not disposed of? What about *sin*? “He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” What about *Satan*? He “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil.” What about *death*? He took the sting out of it. “O death, where is thy sting?” What about the *grave*? He has taken the victory from it. “O grave, where is thy victory?” There is no enemy. Well now, if your heart bows simply in the presence of the blessed One who accomplished all that upon the cross, and rests in

Him, you have this peace, and with this peace no enemy can shew his head *to you*.

The second peace, beloved friends, is the peace which comes from simple subjection of heart to Christ—dependence and subjection. This peace is mine when I take His yoke upon me, and learn of Him. The “yoke” is taken up, generally speaking, for *work*; but the “yoke” is really taken up there for *rest*. “Take my yoke upon you,” not to work but for rest. “Ye shall find rest unto your souls.” That is to say, as soon as my heart simply takes this place of owning myself to be thoroughly and completely set aside as to all that I was in the flesh before God, and in everything else: as soon as I own myself to be what I am before God, that is, a dead man—the *will* not in exercise: as soon as I reckon myself dead in the power of life in Christ, then it is I get the second peace: as soon as I account myself dead—when by faith I own the fact, and keep my reckonings with God, then I get the second peace. This I believe is where people are thrown out. They do not keep their reckonings with God. There is the *reckoning* of faith, as well as the *realisation* of it. If you do not reckon yourself to be dead, your will is *governing* you, and if your will is not *governed*, you cannot have the second peace; but if you keep your reckonings with God, your will is kept with the cross upon it, and you have got peace, the second peace, the peace of a dependent, subject man. That which keeps us out of dependence and subjection is this *will*, and we cannot, beloved brethren—I say it strongly—we cannot surrender will by force of will. Can you by your will surrender your will? Did you ever know will to abdicate? There have

been sovereigns who have done so, but this never ! It never has and never will ! There is only one thing that disposes of us altogether, and that is the cross ! I have to keep my reckonings with God ; God has put an end to me ; God has closed up in death all that I *was*, and it is mine simply to reckon myself “ to be dead indeed unto sin.”

One thing more in this John xiv., in connection with the best circumstances, which is most beautiful and blessed. “ If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father.” Oh ! beloved friends, how little our hearts seem really to have entered into this ! He says, as it were, “ I have brought you into such perfect association with myself, I have set you down in a place of such complete fulness in myself, that I reckon upon you sharing my joy. I give you to be partakers with me in my joy.” What is that ? To forget your own sorrow in my joy ! “ If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father.” How little our hearts—these poor selfish hearts of ours—these wretched hearts that travel everlastingly within that narrow circle of self, self, self—how little in His joy we are ! How little absorbed we are by occupation with Christ, so as to share His joy, so as to find our joy in the fact that He has His ! “ If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. For my Father is greater than I.”

I believe, beloved friends, these are vital truths. I have spoken of them feebly, I know. They are truths that God would keep before our hearts in days like these. I know well there is enough of energy for *service*, but is there rest enough for *communion* ? I am satisfied that none can take their part

in the position in which God would have His people in these last times in connection with His truth, except those who are simply restful enough to know communion with His own heart. And we cannot have communion if our heart is not at rest. If we have not rest—rest of conscience, of course, but I mean rest of heart—we are not free. And, I believe, as I said last week in this place, that the state in which many of God's people are found at this moment, is a fruitful one to invite the trial by their hearts of ten thousand things that are around, so as to banish if possible the dreariness that results from not having rest of heart before God.

The Lord give us, in the midst of all that is weak within as well as withering around, so to know this blessed place which Jesus has gone into to give it character to our hearts, that it may be the home of our souls at this present moment; and to know His presence as our company whilst we are here, and the circumstances which He delights to bring us into, the peace and joy which He gives, until we hear His voice, and are caught up to be with Him for ever!





# REMNANT TIMES:

AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE HISTORY OF

ENOCH, DAVID, AND DANIEL.

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NOTES OF LECTURES

BY

W. T. TURPIN.

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LONDON:

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## P R E F A C E.

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THESE addresses, similar in character to "Our Pilgrimage and His Rest," are sent forth with the humble desire and earnest prayer of the author that God may be pleased, in His sovereign grace, to overlook their many defects, and to use them for His own glory, and the blessing of His beloved people.

W. T. TURPIN.

*Brighton, November, 1876.*

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# THE CHRISTIAN'S PATHWAY AND HOPE.

GENESIS v. 18-24; HEBREWS xi. 1-6.

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THE principles of the times to which the Old Testament primarily relates are very different from the principles of God's ways and dealings with His people now. If however you look at the Old Testament worthies, saints of God in those days, particularly those that are enumerated in Hebrews xi., it is very interesting to see how God raised up for Himself independent witnesses to the great principle which *was to obtain* as soon as ever His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, had finished the work that God gave Him to do, and had gone into heaven. What I mean is this, that the principle of Judaism was one that acted upon the sight and senses of men just as they were. All this had its time, had its day, had its object, and God worked through it for purposes of His own; but in the midst of it, whilst it was in its full force and vigour, the blessed God had, as I have observed, independent witnesses for Himself out of that very nation, who were the people of sight, with reference to what was to come out, and what has come out in our days, that is, the simple principle of *faith*.

Now, at this present moment, such is the position of a Christian, that if I am governed by anything that I *see*, I have left the path of faith. I know that it is a very searching thing for one's heart; but, I repeat, the moment I am governed by

anything that I see around me, or if I act with reference to it as a motive or object, or look to it for guidance, or direction, or understanding as to my path, I have left this simple, blessed, pathway of faith which God has marked out for His own. You may say that when you look around amongst the saints of God, you see a thousand instances, where the act is with reference to what is seen; but then it is all important, beloved friends, whilst confessing the failure, not to act as if making a principle out of our failure. There is oftentimes a great tendency to do that in our hearts, to make a principle out of that which is really nothing more nor less than a breakdown with us as to the blessed and wonderful ground God has called us out unto. What He has really called us out to be a witness unto, is the blessed fact that we have an invisible God; and faith acts with reference to Him as an object that is not seen by any power of human ken or understanding. This was the wonderful thing in Moses (though I only refer to it in passing). You find the Spirit of God saying of him in Hebrews xi., that he "endured, as seeing the *invisible* God."

You see, the two things that characterise a Christian are these, he has an invisible object in the heavens, that is, Christ glorified at God's right hand, and an invisible power in him here—the Holy Ghost that dwells in a believer's body. So that we have an object entirely outside everything that is seen here in this world, and a power dwelling in our bodies (for my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost), and that power that dwells in my body acts on me and in me with reference to that object, and gives me motives and strength and everything from that object. The moment we

descend from that, we are inconsistent with our calling—it is not *faith*, not the principle that looks beyond everything else to God, sees God, and acts with reference simply to God, and receives power from God. I believe half of our difficulties, individually and collectively, at this present moment, arise because we have not simply acted upon that principle. Most of the difficulties that saints of God experience in their individual path would be obviated, if they simply walked by faith.

Let me say this, and I say it humbly, I believe the difficulties we have collectively are created because of our low state individually; that is, there is a lack of individual faithfulness, there is some want, some feebleness, individually. A good corporate state is the result of a close individual walk with God. You never have corporate power apart from individual faithfulness. And what I believe is this—I often think it over, and pray about it—the reason of our corporate weakness just now is, that we have overlooked individual state before God. The individual state of our souls before God tells immensely upon the corporate relationships that we have to sustain as members of the body of Christ. Suppose I am not walking with God as one in the relationship of a child of God, as an heir of God, and fellow-heir with Christ, how can I ever comport myself as a member of the body of Christ? It is impossible; and you may rest assured of it, where a person is deficient as a member of the *family* of God, he is sure to bring trouble into the *church* of God. The one thing tells upon the other. This it is which is on my heart in taking up this subject a little to-night. One reason why the Old Testament is so exceedingly beautiful is this, there is brought out in it, the

intense individuality of our place with God. You find individual godliness, individual piety, individual walk with God, though, of course, it is after the measure and order of those times. The walk with God must be up to the revelation of God for the time being. This it is of vital importance to maintain. It would not be "walking with God" *now* for a person simply to live up to the measure of what Enoch knew. It was "walking with God" for Enoch *at that time*: but there is now, for God's people, a revelation of God, and a communication of His mind, far beyond what Enoch knew. And therefore, to know this walk with God, I must individually be before God according to the revelation of His mind to me by His Spirit, as He has been pleased to bring it out in His word.

But I will point out to you where, in my mind, there appears to be a very interesting analogy between the time of Enoch and the times we are passing through. If you reflect for a moment on the times in which we find Enoch, and compare them with those in which our lot, by God's mercy, is cast, you will find a very close analogy between the two. People have often said, "It is all very well to talk about Enoch 'walking with God,' but he had not half the trials, half the difficulties, that saints of God have in these days;" but that, beloved friends, is a very superficial view of the history of Enoch's times, as God has given it to us in His word. If you remember, the times of Enoch were simply these—he was surrounded by, and going through the midst of, a system of things that Satan has *improved upon* at the present moment; it was nothing less than Cain's world. Enoch lived in the midst of the world as Cain made it. I say Cain's world, and remember this,



we ought, when we speak of things, to speak of them as they are. God never made the world as we see it. He made the *earth*, but He never made the *world*, or *age*, as it really means. No one supposes that the ordered system of things round about us is the production of God's hand. *Satan* is the god and prince and head of that. God made the literal earth of course, but this ordered system of things that is round about us, where we see such terrible departure from God—God never made that, He is not the author of that. *Satan* has manufactured the ordered system of things that is around us, out of the total revolt of man. That is exactly what Cain's world was, in principle, in Enoch's days. Now there were two things that entered into the constitution of it. I will only just touch on them. There was a *religion*, and a *city*. Those were the two great constituent parts of that system of things in which Enoch lived.

There is a great fact embraced in those two things. Cain was the founder of a religion that disowned the claims of God in righteousness, seeing that man had fallen from God. He also overlooked the fact of the curse that had come in through that fall. A few words may not be out of place as to Cain's sacrifice. He brought to God of the fruit of the ground. It was not that he lacked in energy, or that he wanted in earnestness, or that the man was unruly. Cain toiled on the earth, and, though cursed, it yielded its fruit to him, and he brought the fruit of the earth that was cursed, as if there had been no curse at all, and offered it to God. Observe, beloved friends, and there is a great principle involved in this—the moment that the fall exists as a *fact*, as well as the utter departure of man from God in nature and in

practice, we can bring nothing acceptably to God except through the death of Christ; and the moment that we attempt such a thing, it may be unwittingly, we have fallen under the power of Cain's religion *in principle*. That which characterised and marked what I call the religion of which Cain was the inventor and founder, was bringing to God an offering, and doing it so as to deny the great principle, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." You can trace it in the history for yourselves.

Then, if you look at the *city*, it is exactly what we have all round us at the present moment. There was manufacture, there was the art of man cultivated to its greatest possible extent, ingenuity taxed beyond all conception, to produce something which would make the world, out of which God had been rejected, *bearable* to man. This was Cain's world. Herein lay its religious, political, and moral aspects.

Well now, it is a very blessed thing to find God calling out a man in the midst of a scene like this, surrounded as he was on all hands by that which disowned God; and it is a comforting thing, too, to our hearts, to find the Spirit of God giving us a record, such as you have in those verses in Genesis. With that state of things on every hand, right and left, here is a man that is called forth as a witness to the power of God, so far at least as it was known then, being *kept* in the midst of all that, and as it says, "walking with God." Beloved friends, it is exactly what you and I are called to in these days; we are called to "walk with God." I will tell you what very much struck me lately. I heard a beloved servant of God say that when he left this country, and went abroad, he came across

many of God's people who had gone out from England to settle there, and he asked them how it was they came out there. He got one reply from one, and another from another, but not a word that indicated to him in the least that there was anything like an exercise of soul before God as to *His* pleasure in the matter. And he said to one something like this—"Well, but I read in scripture that 'Enoch walked with God,' and I also read in scripture that God says, 'I will guide thee with mine eye.' What do you know of that?" Well, the only reply he got from several to whom he spoke after that fashion was simply an evasion of this direct appeal to their conscience. Now, beloved friends, all that is very serious; and here is the solemn part of it, these very people were not unintelligent people, they had a very good knowledge of dispensational truth; they understood the scripture, as God has given it to us, outwardly at least; they could tell you the bearing of certain parts of scripture, and so forth; but when it came to this practical question of individually "walking with God," and communion with God, and guidance by God's eye, and this principle of faith, which carries beyond circumstances to that blessed One who is up there in glory, they were completely, as is often said, at sea. I say that is very solemn, and I think that you and I have to be on the lookout. We have to take care, beloved friends, that our outward intelligence is not in advance of our personal communion with God. Be assured of it, the moment it comes to be so, Satan has got materials at hand with which he will make terrible havoc. The outward understanding of the things of God apart from this blessed question of personal "walking with God," is a weapon in the devil's

hands by which he will sow all sorts of seed, producing terrible results by-and-by, if we are not on our guard.

Well now, let us look at this blessed character, "walking with God." What does it involve? The first thing that must be clear in our souls is, as to whether our relationships with God are understood in our consciences. May I ask you now, Are the relationships which God has been pleased to bring His people into, as Christianity reveals them, are they understood by you in your souls? Is it all right, may I ask, between you and God, as to these relationships? Is there any cloud on these relationships, as between you and God, any unsettled question between you and God in any of these relationships? You perceive it is impossible to "walk with God" if this is not clear. It is no use speaking of "walk with God" if the relationships between me and God which He has been pleased both to form and to reveal, are not clearly entered into, and understood, and enjoyed. Or, supposing there is unjudged sin upon my conscience, how can I "walk with God?" It is folly to talk of it. Look at the bearing of that for a moment. Suppose a person with unjudged sin upon his conscience, takes his or her place in the assembly, that person is a member of the church of God, and walks in the outward expression of it; but look at the trouble that person brings in, and the weakness, and the difficulty. I do not believe we think enough of these things, and I believe you will find that they account to a great extent for the immense amount of feebleness and weakness that one finds amongst God's people. You see, the Lord puts it very clearly before us; He says, "Let a man so examine himself." You could not have any-

thing more intensely individual than that. He says further, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," that is, many die. Unjudged sin—sin tolerated in the assembly—was the thing that brought in trouble at Corinth. Of course that was a special instance, but the *principle* is the same; and if you come to the assembly of God now, if any of those comprising it have not got the joy, and the peace, and the satisfaction of their individual relationship with God, if that relationship is not clear and distinct, and further, if there is any evil unjudged or tolerated, there is sure to be weakness, and difficulty.

It is a wonderful thing to find how few there are who know that we are in *relationship* with God, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The utmost that many get to as to this question of relationship—it may appear strange to say so, but it is true—the utmost that a large number of Christians get to is, that they are *pardoned criminals*. That is the extent of it—*pardoned criminals*. I say it is a terribly solemn thing. How can I "walk with God" as His child, if I do not know my relationship? How can I "walk" with Him as a member of the body of Christ, if I do not know *that* relationship? and if all that pertains to the responsibility of that relationship is not maintained? All this enters into this question of "walking with God." The relationships in which my soul stands to God must be without anything that compromises them on my side. If this is not so, then there is trouble and difficulty.

Well now, there is another thing in connection with this "walking with God," which is exceedingly blessed. We see it in Enoch. He had but *one object*. I will say a word about that, because

it is most important. He had *one object* before him. Now you will always find that where there is this simple walking with God, there is this one object. There is the relationship enjoyed, there is the soul in the sense of this relationship, but besides this, there is an object. You will find it brought out most beautifully in Hebrews xi. in the end of that fifth verse. "Before his translation," (I will speak of that presently) "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." That was the one thing that was before him. Beloved friends, may I ask you affectionately, is that the one thing before you? Take everything in your life, take every circumstance in your history as a Christian, take everything that your hands are engaged in, your business relationships, your home relationships, your church relationships; is that the one thing that is simply before your heart? Is it this, that you want "to please God?" This is very searching. "He had this testimony," that is the most lovely communication that we can possibly conceive of, that before ever he left the world of Cain, with all the hindrances, all the attractions, that were in it, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." You see, the eye was entirely off everything but God; there was the one thing that commanded him and controlled every movement of the man, the intense desire "to please God."

You will notice a contrast, and a very beautiful one, between this and what is said of Abel. There you find that God testified "of his gifts." (Ver. 4.) It was there a question of the acceptance of an offering. Abel is an accepted man, and he brings the blood and the fat as an offering to God, recognising the claims of a holy God, and the ruin

in which Adam had involved the world. He brings and places the lamb between him and God in righteousness, a victim chargeable, so to speak, with all that pertained to the judgment; but there was the excellency of the sacrifice as well, for there was the fat. He brought the fat and the blood, and God bore witness to him of *his gifts*. But where it is a question of a man *walking with God*, the testimony was, "You have pleased me." It is a wonderful thing to have that testimony for myself, to have that divine secret between God and my own soul, that secret that nobody knows anything about but God.

But mark this, with a soul that has God before it, a soul that acts with reference to God, you may be always sure of this, there will always be the most thorough, complete, self-abandonment in everything. It is no good for persons to be saying they have God before them, when it is manifest that they have got *self* before them, in whatever form it may be. If I have God before me, if I am acting with reference to Him, if I see the One who is invisible, if I am thinking of pleasing Him, I have the testimony in my conscience that I please Him, and that keeps me up; it is a secret spring of satisfaction and joy in my heart that none else knows anything about. It is a blessed and wonderful thing, because it separates the affections of your soul from the ten thousand motives and influences that would act upon you, and puts before you just the One who should be the centre of your thoughts.

So that you see, "walking with God" at any time, in Enoch's day or now, whichever you take, embraces this blessed motive-power as the spring and source of everything—"I have now to please

but One." My eye is on that One; I consider what would be suitable to that One; I think only of that One. It is not a question of myself, or of what people would say about me; it is this one simple, blessed, wonderful thing, that I have *God* to please. "I have now to please but One!"

Look at all this in the path of the perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ, upon this earth. In Psalm xvi., where we see Him as a dependent man, we find Him saying, "I have set Jehovah *always* before me." What a thing for your heart and mine, if we set the Lord always before us! Think of what subduing power there would be in it! What a satisfying object! What a sanctifying influence it would have upon us, if there were just the simple reference to that blessed unseen object—the seeking Him out, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently *seek him out*." The meaning of it is, that He is set before the soul as an object for consideration before all others; that is the thought of the Spirit of God, "*seek Him out*." You place Him before your eye, and the affection of your heart beyond and above all others; and "He is the rewarder." What is the reward? Just this—the blessed consciousness that He gives your heart, as between Him and you, that you have *pleased* Him. The Lord give us, beloved friends, to know more of what it is to study His pleasure, to please Him! And while that will secure divine energy, it will also secure divine subduedness and restlessness; and this we need. There is enough of energy in all of us for *service*, but there is not restfulness for *communion*. That is a solemn point. There is energy enough to carry one hither and thither in service, but for *communion* there must be



rest and repose; the result of which blessed, passive, quiet condition of soul is having to do with that blessed One who is in heaven, and my heart kept and sustained by the fact that I have studied *His* pleasure, pleased *Him*.

Well, now, with reference to this "walk with God," this that characterised Enoch, this to which you and I are called now, what does it contemplate? I do want to say a little word, strongly and decidedly, yet affectionately, about this. What does it contemplate? This "walk with God" contemplates something as to the present, and something as to the future. What is it as to the present? Mark this—suffering, loss, shame, degradation, every step of the way! That is what is contemplated in a person who walks with God in an evil day: because it is not walking with God when the rule of everything is godliness, it is walking with God when everything is in revolt from Him. That is the character of the time, such as it was in Enoch's day. Therefore it is *suffering*, and I will tell you more than that, beloved friends, it is *self-abandonment*. Believe me, if there were a little more self-abandonment amongst us, many of our difficulties would vanish. Self-abandonment is God's way through difficulties. Look at the difficulties we have around us on every hand. Where do they come from? No doubt from the very contrary to self-abandonment. If it is a simple question of *God*, *His* claims, *His* pleasure, *His* interests, *His* thoughts, why the difficulties are overcome at once! And if God's will is sweetest to me, even though it triumphs at my cost, look how well out of the difficulty I am! We know the *doctrine*, I was going to say, beloved friends, too well. You understand what I mean. I do

honestly think it in my own soul, that many of us have never really thought of these things out on our knees before God. We are becoming *educated*, it is true, but it is the most deplorable thing in the world to imagine a set of people *educated* up to certain things. The tendency of the time is to have everything *easy*. You have everything now, as it were, chopped up for you, broken up so easily for you, and, worse than that, positively an attempt made to garnish and make attractive the things of God to the natural ken, and we are reaping the sorrow of it; because, instead of the truth having gone like an arrow into our consciences, right through our very souls, and ploughed us up, so to speak, so that we are overcome with a sense of the greatness, the wonderful greatness, of this truth of God, and are brought into the presence of God, feeling the very gravity of it—each thing has been accepted, as if there was nothing involved in it. That is simply what it is. People take things, and accept them, as if there were nothing involved in them. Just like a piece of history that is recorded for you in a clever book; you accept it, and believe it, it may be, but it puts you under no sense of responsibility.

Whatever is the tendency of the day is the danger of the church of God; whatever is the character of the time is a temptation to the saints of God. Well, the character of this time is to make everything as easy, and as smooth, and as possible for man as can be, to save him trouble, so that he may have everything with the least possible anxiety or care. But there is no royal road to learning in the school of God. The moment I enter that, there is no way for me to be schooled except

through my conscience. If my *conscience* is not reached by these things (and if it is not a question of my conscience before God, it is terrible work), there is no "walking with God," there is no divine sense of the greatness of these things. That is what you and I ought to have in our souls, and God has got but one avenue to reach the heart of fallen man, and that is through his conscience? and if the thing does not reach my heart through my conscience, I am not reached at all divinely. This is solemn indeed.

Now, just let me explain to you what I mean by "walking with God" *now*; and I shall address a word or two to those who are young in the things of the Lord to-night. I do not mean young in the sense of youth merely, but in the sense that recently only they have known the Lord, or taken His things as theirs. Alas! how little we have the sense of what the acceptance of divine realities will entail upon us. You cannot but observe, as a general rule, that the tendency is, in dealing with the truth of God, to make *something* of people, instead of making *nothing* of them. It is all wrong. There is some deficiency in the soul, and some lack in the heart, where that is the object put forward. The moment divine truth lays hold of me, the effect of it is to make *nothing* of me—not a *little*, but *nothing*; and not only so, but it brings home to me this fact, that I must *suffer* here in the midst of this world. I do not want to depress any one, or make any of you morbid, but I ask you seriously, did you ever entertain this question yourself, with reference to the wonderful place you are occupying, to which God has called you out? If I walk with Christ in that place, must it not somehow entail *surrender*? Have you ever so regarded it, beloved

friends? I say it with all reverence, I desire not to cherish one irreverent thought in my soul, but, looking at the pathway of the Lord Jesus as a man here, was He *successful* as a man? Was it not shame, scorn, contempt, reproach, loss, all the way from the holy mount to Calvary? Was it not *downward* with Him every step? Was it not surrender with Him: surrender, too, of what belonged to Him in right and title? He was very different from us. You and I have no right to claim, everything is pure grace with us: but with Him it was the abandonment and surrender of everything that belonged to Him, from the throne of God to the cross. Is that the pathway that you and I are called into? You see how little we weigh these things. I doubt, beloved friends, whether the oldest of us has ever sufficiently weighed them. There was a time, at the commencement of this blessed revival of God's truth, when men suffered for the reception and maintenance of it. That time has passed, and there is corresponding weakness and feebleness, because there is not the sense of the gravity of what the reception and maintenance of this truth entails upon the saint.

If I set out to follow One who had not a place where to lay His head, I *cannot* go on with this principle—trying to make the best of everything around; on the contrary, I seek to have as little as I possibly can in it; this I cannot help, if I am truly “walking with God.” Here, then, is what this path entails *now*, and I feel it important for me to state it this evening. I should not be the messenger of God to you if I did not state what is the conviction of my own conscience solemnly before God. If I set out to “walk with God” in these days, according to the revelation of His mind as

He has given it to me in Christianity and in His book, I make up my mind for this—this is the one thing that is before me—"It is enough for the servant to be as his master." I would rather see people shrink back; I would rather a person looked at it, and said, "This involves certain things in it; this brings certain claims with it; give me a little time, let me think of it, let me weigh it over before God, do not let me run rashly." I would rather see people like that, I would rather see them looking the thing, as it were, in the face, because I know when they do that, when they do bring the thing before God, in quiet waiting upon Him, He will, to a genuine, true, and honest soul, make known His mind; and, further than this, He compensates such an one *first*. That is what He does; He compensates. Do you mean to tell me that the sense that I have pleased Him is not a compensation? If I have that, I am compensated at once, even before I suffer, and God delights to do so when He sees the heart true and exercised before Him.

Oh, I feel that the *gravity* of these things is not sufficiently before our hearts in these days. It is not a small thing to step out of everything around me, that I may simply answer to the mind of Him who is up there. It is not a small thing, or a trifling thing, be assured. May God keep any of you from thinking it a light thing! May God keep your hearts from ever attempting to bring down the immense solemnity of a divine position to the poor, miserable, wretched, contemptible level of things down here, taking away all pith and reality out of it! It is the tendency of these times: I believe we are not outside the danger of it. I know we are seriously in danger of overlooking *state* of

*soul.* There is the danger of working upon the mere outward intelligence, instead of God working upon the soul through the conscience. May the Lord deliver us from this; it is most dangerous!

Well, now, there is one other thing. What is to be the issue of this "walking with God?" I have spoken a little about the *present*, what the *present* is connected with. It is, as I said, loss and suffering. I might speak of the other side of it, of the blessed reality of Christ's presence, of the sustenance of His love—how He cheers us on, how He walks the road with us, of the joy of being where He is: but I would rather leave the *gravity* of the thing on your heart. I do not think it any loss that you should have a sense of the *solemnity* of it.

What, then, is the end of it? It is this—just the very opposite to everything contemplated by a Jew in Old Testament times. A Jew looked for everything prosperous here, basket and store in abundance; he looked for everything being made straight to his hand as to the present. It was with him *plenty*, it was the increase of everything, plenty of corn and wine, plenty of everything this earth could afford—wealth, dignity, honour, ease. That was all perfectly well in its time; and was what a Jew looked for; it was his birthright, his inheritance here, and there was never a thought of being out of it—length of days, long life, was that which was before the Jew. But when I, as a Christian, look at this "walk with God," what is the issue of it? Look at it in Enoch. Is it just this—to be taken out of the world—it may be to-night! Do you believe that? Do you believe that the very next moment may be the cloud of glory? It is a subject that is common amongst us, this blessed

hope of the Lord's coming, the blessed expectation of our returning Lord. Think how little the reality of it is before us? I remember the time when I first of all "saw" the coming of the Lord, as the expression is—when I first of all believed in the second advent—what a wondrous brightness, and freshness, and vividness, there was about it. May I ask you, how is it *now* with you? What about *to-day*? Is the freshness with which it came to your heart, twenty, thirty, forty, or any number of years ago, that which is welling up in your soul now? Do you calculate just minute by minute with reference to that? Is that the *next* thing before your soul? Is that the expectation of your heart, that you should be translated, that you should not see death, like Enoch? "He was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him." There was a power of life in him that completely overcame the power of death, such a power of life as set aside death completely, the common lot of man since the fall.

Nothing shews me what the power of the redemption-work of the Lord Jesus Christ is like this—that there will be a people alive in the world who will not pass through death. So completely has His death been the answer to everything, that, in right of His prerogative, there will be a people alive when He comes who will not go through death. Do you believe, beloved, that to-night you might be caught up to the cloud of glory, "to meet the Lord in the air?"

The way that these blessed facts of God have become stale with us is this—because we have received them as *doctrines*, the doctrines of a well-framed creed. There is a solemn part of it—it

has become our *creed*. We are in danger, and no one, I trust, will feel hurt or grieved with me for saying this; I say it affectionately, I am in danger of it as much as you, I am in exactly the same position as you are yourselves, and therefore you need not be angry with me for saying it—we are just as much in danger of having our creed, and our “Thirty-nine Articles,” as anybody else. Do not be deceived about it; the instant that the divine freshness and living reality of these blessed truths of God pass away from our souls, so that all we can say of them is, “That is my *doctrine*, that is what I *hold*,” instead of their having a practical, operative, power upon us, searching us each moment—I say the instant that is the case, we go down, we have lost our standing, we have really dropped from the blessed, wonderful, divine power of these things, just to be, as somebody has expressed it, “as clear as the moon, and as cold as the moon.” What a mournful picture that is! The Lord keep us from it.

I have spoken to-night as I feel He would have me do, though feebly I know. I believe, if there is one thing we need in these times, it is “walking with God” *individually*. If you and I were walking individually with God, understanding what is entailed upon us now, and what we look for as the ultimate issue of it—to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and be with Him—we should banish the idea of trying to *get on* in the world, trying to surround ourselves with anything that would make us comfortable. How foreign the whole thing would be!

The Lord help us to look at ourselves in the light of His presence and His truth; that we may take it with us to-night; that our hearts may take these



things right home, and in the secret of His presence, in the solitariness and quietness of His company, go over the thing with Him, our hearts before Him, with this thought upon them—"Lord, really is it I?"

May the Lord command His blessing; may He use His word to stir up our hearts to more personal, individual, walk and fellowship with Himself, in the blessed hope of being taken out of this world, at any moment, to see Him, and be with Him for ever!

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## THE CHRISTIAN'S DWELLING PLACE.

PSALM XXVII. 4-6.

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I TAKE these verses, beloved friends, simply as the expression of the life of God in the soul. There is one thing that I think we do not sufficiently ponder over, and that is, that (if we are Christians) we have got a *divine principle* in us. I do not think that fact rests or dwells sufficiently in our souls. It is a marvellous thing to think that I have the life of Jesus. Do ever you think of that? The apostle says, in 2 Corinthians iv. (I quote this in order to shew you the scriptural nature of the expression) "we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." That is a wonderful thing! It is a wonderful thing to know that, as a Christian, not only is my conscience cleared and set at rest in God's presence, and that I have an uncondemning conscience, but that I have *life*, the *life of Jesus* in me. And I may say that it is a most solemnly momentous subject for all of us (and I merely throw it out now that it may rest upon our consciences and our hearts, mine as well as yours) as to how far that life is *operating* in you and me, how far that is the life that is *seen*. I do not want to turn the eye inward, but, beloved friends, it is necessary to think of this in these days, when *depth* and *reality* are little thought of, and when there is very little

sense at all of the dignity, the blessedness, the greatness, of being a vessel in which this blessed life is deposited. Therefore, I simply throw that question out now in passing, as a matter of exercise for your conscience and mine. Take for instance, *to-day*: because we have to do with plain things and homely things. How much has that life been seen and manifested in the details of your life to-day? It is a very searching thing to think of it. How much do you live in the power of that life in the things you pass through, or how much proceeds merely from the energy of your own nature? I feel it good for us to be called up. Oftentimes, when I think of it myself, I am arrested by its solemnity, it calls me up, and I have to go to God about it.

I take these verses, then, simply for this reason, that here we get brought out the normal character of the life of God in us—this blessed, divine principle that is in us. Here is the simple, normal character of it. “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” That, I say, is the simple, normal position of a Christian, of a person that has this life in him.

Now, of course, I suppose, and take for granted that your souls are thoroughly at rest, and completely established as to the great foundation facts and resting-place of Christianity. As long as ever there are unsettled questions between your heart and conscience and God, it is out of the question to talk about these things. If your conscience is not at rest, and if your soul is not settled on the grand foundation that God puts under His children’s feet, of course there is no use in talking about this—you are not in a position to entertain

it. And that is what one finds every day. It is wonderful how few there are whose consciences and souls are established, really and thoroughly, upon the blessed groundwork of Christianity. I do not mean to say that people have not got thus far, that they know that if they were to die, it would be all right with them; but that is a very poor thing. It would be a very great thing, a wonderful thing, if it were all that God had given; but if it is only the very *beginning* of what God has done for us, then I say it is a miserable subterfuge of Satan when he comes and takes a thing that is *preliminary*, and makes everything of it. That is really what goes to make up the history of things about us at the present moment, that the very simplest starting-point of Christianity, the commencement of all, should be made everything of, and that the centre of the circle around which my thoughts, and affections, and feelings, and desires, should revolve, from one end of the year to the other, should be *myself*. That is what is really the case. You may think it seems a little strong to say it, but it is the truth. The truth is that people all round about us never get beyond *themselves*, never.

Now I take it for granted then—the Lord grant it may be so in truth and reality—that such is not the case here. Surely one ought not to expect it in a place like this. *You* ought, at any rate, to know what it is to be *brought to God*. Is that too much to expect in this place? It is not merely that certain things have been *brought to you*, that is not the question; but that you are *brought to God*, and introduced into the relationship which God delights to bring His children into in the Son of His love before Him, setting them down in the

acceptance, and perfectness, and fulness, of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His own presence. I do not think it is taking too much for granted (it ought not to be) that your souls know what that is. Let us, then, go *from* that point. I take it that all that is an established fact, and I go *from* that.

Now all this being the case, what goes to make up my life here? You see there are two things that are connected with it. The first is that we have in verse 4, and that is, that I have one simple absorbing and commanding object before my affections. "One thing." It is the simple expression of a heart that has but one motive, one object; in other words, it is what the Lord refers to when He speaks of "a *single* eye." "Let thine eye be single," that is, an eye taking in but one object. I have but one object, one commanding object before me, and what is it? Mark this, "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life"—that I may *dwell* there. Of course I pass over the fact that this is a Jewish figure, such as would necessarily be found in the Psalms. We find there all that which was connected with the Jew, the tabernacle, the temple, the place of God's own immediate presence, where the Shekinah was, and so on. I pass over that; and I take it simply as an illustration, a most beautiful and exquisite instance, of how the life of God, this divine principle in a soul, whether we find it in the Old Testament or the New, *returns to its source*. I do not care what the time may be, this blessed principle, this divine principle that is in us, this new life, *always*, where the soul is simple, such as you have unfolded here, *returns to its source*. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may *dwell* in the house of the

Lord all the days of our life." May I ask you, Is that the desire uppermost in *your* heart? How much does it operate in *your* affections? What is the one thing that you desire and seek after? We have to speak to one another *personally*, beloved friends, about these things. What then, is the one thing that you desire and seek after? Well, you say, I seek after salvation, and I seek after safety, and I seek after deliverance from wrath and judgment, and I seek after the things of God. But is *this* the thing that is in your heart, the thing that you *seek after*, is it the continuous *abiding*, and *dwelling*, in the house of the Lord? Because, you see, it is this which alone gives *character*. You may depend upon it, the place where you live is the place that gives you character.

We often hear the expression "heavenly." Well, no person can be "heavenly" unless he *lives* in heaven. The fact is, we all of us have too much the tendency to put off heaven until we die. We think of it as the place where God is, and where Christ is, and it is the resource for us when we leave this world, when we leave our bodies behind us. When we cannot live any longer here, we go to heaven. Or, it may be, if you advance a little upon that, when a person has everything blighted and ruined down here, and there is not a single thing left, then he turns to heaven. It is like a person taking refuge from the storm, and when the storm is over, coming out again to enjoy the things around. Is that the case with you and me, beloved friends? That is the natural tendency and feeling of our hearts. We have, very poorly, if at all in our souls, the thought of continuously *abiding* in that wonderful place, where God is free

to express Himself in all the infinite fulness of His love to us. He does not express Himself to us *here*. He gives us His care, His sympathy, His help, His cheer, His solace; He takes us by the hand, and leads us along the way, every step of the journey: but He does not *express* Himself to us here. He does *there*, that is the difference. That is what I feel, beloved friends, that we want, every one of us in these days, a more habitual dwelling in the house of the Lord. You may depend upon it, we should be a different kind of people altogether if we *dwelt* there. It is not *visiting* there, it is not running there for shelter out of the storm, but I will tell you what it is, it is knowing it as *home*, with all the joys of home. Do you know what they are? Home! It is not being driven there through sheer necessity, but it is the attractiveness of it that draws us there. What do you know of the attractions of that blessed One who is up there? You see, it is not a doctrine, nor a theory, but it is a divine, living, adorable, blessed, transcendent *Person* for our affections. It is a Person who has an attractiveness peculiar to Himself, and one who throws this attractiveness, and blessedness, and beauty, connected with Himself, around the affections of my heart. It is not, as I said, that I am driven by mere necessity from all the things that are round about me here, but I am *attracted* by the beauties and blessedness and glories of that scene where Christ is everything to God, and where God delights to express Himself in all His fulness. There is the spot I long more to dwell in, to live in, to abide in; that is the place I desire to know as my *home*, and that is the "one thing" the psalmist speaks of here. To me it is a beautiful instance of the expression of this divine

life in a person, the life of God—"One thing have I desire of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may *dwell* in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

Now I see all this in its perfection in Christ as a man. We get it in that beautiful passage, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man"—who *was* in heaven. Is that it? No. "Who is in heaven." Take Him as a man (He was the mighty God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, as well) as the perfect man, He who walked that magnificent, blessed, shining pathway, that we have tracked out for us in the gospels, and which, by the Holy Ghost, we can read and think over, and delight in. Was it not this continuous, blessed, wonderful communion, intercourse with all that belonged to that blessed place from whence He came, that so marked His way? As He said, "I know whence I came, and whither I go." There was all that blessed distinctiveness and separateness about His walk here. Is there in our measure that about *us*? In walking along every day, are *we* like people who know whence we come and whither we go? Is that the thing which day by day is telling itself out in your business, in your home, in your intercourse one with another, in your families? What I am speaking of is a *practical* thing. It goes down into the most minute circumstances of our daily life. There is to be this blessed testimony stamped upon it, that I "*dwell in the house of the Lord,*" that "*I know whence I came and whither I go.*" What a thing that would be in our souls! What sort of people should we be if there were that distinctiveness, and divine power, about us, and divine life, and divine satisfaction and rest!



Look at the Lord Jesus Christ again, as a man. It was not that there were not all the genuine feelings of a man, and, as to His Father, perfect obedience, perfect dependence, but at the same time there was perfect rest, in all the fulness and blessedness of a perfect man going through this world. Everything was met in that way. So you find it in a most exquisite and beauteous passage in Matthew xi. where, as you know, every single thing was against Him. Everything had failed that pertained to Him as a man. John doubted Him, the cities where His mightiest works were done had rejected Him. There was not a single bright spot, not a solitary thing that could meet His heart as a man. What does He say? "I praise thee, bearing witness to thee, O Father." Such is the true rendering of that beautiful verse 24, and there we see the blessed, wonderful perfection of this blessed man down here in this world, surrounded by everything that was adverse to Him, and a distinctiveness that pertained to the place whence He came and whither He went. He was the Son of man who *is* in heaven, but there was the manifestation of all that *down here*.

Well, beloved friends, we are called to the same thing, and where this divine life is operative in our souls, we find just what we get here, "One thing have I desired, that will I seek after, that I may *dwell* in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." The Lord awakes the sense of that in your souls! We need all of us to have the sense of it created, formed, quickened, in our souls. What a wonderful thing it would be if you and I here this evening had the stamp of it more upon us! What a power, a silent, blessed power, we should be in this world! It would be said of us, "They are a

people that are living in the midst of the sorrows of earth, in all its pressures, and difficulties, and troubles, but all these things only serve to bring out this blessed life of Jesus in their mortal bodies. They dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of their life."

Well, that is the first thing, the habitual, abiding, resting-place of the heart. I ask you and myself again—the Lord help us to look at it seriously—how much have our minds been there *to-day*? That is the question. How much have our hearts been there *to-day*? How searching it is! How it challenges one's heart! People often say, "Thank God, I am outside the whole thing through which I am moving." Exactly. "Outside of it," but *how*? In your body, it may be, but is your *spirit* in it, are your *thoughts* in it? Ah, that is another question. You see, many a person is outside the world in that way, as a matter of profession; but if my spirit is entangled with it, or my thoughts engrossed in it, or my affections centred in it, I am not *dwelling in the house of the Lord*. I may be able to say, "I do not go into this or that," but are my *thoughts* in any way in it? It is a very searching thing. You see nothing can possibly keep your heart separate unless you are sustained at the spring and source from whence your life comes. That life, if it is not sustained at its source, and gratified at its source, and attracted to its source, is a sickly, feeble thing. I do not mean the thing itself is sickly, but there are hindrances of all sorts that prevent the *manifestation* of it.

I am very much struck with that expression in 2 Corinthians iv., "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." I have no doubt there is an

intended analogy here to what we read about Gideon's army. There were two things there, first, the light was put into a pitcher, and secondly, the pitchers were broken. It was not merely the breaking of the pitcher, but the light was put into it to shine out brightly when the pitcher was broken. It is a wonderful thing that God puts this treasure into an earthen pitcher, such a breakable article. He does place a light in it; but then observe the other thing: He breaks the pitcher, and when the pitcher is broken, the light shines out. Now, *I* have not to break the pitcher, blessed be God for that. That is God's part; but when He breaks the pitcher—and be assured of it He will do so—if you are walking with God, you are certain to be in His mind when He breaks the pitcher, and take care that you do not place something else in the way, to prevent the shining of the light. That is where the hindrance is to be feared.

But that which would give me power and freshness in all these things would be this—*dwelling* in the house of the Lord. *Dwelling* there; there I am sustained, qualified, fitted for Him. I have divine ability, divine power, divine rest, divine freshness. I can face the storms here. What is the effect of these storms? They only bring out the *power* of this *rest*, the rest that we have in the place where God delights to manifest Himself to us. That is heaven *now*, not heaven only when I die. It is heaven *now*; and, beloved friends, I ask you, would you not like to know a little more of Him before you die? Would you not like to be a little more acquainted with that Jesus with whom you are going to spend eternity? Would you not like to say, “I live with Him *now*, from day to day, in the

midst of all the difficulties and trials that belong to this poor world, and through them, I am better *acquainted* with Him, I know Him now, and I have communion with Him, and joy in Him, in that wonderful place where He is free to come out and receive me, and where I am free to go in?" God can come out in the perfection of His love, and I can go in in the perfection of His righteousness. God dwells there, and I dwell there. Just think of it, that He does not consider anything commensurate with the expression of His own heart in the redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ; He regards nothing sufficiently large to express what He thinks of that redemption, except this, that I am to *dwell* in the house of the Lord! The Lord help us to *dwell* there, to know it as our home, the resting-place of our souls, our "sweet retreat," where we have true and real communion?

That, then, is the first thing. Now look at the other for a moment. For what purpose are we to *dwell* there? To get out of the storm? No. Out of difficulties? No. Out of the exercises and trials that we are in here? Not a word about it. What is it, then? Just this, "to behold the beauty of the Lord." Just think of what that is, I go there to behold His beauty. One object fills the vision of my soul there, attracts the affections of my heart there, "His beauty." I love to think of that, beloved friends, for this reason, it is *like* God to give me a motive *in Himself*, outside of all the wretched, miserable, selfish things that obtain round about me here. I behold *Him*, in the place where I dwell.

Now just think what a wonderful thing it is "to

behold the *beauty* of the Lord." It is not merely to escape from the difficulties that are here, the troubles, and exercises, but to go there for His own sake. There is a beauty, there is an excellency, a virtue, an attractiveness, a glory, connected with that place, which I behold, and I never really know what it is until by faith I see it. Beloved friends, a little bit of that would distance all here in the world! A little beholding of the beauty of the blessed One in those wondrous regions would turn the brightest scene on this earth into a poor and contemptible thing to our hearts. You see, we learn everything by *contrast*. A person who knows what it is to see Christ where He is, is the one who thinks very little of earth. He can turn his back upon it; there is nothing in it that is suitable or congenial to him. He can say, The very scene where God Himself is, is the place where I desire to abide, and where I long to gratify myself.

I ask you this question to-night: Suppose an angel were to come down into this world; do not you think he would move through it in a different way from what you and I do? Do not you think (if you could conceive such a thing), that a messenger from God, one of those blessed created intelligences that stand before God, coming down into this world, would move through it (though he might have something to do for God, and from God, in it) as one who was entirely apart from its principles, its maxims, its habits, its ways, its attractions? You *know* he would. Now, beloved friends, an angel is not what you and I are. An angel is not a member of that body of which Jesus glorified is the Head. An angel is not a son of God, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with

Christ. An angel could not say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." An angel does not belong to that which Jesus esteems His body and His bride, that which will be with Him to behold His glory. Is there nothing that touches your heart in all that? To think that God passed angels by, and that He came into this smallest of all worlds, and took out of it a contemptible, miserable, wretched people, to exhibit in them the principles of His grace, and the life of His Son; that He has taken us up in grace and made us positively members of Christ, uniting us to Him in glory, thus separating us from this scene altogether, and then as it were sends us back into it, to exhibit the maxims and principles of the place to which we belong! It is wondrous!

Do we act like this? Do we touch things like people from another country? Do we move through things like people from another place? Do we impart the savour of that place to all whom we meet? I feel how little, beloved friends, there is of that place about us, and how much there is of the world allowed in us. I am humbled when I think, as I do constantly, how many things there are about us all from day to day which savour of that which we profess to be entirely taken out of; and how little manifestation there is of this blessed new principle, new place, new home, new rest, new delights, which God has brought us into. Look at the *young*, for instance—look at the state many of the young are in, many of the children of God's people—attracted by the most contemptible, miserable things that are to be found here in this poor world. If there had only been the smallest taste, the feeblest taste, of the joys, and beauties, and blessedness, and glory of that scene where

Christ is, it would make them despise, as beneath their notice, the counterfeits, and miserable, wretched, vanishing things that the devil hangs out here as his wares to attract.

I feel it is a solemn thing, and what I especially feel is this, that those of us who are older are not able practically to display a better picture ourselves. That is indeed most solemn! It is all very well to say, "Look at the young;" but what do *we* shew them? Can you and I say to them, "Look on me, and as I do, so do you?" I know you will suffer a word from me, beloved friends. God knows how I have gone through all this in my own heart, and I am taking my place with you to-night about these things. I feel how little, deep down in one's soul, one has got the sense of living up there where *He* is. If you are not *from* Him, and *of* Him, you will never be *for* Him. We are, blessed be His name, *of* Him, and *from* Him. The Lord, by His Spirit, write the sense of that in your heart this evening!

Now, if Christ rebukes me by His word, it always puts me into company with Himself. You and I might rebuke one another, and the effect would be to separate us, but not so with Him. If *He* touches my conscience, it brings me into His presence, and attracts me to Himself. May it be thus with all of us this evening!

I dwell, then, in the house of the Lord, and I behold His beauty. There is another thing in that verse, "to inquire in his temple." Now, without the slightest pretension to scholarship, I may say that the strict meaning of the Hebrew words is, "to meditate with joy in his temple." That is, I believe, the literal force of those words in the

original language. "To meditate with joy."  
 "One thing have I desired, to *dwell*, to *behold*, and to *meditate with joy*."

This latter is greatly on my heart; for I do not believe that with any of us there is sufficient meditation. We read, that is quite true; and a great many people (I hope none will misunderstand me) satisfy their consciences, when the first of the month comes round, if they read all the periodicals. I am saying what I know to be true. But I am assured that this kind of thing is most damaging; and nothing will contribute to lower the tone of things amongst us more than this, if our hearts lose the sense of the intrinsic, blessed, wonderful nature of that book that is in your hand and mine at this moment—I mean the word of God. There is nothing that has impoverished the souls of God's saints more than when the effect of all the blessed things that God has given has been blunted by the bringing in of man's work. I believe that Satan has been especially watchful in this way. Those who walk with God know it well. The way by which he seeks to turn aside the edge, and shaft, and power of the word of God is by a sort of wile. It is not by throwing any open contempt upon the scripture. It is not done in that way; but if he can get our thoughts or affections absorbed and occupied with anything else, though it may relate to, or bear upon, the word of God, he has thoroughly succeeded, and he has ensnared us in the wile. Why, you know that the very best thing that any servant of God, or saint of God, could communicate to God's people concerning that blessed book must be as nothing compared with the words that are spoken in it; and therefore, you may depend upon it, that you and I



suffer in our souls if we do not learn what it is to meditate on God's revelation and communications, and if we know nothing of that blessed Person who is the subject, object, theme, and delight of God, whose name, and person, and excellencies, run, like a golden thread, through all this wonderful revelation of God. How can we go on without it? If you and I do not learn what it is to "meditate with joy," and to dwell upon all that God has been pleased to unfold to us about Christ then what we suffer from is, that, though we may have our heads thoroughly well-informed about doctrines, we are almost like pieces of lifeless clay. We may be a people of outward intelligence, of doctrine, of understanding as to certain things, with a well-arranged creed, and all that, but not one single sign of living freshness, power, or energy from God. The Lord enable us by His Spirit, to get more alone with Himself!

If there are any I feel for more than others, it is those of God's people who are engrossed in business, and who have to spend their time in the midst of all the bustle, and excitement, and turmoil of business life, with little leisure from it. We do not feel enough for one another as to this, beloved friends. It is wonderful how little we care for one another in this way—how little we feel for one another. We are becoming so intensely individual, so isolated, as it were. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," is the scripture thought about it; but how much do you and I? How often do we pray for one another? How much do we carry one another upon our hearts before God? There are many of God's people that are engaged in business, and with all our hearts we should feel

for them, seek to help, strengthen, and sustain them in the tremendous rush and confusion that they go through every day; because there must be a loss, a positive loss, to the soul of any one who has not time to enjoy solitariness, and meditation, and communion with God. I cannot see how it is possible to get on without it. The Lord help us to understand the meaning of that word, "To meditate with joy in his temple!" "I desire to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate with joy in his temple." Such is the simple, normal exercise of the life of a Christian.

Just one word on what comes afterwards. Observe, now you get to "trouble"—"for in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion." Now you know, beloved friend, *we* should have put all that has gone before in connection with the "trouble." We should naturally say, "How beautiful it is to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold His beauty, and to inquire in His temple, when everything is withered all around." But that is not the way God puts it. He puts all that before us as the natural normal exercise of the life of God in us. Then what about trouble? Ah, we need not disturb ourselves about that! "In the time of trouble *he* will hide me in his pavilion." If my continual desire is to dwell in the house of the Lord, then in trouble I *rest*, "He hides me." That is exquisite, every word of it! "In the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion." What could you have better than that? "In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me." When trouble or difficulty comes, I am not running about to see how I can get out of it, but there I am, resting and quiescent, and *God* is active. *He* hides

me, *He* upholds me, *He* undertakes for me in the time of trouble. He hides me, and sets my feet upon a rock.

And mark that there is not as yet *deliverance* in this verse. It is not "in time of trouble God will come in, and take me out of it," but "he will *hide* me." It is not "he will quiet the winds and waves"—not a word about it. It is not generally His way, beloved friends. It was His way always with Israel. Jesus shewed Himself to be perfect man when He slept upon the pillow while the waves were roaring around Him, and shewed Himself to be God when He commanded those waves to subside. God opened the rock to supply His people with water, He sent down manna from heaven to feed them, He divided the waters for them to pass over, but that is not His way now, not the rule of His action now. It was the rule of His action once; that is, He operated upon the elements for His people of old; but He does not do that now. He carries us in His power. He *hides* us. It is not that He removes the difficulty but He gives me superiority to it, His own power carries me through it. He hides me in His pavilion. Think of that for a moment! Do you think the person is to be pitied who is in trouble, if Jehovah hides him in His pavilion? It is *worth* the trouble to be hidden of God, to be hidden in His pavilion, in the secret of His presence.

Now we come to *deliverance*, and that is the last thing. All that I have been speaking of is not *deliverance*, but now we have it. "And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer *in his tabernacle*, sacrifices of joy." Mark that the believer is never out of the dwelling-place of God. He dwells

there, that is where the life of God, this blessed principle in us, abides. You must work it all out more fully for yourselves; I have only just given you the outline of it.

You will find all this portrayed to perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect man, who manifested all the perfections of a man before God in this world as He walked through it. If you take His life, you will find to perfection those things that are unfolded here. He was "the Son of man who *is* in heaven." In trouble in this world, in difficulties, He hid Himself behind the will and pleasure of His Father. "I thank thee, and I bear witness to thee," as we have already had this evening; and farther on, after He had gone through that terrible judgment upon the cross, then He praises! "In the midst of the congregation will I sing praises unto thee." It is exactly the same thing in principle, and in our measure, to which we are called. It is the same life, the same dwelling-place, the same God! I know nothing more wonderful than the way God can sustain a man who has this blessed life in him, when everything is against him, as it is with you and me as Christians in this world. There is not a single thing connected with this scene that is not a hindrance. It is a blessed thing to find that out, and to find out, too, that our only secret of safety is in dwelling in the house of the Lord.

I was much interested the other day in reading Exodus xvi. and xvii. There you see that two things went to make up the history of the people through the wilderness—feeding and resisting. There was the manna that came down from heaven to keep them, and there was the resistance. That is exactly what makes up the life of a Christian.

Christ sustains us ; He is the bread of our souls, sustaining this new life that is in us, and we dwell with Him in that blessed place where He is, beholding His beauty, our eye satisfied with the delights of that place. Thus I can resist the pressure of things around. What do I care for all the beauty here if I can be satisfied with Him? If I behold His beauty, do you think I am allured by the beauty here? And, further, if I “meditate with joy in his temple,” I am hidden when trouble comes, and I praise Him.

The Lord instruct us by His Spirit! May He be pleased to use the simple things I have spoken to make you read the word of God more for yourselves. That is the true object of ministry, to bring hearts back to the word of God, with a fresh appetite for it. May God grant that we may have that appetite created, where it is not existing already, and strengthened where it is now, it may be, feeble and drooping; so that we may indeed be able to say, “I have esteemed the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food!”

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## SEPARATION. DEPENDENCE. SUFFERING.

DANIEL I., II. 13-23; III. 12-30.

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I HAVE one definite object, beloved brethren, in my mind, in referring to these scriptures this evening. I am not going to touch the history itself, nor the circumstances connected with it, but I simply want to bring out the great principles which are connected with the history of this *remnant* of God's people—which they were in their day—principles which, I submit, have passed down to us as being the very principles by which God would characterise His people in these days. It is very interesting when you find certain great *principles* of God running through His word at all times. Of course the peculiar circumstances of Christianity in which our lot is cast, and the new and blessed position that we have been brought out into, in connection with Christ glorified at God's right hand, intensify these principles, but they themselves remain the same; and I take a history like this in the book of Daniel, because I think it serves as an illustration suitable to us all, and especially to those who are younger (for I have them much on my mind to-night), to bring out the grand, and blessed, and wonderful position, privilege, and power, that is ours by grace, in order that we may be *for* Christ in these days.

Now, first of all, you will notice this, that there is an immense analogy between the times of Daniel and those we are in. There is a verse in Isaiah

xxxix. I would just refer to for a moment. It contains a prediction of the fact that we get here, namely, that the days were to come when the nation of Israel itself would be prostrate, which was exactly the case in the days of Daniel, and referred to in this history. The nation was to be, as it were, at the feet of a foreign power, and the very pick of Israel, the very flower of the nation, were to be eunuchs, and serving in the palace of the king of Babylon. That was the prediction of the prophet Isaiah long before these times—God's warning voice to the nation. In Daniel i. you will find it word for word accomplished. The nation of Israel was paralysed, it was broken up, so to speak—thoroughly prostrated. Jehovah had retired from directly dealing with the earth, and every single thing was in the power of the king of Babylon.

This is exactly what you will find *in principle* as to the times we are in just now. What has taken place? Simply this—that which God set up here to be a witness for Himself on this earth, out of which His own Son has been rejected, has gone to pieces in the responsibility of man's hand. That is what is meant by the ruin and confusion that is all round about is. It is a complete wreck. If you look at the thing that God set up here in the earth to be *for* Him, what is it? What has it become? I am not speaking now, remember, of that which belongs to Christ—belongs to God—which nobody can touch; that is genuine and true: but I am speaking of that which was committed to the responsibility of man; and if you have never yet seen the difference between that which the Holy Ghost builds, the true, and real, and genuine thing for God, and that which was committed to man in

responsibility as a builder, you have got a great deal to learn. There is that which God builds, and there is that which man builds. Well now, when I look out all around me, I see that which was entrusted to the responsibility of man to build, and the consequence is that, like everything else that man has had in responsibility, it has gone to pieces.

And that is the difficulty with souls to-day. You see really inquiring, anxious, intelligent, true minds, finding an immense difficulty when they look out, and see the confusion that is all around; and, let me say this, sometimes I fear we do not help them. For are we not very prone to be forgetful of the fact that we have our share in the ruin which has been perpetrated by man as a builder? We give them, I fear, the idea that we are *reconstructing* something that is to take the place of the confusion. I am sure that if you have got that in your soul you will always be feeble as to the maintenance of the truth of God. It is an immense thing to understand clearly and distinctly what things have become in man's hand, and what God's principles for His people in such a day are. Now I want to speak as simply about that as I can, and to point out to you this evening what these principles are, simply and plainly.

Now the first thing that marks a feeble remnant who are a witness for God in days of confusion, and ruin, and wretchedness all round about, is exactly what you find in the character of these "children," as they are called here in this Daniel i. And what is that? Just this—intense distinctness and *separateness* for God. That is the first thing. Here are a few, a feeble few, a little handful, so to speak—less than a handful; here are three or four men, poor, weak things, but there is the distinct-



ness of their Nazariteship and separation to God fully acting in their hearts. Nothing will induce them to break that separation.

Now, beloved friends, let me say to you this evening, that kind of thing has become very feeble with us. Is our Nazariteship kept intact? Is our separateness to God preserved? Have we *refused* what the world offers? You can fill up the details for yourselves. I ask earnestly, have you refused to "pollute" yourselves? Have you refused to compromise, not only God and Christ, but the truth of God? Have you refused, at loss and cost to yourselves, to compromise the truth of God, and the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, in days like these? That is the question. I believe the great question that God is raising amongst us is the question of our Nazariteship. Are we separate? And never forget that inward separateness of spirit produces outward separateness of walk and testimony. That is the very first question for each one—Am I inwardly separate? It is an *individual* question, though, of course, it passes into what is *collective*. You cannot raise the collective state unless the individual state is right first. The reason of our weakness corporately is our weakness individually, because it is the individuals that go to make up the corporate thing.

I ask you to-night, beloved friends, does each individual here who is a member of Christ's body, each one who, by faith in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, belongs to Christ—I ask, have we the sense of the distinctness which pertains to us as being set apart by that blood unto God, as those who are "elect according to the knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

Christ?" Is there among you the sense of what it is to be a *member of Christ*? It is not a question of being *saved*. People say, "I am not afraid to die: I am not afraid of going to hell: I expect to go to heaven when I die." Ah, but there is a great deal more than that, if you are a Christian. Let me tell you this evening, if you are a Christian, you are a *member of Christ*, united to that blessed One in heaven, that glorified Man at God's right hand, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I say it is a wonderful thing to know I am a member of Christ. Just think of it for a moment! Why it separates me at once, the moment that it gets hold of my soul. Think of being united to Christ in glory! Beloved friends, the measure of His separation must be the measure of those who are one with Him. There can be no contradiction as to this. If I am united to that blessed One who is at God's right hand in the heavens, if I am a part of Christ, I belong to that which is the complement of Christ. You see I pass now from the individual to the collective; if I belong to that which the Spirit of God speaks of as "the fulness of him who filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23), I have my separation marked out for me at once. It is not, "*May* I do this, or *may* I do the other?" but I have the distinctiveness of my position, and my separateness, marked out at once for me; there can be no mistake as to it.

You know very well what the separateness of Christ was here. Look at His path as a man down here in this world of sin and sorrow. Look at that beautiful, wonderful, isolated, separated pathway through this world. Trace it from the manger, where He was ignominiously laid at His birth, because "there was no room for him in the inn," down to the cross. Look at the separateness of it,

the holiness of it, with Him the divinity of it! But mark what He says—"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." Think of that! You see, we have not the sense of these things. I feel it in my own soul, I am often compelled to say, Blessed God, is it true that I am not only united to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, but I have as distinct a mission on this earth as He had from Thee! Oh, it is wonderful! I do believe in my soul, and I speak what I believe to-night, that it is in this question of Nazariteship that we are feeble. I believe *that* is the point of our departure; there is not this distinctness, there is not this divine, thorough, complete separateness to God. Look at Daniel. He "would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat." He would not touch it. But what people say is this—"Ah, that was a wonderful thing, but the Providence of God so ordered that Daniel was in those circumstances." Just exactly as they say about Moses: "The Providence of God so ordered it that Moses grew up to be the reputed son of Pharaoh's daughter. There never was a more distinct case of providence than that." I do not deny it for a moment; but, beloved friends, do you think I touch that? Do you think I say one word against that? God forbid. But I am speaking of a thing that does not relate to the Providence of God at all.

The Providence of God is always blessed; but when I come to a principle that is to actuate me on *my* side, that is not Providence—it is *faith*, another thing altogether. And it was on that principle that this man Moses acted; as soon as he came to years, as soon as he passed out of childhood into the maturity of years, that divine prin-

ciple of *faith* asserted itself in him. "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. That is exactly the very principle manifested here in the case of Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. It is beautiful to look at them. Their names were changed; the king called them by other names, to obliterate from their hearts, if he could, all remembrance of the land of Israel, and the Jehovah of Israel. Every sort of thing that could be brought to bear upon them was tried, to efface, if possible, any little lingering trace of their connection with the people of God, and the Jehovah of Israel.

For myself, when I look at it, beloved friends, all this is most blessed. Here is this first principle, this blessed principle, living and dwelling in the heart of Daniel and of his three friends: "He would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat," and he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Now it would be entirely outside my present purpose, and I will say quite unsuitable for me, to refer to the details of this great principle as it applies to you. We, beloved friends, are better able to do that than we would fain persuade ourselves. People are fond of saying, "Well, how does that apply to me?" and so forth; and they feel all the time that it applies to them more closely than they like: all the while conscience is wincing under the application of it. So that I do not mean to go into details, but I simply press this first great principle as an *individual* principle, applicable to everyone of us in our individual character before God, and applicable to us in our corporate relationships as well. This is the first thing for each of us—have

we kept and preserved, and are we keeping our Nazariteship intact? Have I refused to pollute myself with the portion of the king's meat? That is the first thing.

Observe what comes after that. It is exceedingly blessed for us to remember it in these days, as an encouragement and comfort to our hearts. That which follows the preservation of their separation to God is this—God marks His appreciation of it by giving these men wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge. That is the way He marks it. And, beloved friends, let me say this to-night—there is not one who can contradict it, it is impossible to gainsay the fact—that what at first characterised the feeble few (that is the only way I would speak of them) to whom God was pleased to make known His mind in these last times, and who have escaped, through mercy, out of the corruptions of Christendom all around, to know the simplicity of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holiness of that name, was understanding and knowledge of God's mind, in a word, divine intelligence. Does that characterise them now? That is the question. It was not *work* that characterised them in former days. I hope nobody will be offended with me for saying this—it was not *activity* which made them remarkable. There is where *our* danger is; there is where we are feeble, beloved friends. We have practically lost our *separateness*, and we have correspondingly practically lost the premium that God puts upon it, and we are obliged to make up for it by a sort of pretentious display of activity before men. You know perfectly well that is the tendency, and that is what catches the young especially. They are caught by it; it has a certain amount of attractiveness about it, and I will tell you

why. A round of continued activity, a series of perpetual evolutions of that kind, is a sort of quietus to the exercise of the soul. There is no time for thought, no time for heart-searching, little time for meditation or prayer. It is a most wonderful thing : and I repeat it again, I do not in the least feel that I am going over old ground—I say it is sorrowful how little we pray ; it is sorrowful how little people read the word of God, how little they meditate. I am sure our prayer-meetings are humbling at times. Why is it so, beloved friends ? What is the reason of that ? Why is it that there is so little real waiting of soul upon God ? Why so little dependence upon Him ? Why is it one finds so few hearts that are burdened ?

Now let us ask you this as a practical question : How much to-day have you prayed for the church of God ? How much have you prayed for the saints of God ? and how much do you pray every day of your life ? How much is it upon your heart as a *burden*, because it relates to the interests of *Christ* and the glory of *Christ* ? How much do you seek solitude with God, and retirement with Him and long to be at home with God, to shut the world out, and yourself in, that you may be there with God about those wonderful interests of Christ, because you have got communion with His mind about that which is so dear to Him on this earth ? I tell you the *lack* of all this is simply the result of the want of *separation* ; and it is not merely a person being separated *outwardly*. It is possible for saints to satisfy themselves if they have *outwardly* escaped from the wreck and the corruption that is all around. They say, “ Oh, well I have escaped from the corruption that is outside ; my body is not in it.” But the question

is, is your *heart* outside the world, and is your *spirit* separated from it as much as your body? Do you think, if I may speak strongly (though I do not apologise, for I speak before God, I trust) do you think that what the blessed God wants is a number of individuals brought together into a place before Him, but whose hearts are far away elsewhere? Do you think it is a mere question of what is outside and seen? Beloved friends, what He is looking for is the affection of a heart, and the earnestness of a soul that has found His own Son in heaven! If it is merely a question of your bodily presence, while your heart and affections are outside, what I say is, and I say it with all gentleness to-night, "My son, give me thine *heart*!"

This is where the feebleness is; it is this want of separation. Inward separateness would lead to outward separateness; but outward separateness will never produce inward separateness. If your heart and affections, your intelligence, your inner man, are separated to God, then your body, as a vessel, will soon follow that which controls it.

Now look at this in Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Take that second chapter. I will just say a little more about prayer. As soon as ever that decree of Nebuchadnezzar goes out to slay the wise men of Babylon, because they could not make known the dream—not the interpretation, but the dream; the dream itself had passed out of Nebuchadnezzar's recollection, and the interpretation, of course, was gone—what was the first thing that Daniel and his companions did? They took the thing to *God*, beloved friends. What is the first thing you would do? I would bring it down to homely, every-day, circumstances. When difficulties come, what is the first thing you do?

Do you go to God? Let us be honest now before the Lord to-night. When you have a difficulty, is not the first thought in your mind whether there is anybody that has wisdom enough to give you direction about it? And if you knew of any wise man, or any man of skill, if he was in the very farthest end of the city, would you not find him out, and get all you could out of him? Exactly. And is not that the very thing that is creeping into the church of God? Take, for instance, any difficulty coming into the company of saints. Do they go down on their knees, and humble themselves before God, first, because there is a difficulty, and next, because they have not understanding enough to meet it? Does the thing really burden them at all? Is not the first thought that comes into their mind just this—if they could get some person of ability or skill, some great man that has a name, to settle the difficulty! I am speaking of practical things to-night, beloved friends, and you and I know that what I have been saying is exactly what takes place.

Now look at Daniel. The moment that his life was at stake, the instant this difficulty was presented to him and his companions, he says, "Give me *time*." For what? That they might make supplication to the God of heaven! They are dependent, they go to God about it. Now I will tell you what all around reminds me of. We ought to feel it. Our conduct is far too like Jacob, who skilfully made all his arrangements, and then went and prayed! He made every arrangement with all the consummate skill of a tactician, made himself perfectly safe first of all, as he thought, and then went and prayed! That is exactly what we do. But here I find, in this simple repre-



sentation of the remnant of God's people in those days, they come and make supplication to the God of heaven, in the dependence of hearts that knew what it was to be cast upon Him, Jehovah their resource, their help, their *only* stay, but at the same time their *all-sufficient* stay.

I often think, beloved friends, and oftener find myself saying, and often hear others say too, "We have no one but God to go to; we have no one but the Lord;" as if He were not enough. Our very expressions, I feel in my heart, shew exactly where we have dropped. "We have no one but the Lord." Do you think we are the worse for that? Are not we well off for that? Nay, are we not ten thousand times better off that we have no one but God? Do we want anybody else? Is He amongst His people? Is He sufficient? Is He equal to every emergency? Has Christ forgotten that which is so dear to Him? Do you think the Head in heaven is indifferent to the necessities of the members on earth? Do you think the ear of the blessed God is not interested by the cries of His people?

But, alas! so poor is our testimony to the blessedness of prayer, that you would never think that there was an ear up there that was waiting to be interested with prayer. You would never think that there were hearts down here that felt the burden of things around. You would never think that there was a blessed, wonder-working God, who stoops to hear the whisper of a poor heart that has nothing but wants to spread before Him. That is what He looks and waits for. Look how blessed it is here in this history. What is the result of this waiting upon God? Of course the result of it was that the thing was made known at

once to Daniel. There was a way out of the difficulty at once, of course there was. I often think of that passage in Hebrews about Abraham: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself," and, says the Holy Ghost, commenting upon it, "so, after he had patiently endured, he *obtained* the promise." Do you think that anyone ever waited upon God in sincerity and reality, in true earnestness of heart, without finding that God came in and marked His sense of it?

You may depend upon it, in proportion as we have the sense that we are interesting God's ear, there will be real earnestness, though my soul may be burdened with but *one* thing. It is most blessed oftentimes to see a person whose spirit is burdened with one thing, and who, in the simplicity of a full heart, can tell that one thing out into God's ear. The Lord give us more true dependence, and real prayer! I do feel we are not people of dependence and prayer as we might be, and I feel that in our difficulties, and exercises, and straits, we run hither and thither, looking for help from every quarter but God. Let me say this, that the result of that is simply going down to Egypt. That is the full-blown result of taking the eye off God, and looking to an arm of flesh, whatever that arm may be. We cannot avoid it. It is simply the story of Abram going down to Egypt repeating itself.

Well, now, the last thing I notice in connection with this remnant in Babylon, as also being characteristic of what should be found amongst the people of God in these days, is *suffering*. That is the last thing I will speak of this evening.

You see here the king tests the fidelity of these men, as to whether they will give up the worship

of the true God, and their allegiance and adherence to the true God, and bow down to the great image that Nebuchadnezzar set up. There is a little word here that is to me exceedingly interesting. It occurred to me as I was reading the passage this evening. It comes in in connection with another passage of scripture I was speaking of elsewhere last evening—that passage in Philippians, where the apostle speaks of Christ being magnified in his body. (Phil. i. 20.) The one desire he had, the ruling desire of his soul was, that Christ should be magnified in his body, “whether by life or by death;” that is to say, that which originally was the platform whereon Satan displayed his power, man’s body, that wherein he manifested all his hatred and all his malignity against God and Christ. God says, “I am going to take up that same vessel, and make it the platform on which I will display the power of Christ;” and the apostle says in Philippians i.—it is wonderful to think of it—“I have full communion with what God is doing.” That is the meaning of the words, “My earnest expectation and my hope.” He had full fellowship with the thoughts of God. It is a wonderful thing to have fellowship with the purposes of God concerning Christ: and here, in Daniel, are people who have this same thought before them, according to what was then known, and hence we find that the king is obliged to own (chap. iii. 28), “They have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God.”

You see these men thrown into the fire, bound hand and foot, the emblem of weakness, cast into a furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated; that is, the perfection of malignant power to destroy them. Was not God

magnified in their bodies? And what is the result? They come up out of the furnace, not even the smell of fire upon them, not a hair of their head singed. And, more than that, there was companionship. "I see four men walking, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." There was most blessed company. They were cast down bound into the midst of this burning, fiery, furnace, and there is not a word of complaint. They were not "careful." Think of that. "We are not *careful* to answer thee in this matter." They were not disconcerted, not "put out," as we say, but yielded themselves entirely into the hands of God, in patient meekness. They are prepared to suffer at any cost. God is their stay and strength, and God comes in, and intervenes for them, and they are the exhibition, under the circumstances in which they were, of that blessed power of God by which He can magnify Himself in bodies like yours and mine.

Now just look how little Christ is magnified in our bodies! Alas! there is a great deal of the magnifying of the world in our bodies, and of self, and of the flesh, but how little there is of the magnifying of Christ! It is humbling when you think of it. If you look around, and see the bodies of God's people, and look at what they are, what are they an exhibition of? The power of the flesh too often, and the power of the world, and the power of nature, but very little of the power of Christ. "That Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death," was Paul's desire. Oh, may it be ours likewise!

Well, now, I believe those principles that come out of these three chapters of Daniel, namely, first, separation to God at every cost; secondly, thorough dependence upon Him in difficulties;

and thirdly, patience in suffering for His name, are the three great characteristic principles that ought to mark the people of God to-day. I am not speaking now at all of what relates to us in our church position, but of that which would *bear upon* our church position, of that which enters into it, of that which would give a wonderful vitality and wonderful power, and wonderful freshness, to our church position.

May I say one word on another remnant that you find in the Old Testament, comparing it with a remnant in the New Testament? Just turn with me to Malachi iii. 16. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." You see what characterised the remnant in the closing days of Old Testament history—the fear of God, and communion one with another. Does that characterise us, beloved friends? Is there anything like that amongst us? I say it is a good thing that we should see where our dangers are. Is there anybody here to-night *satisfied* with the state of things as it is? Are you satisfied to see things as they are? Well, I should think a person who is satisfied with things as they are must be very far from God. Any person who could sit down in self-complacency, and say, "Oh, well, I think it is not so afflicting after all. We are not so bad as all that. That is an extreme view of it; that is a very hard thing to say;" I say such a person has no sense whatever of what is befitting the testimony of the Lord.

Beloved friends, all I say is this, the nearer we are practically to God, and the closer we walk with

Him, and the more the thoughts of God are controlling our minds and affections, the more we shall feel how lacking we are, and how infected we are by that very spirit of self-complacency which characterised Laodicea, which said of itself, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" not knowing that it, of all others (such is the force of the expression), was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

But looking at that blessed characteristic of the remnant at the close of the Old Testament, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another—" Do you get that now? Where is that now? Where is there "fearing the Lord, and speaking often one to another," beloved friends? But think of God hearkening to, and noting that! Think of that having an interest for the ear of the blessed God! "The Lord hearkened, and heard it." And think of Him writing that in a book of remembrance! He thinks it worth His while to record in a book of remembrance before Himself, this expression of "fear," and communion, and fellowship.

Well now, the same thing we find in the remnant when the Lord Jesus Christ came. In the New Testament, what do you find about Simeon and Anna? Turn to the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, where you find the remnant, in principle just as you did at the close of the Old Testament. What do you find about it? Do you find any great thing marking it, any activity or display of wonderful deeds distinguishing it? Nothing of the kind. It is simply this, that Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and the Holy Ghost on him, and a revelation to him that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And when he went into the temple, and saw the

child Jesus, as soon as ever he got that blessed One in his arms—the salvation of God in the person of Jesus—he said, My cup is full, and I can die now. “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

It was the same with Anna. She did not depart from the temple, and her one thought was, “Him.” She “spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” Just as in the Old Testament remnant I was speaking of, “they feared the Lord, and spake often one to another,” so her one thought and subject of conversation, the thing that occupied her, was “Him.” “She spake of him” to all them that were of like hope, and expectation, and affection, with herself.

Beloved friends, I feel it is a good thing for us to look at these traits of character marking the people of God, in times when there was general departure, and declension, and feebleness around, because such are the times we are in now. We are in a time of the most exceeding departure from God. I believe Satan’s great object at the present moment is to get us to take up with something—it may not be wrong in itself, I do not think that is the temptation now—but something other than *the one thing* that God would have His people occupied with. It may be *activity* for God towards man, or anything with which he can get your heart engrossed and occupied, except this—the simple maintenance of “the testimony of our Lord.” As the apostle says in 2 Timothy i. 8, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the *testimony* of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.”

Observe that the great thing that is the regulating power for days like these is to know one’s

*position.* It is Christ who marks that position for me. Where is He? He is at God's right hand in heaven. Then, I say, I am a heavenly person. As regards this earth, He is rejected out of it. That separates me clearly and distinctly from it. The acceptance of Christ in glory gives me a heavenly character, if I am one with Him, and the rejection of Christ on the earth puts me into an outside place, if I have devotedness and affection for Him.

The Lord stir up our hearts, beloved friends, by His Spirit, in these last times, that we may not be unmindful of what Satan is doing, that we may discern the counterfeit that he is spreading before the people of God. You may depend upon it, it is a counterfeit, it is a wile; if he can get our hearts off Christ, and fix them on anything else than the testimony of our Lord, that which I have feebly endeavoured to set forth this evening, though it may be something that appears to be for God, then he has succeeded in his object.

The Lord, by His Spirit, give us to keep our Nazariteship, to be a separate people. What a wonderful thing to be separate! The Lord give us to know, too, that He is sufficient for us! The Lord save us from looking to man, and teach us to look simply to Him, to have our resources in Him, to have our hearts confident that He cares for His own, and that He is *amongst* us! Blessed it is to think of that! Look how little we have the sense of that—that He is *amongst* us!

The Lord bring these things before our hearts this evening by His own Spirit, and quicken us, and give us a sense of what is due to His own name, that we may be more distinctly *for* Him in these times, to the praise of the glory of His grace, through Jesus Christ!



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