

THE
WAYS OF GOD WITH MAN
AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES,
FROM CREATION TO THE END OF TIME

BY
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"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."—ACTS xv. 18.

"And He hath made known unto us the mystery of His will."
—EPH. i. 9.

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INTRODUCTION

GOD has placed and preserved the Bible in this world to maintain His own authority in it, and wherever it has gone, and wherever any nation has owned it as the Word of the living God, there has been blessing and prosperity; but when the Scriptures are overthrown infidelity sets in, and revolution follows.

The overthrowing, therefore, of the *Divine authority of the Scriptures* is nothing more nor less than the overthrowing of the **AUTHORITY OF GOD** *in this world*, and the next thing to the overthrowing of **GOD'S AUTHORITY** is the overthrowing the authority of "the powers that be which are ordained of God."¹ Lawlessness gets the upper hand.

In reference to science, had God wished to make known in the Scriptures what science can discover,* He would have done so; but surely "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork,"² and creation manifests "His eternal power and Godhead."³

God has made known far deeper things in His Word

¹ Rom. xiii. 1.

² Ps. xix. 1.

³ Rom. i. 20.

* Although science has borrowed much from the Scriptures.

than anything that science can discover; the deepest mysteries of creation cannot be so deep as the mysteries of the Creator. God has given in the Scriptures the knowledge of HIMSELF, THE ABSOLUTE: THE ONE SELF-EXISTING ONE—existing absolutely in perfect goodness before creation, and therefore before evil was introduced by Satan into a creation where perfect goodness and only goodness was manifested.

Sin, having been introduced by the devil into this creation, is the sole cause of all the sorrow, affliction, and misery in this world. The evil principle of sin having entered, murder followed: Cain killed his brother Abel. All this evil can be traced to the devil, of whom it is written: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."¹

For the maintenance and development of creation—that is, the creation outside man—God has established natural laws which are so perfect in themselves (and the philosopher glories in them) that it is impossible for creation to get out of order unless God Himself upsets the natural laws, which He has a perfect right to do, being above all laws, natural or moral.

God has not given over natural phenomena into the hands of man; he can look at them, and admire and credit himself with the wonderful discoveries he has made, but touch them he cannot, which, no doubt, is a mercy, because what he has touched he has spoilt.

That part of creation, therefore, which is not in the hands of man, with its natural laws established by God to keep all in order, is still perfect.

¹ John viii. 44.

The brute creation, governed by instinct, brought into existence by God, was placed under the dominion and control of man before and since the Fall, for God said, "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered."¹ But, alas! all is in a groaning condition, labouring under the cruelties of man. The establishment of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals proves that the burdens of the brute creation even call forth the sympathies of the better part of mankind; but has *God* nothing to say to it? Indeed He has. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, and but for His great patience and long-suffering mercy over mankind, He would have delivered the groaning animal creation long ago; "for we know that the *whole creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," *waiting* "for the manifestation of the sons of God."²

But the brute creation is of a lower order than mankind—has no intelligence as to its movements, and no responsibility; for instance, a monkey could not be brought before a magistrate, because there are no laws relative to monkeys. This, although a mere truism, has an important bearing upon recent theories.

But man, placed upon the earth according to the counsels of God (for He had said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"³), and having received life by God breathing into his nostrils "the breath of life," became a "*living soul*" in direct relationship to THE ABSOLUTE, THE SELF-EXISTING GOD, therefore not to be governed by natural laws as the

¹ Gen. ix. 2.² Rom. viii. 19-23.³ Gen. i. 26.

external creation, nor by instinct as the brute creation, but by Divine principles or moral laws, man having a mind given him to intelligently understand the requirements of the One to whom he stood in relationship. Man, therefore, has a relative existence: being a creature, he stands in a relative existence to the CREATOR; being finite, to the INFINITE.

The Divine principles established by God for the moral order and government of mankind are dependence and obedience; these having been violated by man himself, through his sin, the human creation is thrown into helpless ruin as far as man is concerned, and the relationship that existed between God and man has been broken thereby.

But since the Fall God has been pleased in His grace to establish and to reveal in His WRITTEN WORD other Divine principles whereby blessing from God can reach man, and whereby the broken relationship between Himself and man can be restored, or perhaps better to say whereby man can be brought into relationship with God of a far higher character and infinitely more blessed than he stood in before the Fall.

But if blessing reaches man in his now fallen state, and if new relations are established between God and man, they must be established, according to the glory of God, therefore in absolute righteousness. God is love and God is holy; that is what He is in His nature; therefore, whatever He does, it must be in accordance with the glory of His Person.

The fall of man from his first estate had far deeper consequences than man is willing to admit. Often it is spoken of as a very trivial thing, viz., "Adam taking an apple"; but it was a direct act of independence and

disobedience. By it man lost confidence in the living God, *perfect* in goodness. God also lost confidence in man, whom He had put into a place of dignity and honour. It is this that troubled the heart of God. He had got purposes and counsels in connection with man, and for ages past He had been preparing the vast universe for the preservation of man upon the earth. But how can these purposes and counsels of God be carried out for the glory of God if man is disobedient, and acts independently of God? Impossible!

Therefore, the earth has become, through man's sin, the platform upon which other questions must now be raised by God, and Divinely settled for HIS GLORY.

First, there is an existing power of evil which must be traced to its source, Satan. There is, therefore, a positive enemy of God who has taken advantage of the position in which God placed man upon the earth, and through subtilty and temptation has got man under his power through his disobedience and sin. This enemy and his power must be eternally set aside for the glory of God.

Second, had God executed eternal judgment upon our first parents directly they fell, and also upon Satan himself, a question might have been raised both as to the glory of God and the love of God; for, having placed man upon the earth for His glory, if He swept him off under eternal judgment, where would be His glory as to the earth, or where His love as to man? God is love, and God must maintain His own glory.

Third, if God allowed man to go on in his sinful course for ever, where would be His holiness?

Fourth, if God reinstated man, and put him into a place of honour and blessing without executing the

sentence passed upon him at the Fall, where would be His righteousness?

All these questions require careful consideration, for they all have a relative bearing to man upon the earth. THE BIBLE, therefore, has the highest place upon the earth in the sight of God. BY IT God speaks to man, making known HIS *thoughts*, HIS *mind*, HIS *purposes and plans* in connection with man upon the earth; nay, more, therein He reveals His thoughts about heaven.

THE WORD OF GOD IS ABSOLUTE, and God hath magnified IT *above* all His name. What GOD HAS DONE, what GOD IS DOING, what GOD WILL DO, is made known to us *in* THE SCRIPTURES; and although we have had no further communication for over eighteen hundred years, there is no need, for the Word of God *is complete*: He hath "made known the mystery of His will."¹

The Bible, therefore, leaves no room for speculation, or for the opinions of men, or the development of the mind and thoughts of men as time rolls on. It is as true to-day as it was in the days of Isaiah the prophet that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, neither are God's ways man's ways.²

"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the *wise man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the *mighty man* glory in his might, let not the *rich man* glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth ME, *that I AM THE LORD* which exercise *lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness*, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."³

¹ Eph. i. 9.

² Isa. lv. 9.

³ Jer. ix. 23, 24.

In the following pages the reader will meet with a God of lovingkindness, a God of judgment, and a God of righteousness. To-day we have the privilege of meeting God as a *God of lovingkindness*. If He is not met now as such, He must be met in a coming day as a *God of judgment*. But both will be *in righteousness*.

The writer therefore asks the reader to take notice of the *Divine principles upon which* reconciliation, forgiveness, and justification can be known, and the new relationship established by God between Himself and man.

Amidst the strife of tongues, and the contention of the various religious bodies for that which, after all, is of very little consequence, it behoves those who, like the writer, have listened to human teachers for many years to look for themselves into the Word of God, and let God speak to their souls direct. Every one of us will have to stand before God upon our own individual responsibility, and if God has thoughts of peace, and not of evil, surely it is better to have His thoughts than man's.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to state he is no prophet, minister, pastor, or teacher. His object in placing this book in the hands of the reader is to bring before him the plain written Word of the living God. It is necessary, in reading the Bible, to rightly divide the "Word of Truth." This might seem a difficult task, and too great an undertaking; but it is not so, for all that is needed is simply to see that when God speaks of the Jews He means the Jews, and when He speaks of the Gentiles He means the Gentiles, and when of the Church He means the Church.

It will be found that the writer has classed relative

Scriptures together, so as to bring before the mind the whole scope of the purpose of God relative to man. He believes that this plan will prove of deep interest to every true believer in the Lord Jesus, and, in conclusion, he affectionately commends the reader to God and the Word of His grace.

CALVERLEY ROAD,
TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

I.

THE CREATION OF MAN AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY.

GOD has placed the Bible in this world for the maintenance of His own glory, and for the blessing of mankind. To bow to the authority of the Scriptures, as the Word of the living God, Maker of heaven and earth, brings the soul near to God, and God near to the soul; a GOD OF ALL GRACE, ready to pardon the sinner and draw him to Himself in righteousness.

That man is in a state of unrest and uncertainty no one can deny. What lies beyond the present is a mystery he cannot solve: he may deny there is anything, but he may deny the truth, and thereby get into *greater uncertainty*; nay, more than this, he is warned by his own conscience that some day he must meet One whom he feels he is not very friendly with, to say nothing of the enmity there is really in his heart against God.

God has given a simple and concise account of the Creation in Genesis i. and ii. To bow in simple faith to what is there revealed on Divine authority is God's way of understanding. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so

that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”¹

To try to understand what is of God by the natural mind leads to the overthrowing of the Scriptures altogether, and still leaves man in the greatest uncertainty, and the *heart gets hardened*.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”² This is a Divine fact, and no one claims to be the Creator of the heaven and earth but the God of the Bible.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” When? He does not say; but He does tell us that He did not create the earth *without form and void*. “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that *formed* the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.”³ The Revised Version reads thus: “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; He is God; that formed the earth and made it; He established it, He created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.”

To proceed with the account in Genesis: “And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”⁴

What time elapsed for the earth to get into this state of chaos God does not tell us. Between the first and second verses of Genesis i. we have an unlimited space of time, sufficient for all that science tells us must have taken place before the creation of man upon the earth.

¹ Heb. xi. 3.

² Gen. i. 1.

³ Isa. xlv. 18.

⁴ Gen. i. 2.

From verse 2 is recorded God's preparation of the earth which He had already created for the habitation of man. He created it at first to be inhabited; by whom, He does not say; but *now* He is going to prepare it to be inhabited by *man*, who is to be the head and centre of all other creatures whom He is pleased to create.

I do not go into detail as to the six days' work; we all have the privilege of reading and believing it as a Divine record of the creation as it now exists. What was done was done to God's own satisfaction, and was "good," yea, "*very good*." For "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good. . . . Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work that He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made."¹

My purpose is to look a little at God's ways with man, for God had said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."² "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man

¹ Gen. i. 31; ii. 12.

² Gen. i. 26-28.

became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”¹

All this speaks of the goodness of God on the one hand, and the purpose of God on the other: everything that man needed to make him happy was put there by the good hand of God; and the purpose of God was that man should be the head and centre of all the earth. Man was created to be God’s representative upon the earth, for God’s glory. And herein was man’s responsibility. God maintained His authority over him by one simple command, claiming from His creature absolute *obedience*. Nothing could be more reasonable, because if the creature were not absolutely obedient, and subject to his Creator, all must of necessity fall into confusion and ruin, and the purpose of God would be frustrated as far as that creature was concerned.

But the wisdom of God saw that it was “not good for man to be alone.” Adam had no companion to share his joys, no one with whom he could converse, save God, who visited Him at His pleasure. He was

¹ Gen. ii. 7-17.

lord of the creation, he had dominion over all. "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an helpmeet for him."¹ He could make no companion of a lion, or a bear, tame though they were; so to complete the scene, "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."²

Everything had been done by God to make His creature happy in the position of honour in which He had placed him. And now he has one presented to him who would naturally call forth the affection of his heart; being part of himself, she is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," Adam could say; and she is to be his wife. The perfect wisdom of God, and the wonderful goodness of God, are fully manifested in the first and second chapters of Genesis.

Let us look, therefore, a little at man's position before sin came in to spoil all. Innocent, upright, intelligent, able to understand the requirements of God in the place of blessing in which he was set—such was man. Not guided by instinct, as the brute creation, but having a mind that could understand the will of God, which was,

¹ Gen. ii. 20.

² Gen. ii. 21-25.

that man should be intelligently dependent and obedient to his Maker. The sea obeys its Creator, but not with intelligence; but man was placed in a position to do God's will in obedience, with the *knowledge* of what was suitable to the Divine Being whom he was *responsible to obey*.

Dependence and *obedience* were all that God required from His creature man. Had he kept his first estate, God would have had glory in an innocent, upright, and obedient man upon this earth. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work."¹ *The earth* also would have declared the glory of God *to this day* if man had kept his first estate.

Man had received life directly from God, He having breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man had become a living soul. Not so the brute creation, for "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," and, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind."² No breathing into the nostrils here. *Man*, and man alone, is the offspring of God, a marvellous creation, "fearfully and wonderfully made."

Having looked at God's side of the Creation, we turn now to see how man has met his responsibility to God in the position of dignity and honour which God assigned him as head and centre of the Creation, having dominion over the works of God's hands, and with a helpmeet suitable to himself, whom he could love, and the sharer of his joys, with all the dignity and honour that God placed upon them, and in a garden that was a manifestation to them objectively of the goodness of God; every tree growing there that was pleasant to the sight and

¹ Ps. xix. 1.

² Gen. i. 20.

good for food ; “ the tree of life ” also, and “ the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” But this latter tree was only a test to man by which he could prove his fidelity to God.

But there is also a subtle tempter, an enemy of God, and all that was of God, who comes into this peaceful scene. This again is only to test the heart of man as to his loyalty to God. It gave Adam and his wife ample opportunity to manifest their entire dependence upon and obedience to God.

“ Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, *hath God said*, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ?”¹ The crafty tempter comes to the weaker vessel, not with a downright lie at first, but with a *question* as to what God had said—whether He had really said it. The woman, caught by the question, answered, instead of resisting the tempter. “ And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden ; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, *God hath said*, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”²

The tempter, having got the ear of the woman by raising a question as to what God had said, now flatly denies what God *did* say. “ And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die : for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”³ The tempter now suggests that God has *kept something back* that would be for *their good*, that God is not perfect in His goodness. What the tempter

¹ Gen. iii. 1.

² Gen. iii. 2, 3.

³ Gen. iii. 4, 5.

said entered into her heart. All was over. She lost confidence in God.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her ; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked ; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”¹

In this *act* we have *positive disobedience* to God, and unbelief as to the Word of God. *Man, tested in innocence, failed; he broke down in his responsibility; he gave up God, who was perfect in goodness, for the tempter, Satan; he believed the devil's lie, and all was ruined. Eve was deceived. Adam hearkened to the voice of his wife instead of maintaining God's glory. God was dishonoured, His glory ignored, His claims disowned, and all confidence in God lost.*

“And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”²

Man now has a conscience, the knowledge of good and evil, of right and wrong ;* but he got this by *doing the evil, doing what was wrong*, and he cannot meet God. He hides away from Him ; he cannot now face the God whom he has known up to this time only as a

¹ Gen. iii. 6, 7.

² Gen. iii. 8.

* Here the theory of evolution as to man explodes. The fact that man has a conscience—the knowledge of good and evil—proves that he has a relative existence to a Holy Being. Man cannot get rid of his conscience ; it may get seared as with a hot iron, but it is his conscience that gets seared.

GOD PERFECT IN GOODNESS. Surely this tells a tale. There is not an unconverted man that would like to meet God the moment after he has committed a sin. The believer has already met God, and has, as a sinner, been pardoned.

But has God's goodness lessened towards man since he became a sinner? Indeed it has not; but it is not now goodness to an innocent, upright man, but to a disobedient, sinful race. His Word tells us it is "the goodness of God" that "leadeth man to repentance." He says, therefore, to His own children, "Love ye your enemies, and do good . . . for He (God) is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."¹ How far we act up to this is another thing; but this is what is in the heart of God, this is how *God Himself acts*.

But we turn again to Adam and Eve. They could not meet God; they hide away from the presence of the Lord God. And, note, God does not leave man, but man runs away from God. Surely they proved His Word to be true: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." *Death* had already come in—that is, *separation from God*. And what was the cause of it but man's disobedience and sin? Adam had given up God, had lost all confidence in Him, and how could he face Him, a God whom he had disobeyed? But face Him he must, and so must we all.

"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" Where indeed? Not in a state of innocence and uprightness, of which God had said, "Behold, it was very good." *Innocence had gone, and gone for ever*. But where was Adam? Away from God. Having exalted himself, he was now debased

¹ Luke vi. 35.

under the sentence of death and judgment. Yes, away from God ; and *there* man is to-day unless he be *in Christ*. "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creation."¹ But Adam could not hide from God. "Where art thou?" finds him out. "And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself."² All this speaks for itself as to the state that man had got into by his sin, away from God, and afraid of God.

"And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom *Thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."³

Adam throws all the blame upon God. "The woman," says he, "whom *Thou gavest* to be with me," as much as to say, Thou shouldest not have given me the woman. But this only shows what Satan has put into the heart. To see where man is *wrong* is the way to get right, but to throw the blame upon God is what man has done ever since the Fall.

"And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."⁴

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

³ Gen. iii. 11, 12.

² Gen. iii. 10.

⁴ Gen. iii. 13-15.

Before God pronounces judgment upon man—Adam and his wife—He makes this statement in their hearing,* which brings before us the fact that God will maintain His own glory, notwithstanding the evil which had been introduced. The power of Satan, the tempter, would be set aside, his head bruised, and that by the woman's Seed. Satan had gained a victory over man. Man had through his sin dishonoured and given up God, and thereby had fallen under the power of the devil. Will God allow this for ever? No; "the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." The devil may hold his own for a time, as "when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."¹

The devil has got man under his power, and the armour wherein he trusts is man's disobedience to, and rebellion against, God: *this* he keeps up in a man's heart. But God has sent into this world His Son, who was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This is the stronger than he, who has taken away the devil's armour, wherein he trusted, and that by His absolute obedience to God. Now, through God's grace, the moment anyone bows to God's authority—God as manifested in flesh—and in the *obedience of faith* believes what God has said about Christ in His written Word, that soul is delivered from the power of Satan, and has overcome the wicked one.

The judgment pronounced upon Adam and his wife

¹ Luke xi. 21, 22.

* Note, this is not a promise made to Adam; there are no promises for the first man, who in his nature is disobedient and independent.

was temporal judgment, and did not go beyond what is manifested in this world. "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."¹

Now, while it is manifest that the judgment pronounced upon Adam and his wife was only temporal, yet it is also manifest that man could no longer stand in the presence of God, that his disobedience and sin had brought in a separation between himself and God.

¹ Gen. iii. 16-24.

The judgment pronounced related to the body only; but man had become a living soul by God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. But now he is a "living soul" with a guilty conscience, having the knowledge of good and evil, but entirely under the power of the evil, as we shall see. He is away from God, under the sentence of death, but the eternal judgment that man's sin really involved has not yet been executed. God has, ever since the fall of man, lingered over him in grace, although His righteous judgments have been manifested upon the earth.

The first act of grace on God's part towards man after the Fall was, that He clothed Adam and his wife with garments suitable to Himself, and the garments were obtained by God through the accomplishment of that which man's sin had brought in—viz., death. "The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them." Here we have THE FIRST DIVINE PRINCIPLE ESTABLISHED, that, if God blesses man now that he is a sinner, it must and can only be through death—that is, through the life taken of a victim, instead of the life of the one who had really forfeited it by his sin. God did not execute eternal judgment; for He had "thoughts of peace and not of evil" towards man, although he had become a sinner.

We are all slow to recognise our true state as sinners before God; and we are also slow to recognise God's grace that is ever ready to meet us in that condition. Nevertheless, God *still goes on* to accomplish all His eternal purposes of love and grace.

The tree of life, which was a type of Christ, was not forbidden when man was in innocence; but God would not allow man to "put forth his hand and take also of

the tree of life, and eat and live for ever,"¹ in his now fallen and sinful state. The only way *now* for man to have eternal life, and to be able *again* to live in the *presence of God*, is through death—the *death of Christ*—who is the Tree of Life, and who has accomplished redemption by going down into death Himself, and then coming up out of it, as the Resurrection and the Life. And He says now to all who believe in Him: "Because I live, ye shall live also."² "He is the true God and eternal life."³

We now pass from our first parents to their offspring—Cain and Abel—born into the world *after* sin had come in. They feel the separation that had taken place between God and themselves; so in Genesis iv. we read, "And in process of time, it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." What is taught here is very plain and simple. Sin having come in, separating man from God, man, having the consciousness of it, feels his need of God, and, desiring to approach Him, brings an offering for His acceptance. "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

Everything depended upon the character of the offering by which they approached God. God had said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," and Cain brings of the fruit of the cursed ground an offering to the Lord. He goes on just as if nothing had happened, taking no notice of what God had said, and ignoring the fact that death had come in through man's sin.

¹ Gen. iii. 22.

² John xiv. 19.

³ 1 John v. 20.

Therefore, neither Cain nor his offering could God accept.

Abel, on the other hand, recognising in faith the divine principle established by God when man fell, approaches Him through death, offering the firstling of his flock, and the fat thereof. He does not, as Cain did, bring the work of his hands for an offering; but, acknowledging that man has forfeited his life through sin, he draws near to God through the forfeited life of a spotless victim; and so doing, he finds acceptance! "*By faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh!"¹

Here we have ANOTHER DIVINE PRINCIPLE ESTABLISHED, viz., that man, although *born in sin*, and away from God, may approach God *in faith through a sacrifice* and find acceptance. *But it must be a sacrifice that can be accepted by God*, as everything depends upon the *sacrifice*, and not upon the one who approaches God.*

¹ Heb. xi. 4.

* It is important to see that this Divine principle of approach to God through death was established before the earth was peopled, therefore long before the establishment of the various modern religious systems which obscure the simplicity of these early days. Abel approached God through death, and was accepted. The lamb which he took from the flock was but a type of the spotless Lamb of God, God's own beloved Son. HE offered Himself without spot to God. There is no more offering for sin. We have therefore but to approach God through a death that has already been accomplished, the death of God's own provided Lamb, and we shall find acceptance. Christ Himself is the Lamb or offering. Christ Himself was the Priest—"He offered Himself"; we have therefore but to go straight to God through the death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus the Son of God, and find acceptance as Abel did.

Abel's offering was but a type of the perfect offering and sacrifice of Christ, God's own provided Lamb. He has offered Himself without spot to God ; therefore *anyone drawing near to God through the death of Christ will find acceptance*, and God will justify him freely by His grace.

"But unto Cain and to his offering God had not respect ; and Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." All this God takes notice of, and He says to Cain, "Why art thou wroth ? and why is thy countenance fallen ? if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." God is very reasonable. He is not unrighteous in His ways with man. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ?" But he did the wrong, and "sin lieth at the door," or a sin-offering is at hand. Just as Abel, who felt the separation that had come in between God and man, could approach in faith, by a *burnt-offering*, and find acceptance ; so Cain, who had sinned, could have approached in faith, through a *sin-offering*. But he would *not humble himself*. He wanted God to accept him just as if nothing had happened. This God could not do. He would deny His own holiness if He did. He has found a way to pardon in righteousness, but it *must be in righteousness*, or God would not be God.

"And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother ? And He said, I know not : am I my brother's keeper ? And He said, What hast thou done ? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." And then God

pronounces judgment upon him, but judgment that relates only to the earth. "*And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.*" There he made himself as happy as he could, *away from God*, building a city, and calling it after his son's name, his descendants, too, being the fathers "of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle," and of "all such as handle the harp and organ," and of "every artificer in brass and iron."¹

God had put two solemn questions: one to Adam, "Where art thou?" another to Cain, "What hast thou done?" Adam was away from God, hiding amongst the trees of the garden. Cain, being away from God, had murdered his brother, and had no conscience as to what he had done. When God spoke to him about it, he said: "Am I my brother's keeper?" His conscience being dormant, he goes out from the presence of the Lord, and commences the world that has its music, its arts, and its science, all away from God. But God had not given man up, although man had given God up; and in due time He visited the world in grace, in the person of His own beloved Son, He becoming Man for this very purpose. But man rose up against Him, and slew Him; therefore the world is not only away from God, and has no conscience as to the fact, but it is *now guilty* of the murder of the blessed Son of God, when He came in grace to save, the Father saying, "I will send My beloved Son; it may be they will reverence *Him* when they *see Him*." But no, "they cast Him out . . . and killed Him."²

At the end of Genesis iv. we find that God had given another son to Adam in Seth, and to Seth "also there

¹ Gen. iv. 16-22.

² Luke xx. 13-15

was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.”¹

Amidst all the darkness God did not leave Himself without witness. There were men of faith who called on the name of Jehovah.

Genesis v. presents to us a scene of death. Man lived close upon a thousand years, *but “he died.”* Death had indeed come in upon God’s fair creation, where He had set man in his responsibility. But there is one bright picture, which tells us that God had other thoughts for man than death. “Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” “*By faith* Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”²

We have noticed that it was only temporal judgment God had pronounced and executed upon man for his sin and disobedience, that is, judgment that relates in a governmental way to man while upon the earth. But Jude speaks of the eternal judgment that is to come upon all the ungodly of the present day, and says, “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”³

So we see that while God has reserved eternal judgment to a coming day, yet He made it known in the days of Enoch. But we must remember that God “is

¹ Gen. iv. 26.

² Heb. xi. 5.

³ Jude 14, 15.

longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”¹ And we must also remember that “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”²

In Genesis vi. we have a still worse picture. Man, whom God had made “very good,” and who was innocent and upright when he came out of the hands of his Maker, had now filled the earth with violence. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”³

What God had done Himself was “very good,” and He made man for His glory. But what glory had man rendered to God? The earth, where man was to have been God’s representative, he had “filled with violence,” and “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil.” It might well repent God that He had made man, and it might well grieve Him at His heart!

The “very good” has passed away. The image of

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

² Eccles. viii. 11.

³ Gen. vi. 5-13.

God and His likeness has gone for ever for the first man, and it repented God that *He had made him*. It is only judgment that could fall upon such a scene as this—the righteous judgment of a holy God upon man, who had filled the earth with violence, and whose wickedness was great.

“I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth,” said Jehovah. “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” “*By faith* Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”¹

God destroyed man from the face of the earth by the flood. And when all was over, and the waters of the flood had dried up, “Noah went forth” out of the ark, he “and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him,” and every living thing that had been preserved through the judgment. “And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour: and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake, for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”² Here we have two distinct things: first, Noah offers a burnt sacrifice, and it is a savour of rest unto Jehovah; second, *the heart of man is unchanged*, it is still “evil.” The burnt offering is a type of Christ,

¹ Heb. xi. 7.

² Gen. viii. 20-22.

who "hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."¹ Through this sacrifice God acts towards man in blessing. Temporal blessing only is spoken of here. God will not curse the ground any more for man's sake, and since that day seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night have not ceased, according to the word of the living God.

The new world having now commenced on the ground of the typical sacrifice of Christ in Noah's burnt offering, the curse being partially removed, God saying, "I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake," "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man."²

Here we note a development in the ways of God with man. Up to this time man had only the green herb and fruit of the trees for food.³ But now God gives him flesh to eat in addition; "but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat,"

¹ Eph. v. 2.

² Gen. ix. 1-6.

³ Gen. i. 29.

said God. Man *must own* before God that he has forfeited his life through sin ; therefore, before he eats flesh the life must be poured out in the shedding of the blood ; and if this was not done, the guilty one forfeited his own life's blood by the hand of man. But further, this puts governmental power into the hands of man. God says, " Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed : for in the image of God made He him."

This government, which was at first placed in the hands of Noah by God, has remained unto this day, and there is no country in the world that has more cause for thankfulness to God for governmental power in the hands of man than England.

When Cain took the life of Abel his brother, God said : " Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold,"¹ and the end of that system of things filled the earth with violence. God then took the matter of judgment into His own hands, and swept man off the face of the earth by the Flood. But now governmental power in judgment is placed in the hands of man ; therefore the exhortation is : " Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God ; the powers that be are ordained of God . . . for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil."² Therefore Christians are not only to be subject and obey the Governments, but to pray for all that are in authority, also to pay whatever is demanded, such as taxes, etc.

But Governments fail, as man ever has done. Noah himself failed, therefore we wait in patience for the time when the " government shall be upon His shoulder "

¹ Gen. iv. 15.

² Rom. xiii. 1-3.

who is called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,"¹ even our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is a God perfect in goodness, and while of necessity He must manifest His righteous indignation and judgment against all the ungodliness of man, it is in order that they who are left should fear and seek Him. He therefore says to Noah and his sons: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." And then God made a covenant with them that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." This is grace—pure sovereign grace. Blessed be God! Man is unchanged, the imagination of his heart is still evil, yet God will bless. "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set *My bow* in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember *My covenant*, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth."² And this has continued throughout all generations even unto this day.

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of

¹ Isa. ix. 6.

² Gen. ix. 12-17.

one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.* Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."¹

Thus God confounded the language of men, dividing them into nations. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people accord-

¹ Gen. xi. 1-9.

* The thought here is to restrain the imagination of men's hearts. It was a foolish thing for man to imagine he could build a tower to reach heaven, but that is what he attempted to do. What God did in dividing the inhabitants of the earth into nations has answered His purpose well; for one nation keeps another nation in check from unduly exalting itself, and carrying out the imaginations of men's minds.

ing to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."¹

Wonderful are the ways of God with man! In judgment God confounded the language of men, and scattered them all over the face of the earth, dividing them into nations, thus restraining men from carrying out the imaginations of their hearts, and at the same time doing all according to the plans and purposes which He Himself intends to carry out in connection with *man upon the earth*, Israel being the centre of these plans and purposes, with the promise of the Messiah, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."²

Man had now become religious, but served other gods, not the true God, and out of this mass of idolatry God calls one man, Abram: *he hears* God's call, and *obeys it*, and thus becomes a man of faith, and God makes promises to him.

Having to do with God *by faith is a Divine principle*. He who believes what God has said, because God, who cannot lie, has said it, honours God; and He says, "Them that honour Me I will honour." The devil says, "Hath God said?" He raises questions, and then he gives us some lie to believe. He did this at the first, he does it now. But he is always defeated when we take our stand upon the *plain written Word of God*, and say, "*IT IS WRITTEN.*"

Our blessed Lord has left us an example as to this—"Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, *angels* came and ministered unto *Him*."³

¹ Deut. xxxi. 8, 9.

² Acts xv. 18.

³ Matt. iv. 11.

We have seen that up to this time, in God's ways with man, man had entirely *broken down in all his responsibility to God his Maker*; and the fact is demonstrated that if God blesses man, it *must be* in sovereign grace, and this being God's purpose from the beginning, the doctrine of Election is established in the call of Abram—that is, the *sovereign right* on God's part to bless man irrespective of works: “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.”¹

Blessing from God can only reach us through His sovereign grace received in faith. Yet God in His ways with man has used this sovereign grace to test the heart: First, with the Jews, who deliberately rejected their Messiah when He came in grace to fulfil the promises, and then with the Gentiles, in calling them as sinners to repentance, which will end in the entire rejection of the Gospel by the Gentiles: so that, after the judgments upon living Jews and Gentiles for the rejection of Christ have been executed, God will conclude all in unbelief, not testing the heart of man any longer, but in His sovereign grace having mercy upon all. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”²

¹ Rom. ix. 11.

² Rom. xi. 33.

II.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM—THE PROMISES— ISRAEL'S RESPONSIBILITY.

IN the call of Abraham we have *many Divine principles established.*

First. The world having given itself over to idolatry, separation is absolutely necessary if one is to walk with God.

Second. The call being heard and obeyed in simple faith, God is free to make known His mind and thoughts as to the future to the one who obeys His call.

Third. Man (Abraham is the example) being brought morally into a state of obedience to and dependence upon God (Abraham obeyed the call of God, and went out *not knowing whither he went*), God is free to make promises to him, being a man of faith.

Fourth. The world still being in a state of rebellion, and God still waiting in longsuffering mercy until its iniquity is full before He executes the judgment which will bring in the fulfilment of the promises, all is held for the time being, by the obedient and dependent man, on the principle of faith.

The promises made to Abraham have a very wide

bearing, reaching to all nations of the earth for blessing, and embracing the national government of the world.

National Government, therefore, is first placed in the hands of Abraham's descendants, the nation of the Jews ; and after the rejection by Israel of Jehovah their King, and then the rejection by God of Saul, the independent and disobedient king, God gives Israel a king after His own heart—David—who subdues all his enemies, and then establishes peace upon the earth ; and in Solomon the glory of the kingdom is manifested. Solomon having failed to maintain God's glory, the kingdom was divided in judgment ; but God in His grace reserved two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—to the sons of David, for David's sake, and for the sake of Jerusalem, which God had chosen.

But ultimately the Jewish nation entirely broke down in maintaining righteous government upon the earth. God therefore transfers government from the Jews to the Gentiles, and thereby places the government of the world under Gentile power in Nebuchadnezzar ; the Jewish nation being brought into captivity and under Gentile rule, government has, therefore, been in the hands of Gentiles ever since, and is at the present time.

But God, in due time, according to His grace, restored the Jews—that is, Judah and Benjamin—to their own land. To them the promised Messiah and King was presented, but was rejected, being cut off and having nothing. Therefore the fulfilment of the promises was of necessity set aside, and the Jews scattered among the nations.

All this took place under Gentile government and rule, which still exists, and will exist until the times of

the Gentiles be fulfilled, when it will be proved, by the misrule and rebellion of not only Jews, but also of Gentiles, that God must take the matter of the government of this world into His own hands, and set His own King upon the throne in righteousness.

It is necessary for me to notice these things, as they are involved in the promises made to the fathers. Without, therefore, further calling attention to the government of this world by Jews or Gentiles, I go on to trace in a way that should affect the heart and conscience of every reader God's ways with man, while I shall freely speak of the way both Jews and Gentiles have acted in connection with those ways.

God made unconditional promises to Abraham as the head of His chosen people, and confirmed the same to Isaac and Jacob, the "heirs with him of the same promise."¹ The first of these promises we find in Genesis xii. 1-3: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." God confirmed this in chapter xv.: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my

¹ Heb. xi. 9.

house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness. . . . In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

Here God promises to Abram a seed, and that his seed shall be as the stars of heaven. Abram believes God, and it is counted unto him for righteousness; and then God makes a covenant with Abram, and promises to give the land to his seed.

Again we read: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I

will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is My covenant which ye shall keep between Me and you and thy seed after thee: Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. . . . And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. . . . And He left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”¹

Here we have a development in the ways of God. God changes Abram’s name to Abraham, which means “Father of a great multitude,” then confirms His covenant with him and his seed after him, and gives him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and then God gives him circumcision as a token of the covenant betwixt God and Abraham. God had said to Abraham, “In *thee* shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” and “Thou shalt be a father of many nations.” Again, “Abraham shall surely become a

¹ Gen. xvii. 1-22.

great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in *him*.”¹ “But My covenant,” said God, “will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”² In due time Isaac was born.

These Scriptures still wait their fulfilment, for “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”³ It is true, speaking of the present time, “that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so *all Israel* shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is *My covenant unto them*, when I shall take away *their sins*. As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as *touching the election, they are beloved* for the fathers’ sakes.”⁴

Abraham was a man of faith; he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. “By *faith*, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”⁵ Now God tries his faith. “And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”⁶ “By *faith*, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said,

¹ Gen. xviii. 18.

² Gen. xvii. 21.

³ Num. xxiii. 19.

⁴ Rom. xi. 26-28.

⁵ Heb. xi. 8.

⁶ Gen. xxii. 2.

That in Isaac shall thy seed be called : accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure.”¹

“And the angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham : and he said, Here am I. And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me. . . . And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son : that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed My voice.”²

After the death of Abraham all this is confirmed to Isaac. “And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt ; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of : sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee ; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father ; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries ; and in *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; *because that Abraham obeyed My voice*, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws. And Isaac dwelt in Gerar.”³

¹ Heb. xi. 17-19.

² Gen. xxii. 11-18.

³ Gen. xxvi. 2-6.

Next, all is confirmed to Jacob. "And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where He talked with him."¹

"Abraham begat Isaac . . . and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs."² Here we have the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, afterwards known as the children of Israel.

We are familiar with the history of Joseph, and how in the providence of God the children of Israel went down into Egypt, and what befell them there.

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."³ "And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land

¹ Gen. xxxv. 10-13.

² Acts vii. 8.

³ Exod. ii. 23-25.

and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey ; unto the place of the Canaanites,"¹ etc.

God raised up Moses as the deliverer of His people. We then have the plagues and God's dealings with Pharaoh in order that he should let His people go. We need only notice the last, as my object is to trace the ways of God with His people, who in the Old Testament are the Jews, the children of Israel. It is important to observe in connection with the judgment of God upon all the firstborn of Egypt, that God in the love of His own heart makes provision for the escape of His own people ; the eye of God is upon them. We read therefore : " And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months : it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house : and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls ; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year : ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats : and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month : and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread ;

¹ Exod. iii. 7, 8.

and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. . . . And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."¹

In reading this Scripture there are three things presented to the mind. First: that the Israelites are sinners as much as the Egyptians, and that if they are to escape the judgment of God, which is death (for "the wages of sin is death"), there must be a substitute of a spotless victim, which is provided in the unblemished lamb, the blood of which on the two side posts and on the upper door post is a token of the fact that death has taken place. Second: the blood is for God—to meet His righteous and holy claims against them as sinners. He says, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" Third: the Israelites *obeyed* the word of God, and thus became sheltered from the judgment that fell upon the Egyptians, for we read: "And the children of Israel went away, and *did* as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, *so did they*. And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh

¹ Exod. xii. 1-13.

rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. . . . And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.”¹ But has Pharaoh learnt to bow before the Judge of all the earth? No, his heart is hardened, for “It was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. . . . And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. . . . And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of

¹ Exod. xii. 28-51.

Israel ; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these : so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground : and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily : so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel ; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared ; and the Egyptians fled against it ; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them ; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea ; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians ; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon

the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses."¹

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him,"² etc.

God has now a *redeemed people*. "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation."³ Of course, only in type, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."⁴ But all this is very interesting, because it teaches us the ways of God with man, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."⁵ They go three days in the wilderness and find no water; they come to Marah and the waters are bitter; they murmur. Moses cries to the Lord. He shows him a tree; he casts it into the waters and they are made sweet. And God said, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee."⁶

¹ Exod. xiv. 5-31.

² Exod. xv. 1, 2.

³ Exod. xv. 13.

⁴ Heb. x. 4.

⁵ Rom. xv. 4.

⁶ Exod. xv. 26.

But they murmur again and again. Nevertheless, God meets them in all the goodness of His heart, and gives them manna, and water from the rock. The time comes for them to go up and possess the land that God had given them. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them."¹ "And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many. . . . And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes. So they went up, and searched the land. . . . And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. . . . And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. . . . And Caleb stilled the people before

¹ Num. xiii. 1, 2.

Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! . . . And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before the children of Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere

they *believe* Me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye hath spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against Me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. . . . And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.”¹

“But with whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that *believed not*? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the *word preached* did not profit them, *not* being mixed *with faith* in them

¹ Num. xiii., xiv.

that heard it.”¹ How solemn are these words of God ! May we ponder them !

God's chosen people had now to wander in the wilderness for forty years because of their unbelief. God gave them the law, which they disobeyed before it reached them, and He made a covenant with them in connection with the law, and they accepted blessing on the ground of their obedience. But had God acted on this covenant *they would have had no blessing at all*. He acted in grace, although His judgments were manifested ; but He continually remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. “Not,” says God, “for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land : but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness ; for thou art a stiff-necked people.”²

It is clear that God was dealing with Israel in their responsibility, testing their hearts : ever ready to meet them in all their need and bless them according to His own grace, but still testing their hearts. “And thou shalt,” says God, “remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that

¹ Heb. iii. 17-19 ; iv. 1, 2.

² Deut. ix. 5, 6.

He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.”¹

Moses, the servant of the Lord, was not permitted to go into the land. He was provoked to anger by the murmurings of the people. “They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.”² “And I besought the Lord at that time,” said Moses, “saying, O Lord God, Thou hast begun to shew Thy servant Thy greatness, and Thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to Thy works, and according to Thy might? I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter.”³ “And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him.”⁴ How blessedly does Moses bow to the will of God! His whole heart is set upon the good of the people, that they may have one to go before them, into this good land, although he himself is shut out.

¹ Deut. viii. 2, 3.

² Ps. cvi. 32, 33.

³ Deut. iii. 23-26.

⁴ Num. xxvii. 15-18.

Thus we get Joshua raised up of God, to bring Israel over Jordan into the land promised to their fathers.

But surely Joshua is only a type of the One of whom Moses spake, saying: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken; according to all thou desiredest of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? when a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."¹

The Book of Joshua tells us how carefully God placed His people in the land according to the twelve tribes, although they had to subdue their enemies in the land. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He

¹ Deut. xviii. 15-22.

set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people ; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.”¹

Thus we see that God had Israel in His thoughts when He divided the inhabitants of the earth into nations and scattered them. Moses has spoken of a Prophet whom God would raise up unto Israel, which tells of their future blessing. To David God said : “ And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy Seed after thee, which shall be of *thy sons* ; and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build Me an house, and I will stablish His throne for ever. I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son ; and I will not take My mercy away from Him, as I took it from him that was before thee : but I will settle Him in Mine house and in My kingdom for ever : and His throne shall be established for evermore.”²

Israel has not only a promised PROPHET, but also a promised KING. We will look at a few Scriptures which speak of HIM.

“ Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”³ “ Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and *the government* shall be upon His shoulder : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His government and peace there shall be no end*, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts

¹ Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.

² 1 Chron. xvii. 11-14.

³ Isa. vii. 14.

will perform this.”¹ “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, *thy King cometh unto thee*: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”²

Every word of God is pure. The Scriptures we have looked at will suffice to show that the Jews, the children of Israel, are God's elect people in the Old Testament, and that the promised King was to be the King of the Jews. “Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, **THY KING COMETH.**”

In passing on to the New Testament, *this* must be borne in mind, otherwise we shall not understand the ways of God with man at this present time, which are of all-importance to us Gentiles, because God will carry out His own purposes, and what we have to do is to bow to the will of God.

The first thing that meets the eye in the New Testament is, “The book of the generation of JESUS CHRIST, *the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.*”³ *Abraham and David are the two heads of promise.* To Abraham God said: “*In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*” To David: “I will raise up *thy Seed* after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish *His kingdom.*” Here we have the promised Seed, and the promised King; the One in whose hands the kingdom is to be established, so that God's elect people Israel may be brought into perfect blessing, and then blessing be extended to the Gentiles, as it is written: “Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people.” Now everything depends upon how the King is received, and this is brought out very prominently in the Gospels.

¹ Isa. ix. 6, 7.

² Zech. ix. 9.

³ Matt. i. 1.

It will be seen that where there was faith, the hearts of God's people were resting in the word of promise. Hence, as soon as the Messiah came, even when a Babe, faith could recognise Him as the long-promised Prophet and King of their Scriptures. We will commence, therefore, with the birth of the Lord Jesus: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."¹ "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."² "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."³

"And his (John the Baptist's) father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant

¹ Matt. i. 23.

² Luke i. 30-33.

³ Luke i. 46-55.

unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.”¹

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST THE LORD. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.”² “And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcizing of the Child, His name was called JESUS. . . . And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law, then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant

¹ Luke i. 67-75.

² Luke ii. 7-14.

depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen THY SALVATION, which Thou hast prepared before the face of *all people*; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. . . . And she (Anna) coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”¹ “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is *born King of the Jews*? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.”² In reading the beginning of the Gospels, we cannot help being struck with the fact, that God has before His mind the fulfilment of the promises He made to the fathers in the coming of His beloved Son into this world; and it is very important to understand this, because, as I have said, if we do not, we cannot understand God’s present dealings with us Gentiles. It is my desire by God’s help to make this plain from His Word, so that any simple soul bowing to that Word may get blessing in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, and relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Now, when Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule MY people Israel.”³

¹ Luke ii. 21-38.

² Matt. ii. 1, 2.

³ Matt. ii. 3-6.

How amazing that Herod and all Jerusalem with him should be troubled because the promised King had come! They know well their Scriptures, and can say where Christ should be born. But the enmity of the heart of man is soon manifested against the Lord's Anointed, and Herod sent and "slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under."¹

God purposes blessing, but man will not have it! he fills the land with "lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."² Before the Lord Jesus had spoken a word, when but a Babe, man seeks His life. But where is He? Surely in the hands of God, for He had said to Joseph in a dream, "Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."³

At the age of twelve years we find the blessed Lord saying, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" And then, on the other hand, going down to Nazareth with His parents, He "was subject unto them." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."⁴

"And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age."⁵ "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."⁶ Here we have another fulfilment of Old Testament Scripture relative to the Jews. "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice

¹ Matt. ii. 16.

² Matt. ii. 18.

³ Matt. ii. 13.

⁴ Luke ii. 47-52.

⁵ Luke iii. 23.

⁶ Matt. iii. 1, 2.

of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.”¹

John says, “The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” and he goes before to get the people ready to meet their King. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”²

This is a step in the right direction, confessing one’s sins. There is nothing like taking our true place before God as sinners. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”³

The Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him, but not confessing their sins, he says to them, “O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”⁴

Now we find the Lord Himself coming from “Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him. . . . Jesus answered and said, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”⁵

The Lord, after the temptations in the wilderness,

¹ Matt. iii. 3.

² Matt. iii. 5, 6.

³ 1 John i. 9.

⁴ Matt. iii. 7-9.

⁵ Matt. iii. 13-17.

where He overcomes Satan, goes forth in testimony to His people, and in due course presents Himself as their King. Thus we read: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."¹ "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, THE TIME IS FULFILLED, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel."² "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth."³ In Matthew we read: The Lord said, "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In Mark: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel." In Luke: "The Spirit of the Lord is

¹ Matt. iv. 17.² Mark i. 14, 15.³ Luke iv. 16-22.

upon Me . . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."¹

But what is the answer of the Lord's people? "Is not this Joseph's son?"² "From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him."³

Had the Jews believed their own Scriptures, which they boasted in, they would have said, "Is not this the Son of David, the King of Israel?" Where the heart did rest in the Word of God, as Nathanael's heart did, faith said, according to the Second Psalm, "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."⁴

We have seen that the testimony of John the Baptist and that of the Lord Jesus were the same: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

The Lord now chooses twelve Apostles, whom He sent forth, and commanded them, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."⁵

This is the same testimony, and to the same people, all showing that Israel is the object of the Lord's choice, and that the Gentiles are not looked upon here as the

¹ Ps. cii. 13.

² Luke iv. 22.

³ Mark vi. 2, 3.

⁴ John i. 49.

⁵ Matt. x. 5-7.

people of God. The Lord did many miracles which manifested the glory of His person, and faith could easily recognise that the One who was in their midst was "Emmanuel," "the Messiah," "the King of Israel." Thus we read, "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?" This is faith. "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."¹ The religious leaders of the people come out with their satanic blasphemy, and attribute the mighty works of the Spirit of God to Satan. This is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which will never be forgiven. The Lord said, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you."² These evil leaders now say, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." But what about the blind and dumb man, possessed with a devil, whom Jesus healed? Is not that a sufficient sign that they may know that God Himself is really there? The Lord's answer is, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."³

The Lord had said to Ahaz, "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God. . . . But Ahaz said, I will not ask. . . . Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and

¹ Matt. xii. 22-24.

² Matt. xii. 28.

³ Matt. xii. 38-40.

shall call His name Immanuel.”¹ Here we have Jehovah’s sign to the nation of Israel. The nation rejects it, as well as the manifested power of the Spirit of Him who is God manifest in flesh ; and they seek a sign, but no sign shall be given but that of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We shall see how this also is treated by Israel.

We now come to the positive fulfilment of the prophecy we referred to in Zechariah.² “And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her : loose them, and bring them unto Me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them ; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way ; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest.”³

The prophet had said, “ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy

¹ Isa. vii. 10-14.

² Zech. ix. 9.

³ Matt. xxi. 1 9.

King cometh unto thee ; He is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." The answer of Israel is, " We will not have this man to reign over us."¹

On God's part it is all grace, ready to bless. On Israel's part it is rebellion, hardness of heart, and rejection of Christ. Many parables of the Lord bring this out very plainly. The following will suffice for proof:

The Lord said, " Hear another parable : There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country : and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first : and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir ; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."² Here God's grace is seen again. He sends His Son, saying, " They will reverence My Son." But Israel—man—in the exercise of his own free will and the wickedness of his heart, says, " Let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance," knowing well who He was.

The blessed Lord felt all this, for He knew that Israel's blessings all centred in Himself, that if they

¹ Luke xix. 14.

² Matt. xxi. 33-39.

rejected Him, all hope of blessing must be cut off. They might boast in the promises, and being the children of Abraham, God's elect people, but what about the One who was Abraham's Seed, David's Son, yet David's Lord? They saw no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him. "He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."¹

"And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; *because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*"²

Tears of sorrow and grief flow down the cheeks of the blessed Lord, giving expression to the love and sympathy of His loving heart, which was "full of compassion"; and again He breaks forth in lamentation: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not!* Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."³

We pass on now to the closing scene of the Lord's life on earth in connection with the responsibility of Israel, of whom we read, "Who are Israelites, to whom

¹ Isa. liii. 3.

² Luke xix. 41-44.

³ Matt. xxiii. 37-39.

pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”¹

“Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill Him. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”²

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.”³

The Lord warned Judas, saying to His disciples, “One of you shall betray Me,” and “The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.”⁴ Judas said, “Master, is it I?” as though he knew nothing about it; but he had already been to the chief priests to see how much he could get if he betrayed Him. His heart was set upon the money, and he no doubt thought the Lord would deliver Himself out of the hands of His enemies, as He had done before, because we read, “Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, *when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself*, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

¹ Rom. ix. 4, 5.

³ Matt. xxvi. 14-16.

² Matt. xxvi. 3-5.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 24.

saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”¹

The Lord, knowing all that was about to come upon Him, went into the garden of Gethsemane, saying to His disciples, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.” Then, having bowed to the Father’s will, saying, “O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done,” He comes again to His disciples, and finds them asleep, and says unto them, “Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. . . . And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. . . . Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took Him. . . . And they that had laid hold on Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. . . . Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto Him, Answerest Thou nothing? what is it which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest answered and said unto Him, I

¹ Matt. xxvii. 3-5.

adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God? Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy, What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?"¹

Can we conceive anything so awful as the manifest wickedness of Israel at this moment! The high priest, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, are all assembled. And whom have they at their bar? The long-promised Prophet, their Messiah, the King of Israel—yea, more, "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And on the confession as to the truth of His Person, the answer of Israel is, "He is guilty of death." We have the blessed Lord here before the religious heads of the people, and Mark says, "They all condemned Him to be guilty of death."²

"And straightway in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate."³

"And Pilate asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this Man. And they were

¹ Matt. xxvi.

² Mark xiv. 64.

³ Mark xv. 1.

the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time."¹

Now we have the Lord before Herod, the king of the Jews, the political head of the nation. Already we have seen He had been before the religious heads—the high priest, the chief priests, etc.—and was condemned, and now Herod condemns Him.

“And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.”²

It is interesting to notice that Pilate, being a Gentile, is warned by God through his wife, the very one whom he is the most likely to listen to: “When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just Man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.”³

“And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people, said unto them, Ye have brought this Man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this Man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him. No,

¹ Luke xxiii. 3-7.

² Luke xxiii. 10-13.

³ Matt. xxvii. 19.

nor yet Herod : for I sent you to him, and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him.”¹

“ Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.”²

Pilate said, “ Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews ? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this Man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.”³ “ Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath He done ? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified.”⁴ “ Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man ! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him ! Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him, and crucify Him : for I find no fault in Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid ; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou ? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me ? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee ? Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no

¹ Luke xxiii. 13-16.

³ John xviii. 39, 40.

² Matt. xxvii. 15, 16.

⁴ Matt. xxvii. 22, 23.

power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from henceforth Pilate sought to release Him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar."¹ "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person; see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified."²

"And they took Jesus, and led Him away, and He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the

¹ John xix. 4-15.

² Matt. xxvii. 24-26.

city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.”¹

“And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.”²

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous Man.”³

“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

¹ John xix. 16-22.

² Matt. xxvii. 39-44.

³ Luke xxiii. 46, 47.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true : and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”¹

“When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple : he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.”²

“Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”³

Man has done his utmost, manifesting his enmity and hatred against God, and against His Christ. God had acted in pure grace, sending, according to His promise, His own beloved Son to Israel as their King. It was to Israel that the promises were made ; it was

¹ John xix. 31-37.

² Matt. xxvii. 57-60.

³ Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

to Israel that Christ presented Himself as their King, as we have seen in the account the Holy Ghost has given at the birth of the Lord Jesus.

The wise men say: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"

Mary said: "He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

Zacharias, full of the Holy Ghost, said: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets. . . . To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father Abraham."

John the Baptist preached: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

The blessed Lord Himself preached: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel."

The disciples also preached, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," and they were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not into the way of the Gentiles.

But now Israel has rejected and deliberately crucified their King—David's Son, yet David's Lord! And while they have rejected Jehovah their King, they have just as deliberately accepted a Gentile King.

Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your King?" They answer, "We have no king but Cæsar." Again he says, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

"They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified." And now they have made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. All this time God has kept silent, He has not interfered. As the Lord said to the Jews, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness!" Awful moment! This act stands alone in the history of mankind.

But God has taken notice of everything. This we shall find as we turn to the Acts: "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."¹ In the Acts we find that God has raised up Jesus from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand; and that the Holy Ghost has come down upon the earth, and charges home upon the consciences of the people of Israel, by the Apostles, the rejection, murder, and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. We will look at a few of the Scriptures, and we shall not fail to see the force of them in connection with what we have been looking at, from the call of Abraham right on to the fulfilment of the promises in the coming of the Messiah into the world. I shall only notice here the testimony of the Holy Ghost by the Apostles in connection with Israel, God's elect people,* and their responsibility.

"Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words. . . . Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs,

¹ Heb. iv. 13.

* Not the blessing flowing to the believer through the death of the Lord Jesus; that we shall notice in subsequent chapters.

which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye ourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that *same* JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST.”¹

In Acts iii. the Apostles Peter and John do a notable miracle “*in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH*”: they cause a man forty years of age, who had been born lame, to rise up and walk. This so astonished the people, that they all ran “together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.”

“When Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. *But ye denied the HOLY ONE and the JUST, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the PRINCE OF LIFE, WHOM GOD hath raised from the dead*; whereof we are witnesses. And HIS NAME through faith in HIS NAME hath made this man strong, whom ye see and

¹ Acts ii. 14-36.

know ; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath *so fulfilled*. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For *Moses truly said* unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me ; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and *all* the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in THY SEED shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”¹

Here the Holy Ghost by Peter speaks to the “men of Israel,” and charges them with having denied the Holy One and the Just, and in the place of Him “desired a murderer to be granted unto them,” and that they had “killed the Prince of Life.”

¹ Acts iii. 12-26.

But he declares that God has raised Him up from the dead, and that in His name, through faith in His name, a man above forty years old, lame from his birth, was healed. God had given him perfect soundness in the presence of them all by the hand of Peter and John, witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and through this miracle (which in the next chapter the kindred of the high priest say they "cannot deny"—that is, they would if they could) the people of Israel may have confidence and believe the testimony of the Apostles.

But further, the Holy Ghost gives them credit for ignorance, saying, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Also, the prophets had spoken of these very things, that Christ should suffer; and *while they had shown the hatred and enmity of their hearts against God and His Christ* in killing the Prince of Life, *He had so fulfilled the Scriptures*. It was with wicked hands the Lord had been taken and crucified and slain. But God says, "Through ignorance ye did it." "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you."

Here we have God's long suffering mercy, *God's grace to a rebellious people*, whose sin has reached its very height in the murder of GOD'S own beloved Son, their Messiah and King. Yet God promises to send Him back again, if they will repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out.

Then Peter goes on to tell them that this is the Prophet which Moses said God would raise up, and

that every soul that would not hear that Prophet should be destroyed from among the people. And, further, that all the prophets had spoken of Him, and that they were the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God had made with their fathers, saying unto Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." "Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

But how could they be blessed if they did not receive Him? if they did not believe in Him? if they did not hear the voice of the Prophet? "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen."¹

But it grieved the captain of the temple and the priests and the Sadducees that Peter and John taught the people, and preached through JESUS *the resurrection from the dead*, and they laid hands on them, and put them in hold until the next day.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the *kindred of the high priest*, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Ghost*, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the *good deed* done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; *be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel*, that by the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH, *whom ye crucified, whom GOD raised from the dead*, even by Him doth this man

¹ 2 Cor. i. 20.

stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there *salvation in any other*: for there is none other NAME under heaven given *among men*, whereby we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were *unlearned and ignorant men*, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, *that they had been with Jesus*. And beholding the man which *was healed* standing with them, they could say *nothing against it*. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed *a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest* to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and *we cannot deny it*. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in *this NAME*. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you *more than unto God, judge ye*. For we cannot but speak the things which *we have seen and heard*. . . . And being let go, they went to their *own* company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God, with one accord, and said, Lord, *Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is*: who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?* The *kings* of the earth stood up, and the *rulers* were gathered together *against THE*

LORD, *and against HIS CHRIST.* For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, *both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel,* were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.”¹

Many signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the Apostles among the people, and “a multitude also came out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one.”

Again we read : “ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”

But we find them again brought before the Council, “ And the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name ? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather* than man. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and

¹ Acts iv.

* Note here, the Apostles say, “ We ought to obey God *rather* than man.” The principle of obedience is right, and the Apostles own it. Man ought to be obeyed when in a place of authority ; but if he puts his authority between the conscience and God, then God must be obeyed *rather* than man.

hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that *obey* Him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.”¹

Mark here again the enmity of the heart of Israel. It is true that they had crucified their Messiah, and that they had said, “His blood be on us, and on our children.” But God has raised Him up and exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins—all grace on God’s part. He is ready to forgive them, but they will not be forgiven. They take counsel to slay God’s witnesses who testify of His sovereign grace.

We have now but to look at one more witness, and our chapter closes.

Stephen was a man “full of faith and power,” and “did great wonders and miracles among the people.” “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.” I suppose they would have done so if they could. They bring him therefore before the Council. They then set up false witnesses, who said that he spake blasphemous words against Jerusalem and the law, etc. “And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” He is permitted to speak for himself. The high priest said, “Are these things so?” Stephen then rehearses the history of Israel briefly, and shows how the God of glory had appeared unto their father Abraham, and called him out of his own country,

¹ Acts v.

and promised to his seed the land wherein they now dwelt, and had given him the covenant of circumcision. He then goes on to show how their fathers had rejected and refused those whom God raised up to deliver them. First, they sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with him. Then they say to Moses, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?"

"This Moses (said Stephen) whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

"This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear."

Finally, Stephen testifies thus: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

“Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him : and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”¹

It is now all over with Israel for the time being ; they are truly God's people, but their house is left unto them desolate, as the Lord said, until He comes again, and they say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” But why ? Because they have forfeited every claim to the promises : first, through breaking the law ; second, killing the prophets ; third, rejecting and crucifying their Messiah ; fourth, resisting the Holy Ghost.

Yet God will be faithful, and will fulfil the promises made to their fathers in the latter days. And the Scriptures make all this known to us. We shall therefore resume this subject when we look at the Restoration of Israel.

¹ Acts vii.

III.

GOD MANIFEST IN FLESH—REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED.

WE have noticed briefly the ways of God with Israel, and have seen the reason why the Jews have not yet been brought into the blessings God promised them. But there are glories which belong to the Lord Jesus Christ besides those that relate to Israel.

The first and foremost of these is the glory of His own blessed Person. This is as definitely presented to us in the Word of God as that which has Israel as its object.

When we think of Israel, we think of the Promises, the Covenant, the Law, the Prophet, the Messiah, the Son of David, the King, and the glory of the Kingdom. But the ONE who has alone the right to the glory of these titles "is over all, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER."

The Apostle Paul, thinking of the condition of Israel as having rejected Christ, says: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the

covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, **WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER.**"¹ We therefore leave Israel, and look a little at the **LORD HIMSELF.**

The Gospel of John differs very markedly in some respects from the other three, and that from the very commencement. For instance, St. John gives us no account of the birth of the Lord Jesus. In Matthew we have facts stated about the Lord's birth, and references to Old Testament Scriptures showing how they have been fulfilled. In Luke we have very interesting family details, ever dear to the hearts of those who love the Lord. But in John we are taken right back into eternity, before the world was, and we are told of One who existed then ! We believe that God existed throughout eternity, but here we are told of One who was with God—the Word : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We have therefore more than one Person in the Godhead. The doctrine of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—is an established Christian doctrine. But it is important to see how God is presented to us in the Scriptures. Here, **THE WORD**, whom we know to be **THE SON OF GOD**, is particularly brought before our notice. We are told that **HE ETERNALLY EXISTED, AND EXISTED ETERNALLY WITH GOD, AND THAT HE HIMSELF IS GOD** ; then we are told that "**THE WORD BECAME FLESH.**"² We are therefore brought face to face with **GOD**. But in verse 3 we read : "All

¹ Rom. ix. 1-5.

² John i. 14.

things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." We are brought, then, face to face with THE CREATOR. The Apostle Paul says: "All things were created by Him, and for Him."¹ In the Gospel of John we have the LORD OF THE CREATION *coming into His own Creation*, and, as we have seen in Matthew and Luke, *really born into His Creation*. He is therefore the Firstborn of all Creation—"In Him was life"—self-existing in His own Person.

"And the Life was the Light of men." The Lord Himself is the Life and Light of men. And it is in this dark world that the Light has shone. "The Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." So dark was man's heart, that it took no notice of the Light that was there. God sends a man from Himself to bear witness of that Light. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe." John is not the Light, but he comes to bear witness of it. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."²

We cannot fail to see that we are far beyond the limits of Israel here. The Lord Jesus is "the Light of men," and, coming into this world, is Light for every man; it must of necessity be so, because we have the Creator of the whole universe before us, God manifest in flesh! This is proved without a doubt by verses 10 and 11: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

¹ Col. i. 16.

² John i. 4-9.

Here John contrasts "the world" with "His own." "His own" are Israel. "The world" embraces the human creation, which came into being through Him. But when He made Adam, who was the head of the human race, He made him in the image of God. "In the image of God created He him."¹ But man has lost the image of God through his sin; so, when the Creator comes into the human creation, it does not know its Creator. "The world knew Him not." But in verse 11 we have something still worse, if one may so speak. God had chosen Israel, and here Israel is called "His own," and He had given to Israel "exceeding great and precious promises," and the Fulfiller of these promises came to those to whom the promises were made, and they would not have Him. "His own received Him not"; this we have seen in our previous chapter.

The Gospel of John commences with the rejection of Christ, and it is all-important to see this; in the other Gospels we have it in history, as the rejection took place, and became a fact. In John we have it stated as a fact by God Himself.

Thus Christ, God, The Creator, The Son of God, The Son of Man, The Messiah, The King, is the Rejected One of this world, Jew and Gentile. The fulfilment, therefore, of the promises relating to the earth is of necessity set aside for the present. Man, be he Jew or Gentile, has no claim upon God on the ground of promise. The promises were given to the Jews, the Gentiles had no promises. But because Gentiles had no promises, we must not conclude that God had nothing in store for them. What we see is this, that

¹ Gen. i. 27.

the world not knowing its Creator, and the Jews not receiving their Messiah, God is free to act according to the love of His own blessed heart, independently of man altogether. This comes out in the next two verses: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (*Marg.* : the right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."¹ This is outside promise (save the promises given to Christ), and Jewish blessing. It is Christianity, which is developed in the Epistles, Atonement and Redemption having become an accomplished fact.

Christianity is manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pause here for a little to look at the Person of the blessed Lord; for if we see the glory of His person, we shall be able, by God's grace, to understand better the value of His work. Thus we read: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

It may be as well to say here that we have in the Scriptures a revelation *from* God—that is, we have the mind of God, the thoughts of God, expressed to us in writing, viz., in the written Word of God. But more than this, we have also a revelation *of* GOD IN THE PERSON OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: that is, GOD HIMSELF has been down here into this world, and has acted towards man in His sovereignty just as it has pleased Him.

But it is necessary to notice the *way* in which GOD *has* come into the world.

¹ John i. 12, 13.

“The LORD hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness.”¹ “He made darkness His secret place.”² “Clouds and darkness are round about Him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.”³ Job said, “O that I knew where I might find Him.” In the Old Testament, therefore, God had not revealed Himself; He had not made Himself known.

In the tabernacle, where God dwelt in the midst of His people, a veil was set up, and God was behind the veil, and it was called the Holy of Holies, where no one but the high priest was allowed to enter, and he only once a year, on the day of atonement, and then not without blood. Thus the Apostle says, “But into the second (the Holy of Holies) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people : the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.”⁴ I shall not now speak about the *way* that *is made* into “the holiest of all,” but about God coming from behind the veil, where He had dwelt in the thick darkness.

God had spoken, but it filled the heart of those who heard His voice with terror, so that the children of Israel said to Moses : “Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”⁵ And the Apostle said, “So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.”⁶ This was upon Mount Sinai, and there were thunderings, and lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the smoking mountain, so that when the people saw it,

¹ 2 Chron. vi. 1.

² Ps. xviii. 11.

³ Ps. xcvi. 2.

⁴ Heb. ix. 7, 8.

⁵ Exod. xx. 19.

⁶ Heb. xii. 21.

they stood afar off, "And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where GOD was."¹

But God came out from that thick darkness; not in all His glory and majesty demanding from man, or executing judgment upon the transgressors; but He came in humiliation and lowliness, and the Apostle says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation." The Lord Jesus being truly God, it was no robbery for Him to be *equal with God*, but He emptied Himself, laid aside that unapproachable glory which "no man hath seen, nor can see,"² "and took upon Him the form of a servant,"³ and was found in the likeness of men—in fashion as a man. He went lower down than this, but that we will leave for the present.* Truly God has been down here! The Son of God has become a real man in Divine love, and has taken a servant's form to accomplish for the glory of God that which the first man never did and never could accomplish. By the first man came sin and death; by the Second Man came life and resurrection.

It is a matter of great importance to us to hear what God says, and see what God does when He comes into this world. We are His creatures; we have rebelled against Him; we are under the sentence of death and

¹ Exod. xx. 21.

² 1 Tim. vi. 16.

³ Phil. ii. 5-7.

* All this is a striking contrast to what took place in the Garden of Eden. There the creature sought by robbery to become as the Creator—"ye shall be as God" was the temptation—and by *self-exaltation* lost all. Here the Creator takes an inferior position (not that it lessens the glory of His Person): He takes the form of a servant; He then acted as man should act in that position—"He humbled Himself." In consequence of so doing He has been, as Man, "highly exalted."

the judgment of God through our sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."¹

How God has acted towards man, and how man has acted towards God, are questions which must be considered; and they have been fully answered in the Son of God coming into this world. And further, God has had it all written down by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

May we not, then, with unprejudiced minds turn aside a little and see this great sight—God manifest in flesh! God walking in the midst of men down here in this world, and not consuming them, and then hear Him say: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."² No thundering law, with lightnings and voices, and blackness and darkness. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."³ *Truth* we must have if GOD comes; God is holy. But we have *grace as well*: and that supposes there is a need for it in this world, and a deep need too, only known to God Himself. So He acts according to His knowledge of our need, and therefore comes into this world "*full of grace and truth*."⁴ "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"⁵—in this lowly form of a servant.

Divine love alone could lead Him to take such a place. But love delights to serve. He says, in coming

¹ Rom. v. 12.

² Matt. xi. 28, 29.

³ John i. 17.

⁴ John i. 14.

⁵ John i. 18.

into this world: "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God." Where is there another in the whole universe that could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God"? It was *absolutely necessary* for the *glory of God* and *our salvation* that the *will of God should be done in this world*. And this led the blessed Son of God to put Himself in His Father's hands in order that He might restore the glory of God which He took not away; as He says: "Then I restored that which I took not away."¹ He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me."²

Thus all that the will of God involved He undertook to do at all cost to Himself, never turning aside for one moment. It was a path of humiliation, a path of sorrow. He could say, "I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting."³ What but Divine love could endure this? But have we no manifestation of His Divine glory? Indeed we have. He comes down from the mountain where He had been teaching His disciples, and great multitudes follow Him. "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."⁴ Who but God could say "I will; be thou clean"? Who but God could touch a leper and not be defiled? A leper is a type of a sinner, and this

¹ Ps. lxi. 4.

³ Isa. l. 5, 6.

² Heb. x. 5.

⁴ Matt. viii. 2, 3.

is an everlasting manifestation that Jesus is not only able but willing to cleanse every poor sinner that comes to Him in faith.

In the fourth chapter of John we see the Lord, truly Man, wearied with His journey, sitting on the well, but none the less GOD. "For our sakes He became poor." And He makes Himself dependent upon a woman of Samaria for a drink of water, and says, "Give Me to drink." She says, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." But there were no Jewish prejudices in His blessed heart! He is far above Jew and Gentile, GOD OVER ALL. But He has come down to both, in love and grace, and He says to the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and WHO it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of HIM, and HE would have *given thee* living water." Do we know Who it is that said to the woman, "Give Me to drink"? IT IS GOD, the God of all grace, that has come down here, and sat upon the well at Sychar—come down so low, so near to man, and has asked a drink of water of a poor sinful woman. It is the God who told Moses to strike the rock so that the waters gushed out, and Israel drank, that said to the woman, "*Give Me to drink.*" Do you, dear reader, know that blessed heart—that love that brought Jesus down here to do the Father's will, as well as to seek and save the lost? The woman said, "Give me this water." Then the Lord touched her conscience, and showed her that He knew all about her. And before she left Him He set her heart at rest, so that she left her waterpot and went into the city and said: "Come,

see a Man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" And in satisfying that poor sinner's heart, the Lord said: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." "Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. . . . And many more believed because of His own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and *know* that this is *indeed* THE CHRIST, the SAVIOUR of the world." It was the love and grace of the Lord Jesus that led these Samaritans to believe in Him; and "he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." And they bear witness that He is the Saviour of the world!

The Lord's life was a life of love, ever seeking in grace to meet the deep need that He saw all around Him. He had taken the form of a servant; He came here to serve God and man, finding His delight in doing the Father's will, while He was ever at the disposal of man to serve him in Divine love. And by the tender expressions of that love the Father draws souls to Himself. The Lord said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," and "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him."¹ And because no man can come except he is drawn by the Father, the Father, in the love of His heart, sends His own beloved Son into this world, where He knew He would be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows." Yet He came, nothing stopping the flow of the Divine love that was there. Love delights to

¹ John vi. 44.

serve, and the Son of God says, "I will be the servant." "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant." And it is by Him—the Son—in this lowly form that the Father draws hearts to Himself. "God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."¹

I said that the Lord Jesus was ever at the disposal of man, to serve him in Divine love, and so He was; for "There came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM." He finds Peter's "wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And He touched her hand, and the fever left her." At evening "they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."²

He entered into a ship with His disciples, "And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."³

The blessed Lord heals the man sick of the palsy,

¹ 1 John iv. 8, 9.

² Matt. viii. 5-17.

³ Matt. viii. 24-26.

besides forgiving his sins. A man's withered hand is restored whole as the other by His word.

He meets a man possessed with an unclean spirit, who cannot be bound or tamed. Jesus asked him, "What is thy name?" "My name is Legion: for we are many," said he. But the Lord casts out the devils, and sends them into a herd of swine, which were choked in the sea. "And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. . . . And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts."¹ How terrible! they would rather have a man possessed with a legion of devils in their midst than the blessed Son of God, who had come in grace, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Again, we have a woman who, when she had heard of Jesus, touched His garment. "For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole." And straightway she was healed of her plague. The woman would have gone away "fearing and trembling," but that would never have satisfied the loving heart of Jesus; so He finds her out, and said unto her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; *go in peace*, and be whole of thy plague."²

Time and space forbid us to go more into detail concerning the Lord's life of love. What was said of old of Him is true of Him when He comes into this world: "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow

¹ Mark v. 1-17.

² Mark v. 25-34.

to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."¹

In the Old Testament we have promises of blessing for the righteous, and threats of judgment for the wicked. But the blessed Lord comes down from heaven to tell us that God "is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."² Thus the Lord goes on telling the tale of *love and mercy* that was *flowing from the heart of God to poor sinful men*. He opened the eyes of the blind, He made the deaf to hear; He raised the dead, comforting the heart of the poor widow who had lost her only son; He weeps with the sorrowing ones at the grave of Lazarus, and then manifests His Godhead power, and calls him from the grave. This is how GOD has acted in His love and grace towards man in this world, never turning any away.

We have seen a little how man has acted towards God in our previous chapter, but only a little. "Many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?"³ Again they say, "We know that this man is a sinner." "We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is."⁴ He is mocked, He is spat upon, crowned with thorns; He is reviled, scourged, and condemned. But, more than this, He had friends—those that loved Him, who followed Him in all His journeyings—and He looked for sympathy from them. He said, "Tarry ye here, and watch with Me"; but He found them asleep. He "looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but found none."⁵ And at last "they all forsook Him and fled." But all this brings

¹ Ps. cxlv. 8, 9.

² Luke vi. 35.

³ John x. 20.

⁴ John ix. 29.

⁵ Ps. lxix. 20.

out the fact that there was Divine love in the heart of Jesus that many waters could not quench, nor floods drown: a love that could and would go through all, even death itself, for the objects of that love—poor lost guilty sinners.

But “God is light,” and “God is holy,” and must ever act consistently with Himself. He has claims—righteous and holy claims—against man; and if man comes into judgment, it is condemnation and death, for he is a sinner. So these questions necessarily arise: If God acts according to His love towards man, and takes no notice of his sins, what about His righteousness? And if in His righteous and holy indignation He sends man into perdition, what about His love? Both find their *Divine answer* in the *death of Christ*—to the GLORY OF GOD. This, by God’s help, we will now consider.

When Adam fell, as we have seen, he obtained the conscious knowledge of “good and evil,” and he knew that he must be condemned by God. This is manifested by Adam and Eve hiding amongst the trees of the garden. When God came, He had to say, “Where art thou?” And Adam said, “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”¹ Thus, we find man forsakes God, and hides himself from Him, and this has been going on ever since. God did not forsake man; for, notwithstanding that sin has come in, and a positive breach and separation between God and man has been made, yet God has only inflicted temporal punishment. The eternal judgment still awaits its accomplishment. “God is slow to anger.” He pronounces temporal

¹ Gen. iii. 9, 10.

punishment upon Adam and Eve, and then through death clothes them with coats of skins suitable to Himself, and drives them out of the garden. It is manifest that man has tried to make the best of it; but it is also manifested that sin is in the world, and death follows. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."¹ The eternal judgment, as I said, has not yet been executed. That is God's long-suffering mercy and grace. How blessed!

But before God says a word to Adam and Eve, He pronounces judgment upon the serpent (the devil) in their hearing, and makes a statement concerning the *woman's* "SEED": "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."²

In this we have the *foundation* for the establishment of the *glory of God* in connection with all that the devil has done in this world, or, I might say, in the whole universe of God.

It was manifest in the Lord's life on earth that Divine love and mercy flowed out freely to all around, and the love and mercy was enjoyed by those who had hearts to receive it by faith. But then there were questions of eternal import that sin had raised which had to be settled by the Son of God.

The righteousness of God had to be established in connection with the love and mercy that had been

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

² Gen. iii. 14, 15.

flowing from God ever since the Fall. God had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."¹ The devil said, "Ye shall not surely die." But death* certainly came in, and that by man's sin. But we read, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."² And again: "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."³

Moreover, on the mount of transfiguration, "Behold, there talked with Him *two men*, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."⁴

But God will vindicate Himself in righteousness, and maintain His own glory, in all His ways, in heaven and upon earth. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"⁵

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."⁶ He comes as such into this world, which manifests the darkness and sin that is in it. And, what is worse, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."⁷

Yet "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."⁸ "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."⁹

There have ever been prejudices arising in men's minds through religious questions, and this is manifested

¹ Gen. ii. 17.

² Heb. xi. 5.

³ 2 Kings ii. 11.

⁴ Luke ix. 30, 31.

⁵ Gen. xviii. 25.

⁶ 1 John i. 5.

⁷ John iii. 19.

⁸ John iii. 17.

⁹ 2 Cor. v. 19.

* "Death" is separation from God.

in the Jews and Samaritans. The woman at the well, perceiving the Lord was a prophet, said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that at Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." But the Lord settled this by saying, "Salvation is of the Jews." He owned all God's former dealings with the Jews, although He had come "the Saviour of the world." But the Samaritans would not receive Him, because "His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem." James and John wanted to command fire to come down from heaven to consume them. "But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."¹ And again He says: "If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."²

But why go to Jerusalem? It was there the things concerning Him had an end. Jesus began to show the disciples "how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."³

At Jerusalem the Lord was going to lay a *righteous foundation* for Enoch and Elijah to be in heaven, without dying; and going to settle the dispute between Michael the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses; and that GOD might "declare HIS *righteousness* for the *remission of sins* that are past, through the forbearance of God."⁴

The Lord had said to Nicodemus, "Ye *must* be born

¹ Luke ix. 53-56.

³ Matt. xvi. 21.

² John xii. 47.

⁴ Rom. iii. 25.

again"; and that man might have life given to him in righteousness by God, the Lord further said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up: *that* whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, *but have eternal life.*"¹ Just as man *must* have a *new life* to enter into the kingdom of God, so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up. If Enoch was taken to heaven without dying, some ONE *must die* in his stead, because he was a sinner, and "the wages of sin is death," although he "walked with God." If Moses' sin shut him out of the promised land, why has it not shut him out of heaven? He is seen in the glory on the mount with the Lord Jesus. All these questions find their righteous answer in the DEATH of the LORD JESUS. The just and righteous claims of a Holy God must be met, and *met in such a way* that no created being could raise a charge against the righteousness of God, although He takes the vilest sinner on earth to heaven. All these things necessitated the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

DEATH is God's righteous judgment against man on account of his sins, *and death is also* the power that Satan had over man through his sin. Unless the power of Satan is destroyed, and the judgment of God executed upon a substitute, there could be no salvation. This the Lord Jesus undertakes to accomplish, at all cost to Himself, when He says, "Lo, I come *to do* THY WILL, O GOD."²

But let us consider what it would be for the Lord Himself to go *thus into death*. He was, as we have seen, the Son of David as born into this world, the rightful Heir to the throne of David. He was also the

¹ John iii. 14, 15.

² Heb. x. 9.

Son of Man, as we read in Ps. viii., and was to have dominion over all the works of God's hands, and all things were to be put under His feet. And when born into this world the heavenly host say, "Glory to God in the highest, *and on earth peace*, good will towards men."¹ Such were the *hopes* of the MESSIAH, and the SON OF MAN as born into this world. But "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? for He was cut off out of the land of the living."² In the psalm where it is said that the set time to favour Zion had come, the Messiah says, "He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days. I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days." Then Jehovah makes answer to Him and says, "Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."³

The *power of the devil* had to be *met* and *overcome*, both in *temptation* and *death*, in order that eternal blessing might be secured to man. The Lord was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be *tempted of the devil*. Satan had tempted Adam in the garden, and had overcome him. Adam was not in the wilderness, neither was he hungry; he was surrounded by the goodness of God. But the Lord Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was afterwards an hungered. It was then the tempter came to Him and said, "If Thou be

¹ Luke ii. 14.² Isa. liii. 8.³ Ps. cii. 23-27.

the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." A very reasonable thing to do, one might think. But the Son of God had taken the place of the son of man, and as such a place of *dependence upon* GOD, as well as *obedience*, and He knew well the temptation was to make Him forfeit that place by an *act of independence*. He defeated the devil by the written Word of God, saying, "IT IS WRITTEN, *Man* shall not live by bread alone, *but by every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."¹ Again and again the devil tries to overcome Him, even by using, or misusing, the written Word, tempting the Lord to tempt God. But Jesus stands His ground, and overcomes the strong man, and then goes forth and spoils his goods, as we have seen. "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season."²

It was at the end of the Lord's life here that He said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."³ It was the devil that put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him. And the Lord having marked him out by giving him a sop, "Satan entered into him." But the Lord was "troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me."⁴

It is necessary that we should have before our souls the fact that the Lord is about to enter into the judgment of God against sin. This is what is before Him when He says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." *This is what is in the cup* which He contemplates in the garden of Gethsemane. The

¹ Matt. iv. 1-4.

³ John xiv. 30.

² Luke iv. 13.

⁴ John xiii. 21.

thought of drinking it causes Him to sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly."¹ He "fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt."² This was not drinking the cup. The cup was a *cup of wrath*, and of *the holy indignation and righteous judgment of a HOLY GOD*. And to bear *that He must be made sin and forsaken of God*, which took place upon the Cross; and *there*, and THERE ALONE, atonement was made, REDEMPTION WAS ACCOMPLISHED. But here in the garden He was looking at what it *all meant for Himself*. He had become Man, to *go into it in all its reality*. And now the question is, Will He do it? The devil would say, "Pity Thyself," but, bless His holy name! He goes to the Father, and learns the Father's will in obedience. "Though He were a Son, *yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered*."³ He learned the BLESSEDNESS OF OBEDIENCE, the *preciousness of it to GOD—what it was for God to have A MAN here upon this earth, who would be OBEDIENT unto DEATH, even the DEATH OF THE CROSS*.

The first man *knows nothing* of obedience. When in life and happiness *he disobeyed God*, and has gone on disobeying Him ever since.

We have seen that the Lord commenced a downward path, from the highest point in glory, from Godhead itself. He only could, being God, and it is HIS GLORY. But what infinite condescension to come

¹ Luke xxii. 44.

² Mark xiv. 35, 36.

³ Heb. v. 8.

down here and be a servant! Yet Divine love led Him to do this. But He must go down still lower if *He will do God's will*. So we read: "And being found in fashion as a man, HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."¹

He prays again, saying: "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, THY WILL BE DONE."²

The Lord having bowed to the Father's will, and taken the cup from His hand, goes forth and meets the power of the world and Satan that has come out against Him. Betrayed with a kiss, He is handed over by the traitor to the multitude that had come out *against Him* with *swords* and *staves*. One of His disciples drew a sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. But the Lord, having healed the servant, says to the disciple: "Put up again *thy sword* into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*"³ Again He says: "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"⁴

Thus we see the Lord going on in *subjection* to the Father's will. He says: "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He is positively rejected by His own people Israel—"the innocent blood" betrayed—handed over to the Gentile power, condemned to death by the governor, who confessed

¹ Phil. ii. 8.

² Matt. xxvi. 42.

³ Matt. xxvi. 52, 53.

⁴ John xviii. 11.

and said: "*I find in HIM no fault at all,*"¹ and "*I have found no cause of death in HIM.*"² Forsaken by His friends, He is led on to the Cross; "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."³ And now He is hung up upon the Accursed Tree; for it is written: "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."⁴ "And He was numbered with the transgressors,"⁵ being placed between two thieves, men that were so wicked that the world had to get rid of them, whereas the Lord could declare: "They hated Me without a cause."⁶

There He is, the Christ of God, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the King of Israel, and in addition God's own provided Lamb. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."⁷ And the language of His heart is, "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him. . . . For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. . . . They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture."⁸

"Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."⁹

Thus He is reproached, reviled, mocked, scorned,

¹ John xviii. 38.

² Luke xxiii. 22.

³ Isa. liii. 7.

⁴ Gal. iii. 13.

⁵ Isa. liii. 12.

⁶ John xv. 25.

⁷ John i. 29.

⁸ Ps. xxii.

⁹ Ps. lxix.

and abandoned by all—king, high priest, chief priests, the Jews, the Gentile governor, and the Gentiles. “He is despised and rejected of men.”¹

But now comes that *awful moment* which, as He looked forward to it in the garden, caused Him to sweat as it were great drops of blood—the *judgment of a holy God against sin*. God made His own beloved Son, when upon the Cross, “*sin for us*.”² He “spared not His own Son.”³ “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *the just for the unjust*, that He might *bring us to God*.”⁴ “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying . . . My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”⁵

This was death, “THE SECOND DEATH”—“THE WAGES OF SIN.” Man, having sinned, could no longer stand in the *presence of a HOLY GOD*. The Lord takes the sinner’s place in judgment, He is *made sin*, and *bears sins in His own body on the tree*; and HE is then *judged*, CONDEMNED, and ABANDONED BY GOD. *All the waves of God’s wrath roll over His holy soul*. The *just judgment and wrath of God*, due to the sinner, is *poured out without limit* upon the LAMB OF GOD. He cries out that *He is forsaken of God*, and vindicates God in doing it, saying, “But THOU ART HOLY, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”⁶ And He remains upon the Cross until every drop of that bitter cup of judgment has been poured out upon Him and all appropriated and exhausted by Himself, so that nothing but the Divine love, that led Him to stand in the judgment, remains for us poor guilty sinners.

¹ Isa. liii. 3.² 2 Cor. v. 21.³ Rom. viii. 32.⁴ 1 Pet. iii. 18.⁵ Matt. xxviii. 45, 46.⁶ Ps. xxii.

But there is more than this in the Cross. The Lord had lived a holy, perfect, spotless life from the time He took the lowly form of a servant until His crucifixion. GOD the Father had given testimony again and again of His satisfaction in His own Son, who had so come into this world. He said, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased."¹ The Lord could say, "I do always those things that please Him";² "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do."³ And the Holy Ghost has said of Him that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."⁴ Also, He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."⁵ "A Lamb without blemish and without spot."⁶ *As such* He goes to the Cross of His own free will, and offers Himself up a "sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."⁷

There are two aspects to be considered in the death of Christ—that which went *to* God, and that which came *from* God. That which came from God was the just judgment and wrath of God against sin. This was all poured out upon Christ, the spotless victim, when upon the Cross; and He has consumed it, so that there is none left. That which went to God is that holy, unblemished, spotless life of the blessed Lord offered up (in death, the blood being shed) to God, to meet the holy and Divine claims of a holy God, who had been offended and dishonoured by man's sin. The one is the sin-offering aspect, and the other the burnt-offering aspect of the death of Christ. By the one, sins are put

¹ Matt. iii. 17.² John viii. 29.³ John xiv. 31.⁴ Heb. vii. 26.⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 22.⁶ 1 Pet. i. 19.⁷ Eph. v. 2.

away ; by the other, GOD IS GLORIFIED. The application of this to the sinner is made known in the Gospel.

We turn again to the Cross and the Lord hanging upon it, and read : “ Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar : and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, IT IS FINISHED : and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.” Then “ one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.”¹ “ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”²

The Lord Jesus, having done the will of God in laying down His life, (He had power to lay it down and power to take it again), “ made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death.”³ In fulfilment of this Scripture, a rich man named Joseph went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock ; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed.

But alas ! man, not satisfied with what he has done, comes and seals the stone, and sets a watch, to keep the Lord there. But how could death and the grave hold Him ? He came from heaven to *abolish death* and to bring *life and incorruptibility to light*. But He came as a servant, to do it all for God, being “ obedient even unto death ” for the glory of God. Therefore God Himself steps in. “ And, behold, there was a great

¹ John xix.

² Matt. xxvii. 51.

³ Isa. liii.

earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."¹ This was not for the Lord to come out; *no great stone sealed* could keep HIM there! He was risen, but God had sent an angel from heaven to roll away the stone, so that His own loved ones might see that the tomb was empty. "Come, see (said he) the *place where the LORD lay*."²

It soon became an established fact amongst those that loved Him that "the Lord was risen indeed,"³ although they had been slow to believe at first. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils."⁴

Without going into the details of the narrative, we may look a little at the wonderful results of that which the Lord had accomplished by His death, as simply brought before the disciples, after His resurrection, in the end of the Gospels.

In John xx. the Lord is first seen by Mary Magdalene, and she is about to embrace Him and own Him as the true Messiah and King of Israel. But "Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not." He will no longer be owned in that relationship, and gives a reason for it: "I am not yet ascended to My Father." Luke xix. 11, 12 will explain this. "And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and *because they thought* that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

¹ Matt. xxviii. 2.

² Matt. xxviii. 6.

³ Luke xxiv. 34.

⁴ Mark xvi. 9.

Now that is what the Lord has done. He has gone back to heaven (the far country) to receive the kingdom as the Redeemer Heir, and He will soon "return" and take it.

But what about His disciples who truly loved Him? These, now, He calls His "brethren," and sends a message by Mary Magdalene to make known to them the wonderful relationship He has made for His poor disciples (who had forsaken Him) and also for all true believers in this dispensation. "But go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto *My Father*, and *your Father*; and to *My God*, and *your God*." This is Christianity.

In the first chapter of John, not being known by the world, and not being received by His own, the Lord gives those who do receive Him by faith the right or privilege to become children of God. Here the Lord brings them into the relationship of children through His death and resurrection. And Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils, because of her devotedness to the Lord, has the blessed privilege of making this known to the disciples.

But this is not all: the disciples (as well as we) were sinners. Peter had denied the Lord, had told lies, and had cursed and sworn. Long ago he had confessed, "I am a *sinful man*, O Lord." Matthew was a publican, and the Pharisees complained of the Lord for eating with publicans and sinners. All this must be settled in Divine righteousness for the glory of God, before we can "eat bread in the kingdom of God." Mary Magdalene's message, therefore, gathers the disciples together. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples

were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

The Lord only three days before this had been nailed to the Accursed Tree, and when hanging there, dead, then from His own blessed side (that side He showed to the disciples) had flowed blood and water. He, having "made peace through the blood of His Cross," now, in resurrection, brings that peace Himself to His sorrowing disciples, and His presence rejoices their hearts.

Here we have two distinct things: first, RELATIONSHIP; second, PEACE; the *one* for the HEART, the *other* for the CONSCIENCE. Both are established upon the atoning work of the Son of God upon the Cross. The disciples have both peace and relationship *with God as Father*.

But, further, the Lord said to them again, "Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."¹

These, therefore, are the first true sent servants of Christ after His death and resurrection. But before He sends them out He gives them abiding peace with God and forgiveness of sins through His own precious blood, so that Peter, the first of the Apostles, could say, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."²

He gives them also the knowledge of relationship—

¹ John xx. 21, 22.

² 1 Pet. iii. 18.

both eternally settled by the blood of Christ for the glory of God. All this is made good to them in power by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. But the foundation of all is "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."¹

We must now see where those servants of Christ are sent. They had been sent out before, and the Lord told them where to go and what to preach, as we have seen in our second chapter. But to get this plainly before our souls, and to see the contrast between the commission *then* and *now*, we will turn again to the Scriptures.

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."² This is what they preached before the Cross, and they were sent only to God's elect people.

But the commission now from the Lord is, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."³

"Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: *and that* repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye

¹ Rom. iii. 24.

² Matt. x. 5-7.

³ Mark xvi. 15, 16.

in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

“And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, . . . and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

“And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **THIS SAME JESUS**, which is taken up from you into heaven, **SHALL** *so come in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem” with great joy, and continued in the Temple, praising and blessing God.¹

It is of the utmost importance for the true blessing of our souls that we should understand our exact position before God as being born into this world. The Gospel is presented to us in that position, as we shall see later on. We are born either Jews or Gentiles, but in any case we are all dead in trespasses and sins.

Before the Lord left this earth the disciples asked this question relative to the Jews: “**LORD**, *wilt THOU at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”²

¹ Luke xxiv.; Acts. i.

² Acts i. 6-8.

These, and many other Scriptures, show plainly that the rejection of Christ by Israel, on the one hand, and the accomplishment of redemption on the other, have made a distinct change in God's ways with man since the Cross. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the understanding of the mind of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, to rightly divide the word of truth.¹

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 15.

IV.

THE COVENANTS—GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY— GENTILE RESPONSIBILITY.

HAVING looked a little in a simple way at God's ways with the Jews, and having seen how God has been pleased to reveal Himself in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that redemption has become an accomplished fact, it is necessary to notice the change that has taken place in the ways of God with man since the Cross before considering the ways of God in this dispensation, which are characterized by pure grace—that is, by God revealing Himself in all the love of His own blessed heart to the world as a SAVIOUR GOD.

It is important, therefore, not to mix up and jumble together God's past ways with His present ways. *Divine principles* ever remain the same, but the ways of God may change, and they *have changed*.

Not that God is unfaithful concerning His promises. Promises made by God must be fulfilled, and will be fulfilled ; but in God's past ways with man He promised blessings on the ground of keeping the law, and no one kept it, therefore no one had a righteous title to the promised blessings. Again, the Messiah promised to the Jews was to bring in the promised blessings, but Him they crucified.

Hence the necessity of a change in God's ways with man if blessing is to reach him. Yet it is necessary to see the place that promise and the covenants have, also the sovereign right that God has to change His ways if He pleases, and our responsibility in connection with His present ways.

It is the importance of these things that has led to the writing of this chapter, so that nothing may hinder the fulness of God's grace being received by those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we may have a perfect understanding of the ways of God at this present time.

It is most important, therefore, to understand that in the Word of God there are revealed to us the ways and thoughts of God, and we can only have Divine thoughts formed in our hearts by submitting to God's ways as revealed in the Scriptures. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."¹

The covenants are clearly made known in the Word. God's sovereignty can be seen throughout the whole volume of truth. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, *What doest THOU?*"² Moreover, every individual soul is responsible to God, and will be brought to submit sooner or later to Him. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."³

¹ Isa. lv. 8, 9.

² Dan. iv. 35.

³ Rom. xiv. 11, 12.

Covenant means, an agreement between two or more persons. Thus God made a covenant with Abraham, and gave him circumcision as a seal of that covenant. God confirmed the same to Isaac, and then to Jacob.

The terms of the covenant were: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."¹ This is purely promise of earthly blessing.

God, having brought His people Israel out of Egypt in grace according to the above promise, made a covenant with them, of which Moses speaks in Deut. v.: "Hear, O Israel. . . . The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." This covenant was a covenant of works. Israel having accepted blessing on the ground of their obedience, through disobedience forfeited all claim to everything, therefore God's chosen people are under the curse of a broken law and a rejected Messiah unto this day. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I WILL make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My

¹ Gen. xv. 18.

people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”¹

We learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews how Christ is the Mediator of this new covenant; but the covenant is not yet made, and the Apostle speaks of it as still future. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I *will* make a new covenant”; and then he goes on to say with whom the covenant will be made, viz., “with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.” The old covenant was made with Israel, and because they brake that, God will make a new covenant with the same people in a coming day, so that He may fulfil the promises He made to their fathers. This is plainly stated in Scripture: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And *ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers*; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.”²

We have had in detail before us the application of the covenants of promise, first to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then to the children of Israel. The addi-

¹ Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

² Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28.

tional new covenant in Jeremiah that we have now looked at makes a complete picture, and runs as follows :

Covenant made first with Abraham ; confirmed to Isaac and Jacob. Character : *Unconditional*. Terms : Promise of a seed as numerous as the stars of heaven, and possession of the promised land (Palestine) by the promised seed.

Second, to Israel, the promised seed. Character : *Conditional*. Terms : Possession of the promised land, and blessing in the land on the ground of their obedience ; *a covenant of works*.

Third, the new covenant yet to be made with Israel. Character : *Unconditional*. Terms : Forgiveness of Israel's sins, cleansing from their idols, a new heart and a new spirit, so that they can keep God's statutes and judgments, and dwell in the land which God gave to their fathers.

In addition to that which was promised in connection with Israel, God said to Abraham, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," showing plainly that God had in store blessings for man which would go far beyond the limits of Israel.

The promises of blessing in the Old Testament do not go beyond earthly blessing, in the plain language of the terms.

Now there is another covenant spoken of in Scripture, viz., "the everlasting covenant," and this covenant was made between the Persons of the Godhead in eternity. The terms of it are stated in Psa. xl. and Heb. x. The Son of God undertakes to accomplish the will of God down here upon the earth ; this necessitates Him becoming Man. He therefore, in lowly

grace, takes upon Him the form of a servant, as we have seen, and in doing so puts Himself into the hands of God the Father to do His will, whatever that will was. "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God."¹

Now the will of God was that Christ should go down into death, and glorify Him about sin, and its entrance into this world by the first man, and that sin should be put away by the sacrifice of Himself, Satan and his power set aside through death—"that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,"² and abolish death, and bring life and incorruptibility to light by the Gospel. Thus we have in the accomplishment of the will of God, by the Son of God going down into death and shedding His own blood, an immovable foundation for the establishment of all the eternal counsels of God, which He purposed in Christ before the foundation of the world, as well as the covenants made to the fathers. And this is a much wider thought than merely the salvation of those we may look upon as the elect, for it includes the reconciliation unto God of all things that are in heaven and upon earth. "Having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile ALL THINGS unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were some-

¹ Heb. x. 5-7.

² Heb. ii. 14, 15.

time alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight."¹

The foundation has been laid, because He has made peace by the blood of His Cross ; but all things are not yet reconciled, but they will be, because the foundation is immovable, and the gates of *hell cannot prevail against it*, for all is to be established upon the PERSON of the SON OF GOD and HIS WORK. But while we do not yet see all things subdued under His feet, "yet NOW HATH He reconciled" (believers), "in the body of His flesh through death, to present them holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight." In connection with this the Apostle says in Eph. i., "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in Him : in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."² These Scriptures show the *wonderful value* of the *work of Christ*, and the *extent* of its *results* in the *coming day of glory*, reconciling all things in heaven and on earth to God. Surely our thoughts are not God's thoughts, nor our ways God's ways. For GOD will reconcile ALL THINGS unto HIMSELF, BOTH which are IN HEAVEN and ON EARTH ; and to be in the reconciled purchased possessions of Christ *in the coming day of glory*, we must KNOW what it is NOW TO

¹ Col. i. 20-22.

² Eph. i. 9-11.

BE INDIVIDUALLY RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

A definite distinction is made by God between Jews and Gentiles, from the call of Abraham right on to the rejection of Christ. It will be noticed that Gentiles are NOT included in the above covenants, and the following Scripture, written to Gentile believers, shows this very plainly: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE, AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD."¹ THE WORD OF GOD says that Gentiles are NOT included in the blessings of the covenants; they are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." And the new covenant is to be made with the *same people* with whom the old covenant was made, viz., "the house of Israel and the house of Judah." Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, and He will make it good to Israel (the Jews), when He comes the second time, as He said to them when here: "Ye shall not see ME henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."² Election and the new covenant in the Old Testament go together, and both refer exclusively to the Jews.

Now while it is said that Gentiles have no part in the covenants of promise, or in the commonwealth of

¹ Eph. ii. 11, 12.

² Matt. xxiii. 39.

Israel, having no hope, and being without God in the world, yet that does not mean that God had no blessing for Gentiles; indeed, God had far richer and higher blessings for Gentile believers of this dispensation who were not His people than He had even promised to the Jews. And the Scriptures state plainly that the character of the blessings that Gentiles are brought into in this dispensation through the Gospel was "the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel: whereof I (says Paul) was made a minister . . . to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been *hid in God*."¹ And again ". . . for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been *hid from ages and from generations*, but *now* is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."² Also, "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."³

The "MYSTERY" here spoken of as "HID IN GOD" and "NOT MADE KNOWN," and "KEPT SECRET" IS THE CHURCH—THE BODY OF CHRIST—chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, and composed only of

¹ Eph. iii.

² Col. i.

³ Rom. xvi. 25.

Jew and Gentile believers in this dispensation. The further unfolding from the Scriptures of this subject will be found in Chapter VI.

We pass on now to the sovereignty of God in His present dealings with man as explained in Romans ix., x., xi. The three chapters go together, and form a parenthesis in the Epistle.

It will be easily seen that the Apostle at the end of chapter viii. leaves the subject that was before him, and begins to speak about Israel and election, and we might ask, What has given rise to this sudden change in the Apostle's subject? It was the very thing that Paul had been laying before the saints at Rome that they might understand *God's ways* that called for these explanatory chapters.

In the first chapter of Romans, St. Paul says he is "a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures), concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name."¹ Here we have Paul, a true sent servant of Christ, who had received grace and apostleship, separated unto the "Gospel of God" concerning His Son, that Son being, according to the flesh, David's seed, but declared the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection; and this

¹ Rom. i. 1-5.

Gospel is "for the obedience of faith"* among all nations.

The Apostle says: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the *power of God* unto salvation to *everyone that believeth*; to the Jew first, and *also* to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."¹

This Gospel, which is God's power unto salvation to everyone that believeth, is to the Gentile as well as the Jew, but to the "Jew first." And, further, in this Gospel God's righteousness is made known.

Then the Apostle explains God's former dealings with the Gentiles, who had not been under the direct government of God as the Jews had, and says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even HIS *eternal power* and Godhead; so that they are *without excuse*: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."² "Therefore thou art inex-

¹ Rom. i. 16, 17.

² Rom. i. 18-21.

* We have here a very important Divine principle brought before us, viz., "the obedience of faith"—that is, God sends a message of grace in the glad tidings for men to bow to, and receive in child-like faith without questioning or reasoning, He having given Divine proof of the genuineness of the message by the resurrection of Christ, the Son of God.

cusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, *thou condemnest thyself*; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, *O man*, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that *thou shalt escape the judgment of God*? Or *despisest thou the riches of HIS goodness and forbearance and longsuffering*; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the *righteous judgment of God*; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, ETERNAL LIFE: but unto them that are contentious, and do *not obey* the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is *no respect of persons with GOD*. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel."¹

The above Scriptures plainly show that God will deal with every man on his own individual responsibility. Man will never be judged and condemned for original sin; THAT judgment and condemnation has already

¹ Rom. ii. 1-16.

been borne by Christ Himself. "He died unto SIN (not sins) once."¹ "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and FOR SIN, condemned SIN in the flesh."²

Every unbeliever will be judged for the sins he himself has committed. The believer in Christ will escape the judgment only on the ground that he has redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace.³

We pass on to Romans iii., in which chapter the Apostle sums up what he has stated in the two previous chapters, and says: "What then? Are we (God's elect people) better than they (the non-elect)? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is NONE righteous, no, not one: there is NONE that understandeth, there is NONE that seeketh after God . . . there is NONE that doeth good, NO, NOT ONE. . . . Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. BUT NOW the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ *unto all* and upon all them that believe: for *there is no difference*: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."⁴

¹ Rom. vi. 10.

² Rom. viii. 3.

³ Ephes. i. 7.

⁴ Rom. iii. 9-23.

It is what is stated here that gives rise to what the Apostle states in the ninth and two following chapters of this Epistle. He has proved that Jews are no better than Gentiles, although they were God's people, for "there is *none righteous, no, not one*; there is NONE that seeketh after God." He has also shown that God is now acting upon another principle altogether, in which He makes no difference between the Jews (who were God's people, but have rejected their Messiah) and the Gentiles, who were strangers to the covenants of promise.

This act of grace on God's part, in revealing Himself to all alike, naturally aroused the enmity of the Jews, to whom the promises were given, and it provoked them to jealousy, and the Jews were "filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming."¹

Paul, realizing the state of the Jewish nation, and how the just judgment of God would overtake them, says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."²

The Jews naturally laid claim to the promises, and they would not bow to the sovereignty of God in going out to the Gentiles. God had acted in sovereignty towards them, and given them blessings and promises that no other nation had had; and now they had proved to be

¹ Acts xiii. 45.

² Rom. ix. 1-4.

the "betrayers and murderers" of the Holy One of Israel.

But will God cease to bless because they to whom the promises were given had rejected the One in whom alone they could be fulfilled? No. There would be no hope at all for us Gentiles if God only blessed on the ground of Israel's election and covenants. As touching the election, *THEY* are still beloved for their fathers' sakes; but as concerning the Gospel, *THEY* are enemies for our sakes.¹ God, therefore, in His sovereignty in election has turned to us Gentiles to take out from among the Gentiles "a people for His name."²

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."³ But there is another side to God's sovereignty. "Whom He will He hardeneth," and Pharaoh is the example of this; "for the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth."⁴

The circumstances in connection with Pharaoh must be considered. Moses and Aaron brought word to the children of Israel that the Lord had come down to deliver them, and the people believed the word of the Lord, and bowed their heads and worshipped.

"And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My

¹ Rom. xi. 28.

² Acts xv. 14.

³ Rom. ix. 14-16.

⁴ Rom. ix. 17.

people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."¹ Pharaoh said this before God said He "hardened his heart," and "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee."

Pharaoh first hardened his own heart in replying against God; and surely he was a fit man for the purpose of God at that moment, that God might show His power in righteous judgment. There was no reason why he should not let Israel go; and if he had only remembered how God had blessed Egypt years before, in the time of famine, what better return could he make than to let Israel go? But no. He says, "*Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*" But if Pharaoh does not know the Lord, and will not obey His voice, God must teach him, and *make him bow under His righteous judgment.* God was perfectly righteous when, acting in His sovereignty, He hardened the heart of the man who said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, ENDURED WITH MUCH LONGSUFFERING the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (fitted by themselves in rejecting and defying God): and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He saith also in

¹ Exod. v. 1, 2.

Osee, I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved."¹

It is a mercy to be brought to bow to the sovereignty of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Sovereignty is God acting as HE *pleases*, but HIS *first thought* is, *sovereign goodness* acting in grace to man, and but for God's sovereignty in electing love, there would be no blessing at all. This is brought out in Romans ix. God loved Jacob, and chose his posterity, blessed them and promised them blessings, and Israel were God's elect people (we read nothing in Scripture of "spiritual Israel"). And Jehovah the God of Israel came into their midst in the Person of the Blessed Lord, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; but Israel deliberately rejected and murdered their King, and now God has turned, in His sovereignty and His electing love, to Gentiles, to bless Gentiles who are not in the Covenant. "I will call them My people, which were not My people." "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people; there shall they be called the children of the Living God."² This the Jews did not like; as Paul said of them, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."³

The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God. So, while contending for God's sovereignty, we might be found replying against God, like Israel of old, who, forbidding the Apostles to speak to the Gen-

¹ Rom. ix. 22-25.

² Rom. ix. 26.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

tiles that they might be saved, pleased not God, and were contrary to all men. And in so doing they brought the wrath of God upon themselves to the uttermost.

It is in this way man becomes a vessel of wrath, fitting himself for destruction. And God is perfectly righteous in hardening such; for He never gives a man over to hardness of heart until he has hardened his own heart against the Lord, and refused to bow to Him and His Word. "He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."¹ "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."²

In Rom. x. the way of receiving salvation is fully established, which is *by faith*, and Paul's heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved. And he could bear them record that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They would not in faith submit to God's righteousness, and that is why they are cast off, and there is no difference now in God's ways with Jew or Gentile. "For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."³ But they cannot call on Him in whom they have not believed; they cannot believe unless they hear, nor can they hear without a preacher, nor can they preach except they be sent. "But they have not all obeyed the Gospel," and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Did they not hear? "Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."⁴ But God had given them over to judicial blindness and hardness

¹ Prov. xxviii. 14.

² Prov. xxix. 1.

³ Rom. x. 12.

⁴ Rom. x. 18.

of heart because of their ways. "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

In Rom. xi. the Apostle says, "I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid." His own salvation was a proof of it, and at that time there had been a remnant saved according to the election of grace, although the nation was cast off. But are they cast off for ever? No: God will graft them in again. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

God has turned to the Gentiles in His goodness, but in connection with their responsibility. They were not to boast because Israel was cut off, and they (a wild olive-tree) were now grafted in; because it was for *unbelief* that Israel was cut off, and Gentiles stand by faith. "Be not high-minded, but fear."

It is no question of individual salvation here, but Jews and Gentiles. God had in His goodness and sovereignty taken up Jews for blessing, but they having given up God in unbelief, God has now turned to Gentiles. And if Gentiles do not continue in His goodness, they will be cut off, as the Jews have been!

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, *if thou continue in HIS goodness*: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." This is the character of the

"election" spoken of in these three chapters. God in His sovereignty in election took up the Jews for blessing, and the Jews having rejected the goodness of God (and it is this which leads to repentance), God has taken up Gentiles for blessing, and they stand by faith; but they are going the same way as the Jews in unbelief, giving up God and the Word of God, despising the Gospel and the riches of God's grace!

The eternal purpose of God at this present time is to take out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name, for the heavenly inheritance; and to be in this "election" we must become "children of God BY FAITH in Christ Jesus," where "there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile), there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."¹ Gentiles, who had no claim to the promises, believing in the promised Seed (Christ) inherit all the promises in Christ: "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."² These blessings are given to us *in Christ*, and we must be IN CHRIST to have them.* These things are plainly stated in the Scriptures. James says, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David,

¹ Gal. iii. 28, 29.

² 2 Cor. i. 20.

* The Apostle Paul speaks of some who were "*in Christ* before" him, which proves there was a time when he was *not in Christ*. We are either in Christ or in Adam. See Rom. xvi. 7.

which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up ; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”¹ This was said by James after the dispute among the brethren as to whether the character of blessings now was Jewish, and whether the Gentiles must be circumcised. Peter settled the dispute, declaring how God had permitted the Gentiles to hear the Gospel by his mouth and believe, giving the Gentiles that believed the Holy Ghost, as well as the believing Jews, putting “no difference between us and them” (says Peter), “purifying their hearts by faith.” And then he adds, “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”²

We turn again to Rom. xi., and read : “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits ; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is MY COVENANT UNTO THEM, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : but as TOUCHING THE ELECTION, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief : even so have these also now not believed, that through your

¹ Acts xv. 13-18.

² Acts xv. 11.

mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."¹

We have noticed, then, that it is plainly stated that God made a covenant with promises to Abraham, and confirmed the same to Isaac and Jacob, "heirs with him of the same promise." These are the "fathers."

We have also noticed that God proposed a covenant of works with promises to the children of Israel. Moses was the mediator of this covenant, which covenant they broke, and forfeited all claim to the promises. Also that Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant to be made by God with the same people, namely, the children of Israel in a coming day. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."² Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, and He having come and been rejected, has gone back to heaven without making the covenant good to Israel. But, having shed His blood, He has laid the foundation in "the blood of the everlasting covenant" for its establishment in righteousness, and will make it good to Israel when "HE shall appear the *second time* without sin unto salvation."³

And further, in the everlasting covenant, Christ

¹ Rom. xi. 25-36.

² Jer. xxxi. 31.

³ Heb. ix. 28.

undertook to do God's will in obedience unto death; and in so doing He has laid the foundation for the accomplishment of all the counsels of God purposed in Christ before the foundation of the world.

The blessings of Israel being set aside for the time being through their unbelief, God has a perfect right in His sovereignty to bless whom He will, even those who are "strangers to the covenants of promise," making *no difference now* between Jews and Gentiles. Hence His blessings to-day are not founded upon the covenants, but upon the *accomplishment of redemption* by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. "To HIM give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."¹

We have no Scripture for supposing that God has made a covenant of grace in election, that would *limit HIM in HIS sovereign right to bless whom He will*. He says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"—that is, *He has a perfect sovereign right to do as He pleases*. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." And He can tell us before Esau and Jacob are born that the elder shall serve the younger, but it was not until after Esau had "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears," that God said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Man's individual responsibility is a solemn reality, and found everywhere in Scripture. Man is not responsible to keep his first estate, for that he has already lost, and he cannot get back to innocence.

¹ Acts x. 43.

Man is not responsible to keep the law for salvation, "*for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in God's sight.*" Adam was responsible to keep his first estate, but this he lost by disobedience, and became a sinner.

The Jews were responsible to keep the law, but did not, and man became a transgressor, and has proved himself to be an enemy, and a hater of God, by his rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

MAN IS LOST! but has his responsibility come to an end? Indeed it has not; it has been heightened by the way God has acted towards him. God has not acted in judgment yet. He has been "slow to anger and of great mercy." And yet man has rejected His goodness in every possible way.

But where is man's responsibility to-day? First, in connection with his sins; second, in connection with the Gospel.

GOD *has proved* man to be lost—totally ruined—absolutely undone—that there is no possible way for him to recover himself, that if saved, God Himself must save him and bear the cost, or he is lost for ever.

But God has provided an eternal salvation for man (Jew and Gentile) in Christ by His blood-shedding. The work that the Blessed Lord accomplished upon the Cross has fully satisfied God; yea, it has more than satisfied Him. HE *has been glorified by it*, and God has given His own answer to the work of the Lord Jesus in that He has raised Him up from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand. And now God has come out with HIS *own righteousness for man*; and it is *unto all*, and UPON ALL *them that believe*, "for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come

short of the glory of God.”¹ “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”² Man is responsible to hear and believe the Gospel, and *herein* is the division between man and man to-day. “Some *believed* the things which were spoken, and some *believed not*.”³ Those that believed became the “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,”⁴ and those that did not believe still remained dead in trespasses and sins.

We do not of our own free will believe the testimony God has given of His Son. We naturally hate God, and this is brought out in the Cross of Christ. It is the expression of the enmity of the heart of man against God—*against GOD come into this world in goodness and love, not to judge, but to save*. “For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”⁵

The world rejected God’s grace, and crucified the Son of God. This God permitted, and so the Cross of Christ has also become the expression of the love of God to man.

There can be no limit to the results of the death of the Lord Jesus. They are infinite. Death is the judgment of God against man for his sin. “The wages of sin is death.” This the blessed Lord underwent. So God has anticipated the Day of Judgment, and the wrath and judgment of God has been all executed upon the head of His own beloved Son. The sin of one brought in the death, the death of One has made a way for life in righteousness. “Therefore the grace

¹ Rom. iii. 21-23.

² Rom. i. 16.

³ Acts xxviii. 24.

⁴ Gal. iii. 26.

⁵ John iii. 17.

of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared.”¹ And herein is man’s responsibility: If he by the grace of God *accepts salvation in faith*, he has it; but if of his own free will he rejects it, he is lost for ever.

Believing in the LORD JESUS CHRIST is a very *real thing*, apart from the result in blessing that it is to us.

God did send His Son in grace into this world, not to judge, but to save, for “we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world,”² and, as we have seen, the Lord gave full proof of the glory of His person both in His words and works. Thus, faith could easily recognise that God was there, that the Son of God had come from heaven. But the world did not receive Him—nay, more, He was rejected in a most awful way, for none of the princes of this world knew him, for had they known Him, “they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”³

The world truly *dishonoured* God in rejecting His Son, and therefore *awaits the judgment of God*; but in the meantime God is acting in pure grace, not in view of reconciling the world and bringing in the millennium by the preaching of the Gospel, but He is taking us up, each one, on our own individual responsibility in connection with the rejection of Christ by the world, presenting HIM to us in the Gospel as the ONE whom HE *has raised up from the dead*, and we cannot get rid of the responsibility that rests upon every one of us in connection with what *the world has done until we confess*

¹ Titus ii. 11, margin.

² 1 John iv. 14.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 8,

to GOD *our faith in* THE LORD JESUS, and believe that GOD *has raised Him from the dead.*

This must be done in spite of all that is going on in the world to-day, in spite of the great thoughts and enlarged ideas of man, and in spite of ourselves, because it is very humbling to think that *man, with his intelligence and understanding, should be guilty of such a deed*; but the Scripture that delivers us and frees us from the judgment that must come upon this world is *plain and simple*: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth THE LORD JESUS, and shalt *believe in thine heart that* GOD *hath raised HIM from the dead,* THOU SHALT BE SAVED. For with the heart man believeth *unto righteousness*; and with the mouth *confession is made unto SALVATION.*"¹

Such a belief and such a confession *honours* GOD. It is due to GOD in spite of the devil, who would keep up the enmity and rebellion that is in our hearts against Him.

Any doctrines therefore that would lessen our responsibility to believe the Gospel as revealed in the Word of God cannot be of God. If we do not know what it is to be reconciled to God and have our sins forgiven, we are responsible as sinners before God, and God will judge us according to our works. But if true believers, we *are* reconciled to God, have been pardoned and justified by God, and adopted into His family, and have become His children, being born of God. In that case our responsibility would be as *children*. If unpardoned sinners, we need not despair, because "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."² And God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any

¹ Rom. x. 9, 10.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

should perish, but that all should come to repentance"¹—that is, God is ready and willing to meet us in all our responsibility as sinners, and cleanse us from all our sins by the blood of His own beloved Son.

Thus God comes to us Gentiles in His own sovereign right to do as He pleases, and it hath "*pleased* GOD by the *foolishness of preaching* to save them that believe."² He comes with a full and free salvation according to His own righteousness and love as revealed in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. *This is free grace.*

But we who are born in a Christian country find as we grow up all manner of conflicting doctrines, which are presented to us for our belief and acceptance. These doctrines are known by characteristic names, and form foundation creeds of the various systems in Christendom, and can be easily believed without a divinely-given faith, because they are formed by man's judgment of what he believes to be the nearest to the truth.

We are *not responsible to believe these*, but we are *responsible to believe the WORD OF GOD*, and the GOSPEL OF GOD, which is "for obedience to the faith among all nations."³ But there were none of these doctrines in the beginning of Christianity. The Apostles preached the Word of God, and those who believed, believed the Word of God, and were saved there and then. We shall notice in our next chapter what the Apostles preached, and the effect of their preaching. But here let us look a little at the effect of believing doctrines instead of GOD HIMSELF. Doctrines can be believed without any exercise of conscience and heart before God; they do not therefore

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

² 1 Cor. i. 21.

³ Rom. i. 5; xvi. 26.

bring the soul into direct contact with God, and by them wrong thoughts of God are formed in our minds, and our hearts get hardened, or we fall into a state of despair, whereas believing God's Word brings the soul immediately to have to do with God, "for he that cometh to God *must believe* that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."¹ GOD can only be met to-day as a SAVIOUR.

Christianity is founded upon CHRIST *and* HIS WORK. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST."² It is not founded upon the "covenants" and "promises" made in the Old Testament; they wait their fulfilment to the people they belong to.

It is one thing to believe what is said *about* the Word of God, but quite another to believe what GOD HIMSELF says. The latter, as just stated, brings the soul into direct contact with God, the former only with man. By believing the Word of God, we "set to our seal that GOD is true." But it must be taken up according to our responsibility. First, as sinners, we must believe what God says about ourselves as lost, guilty sinners. We may not like this, and it may bring out the enmity of our hearts against God, because God *speaks very plainly in His Word* about man, and what He says of one is true of all as to our standing before God. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." This is man's heart. It is awful, but true; yet God is greater than the heart, and can meet all the difficulties for our blessing and His own glory.

God ever had it in His heart to *bless man*, but man *has opposed this* in every possible way. Nevertheless,

¹ Heb. xi. 6.

² 1 Cor. iii. 11.

God continues to bless, and that is the *delight* of His heart; judgment is God's "strange work." But He must execute judgment because there is sin to be judged, and He will do it in righteousness; but the wonderful thing is that before the Day of Judgment has come He has executed it on the head of none other than the One to whom He said, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."¹ And "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the MAN that is MY FELLOW, saith THE LORD OF HOSTS."² Of this Holy One we read, "In Him is no sin;"³ "who *did* no sin;"⁴ "who *knew* no sin."⁵ He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;"⁶ God's own provided "Lamb without blemish and without spot;"⁷ perfectly fitted in the glory of His own Person to become "an offering and sacrifice" for sin. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."⁸ "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."⁹ "But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so *Christ* was *once offered* to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."¹⁰

God had put before man a blessing and a curse: blessing for the righteous, curses for the wicked. But

¹ Luke iii. 22.

² Zech. xiii. 7.

³ 1 John iii. 5.

⁴ 1 Pet. ii. 22.

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁶ Heb. vii. 26.

⁷ 1 Pet. i. 19.

⁸ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁹ 1 Pet. iii. 18.

¹⁰ Heb. ix. 26-28.

man is under the curse, because there was not a *righteous man in all the world* to have the blessing. This was God's way with man in a past dispensation. Now, in this present dispensation God has put before man—*every man*, not only God's people the Jews, but also Gentiles—*salvation or judgment*. Judgment is still in the future, how far distant we cannot tell. God is not executing judgment to-day; but in His love and grace He brings salvation to all men—full, free, and eternal salvation for our acceptance in faith, so that we should “*not come into judgment*.”¹

This is the free, sovereign grace of God. God “*commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead*.”² “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life*.”³

These two Scriptures bring before us the fact, already mentioned, that God has given us the choice in this dispensation of *salvation or judgment*. God is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*.”⁴ This must be true, because God says so. But man is an enemy, and therefore must be *reconciled* before he can be *happy with God*, and it can only be by his *bowing to God and His word*. “*And He hath committed unto us (says the Apostle) the word of reconciliation*. Now then we are ambassadors for

¹ John v. 24.

² Acts xvii. 30, 31.

³ John v. 24.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."¹

"Be ye reconciled to God." Here is our responsibility, and the question is, How are we acting?—like Abraham or like Pharaoh? "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."²

Most unnatural was this. For a man to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and not to know where he is going, would seem to us most unreasonable. But faith obeys, and reason has to be set on one side. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, OBEYED; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."³ God also promised Abraham a son when there was no hope according to nature: "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he *considered not his own body now dead*, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, GIVING GLORY TO GOD."⁴ Faith believes what God says because God says it, and it must be true. Abraham is God's example of a man of faith, and through his faith he has become the father of all that believe. "*So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*"⁵

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19-21.

² Gen. xii. 1.

³ Heb. xi. 8.

⁴ Rom. iv. 18-20.

⁵ Gal. iii. 9.

By *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ we receive life. "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and *that believing ye might have life through His name.*"¹

By *faith* we receive the forgiveness of sins. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name *whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.*"²

By *faith* we are brought into the family of God. "For ye are all the *children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*"³

By *faith* we receive the Holy Spirit. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, *or by the hearing of faith?*"⁴ "After that ye *believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*"⁵ Herein is our responsibility to believe what God says about the Lord Jesus Christ. And why cannot we believe Him? He speaks the truth, and He takes us up upon that ground. The Lord said, "If I say *the truth, why do ye not believe ME?*"⁶ That is why one man believes another, because he speaks the truth; we do not believe a man who is given to lying. Under the law, in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word was to be established. And so it is in our Law Courts; if there are several witnesses who agree in any matter, their word is received, and a verdict is passed accordingly.

God has His witnesses, so there is no excuse for not believing Him. "There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."⁷

The Holy Ghost has come down here, and witnesses

¹ John xx. 31.

² Acts x. 43.

³ Gal. iii. 26.

⁴ Gal. iii. 2.

⁵ Eph. i. 13.

⁶ John viii. 46.

⁷ 1 John v. 8.

to the fact that the Son of God, whom this world crucified, has gone back in righteousness to the Father.¹ And He witnesses to every believer in whom He dwells that God will remember his sins and iniquities no more, so that there is no necessity for another offering.²

The water flowed from the blessed side of the Son of God when upon the Cross. Water speaks of cleansing, and is a type of the Word of God. In Eph. v. 26 we read of "the washing of water *by the Word*." In receiving the Word of God by faith our hearts are purified. "Purifying their hearts by faith."³ "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."⁴ "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."⁵

The blood also flowed from the side of the blessed Lord, and that has made a way for us to meet God, and also for God to meet us in love and mercy, with pardon and forgiveness, in righteousness, according to the holiness of His nature. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "If we confess our sins, He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁶

Here we have God's witnesses, the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the death of Christ. Now let us hear what He says: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of

¹ John xvi.² Heb. x. 15-18.³ Acts xv. 9.⁴ 1 Pet. i. 23.⁵ 1 John v. 1.⁶ 1 John i. 7, 9.

His Son.”¹ If we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ we have the witness in ourselves, we know it. If we really *believed God means what He says*, we should at once *bow with thankful hearts to HIM* who has thus brought salvation. “Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”²

Now let us look at Pharaoh. The Lord said unto him, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Very natural and very reasonable this; but Pharaoh said: “Who is the Lord, *that I should obey His voice* to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, *neither will I let Israel go.*”³

Five times the Lord said to Pharaoh “Let My people go,” and five times he refused. Pharaoh therefore is the man for God’s “strange work,” JUDGMENT. After much longsuffering from God, Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea.

Abraham is the man for God’s delightful work, BLESSING; He therefore says, “In *blessing I will bless thee.*”

Once again, “THE FATHER *loveth* THE SON, and hath given *all things into* HIS HAND. He that *believeth on* THE SON *hath everlasting life*: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”⁴

¹ 1 John v. 9, 10.

² Rom. iv. 3.

³ Exod. v. 1, 2.

⁴ John iii. 35, 36.

V.

THE GOSPEL.

THE Gospel is established upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby He accomplished redemption. The blessings that flow from this were promised in Christ, before the foundation of the world—"according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus";¹ "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."²

It will be necessary to examine a few Scriptures that bring before us the character of the work of Christ, and the wonderful results of that work, both for God and for man (because it was for God's glory and man's blessing), before we look at the preaching of the Apostles. And herein is the goodness of God, that while He has had many thousands who have proclaimed the glad tidings since the days of the Apostles, yet He has given us in the Holy Scriptures what the Apostles themselves preached, so that there should be no uncertain sound, and that all might be judged according to the standard that God gave at the beginning. The Apostle John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because

¹ 2 Tim. i. 1.

² Titus i. 2.

many false prophets are gone out into the world. . . . They are of the world : therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God (that is, the Apostles) : he that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”¹

This is the Divine standard of knowing the spirit of truth : if what we believe is of God, we believe the Apostles ; we do not reject what they say.

The Apostle Paul, knowing the important place the Gospel of the grace of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ had in this dispensation, said, “ Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which *we have preached* unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that *ye have received*, let him be accursed.”²

Paul includes himself in what he says here, showing that while God is unchangeable, and God’s Gospel is the same to-day as at the beginning, yet he himself might change and preach another gospel.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST can be viewed in many aspects : *it is UNFATHOMABLE as to its results.* GOD HIMSELF has been *glorified* by it ; and all the manifested glory of God will be established upon it. God has found an answer in it to all the reproach and dishonour that man has brought upon Him through his sin and rebellion. The power of Satan has been annulled by it. It has closed up the history, and brought to an end all God’s dealings with the first man in his responsibility. The death of Christ proves absolutely that MAN IS LOST. To bow to

¹ 1 John iv. 1-6.

² Gal. i. 8, 9.

this as *God's judgment* of ourselves *leads to blessing*; it is very humbling, but solemnly true. The death of Christ proves also absolutely that GOD IS LOVE, even love to man when he is lost. But before God could tell out all that was in His own heart for man, it was necessary for His will to be done, and for Him to be glorified here on the earth: and if this was done, it must be done by Himself—that is, by one of the persons of the Godhead. The eternal Son of God undertakes to accomplish this, as we have seen. But this was undertaken by Him in eternity, before the world was; therefore Adam “is the figure of Him that was to come.”¹

It would have been the glory of the first man if Adam had kept his first estate, in being dependent upon, and obedient to, God; and God would have had His glory in him, as an innocent creature. God made him to have dominion over the works of His hands; but he sinned, and *death* followed as the *judgment of God*.

The Son of God comes into this world of ruin, sin, death and judgment as the Second Man and Last Adam “that He might destroy the works of the devil.” “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”² In contrast to Adam, whom the devil overcame in the Garden of Eden, the Son of God overcomes the devil when tempted in the wilderness, by keeping an entire place of dependence upon and obedience to God as Man. The circumstances and the contrast between the Garden of Eden and the wilderness are of peculiar interest. But the Son of God went down even to death in obedience. “Wherefore God also hath highly

¹ Rom. v. 14.

² 1 John iii. 8.

exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee *should bow*, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that *every tongue should confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”¹

It is the glory of the Person who has accomplished this great work of redemption that gives value to the work itself. In Heb. i. He is presented to us as God coming down here, in these last days, and speaking to us in the Person of the Son, “Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”²

Here the *glory* of the Person of Christ is before us. He is the CREATOR of the universe, and the Sustainer also—“upholding *all things* by the *Word* of His power”: the *brightness* and the *express image* of the glory of God. But He *adds* to *His glory*, by becoming the Accomplisher of redemption, by HIMSELF making purification for sins, and then He sits down in DIVINE *right*, “on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

In Col. i. the Apostle speaks of the *effect* of the work of Christ on behalf of the believer. “Giving thanks unto the Father, who *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in WHOM we *have* redemption through His blood, even

¹ Phil. ii. 9-11.

² Heb. i. 2, 3.

the forgiveness of sins.”¹ “*And* having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile *all things* unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet *now hath He reconciled*, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.”²

But the One who has made the believer meet to stand in the light of God’s presence, he having redemption through His blood—the forgiveness of sins, being reconciled and brought to God in peace—I say, the One who has done this “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all Creation: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible . . . all things were created by Him, and for Him: and HE is *before all things*, and by Him all things consist.”³ “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”⁴ The Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—was pleased to dwell in Him, so that He could say when here, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”⁵ The Father could say to Him, “Thou art My beloved Son.” And by the Spirit of God He cast out devils—“God was manifest in the flesh.”⁶

Therefore, “When He had by Himself purged our sins,” He sat down in Divine right upon the throne of God. It is seeing these things in the Word of God that *creates confidence* in our hearts towards Him. There is no faith in our hearts naturally; “faith cometh by

¹ Col. i. 12-14.

³ Col. i. 15-17.

⁵ John xiv. 9.

² Col. i. 20, 22.

⁴ Col. ii. 9.

⁶ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”¹ The *Spirit of God* leads the heart to *trust in GOD*, as we read *His Word*.

God hath undertaken to accomplish the work of redemption Himself; but to do this it was necessary for Him to become Man. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”² Jehovah says of Him, “The Man that is My Fellow.”³

It was upon the Cross, and only upon the Cross, that the work of redemption was done, because death was required by God to accomplish it. Hence the necessity for the death of Christ, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.”⁴

Death was God’s judgment upon man for his sin. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”⁵ Death, as God’s judgment, is not merely passing out of this world by physical death, for believers die, but they will “not come into judgment.”⁶ Death, as God’s judgment, is spoken of as “*the second death*,” which is banishment for ever from the presence of Him who has said He “willeth not the death of a sinner.”

Death was also the power that Satan acquired over man through his sin. Man having been placed by God head or lord of the Creation, to have dominion over the works of God’s hands,⁷ the whole Creation falls into the hands of the usurper, even Satan, through man’s sin. Thus God is robbed of His glory, and all is a failure as to the first man! “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the Second Man is the Lord from heaven.”⁸

Now Christ, the Son of God, comes into this world

¹ Rom. x. 17.

² John i. 14.

³ Zech. xiii. 7.

⁴ Heb. ix. 22.

⁵ Heb. ix. 27.

⁶ John v. 24.

⁷ Gen. i. 26-28.

⁸ 1 Cor. xv. 47.

as the Second Man, to become Redeemer—Heir to all the Creation; and to become this He must of necessity set the power of Satan the usurper aside; and this can only be done for the glory of God, and as Redeemer, *by death, and death as God's judgment*. This the Son of God has done once and for ever! And although “we see not yet all things put under Him,” says the Apostle, “we see JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR; that He by the grace of God should *taste death* for every man”¹ (or everything; it means the whole Creation, including man). Thus, through death, Christ has acquired everything as Man and Redeemer, and that, “through death, He might *destroy him* that had the *power of death*, that is, THE DEVIL; and *deliver them* who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”² The Son of God did this great work Himself, but He did it AS MAN, and *for* GOD—FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

The next question is, IS GOD SATISFIED? If so, *how* has He shown His satisfaction? The Son of Man was glorified in His obedience unto death, and in this obedience He glorified God; thus we read: “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. *If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify HIM in Himself, and shall straightway glorify HIM.*”³ This is God's *answer* to Christ for what He did for Him on the Cross. The blessed Lord should have been glorified as the Messiah, the King of Israel; but He was rejected and crucified, and now God has immediately glorified Him at His own right hand. “*Wherefore* GOD also *hath highly exalted* HIM, and

¹ Heb. ii. 8, 9.² Heb. ii. 14, 15.³ John xiii. 31, 32.

given Him a NAME which is above every name: that at the NAME OF JESUS every knee SHOULD bow, of things in *heaven*, and things in *earth*, and things *under* the earth; and that every tongue *should confess* that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the GLORY of GOD THE FATHER."¹ For "GOD *hath* made that *same* JESUS, whom ye have *crucified*, both LORD and CHRIST."² "CHRIST *was raised* up from the *dead* by the GLORY of THE FATHER."³ God has thus shown HIS *entire satisfaction* in the WORK of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by raising Him up from the dead, and setting HIM *as Man* at His own right hand. God has set Him *there in righteousness*; and Christ has received, as the Divine Man, from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and this He bestowed on His own disciples on the Day of Pentecost. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."⁴

The Lord had spoken when here of the coming of the Holy Ghost. He had said that believers should receive the Spirit, so that living waters might flow out from them to others. But this would not be until Jesus Himself was glorified at God's right hand. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He *of the Spirit*, which they *that believe* on Him *should receive*: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet

¹ Phil. ii. 9-11.

² Acts ii. 36.

³ Rom. vi. 4.

⁴ Acts ii. 33.

glorified.”¹ This is the grace-side of the death of Christ. His death has secured *for the believer* who has his sins forgiven the *gift of the Holy Ghost*, which enables him to go out to others with this living water ; and he can say, “ Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”² This was fully manifested at the first in the Apostles, as we shall see.

But the Lord had spoken also in another way of the coming of the Holy Ghost. He said, “ When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment : of sin, because they believe not on Me ; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”³ The presence of the Holy Ghost here is an undeniable proof of the sin of the world in rejecting the Son of God, “ come in flesh,” a proof also that in righteousness He has gone back to the Father from whence He came ; and that the prince of this world (Satan) is judged, and all under his power will sooner or later meet with the *same judgment*. “ Because God hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom He hath ordained ; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that *He hath raised Him from the dead*.”⁴ “ Behold, HE cometh with clouds ; and *every eye shall see HIM*, and they also which *pierced HIM* : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.”⁵

It is certain that these things will take place, and that God will never pass over the guilt of this world in the rejection of His own beloved Son ! But we need

¹ John vii. 37-39.

² Rev. xxii. 17.

³ John xvi. 8-11.

⁴ Acts xvii. 31.

⁵ Rev. i. 7.

not meet the Lord Jesus as a Judge, because to-day He is presented to us as a LIVING SAVIOUR! God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."¹

We turn now to the Gospel. We have shown plainly, by facts stated in the Scriptures, that the Gospel is offered upon the ground of what the Lord Jesus did upon the Cross. We noticed in the history of the Lord's death, that when He had cried out with a loud voice, "My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and then bowed His head in death, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."² The veil was set up because a way into the holy presence of God had not yet been made, and no sinner could stand in God's presence. The high-priest alone was allowed to go behind the veil, and he only once a year, and then not without blood. But the death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus has enabled God, who had the veil set up, to rend it Himself, "from the top to the bottom," this signifying that the *way into* the holy presence of God is *now made manifest*, and by the blood of Christ God can and does justify sinners "freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood."³

The blessed Lord, having obtained eternal redemption, has gone "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"⁴ and has become "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY HIM."⁵ "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."⁶ "For both HE *that*

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

² Matt. xxvii. 51.

³ Rom. iii. 24, 25.

⁴ Heb. ix. 24.

⁵ Heb. v. 9.

⁶ Heb. x. 14.

sanctifieth and they who *are sanctified* are all of *one* : for which cause HE is *not ashamed to call them brethren.*"¹

The Apostles simply preached the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus as a fact ; that is, the world had crucified Him, but God had raised Him from the dead, *and forgiveness of sins was preached in His Name.*

And this was very real, because the *whole world at that time knew* that there had been ONE here who declared HIMSELF to be the SON OF GOD. The miracles He did proved the GLORY OF HIS PERSON. His words of love and grace touched the hearts and consciences of those who heard Him, so that the officers who were sent to take Him could not touch Him, but had to confess, "*Never man spake like this MAN.*"² Nevertheless, the hour came, of which the Lord said : "This is your hour, and the *power of darkness.*"³ And He gave Himself up, and thus *the world* "*denied THE HOLY ONE and THE JUST,* and desired A MURDERER to be *granted unto them ; and killed THE PRINCE OF LIFE,* whom God hath raised from the dead ; whereof we (the Apostles) are witnesses."⁴ These were facts that were known in *the world at that time* ; so that the preaching by the Apostles of the RESURRECTION *was full of meaning and power,* for they preached with the HOLY GHOST *sent down from heaven,* who witnessed to the Apostles and all the disciples of the GLORY of THE ASCENDED MAN, who was "CROWNED with GLORY and HONOUR,"⁵ for "God hath made that same JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST."⁶

Now, while these FACTS *cannot be denied,* and the

¹ Heb. ii. 11.

² John vii. 46.

³ Luke xxii. 53.

⁴ Acts iii. 14, 15.

⁵ Heb. ii. 9.

⁶ Acts ii. 36.

world's guilt in the rejection of Christ the Son of God has *reached heaven*, yet the answer of God to it all is pure grace, mercy and salvation for *every one that shall confess with his mouth THE LORD JESUS*, and *shall believe in his heart that GOD hath raised HIM from the dead*. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth *confession* is made unto salvation."¹ For "to HIM give all the prophets witness, that through HIS NAME *whosoever believeth in HIM shall receive remission of sins*."²

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through *this MAN* is *preached unto you the forgiveness of sins*: and by HIM all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."³ "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. . . . The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."⁴ "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The

¹ Rom. x. 9, 10.

² Acts x. 43.

³ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

⁴ John iii. 14-17; 35, 36.

hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live."¹

The "word of this salvation" was not only sent to the Jews (God's elect people), but "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles,"² and to them God has "opened a door of faith,"³ and also granted to them "repentance unto life."⁴ God also raised up the Apostle Paul for the express purpose of making this known to the Gentiles, and what he and the other Apostles taught and wrote by the Holy Ghost establishes the *fact* that every Christian blessing is received on the *principle of faith*, and on *that principle only*.

Before this dispensation of grace God put man under law ; as the Apostle Paul says : " But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto *the faith* which should *afterwards* be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that *faith is come*, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus."⁵ The law taught man as a schoolmaster what he ought to be for God. But man was not what he ought to be, and *the law proved it*. " For by the law is the knowledge of sin ; "⁶ and man was a sinner and also a transgressor. But " if there had been a law that *could* have given life, verily, *righteousness should have been by the law*." But the law could neither give *life* nor *righteousness* ; and man *as a sinner*, and under the sentence of death, *needed both*. Life and righteousness, therefore, are brought to us in the Gospel, and *both* are *received by faith*. Man is dead,

¹ John v. 24, 25.

² Acts xxviii. 28.

³ Acts xiv. 27.

⁴ Acts xi. 18.

⁵ Gal. iii. 23-26.

⁶ Rom. iii. 20.

and needs life. He is dead in trespasses and sins, and needs forgiveness. He is an enemy, and needs reconciliation.

The word of reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins, also life, are brought to us by God in the Gospel, and can only be received *by faith*. Nor is this salvation only for a favoured few, for "the grace of God brings salvation to *all men*."¹

Reconciliation is the first thing in Christianity; *we must* be reconciled to God, or we never could be *happy* in His presence. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."² And God sends His "ambassadors," the Apostles, who say: "*Now then* we are AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST, as though God did beseech by us: we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."³ God is not now speaking to the world as a whole, but to each individual; and He says; "Be ye reconciled to God." This is spoken to us when enemies. There are those in this world who are reconciled, and those who are not; there are those who have believed, and those who have not. This is the only division that God makes between man and man to-day; and grace alone has made the difference. The believer has accepted the salvation that the grace of God brings to all men. In so doing he is brought to God, and is before Him in all the value of the blood of Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, has cleansed him from all his sins. But the grace in which the believer stands before God is that which met him

¹ Titus ii. 11.

² 2 Cor. v. 19.

³ 2 Cor. v. 20, 21.

when an unbeliever, a lost, guilty sinner. And such is God's free sovereign grace now. For God has proved by His ways with man since the Creation that there is no possibility of man improving himself, or keeping a law whereby he could get life and righteousness; he requires his sins forgiven, and the forgiveness of sins is a present reality, which becomes his by accepting it from God through the death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."¹ God had promised blessings to the righteous, and if anyone could have been found who was righteous, God would have blessed him on that ground. But it is written, "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."² Therefore if God blesses man it must be as unrighteous, and as one who has no good in him, as an ungodly sinner. And this is just what God does, for it is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."³ Man has no righteousness of his own; it must be given to him by God, and it is only the righteousness that God gives that will satisfy Him; therefore God proves man to be unrighteous, also guilty, that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."⁴

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the

¹ 1 Tim. i. 15.

² Rom. iii. 10-12.

³ Rom. iv. 5.

⁴ Rom. iii. 19.

prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”¹

What God says here is very plain and simple. Man having by sin come short of God's glory, and having no righteousness, God Himself brings to him in the Gospel His own righteousness, that is, GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. And He brings it to everyone; it is “*unto all*,” for “ALL HAVE SINNED”; and it is “*upon all them that believe*.” Those who *accept it in faith have it*, and those who reject it remain as they are—unrighteous and guilty.

Those who accept God's righteousness and salvation have it on the ground of God's free grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This is plainly stated in Scripture: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that HE might be *just*, and the JUSTIFIER of *him that believeth in JESUS*.”² GOD is *perfectly* JUST in acting in this way, because He has first given up His own beloved Son to death, who has accomplished redemption by His blood; and God *now declares His righteousness in His past actings in grace*, in the remission of the sins of the *Old Testament saints*. And He also declares *His righteousness in being just*, and justifying the *present believer in Jesus*. This excludes all boasting, for it is free to *all, Jew or Gentile*. And we receive it

¹ Rom. iii. 21-23.

² Rom. iii. 24-26.

only through "*the obedience of faith.*" Therefore the Apostle says, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore *we conclude that a man is justified by faith* without the deeds of the law. Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."¹

The Jews were God's elect people, and they were responsible to keep the law, but they did not; so they could not claim any blessing from God; if they could, they would have been able to boast over the Gentiles, but all is of grace. Both Jews and Gentiles are entirely dependent upon God for blessing; but GOD *will bless*; He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. So now, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."² God now justifies an ungodly sinner who believes that He has "raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." But this is just what we are, ungodly sinners. We are helpless and ungodly. One cannot boast over another, for there are no godly sinners; but it was "when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." GOD has taken into account *all that we really are as helpless and hopeless sinners*, and *Christ has died for us as such*. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward

¹ Rom. iii. 27-31.

² Rom. iv. 5.

us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."¹ It has *all* to do with the *death of Christ*, and *ourselves as sinners*, and *nothing* else. And the moment we bow to what GOD says in HIS WORD, we have PEACE WITH GOD, being justified by faith. It was in *this way* that blessing reached Abraham. God spoke to him, and he believed what God said. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, *giving glory to GOD*; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."² Abraham is an example of how the blessing of God reaches us; it is *not* through *seeking* or *praying*, for God was found of them that sought Him not; but it is *through believing*, believing what God says about Christ. And this removes all boasting and all self-confidence. We may have confidence in ourselves as seekers, or as needy ones, or as having righteous desires; but all this unfits us for *accepting God's free offer of salvation and righteousness*. And if it is not a *free offer*, it is not of *free grace*; and if it is not of *faith*, it is not of *grace*.

Nothing humbles the soul so much as to know that God is willing and ready to bless us, just in the condition and character in which we are found in this world as sinners. We have not to look into our hearts to see if God has commenced a work of grace in us; it is not the work of the Spirit that saves our souls. *Most important as the Spirit's work in us is*, it is the *work of Christ upon the Cross that saves, and that alone*. It is His blood-shedding, His death, and resurrection.

¹ Rom. v. 7-9.

² Rom. iv. 20-22.

We must believe in that to be saved. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Christ has done the work that saves! He said, "It is finished," and what He has done He has done once and for ever. *Here is a safe resting-place for our souls.* CHRIST *has done the work, accomplished* REDEMPTION, and GOD has raised HIM up from the dead, and given HIM GLORY, that our "*faith and hope might be in God.*"¹

GOD has had it all written down in HIS WORD for us to believe, and when we believe, the Holy Spirit bears witness to us of the perfection of the work of the Lord Jesus, who has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Of course, if we do not believe it, we treat it all as "idle tales," and remain unconverted and in our sins; as the Lord said to the Jews, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."² Abraham believed what God said, and this is all that the believer does. God is *speaking to us by His written Word.* "What saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. . . . Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but *for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on HIM that raised up JESUS our LORD from the dead; who was delivered for our OFFENCES, and was raised again for our JUSTIFICATION.*"³

Here is something very definite to be believed, and righteousness will be reckoned to us if we believe on God, who raised up Jesus the Lord from the dead; and believing this, we are brought into peace with God. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we

¹ 1 Pet. i. 21.² John viii. 24.³ Rom. iv.

have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*"¹

Any sinner is *perfectly justified in believing what God says*; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." All is established upon the value of the blood of Christ, "being justified by His blood." God thus acts in righteousness and pure grace in justifying the ungodly sinner who believes in Jesus.

Then, again, the standing of the believer is immediately changed. I mean, his standing before God: he now stands in the perfect grace and favour of God, and has access into it by faith, that is, by still believing what God says. But more than this, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Therefore believers can say, "We love Him because He first loved us." "And not only so, but we also *joy in GOD* through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have *now received* the reconciliation."²

Thus, in believing God we are perfectly reconciled to Him, justified freely by His grace, justified, too, by the blood of Christ; and, also, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Every question that could be raised has been, and has been divinely settled by God and Christ at the Cross before the Day of Judgment. And the presence of Christ at the right hand of God in heaven is the Divine evidence to us that all has been done to the *entire satisfaction of God Himself* for us. The Holy Ghost has come down from that blessed, holy, glorified Man in heaven, to bear witness to every believer of the glory of His Person, as well as to the perfection of His work. And the love of God is shed

¹ Rom. v. 1, 2.

² Rom. v. 1-II.

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, so that we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, "WE JOY IN GOD"—the GOD we once dreaded and were afraid to meet. He having manifested Himself as a God of love, has *become in righteousness the eternal source* of every blessing to the one who bows to, and believes what HE *has said* of the Lord Jesus Christ in HIS WORD. "There is therefore *now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" This is where the believer *is*—IN CHRIST JESUS. Before he believed, he was *in Adam, in his sins, and under condemnation*; but now, having the forgiveness of his sins, there is nothing to condemn; therefore "there is no condemnation."¹

I cannot go fully into the blessedness into which the believer is brought, as shown in Romans viii.—everyone has the privilege of reading it for himself, and believing what is there stated—but will draw attention only to two or three verses. They speak exclusively of those who have believed that Jesus was delivered for their offences, and was raised again for their justification, and, having peace with God, the Spirit of God dwells in them, therefore they are led by the Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Thus we have a positive known relationship estab-

¹ Rom. viii. 1.

lished between God and the believer. The Spirit of God having been given and received, is "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." And this delivers once and for ever from the spirit of bondage we were formerly in; we have become children of God, God's "elect," being IN CHRIST, chosen and "accepted in the Beloved."

But to be here before God, it must be upon the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ for us. Nothing can be laid to the charge of the simple believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, because Christ died and God justifies. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."¹ This is positively true of the believer. The moment he believes God's Word about Christ he passes from death unto life; and if he went to heaven *there* and *then*, it would be only to *prove* the reality of it all in the *presence* of CHRIST HIMSELF, who was dead, but is now alive for evermore.

But the Lord had to say to His disciples, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."² And this no doubt would apply to some of us. God may be working with us for years before we will *bow* to HIS *written Word* and *only* believe HIM. We naturally believe in certain "doctrines," or what people say about the Word of God, but that is not believing God or His Word; and there is no settled peace in the soul until we are brought to set to our seal *that* GOD *is true*, and that what He says in His Word

¹ Rom. viii. 33, 34.

² Luke xxiv. 25.

is the truth ; nor is there any effectual working in our hearts by the Spirit of God until we believe the Word of God. HIS WORD is of *absolute authority*, and we must bow to that. This is where faith comes in. We have no faith in God naturally. Faith is the gift of God. But God has given us His Word to *produce faith* in our hearts. Man lost confidence in God at the Fall, and God has acted in goodness ever since to win the heart of man back to Himself. But now all that God is has been manifested in Christ, who came down into this world to draw our hearts to Himself. "God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."¹ We often look into our hearts to see if we love God ; we ought to love God, but the fact is we do not, we really hate Him ; and we are all in this condition until we become the "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Now, God says, "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*"² Here are *two* facts, first, *we do not love God*, second, *God loves us*. Faith believes both, and says, there is not a spark of love in my heart to God, and the soldier's spear is the expression of my hatred to Him, and I have become through sin His enemy. But faith also says God loves His enemies, therefore *God loves me*. And Christ given up to death by God upon the Cross is the *expression* of God's love to me.

Thus we get life and forgiveness through the manifestation of the love of God in Christ coming into the world, and then going down into death for us. And

¹ 1 John iv. 8, 9.

² 1 John iv. 10.

those who have really believed this can say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."¹ This is a wonderful thing to say, but not more wonderful than true. But one might be ready to say, I truly believe in the Lord Jesus, but I could not say that "I dwell in love; and dwelling in love, I dwell in God." That may be, but we have another verse which says: "Whosoever shall *confess that JESUS is the SON OF GOD, GOD dwelleth in him, and he in God.*"² Now, if one truly believes in the Lord Jesus, there is no difficulty in confessing Him the Son of God; and God dwells in the one who thus confesses Him. This is what the world *did not* and *does not* confess. Had it done so, it would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But this is the confession of true Christianity: JESUS, the One the world rejected, is the SON OF GOD. "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."³ But, alas! the world crucified Him, and He has gone back to the Father in righteousness. But "Who is *he* that overcometh the world, but *he that believeth that JESUS is the SON OF GOD?*"⁴ Thus the believer takes sides with God against the whole world, although he was as guilty as those who nailed the blessed Lord to the Cross; *he believes and confesses that JESUS is the SON OF GOD, and God dwells in him, and he in God. And he dwells in love—God's love, the perfect love of God that gave Jesus to die for him, so that he can further say, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day*

¹ 1 John iv. 16.³ 1 John iv. 14.² 1 John iv. 15.⁴ 1 John v. 5.

of judgment: *because as He is, so are we in this world.* There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”¹ And when this perfect love of God is known and believed, there is the *response of heart in return to God*: “*We love HIM because HE first loved us.*”²

The Gospel which the Apostles preached was the fact that Christ had died, and was risen again, and had gone back to heaven, and was seated at God’s right hand, and through HIS NAME, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. And this Gospel is God’s Gospel to-day, and there is none other; and it is also true to-day that “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”³

The Lord Jesus said Himself: “Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in HIS NAME among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”⁴

The Apostle Peter, who followed the Lord from Galilee to Jerusalem, and who had confessed the fact that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God—it having been revealed to him by God—being a witness too of the sufferings of Christ, saw the blessed Lord after He was risen, and also saw Him ascend up into heaven. He preached with the other Apostles thus: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and

¹ 1 John iv. 17, 18.

² 1 John iv. 19.

³ Acts iv. 12.

⁴ Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through HIS NAME whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”¹

The Apostle Paul “preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.”² He preached also the rejection of the Son of God by the world, and that God had raised Him from the dead; and notwithstanding this was a fact, yet “grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”³ He says: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”⁴ This is true to-day, for “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”⁵

This is the Gospel, and God’s free grace; but it will not last for ever. God is not going to let the world go on for ever just as it likes. He warns man in His Word, and speaks of coming judgment; and, as we

¹ Acts x. 38-43.

² Acts ix. 20.

³ Rom. v. 21.

⁴ Acts xiii. 38, 39.

⁵ John iii. 16.

have said, if man will not have mercy and pardon through the grace of God, he must have judgment; there is nothing else left for him. But now God "commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."¹

The Judgment Day is appointed, and the JUDGE is ordained, and HE is *none other* than the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the One whom this world nailed to the Cross, but whom God has raised up from the dead, and appointed Him Judge both of the living and the dead. To-day HE is a SAVIOUR, and will in nowise cast out any that come to Him; but when the appointed day comes, HE will be the JUDGE, and "Behold, HE cometh with clouds; and *every eye shall see HIM*, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."²

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."³

If we speak of the things contained in the Scriptures, we must be faithful, because the statements are as plain about the judgments as they are about the salvation. Salvation there is to-day for everyone that confesses with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believes in his

¹ Acts xvii. 30, 31.

² Rev. i. 7.

³ 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

heart that God raised Him from the dead: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."¹ But "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"² "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."³ To-morrow the judgments may set in. God has lingered long, as He did in Noah's day; but the day came when God shut the door of the ark, and the flood came, and all who were outside that ark were drowned.

I declare upon the *authority of GOD'S WRITTEN WORD* that there is present free pardon, and forgiveness, and eternal life for anyone who confesses to God that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God has raised Him up from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heaven. "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you."⁴

¹ Rom. x. 10.

² Heb. ii. 3.

³ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

⁴ Acts xiii. 40, 41.

VI.

THE CHURCH: ITS PROSPECTS AND ITS RESPONSIBILITY.

THE subject that is now before us is of a most interesting character, and should appeal to the spiritual intelligence of every true believer and loyal heart to Christ. To *understand* what the *Church of God* is, and the place that *it has* in the mind and thoughts of God, is of the greatest importance, and *no Christian* should be satisfied without this Divine knowledge through the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul, in thinking of the saints he had not seen, in connection with this subject says, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of *understanding, to the acknowledgment of* THE MYSTERY OF GOD . . . in which are hid *all* the treasures of *wisdom and knowledge.*"¹ And this very Scripture brings us immediately to what the Holy Ghost calls THE CHURCH,* viz., "THE MYSTERY OF GOD," and

¹ Col. ii. 1-3.

* The word translated "Church" in the New Testament means "Assembly"; the word is thus translated in Acts xix. 41, referring

called such because it was "hid in God," and "not made known" in past ages and generations. Thus the Apostle says, "The mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but *now is made manifest*, and by the Scriptures of the prophets (New Testament prophets), according to the commandment of the everlasting God, *made known to all nations* for the *obedience of faith*: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever."¹

The purpose of God in connection with the Church, and what the Church is in itself (it being "the mystery" which was "kept secret" and "hid in God," from the ages and generations past), *cannot* be found in the *Old Testament*. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"² but the Holy Ghost did *not* move them to speak of the Church. The revelation of this remained for a further development of the ways of God with man.

Every attentive reader of Scripture will easily see that the greater part of the Old Testament is occupied with the Jews, and the promises made to them as God's people, which *relate to the earth*; therefore God's dealings with the nations are minutely described, the ultimate result being the restoration of the Jews to their own land (Palestine) as the centre of the earth; and then, blessing flowing out to the Gentiles, so that the exhortation, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people," will be fulfilled; and then, "the knowledge of the glory of

¹ Rom. xvi. 25-27.

² 2 Pet. i. 21.

to a disorderly company: "he dismissed the *assembly*." I retain for the most part the word "Church" as we have it in the Authorised Version, but it is simply "Assembly"—God's Assembly, the company He owns as His upon the earth.

the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."¹

But let us return to *the Church*, the first mention of which we find in Matt. xvi. The question asked by our blessed Lord, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" brings out this confession from Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (a stone), and upon this rock I *will* build *My Church*; and the gates of hell *shall not* prevail against it."² Here we see plainly that upon this rock, that is, upon what the Lord was in the glory of His own Person, as confessed by Peter, "The Son of the living God," He would build His Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Therefore, when the Lord stood upon this earth, and uttered this Scripture, He had *not then commenced to build His Church*. "Upon this rock I *will* build My Church" refers to the future, not to the past.

"Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ,"³ that is, the Messiah. He had already been rejected *as such by the Jews*, and, as rejected, could not fulfil the promises made to Israel. This makes a way for the revealing of this grand "secret," which was still "hid in God," and "not made known." So the next thing we read is: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."⁴

¹ Hab. ii. 14.

² Matt. xvi. 16-18.

³ Matt. xvi. 20.

⁴ Matt. xvi. 21.

This, in a few words, brings before us the accomplishment of redemption, and the setting aside of the power of Satan. Before Christ commences to build His Church He goes down into death, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."¹ Coming up out of death, He shows His complete victory over all the power of the enemy; and "having abolished death, hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the Gospel."

Not only does the Lord say, "Upon this rock I will build My Church," but He adds, "*and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" He therefore sets aside all the power of hell, manifested in the devil, before *He commences* to build. Thus we get a solid foundation upon which the Church of God stands, Christ in resurrection.

GOD has HIS own fixed and eternal purposes and counsels which HE WILL carry out, notwithstanding all that man is and does; and, although to look around it might seem as if man had got all in his own hands, yet at the back of all GOD is working "*all things after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL.*" And "*His will,*" *His eternal purpose, and His counsels, He has made known to the Church,* as the Scripture says: "Having made known *unto us* the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."²

¹ Heb. ii. 14.

² Eph. i. 9-11.

From this we see that God has His own fixed plans and purposes, which He will assuredly carry out, and that CHRIST is the ONE OBJECT and CENTRE of those eternal counsels. Christ being the Head of His body, the Church, the purpose of God being to gather together in one all things in Christ; the things in the heavens and the things on the earth are to be gathered together in one in CHRIST, in whom the Church has obtained an inheritance. And all this is made known to the Church as the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.

Now, for the *commencement* of the *carrying out* of this *fixed purpose* of GOD we must look at the end of Ephesians i. There we read of THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD “which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things *to the Church*, which is *His body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”¹

He, the blessed Lord, who is truly the Son of God, but became Man, is seen here as Man dead in the grave; and the mighty power of God raises Him up from the dead, and sets Him as Man at God's own right hand in heaven, far above every thing and every name, both in this age and in the coming age, putting all things under His feet, giving Him, as Man, to be “Head over all things *to the Church*, which is *His body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

¹ Eph. i. 20-23.

Here we have a simple statement that the Church is HIS BODY. In Colossians i. we read: "He is the HEAD of the body, the Church." Therefore the Church *as His body* is *part of Himself*, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

These Scriptures make the truth very simple and plain. If the Head of the body was found in death, and the mighty power of God has raised Him up, what about the members of His body, where were they? The next chapter tells us: "*dead* in trespasses and sins." Christ, the Head of the body, goes down into death, on account of the members being there through sin. "He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," and thus was found in death for it; and when the members of His body were dead in sins, God quickened them together with Christ, and raised them up together, and made them sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.*

I have just stated this as *a fact* as it is *revealed* to us in Scripture, without speaking of the rich mercy and great love of God in doing it. That we shall speak of, but we must get before our minds what the Church really is, as that which has been established by God Himself.

We have seen that Christ became *dead* and was in the grave on account of our sins, and that God has quickened Him, as *Man*, with the life that He ever had as *Son*

* We have revealed to us here the purpose of God. Man, in doing anything, has a purpose before him; so has God. It is no question here, then, as to the Gospel, but God bringing into effect that which He has before His mind, for the glory of His own Son. The freeness of the Gospel is another subject altogether. It is in accepting from God what is brought to us in the Gospel that we are brought to participate in what we have here.

with the Father from all eternity, that is, ETERNAL LIFE. The Apostle Paul speaks to Titus of "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"; and to Timothy of "the promise of life *which is IN CHRIST JESUS.*" This "eternal life" was promised to man IN CHRIST before the world began, and it is in *this way* God has been pleased to communicate *it to us* by quickening *Christ as Man when dead*, and *the members of His body when dead in sins together with THE ETERNAL LIFE* that the SON EVER WAS, and IS STILL, although HE *has become THE SON OF MAN*, and ever will be, for HE "is the TRUE GOD, AND ETERNAL LIFE."¹ Therefore He is Personally the Life of His body, the Church; and "when CHRIST, who is OUR LIFE, shall appear, *then* shall ye *also appear with HIM in GLORY.*"²

Christ, as the Head and Life of His body, is the subject of Colossians. In Ephesians we have the body brought more prominently before us, and who it is that composes the body, which is of great interest, and very establishing to our souls.

But before going into the details of the Church, there is another point of interest which must be noticed, and which is a further development of God's ways with man. It is a fact—a wonderful fact—that God, having raised up Christ as Man, HE is the commencement of a new creation; for Scripture plainly states that He is "the beginning of the creation of God."³

God has disowned the first creation, connected with the first man Adam. Looking simply at that creation,

¹ 1 John v. 20.

² Col. iii. 4.

³ Rev. iii. 14.

“it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.”¹ But now, Christ having been the faithful and true Witness for God upon the earth, and having glorified God as to all the former creation, in His obedience unto death, God has commenced A NEW CREATION IN RESURRECTION IN HIM, THE SECOND MAN; and this is of the deepest interest to us, because God is now, in His infinite grace, taking *individuals out of the ruin of the first creation*, and *putting them into the new creation*, where “all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.”² This marvellous grace and wonderful love is fully developed in the Epistles, but all this was “hid in God,” and “not made known” before the Cross; for had it been, it would have upset the ways of God with man in past generations; therefore the prophet of old says: “For since the beginning of the world men have *not heard*, nor *perceived* by the ear, *neither* hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.”³ But the Apostle Paul says: “But *we speak* the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the *hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto *our glory*: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. BUT GOD HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD.”⁴

¹ Gen. vi. 6.³ Isa. lxiv. 4.² 2 Cor. v. 18.⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 7-10.

But we return to the subject of the Church, the body of Christ—its formation and its members. “By one Spirit,” says the Apostle, “are we all baptized into one body”;¹ therefore the body of Christ, the Church, was formed by the Holy Ghost. God said to John the Baptist, “Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw” (says John) “and bare record that this is the Son of God.”² It is therefore the Lord Jesus who “baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” And the Lord said to His own loved ones, before He went back to heaven, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”³ Therefore the Spirit comes from the Father as well as from the Son. But further, the Lord Jesus said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you;”⁴ therefore it is not until the Lord goes back to heaven that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, is sent down here upon the earth. We read also, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified”;⁵ that is, the blessed Lord being Personally on earth, the Holy Ghost was Personally in heaven. But when the Lord Jesus went back to heaven, the Holy Ghost would come down

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 13.² John i. 33, 34.³ John xiv. 16, 17.⁴ John xvi. 7.⁵ John vii. 39.

Personally to the earth, and be received by believers, that is, dwell in them.

The Lord Jesus having gone to the Cross, and there accomplished redemption by going down into death, rises from the dead the third day, and is seen of many witnesses ; but especially by the Apostles, to whom He says, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," and "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you"; and having said this "a cloud received Him out of their sight";¹ and He went back to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled *with the* HOLY GHOST, and began to speak with other tongues, as THE SPIRIT gave them utterance."² Thus the body of Christ was formed, and the Church of God established upon the earth, on the Day of Pentecost. *On that day believers* in the Lord Jesus *were baptized* into "ONE BODY" *by the* HOLY GHOST! *On that day* God set up upon the earth A TEMPLE, which was to be the "HABITATION OF GOD *through* THE SPIRIT."³ *That* which was *true of believers then is true of believers to-day, "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."*⁴

We do not find the doctrine of all this precious truth in Acts ii.; but we get *the fact* that the Holy Ghost

¹ Acts i. 5, 8, 9.

² Acts ii. 1-4.

³ Eph. ii. 22.

⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

came down according to the Word of the Lord, and those present were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and they composed the Church.

The Apostles, being filled with the Spirit, by the mouth of Peter bear witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who had been crucified by the nation of the Jews, saying, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received His Word were baptized: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls";¹ these were added to the *company* that *already existed*. But now there is another thing—water baptism. If the Holy Ghost baptized them all into "one body," water baptism admitted others into the already recognised assembly of Christians on the earth; they put on the Christian profession by baptism, and they renounced all connection with the nation of the Jews, who had crucified their Messiah. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ *have put on Christ*."² "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." But the Church already existed, or others could not be "added."

The Church up to this time was composed only of Jews; but the commission the Apostles had was to baptize "*all nations*." Now, the Apostles being Jews had many prejudices, God having in His previous ways with man made a difference between them and Gentiles; therefore they could not reconcile God's present ways with His dealings in the past. They, at first, did not go to the Gentiles with the Gospel.

In order to break down their prejudices, God gave

¹ Acts ii. 38, 41.

² Gal. iii. 27.

the Apostle Peter a vision ; and “ he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth :* wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter ; kill, and eat. But Peter said, *Not so, Lord ;* for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice : and the vessel was received up again into heaven.”¹

The circumstances in connection with this vision, and the one given to Cornelius, brought Peter and those who were with him into the midst of a company of Gentiles ; and *the lesson* that God *had taught Peter* by the vision *was that He was no respecter of persons*. For Peter says, “ Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” Then, having spoken of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, His rejection and death, “ whom they slew and hanged on a tree,” but whom God raised from the dead, and appointed Judge of quick (living) and dead, he announces the Gospel to the Gentiles as follows : “ To Him gave all the prophets witness, that through His Name WHOSOEVER believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” What was the result ? “ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word. And they of the circumcision

¹ Acts x. 10-16.

* Embracing the whole world—east, west, north, south.

which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”¹

Here we see that God, by giving believing Gentiles the Holy Ghost, had brought them into the body, the Church, which up to this time had only been composed of Jews, but now of Jews and Gentiles.

“Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” Why ask such a question? Simply because Jewish prejudices would refuse Gentiles admission into this NEW ASSEMBLY OF GOD, it being the recognised assembly of Christians on the earth. God had acknowledged them and given them the *Holy Ghost, bringing them into the “one body,”* and shall the Jew, because of his prejudices, keep them out of the house of God upon earth? God forbid! Peter says: “What was I, that I could withstand God?”² “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”³

We now have the Church of God—composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles—established upon the earth in its two aspects, viz., first, as the body of Christ, united to its Head in heaven by the Holy Ghost, and the members united in “one body” to each other by the same Spirit, the Spirit dwelling in each member individually. Second, as the house of God on earth, where God Himself dwells in the whole company collectively by the Holy Ghost. The doctrine of all this precious truth is not unfolded in the Acts, but the fact that there was such an assembly cannot be

¹ Acts x. 34-48.

² Acts xi. 17.

³ Read Acts x., xi.

denied. For the doctrine we must go to the Epistles of the Apostle Paul ; but before doing so, let us look a little at his conversion in connection therewith.

I suppose the Apostle was the greatest enemy on earth that this new company which God had just established had, for "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus : and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven : and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am JESUS whom thou persecutest."¹

What a surprise ! Saul had no idea that the MAN whom he knew as *Jesus* was in the GLORY OF GOD ! He knew well that He had been crucified and had died, and no doubt he thought He was in the grave for ever. But that this very Person should speak to him from heaven was a surprise indeed. And the Lord said, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Did the Lord own those who believed on Him as part of Himself? He did ; they were members of His body. HE *had shed HIS own precious blood for them*, and made them as fit for the GLORY as HIMSELF, and HE was "*not ashamed to call them brethren*."² It was these Saul was persecuting when the Lord said, "*Why persecutest thou ME?*" Saul would not have done it had he known what he was doing, for he said afterwards, "I did it

¹ Acts ix. 1-5.

² Heb. ii. 11.

ignorantly in unbelief." But that is what he did—he was *persecuting the members of Christ's body*. These the Lord looked upon as part of Himself, both the Head and members participating in the same Life, even the Life of God, the members having been "quickened together with Christ."

All this adds interest to the unfolding of this truth in Paul's Epistles, he being a chosen vessel, to whom God would reveal this wonderful mystery and precious secret, which had, until made known to Paul, been "hid in God."

The glory of the Person, who is the Head of the body, the Church, gives character to the dignified and elevated position of the Church, "which He hath purchased with His own blood."¹

This blessed, holy Person, who is the Son of God, Maker of heaven and earth, for "all things were created by Him and for Him," has redeemed the Church with His own blood, going down into death where the Church was; but now He is "the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."² Having descended first into the lower parts of the earth, "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."³

He has taken the highest place above all heavens in divine right, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."⁴ "Having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."⁵

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² Col. i. 18.

³ Eph. iv. 9, 10

⁴ Col. ii. 9.

⁵ Col. i. 20.

How precious is this wonderful truth! The Lord Jesus descended from heaven* to do a work by which He could reconcile all things to God, in heaven and on earth, and having done that work, and made peace by the blood of His Cross, He ascends up where He was before *as* THE REDEEMER, HEIR OF ALL THINGS; and all things in THE COMING DAY OF GLORY will be put under His feet. "But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus,† who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."¹

The Church, by the eye of faith, sees her glorified Head in heaven crowned with glory and honour, she being perfectly reconciled to God; for we further read: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet NOW HATH HE RECONCILED, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight."²

Thus the work by which God will reconcile all *things* to Himself in the coming day of glory is that by which the *Church is already* reconciled and justified. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."³ And as to righteousness, the Church *is made even now* absolutely the righteousness of God in Christ. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."⁴ And as to sanctifi-

¹ Heb. ii. 8, 9.

² Col. i. 21, 22.

³ Rom. iii. 24.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 21.

* See Chapter III.

† That is, by faith; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). A *believer* will understand this.

cation, "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee."¹

The Lord having brought those who believe on Him into association with Himself through redemption, calls them brethren, and declares unto them the FATHER'S NAME, when risen from the dead, saying, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."² This brings before us in a very definite way the relationship in which every believer stands individually with God. The Lord said, "*My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God.*"

Father and Son, such is the eternal relationship which ever existed between God the Father and God the Son. The very fact of the Son coming into the world proves the existence of the Father, and becoming Man forms the second relationship in which this *Divine PERSON stands with GOD*. Therefore, *as the Son of God He says, "My Father," and as the Son of Man, "My God."* But He also said when down here, "I and My Father are one," and, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." JESUS was *the perfect expression* of the FATHER in this world. He revealed the Father in the relationship in which He ever was as Son; so to those *who rejected HIM* He had to say: "*But now have they both seen and hated both ME and MY FATHER.*"³

It is upon these two relationships, viz., "the GOD

¹ Heb. ii. 11, 12.

² John xx. 17.

³ John xv. 24.

and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," that Christianity is established.

Thus the Apostle Paul, having grasped with Divine intelligence the *glory* of the PERSON OF THE CHRIST, and the *dignity* of the Church as in association with HIM as HIS BODY, also the mind and purpose of God, to "gather together in one all things in THE CHRIST,* both which are in the heavens, and on the earth"; bursts forth in worship, and then unfolds by the power of the Spirit of God this wonderful truth; saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy* and *without blame* before HIM *in love*: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."¹

Here we see the Church enjoying the very highest privileges which God could confer on man, being blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ; individually being holy and without blame before God in love, that is, each one is there according to the nature of God; for God is holy, and He is blame-

¹ Eph. i. 3-7.

* This expression, THE CHRIST, includes THE HEAD AND MEMBERS OF THE BODY—THE CHURCH, and should never be dissociated in our minds when we think of the CHURCH OF GOD, or GOD'S ASSEMBLY.

less in all His ways, and God is love. But more than this, each one is brought into relationship as a child and son with the Father, He having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, and made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins, and all according to the good pleasure of His will, and to the praise of the glory of His grace. Thus the riches of God's grace are now being displayed in calling lost sinners to Himself, bringing *every believer through the blood of Christ to HIMSELF as redeemed!* and placing each one in *perfect acceptance in CHRIST*, as children of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *holy and blameless before God in love!*

Thus the members of the body of Christ stand in the same relationship to God and the Father as Christ Himself.

Wonderful grace! but not more wonderful than true. And the way in which it has been done, as we have seen, is by God quickening believers together with Christ. Thus to Gentiles who walked according to the course of this world, and Jews who were children of wrath even as others, GOD *has shown HIS rich mercy and great love*, as the Apostle says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."¹

God has His *own purpose* in doing this, and all in

¹ Eph. ii. 4-7.

connection with "*the ages to come*," for He will then show *the exceeding riches of HIS grace in HIS kindness* towards the Church through Christ Jesus.

While God is thus acting in His own sovereign grace and love, it is not without reference to those who are thus quickened: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."¹

When I say that it is not without reference to those thus quickened, I mean that God, while acting in grace, is not acting apart from the responsibility of man, although that is not brought out here, save that it says it is "*through faith*"—that is, the SALVATION here presented, which commences in the quickening power of God, and reaches on to the *display* of those quickened in the coming day of glory, is *received and known through faith now*.

Christ has accomplished the salvation; the Holy Ghost has come down here to make it known to those who *accept it in faith*, as it is presented in the Gospel. Thus the Apostle, having declared that it is the purpose of God to head up all things in Christ, both in heaven and upon earth, says, "In whom also we (Jews) have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who *first trusted in Christ*," that is, the remnant of the Jews who had trusted or believed in Christ before the manifestation of the glory of the kingdom, have obtained an inheritance in Christ, in *contrast* to the inheritance *promised to Israel* in the Old Testament. The Apostle then goes on to say, "In

¹ Eph. ii. 8.

whom ye (Gentiles) also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."¹

Thus we see that both Jews and Gentiles who have received Christ in faith have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and have obtained an inheritance in Christ, *not* according to the promises made to the fathers, *but* according to the eternal purpose of GOD in THE CHRIST, who is now working all things "after the counsel of HIS own will," the Holy Ghost being the earnest of OUR inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession; that is, the Holy Ghost is the earnest to the believer of our inheritance until we come into possession of it, which will be at the coming of the Lord to redeem the inheritance in power, for which the whole creation groans and waits until the "*manifestation* of the SONS OF GOD."²

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained

¹ Eph. i. 11-14.

² Read Rom. viii. 17-25.

in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain *one* NEW MAN, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”¹

By this we see that God is acting in quite a different way from what He did in the Old Testament.

There He promised blessing to Jews; Gentiles were without God and without hope in the world; and there was a middle wall of partition put up by God between Jews and Gentiles which caused an enmity to arise between them. But by the Cross of Christ this middle wall of partition has been broken down, the enmity has been abolished in His flesh, and the distinction between Jew and Gentile has been done away, and all to bring in a NEW CREATION, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, for to make in Himself of the two ONE NEW MAN, so making peace, reconciling both unto God in one body by the Cross, so that through Christ both believing Jews and believing Gentiles have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

But further, this new company that had been baptized by the Holy Ghost into “one body,” blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ in the heavens, quickened, raised, and seated in heavenly places *in Christ*, was established by God as a dwelling-place for Himself upon the earth by the Spirit.

This action of God towards the Gentiles altered entirely the position of those who received the Gospel. “Now therefore,” says the Apostle, “ye are *no more*

¹ Eph. ii. 11-18.

strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."¹

It is plainly stated here that *the Church is an assembly in which God dwells* by the Spirit. As His habitation, it is "AN HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD," while room is left for others to be brought in, for it "*groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.*"

Such *was and is* THE CHURCH, *according to* GOD, established in *perfection* by GOD upon the earth *at the first* as His dwelling-place. Its DESTINY is HEAVEN! At this present moment it is upon the earth. But "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, *that HE might present IT to HIMSELF a GLORIOUS CHURCH*, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be *holy and without blemish.*"²

The Apostle Paul, having by the Holy Ghost brought out and established the doctrine of the Church in the first two chapters to the Ephesians, states plainly in the third *that THIS WAS THE MYSTERY HID IN GOD, AND NOT MADE KNOWN BEFORE.* He says: "How *that by revelation* He made known unto *me the mystery*; (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His

¹ Eph. ii. 19-22.

² Eph. v. 25-27.

holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel; whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto *me*, who am less than the least of all saints, *is this grace given*, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make *all men see* what is the fellowship of the *mystery*, which from the *beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD*, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be (made) known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”¹ Note, that it says that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His PROMISE IN CHRIST by the Gospel. This is *not* that the Gentiles are brought to be partakers of the promises made to the Jews, but the Jews having had promises made to them, it was not surprising that those among them who believed in Christ should be brought into blessing; but that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the same body, and brought on *one common footing* before God into blessing with Jews, was a thing unheard and unthought of before, being a secret hid in God; and so important it is to see this, that the Apostle speaks of it again, especially to the Colossians. He having stated that he had been made a minister of the Gospel, which was preached to every creature under heaven, also states that he is a minister of the Church, “Who now rejoice,” says he, “in my suffer-

¹ Eph. iii. 3-11.

ings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (or complete) the Word of God; even the mystery which *hath been hid from ages and from generations*, but *now* is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of *this mystery among the Gentiles*; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."¹ The mystery here spoken of is that God would *dwell among the Gentiles*, "to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery *among the Gentiles*, which is Christ in (or among) you the *hope of glory*." God had *dwelt among the Jews*, but had now set them aside, and the severity of His judgments is now upon them as a nation for their naughty ways. He now dwells among the Gentiles, those who have received the Gospel, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, they being reconciled to God, and all by one Spirit baptized into one body, which is THE CHURCH, GOD'S ASSEMBLY ON THE EARTH. How it has answered to God's thoughts in its responsibility is another subject, and will occupy us later on. But this is what was according to God, and was specially revealed to Paul, and he calls it his gospel, and it is for all nations to hear and believe, in obedience of faith. Thus, again, the Apostle speaks of it to the Romans, and says: "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to *my gospel*, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to *the revelation of the mystery*, which was *kept secret since the world began*, but is now made

¹ Col. i. 24-27.

manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets (New Testament prophets) according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”¹

Thus the *true Church of God* is composed only of *true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ* in this dispensation, the foundation of which is CHRIST, the SON of the LIVING GOD. It was brought into *existence on the day of Pentecost*, the Lord having been glorified as Man at the right hand of God ; He, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, *baptized on that day believers into one body*. The *doctrine* of this was by *special revelation made known* to the Apostle Paul, he being God’s chosen vessel for this very purpose, converted in a special way, when the enmity of *his heart* was in *open rebellion against God and Christ*. The Lord Jesus speaks to him from heaven, and owns those whom he was persecuting as part of Himself—“Why persecutest thou Me?” Thus the Apostle writes: “So we, being many, *are one body in Christ*, and every one members one of another.”² “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body : so also is THE CHRIST. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be *Jews or Gentiles*, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . Now hath God set the members every one of them, in the body, *as it hath pleased HIM*. . . . That there should be no schism (or division) in the body ; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all

¹ Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

² Rom. xii. 5.

the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”¹

Thus the Church is complete in itself; God’s dwelling-place on the earth by the Spirit, having all that is needed for its edification and establishment, gifts bestowed upon it by its HEAD, for “when HE ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave *gifts unto men*. . . . And He gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which *every joint supplieth*, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”²

The working of the interior of the assembly of God is developed in 1 Corinthians, which I need not go into in detail; but must just say that the Lord’s Table, with the memorials of His death and blood-shedding upon it (the bread and wine), was, and is, the centre of communion and fellowship of the body of Christ, the Church of God. “Wherefore, my dearly beloved,” says Paul, “flee from idolatry. I speak as to *wise men*; judge ye *what I say*. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it

¹ 1 Cor. xii.

² Eph. iv. 8-16.

not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread (or loaf), and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread (or loaf)."¹ "*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.*"²

Thus the believers in the Lord Jesus in every place came together, *as members of the body of Christ, and of one another*, and sat around the LORD'S TABLE for the purpose of *remembering* HIM! They broke the bread together, and drank of the cup together, as *members of one body, in remembrance of their blessed LORD, who had given HIS BODY and BLOOD for them.* The bread which WE break, the cup which WE bless, is it not the communion of the body and blood of Christ? This, then, is the *centre of the communion and fellowship of the CHURCH OF GOD.*

"I therefore (says the Apostle), the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*, even

¹ 1 Cor. x. 14-17.

² 1 Cor. xi. 23-26.

as ye are called in *one hope* of your calling; *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”¹

How wonderful are the ways of God with man ! how He has wrought for His own glory and the eternal blessing of man, bringing those who believe in the Lord Jesus to Himself, as His own children ; giving them His own life, making them a new creation in Christ, uniting them by His Spirit in one body to Christ Himself, the Head, giving them one faith and one hope, which hope is outside this world altogether. Well might the Apostle say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” He also said, “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to *one husband*, that I may *present you as a chaste virgin to CHRIST*.”²

THE CHURCH *belongs to CHRIST* ; it is HIS BODY, *part of HIMSELF* ; and more than this, it is HIS BRIDE, HIS LOVED ONE. He has loved it, and given Himself for it, *and HE is coming HIMSELF to take it home to HIS FATHER’S HOUSE*, and after that *the marriage* will take place.

Let us therefore see how the Church will be translated *from earth to heaven*.

The pattern or type of this translation is Enoch, who walked with God ; and he was not, for God took him before the flood came, that is, before judgment on those living upon the earth was executed.

The normal state of the Church is to walk with God

¹ Eph. iv. 1-7.

² 2 Cor. xi. 2.

by faith, each member answering to the Lord in his own individual responsibility. This was manifested at the first, for "then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."¹

But the Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples before He went back to heaven that He was going to prepare a place for them there, in His Father's house. "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."²

He also said, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given ME, be with ME where I am; that they may behold MY glory."³ The promise is that the Lord will come again, and receive His own loved ones to Himself; and the desire of His own heart is that they may be with Him where He is, and behold His glory. Yes, the blessed Lord who once walked on this earth is now in heaven, and He has prepared a place there, in the Father's house, for every true believer in Him, having redeemed us from all iniquity; so that the believer individually, and the Church collectively, does not belong to this world. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,"⁴ said the Lord. "Our conversation (or place of abode) is in heaven,"⁵ said St. Paul; "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, (is) reserved in heaven for us," says St. Peter.⁶ "I will come again and receive

¹ Acts ix. 31.
John xvii. 16.

² John xiv. 2, 3.
³ Phil. iii. 20.

⁴ John xvii. 24.
⁵ 1 Pet. i. 4.

you unto Myself," said Jesus; and this coming again of the Lord Jesus the Apostles preached when they preached the Gospel, so that those who received the message simply waited the Lord's return! Of the Thessalonians the Apostle said, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; *and to wait for His Son from heaven*, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."¹

The way and manner of the Lord's coming, it appears, they did not understand, but the *fact* of His coming was so real to them that they were plunged into the deepest sorrow when some of their fellow Christians passed away by death, for they thought that the blessed hope that was theirs was lost for those who fell asleep. The Apostle found it necessary therefore to write to comfort their hearts, and to instruct them as to the manner of the coming of their blessed Lord. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," he says, "concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."² What the Apostle says here has reference to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ "WITH ALL HIS SAINTS."

The coming of Christ has two aspects: in the one He is coming FOR His saints, in the other He is coming WITH His saints. Both are clearly unfolded in Scripture. The meaning of the passage just quoted is that, although some who have believed in the Lord Jesus have died, and now the number is innumerable,

¹ 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

² 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

yet, when the Lord comes with all His saints, they will be there *WITH* Him, for “them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with* Him”; and the Apostle unfolds the way in which it will all come about. It had been revealed to him as a special revelation by the Word of the Lord. “For,” says he, “this we say unto you *by the* WORD OF THE LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”¹

What is stated here is as simple as it is certain. The Lord Jesus, according to His own Word, is coming Himself for His saints. His *power* will first be displayed towards the sleeping ones, *those who have died*. *They are to be raised FIRST: then the living ones*, we that “are alive and remain,” will be *changed* and *caught up together* in the clouds, and then both will *meet* the LORD in the air, and be for ever with the Lord, “Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep (are alive or dead), we should live together with Him.”² It is the *purpose* the Lord *had* in *dying for us*, that HE might have us *with* HIMSELF where He is now, in the Father’s house.

The coming of the Lord *FOR* His saints, and then *WITH* His saints, is not established upon one or two

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15-18.

² 1 Thess. v. 10.

passages of Scripture (although it would be just as true if it were), but we find it is one of the *great subjects* of the New Testament, and was given as a *present hope*, and to characterize the life of the Christian while left upon the earth; for the grace of God which has brought him salvation also teaches him "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that BLESSED HOPE, and the GLORIOUS APPEARING of THE GREAT GOD and OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; *who gave HIMSELF for us.*"¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that the Apostle should speak of it when testifying of the truth of the resurrection. Plainly and simply he says: "We shall *not* all sleep," that is, *we shall not all die*, "but we shall all be changed," and it will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible," and we (those that are alive at the time) shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption" (this refers to the dead), "and this mortal must put on immortality, or incorruptibility" (this refers to the living). But the Apostle said: "Behold, I show you a mystery" (something that was not known before); "We shall not all sleep" (that is, die), "but we shall *all be changed*, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye."

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of

¹ Titus ii. 12-14.

death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹

In Thessalonians, as we have seen, we get the *way* in which the Church will be taken to heaven—the dead in Christ will be raised first, then they with the living ones, who will be changed, will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

In Corinthians it is stated as a *fact* that the dead *shall* be raised, and the living *shall* be changed.

Now I will quote a few Scriptures which speak of *the reality of the coming of the Lord for or with His saints*. We have seen that the portion of the Church is in heaven, its blessings there ; all that God has for the Church is “reserved in heaven” in Christ. “For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ : who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”²

“Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”³ “When CHRIST, who is our life, *shall appear, then shall ye also APPEAR with HIM in GLORY.*”⁴

“The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be pre-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 51-57.

² Phil. iii. 20, 21.

³ 1 John iii. 2, 3.

⁴ Col. iii. 4.

served blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹ “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even *ye* in the *presence* of our Lord Jesus Christ *at His coming*?”² “And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts *unblameable in holiness before GOD*, even our Father, *at the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ *with all His saints*.”³

All this brings out the desire of the heart of God for His own loved ones; the heart of Christ will never be satisfied until He has HIS CHURCH, which is HIS BODY and BRIDE, with Himself in the *same glory*. Speaking of those the Father had given to Him, He said: “The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them: that they may be one, even as We are One: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.”⁴ I say again, the blessed loving heart of Jesus will never be satisfied until He has His own loved ones with Himself in His Father’s house.

And is there no response of heart to this love? Is it all one-sided? Have we not seen that the children of God love Him because He first loved them? Thank God, there is a response, and the heart of the one who truly loves the Lord can say, when He says, “Surely I

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23.

² 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

³ 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.

⁴ John xvii. 22-24.

come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."¹ "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."²

This response is a test to every heart that knows the Lord! Can we say to HIM, *Come*? The SPIRIT that dwells in every true believer individually, and in the whole Church collectively, says, *Come*! And the BRIDE, true to her BRIDEGROOM, says, *Come*! And let the one who has heard His voice, but perhaps does not know His loving heart, say, *Come*! for He has said, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"; let such an *one* join with the SPIRIT and the BRIDE, and say, COME! And let the thirsty come, and whosoever will, let them come and drink of the living water that flows from the loving heart of Jesus, who said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."³ And, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."⁴

Thus we see that the Church to which every true believer belongs is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, and he is a member of THE BODY OF

¹ Rev. xxii. 20.

² Rev. xxii. 16, 17.

³ John iv. 14.

⁴ John vii. 37, 38.

CHRIST. What was true at the beginning is true to-day, "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"; this embraces all true believers; the PROSPECT of the Church is HEAVENLY GLORY, its portion is *entirely outside this world*. The Church no more belongs to the world than Christ does; it is united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, and it is waiting the Lord's return, waiting to be *taken away from earth to heaven*, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the REDEMPTION of *our body*," for "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken *your mortal bodies* by HIS SPIRIT that *dwelleth in you*."¹

There is therefore A BLESSED GLORIOUS FUTURE for THE TRUE CHURCH OF GOD! for *in IT* "*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*."² And by IT, God makes known to the heavenly host "the manifold wisdom of God."³

Wondrous indeed are God's ways with man, but how awful are man's ways with God! How he rejects His grace! how he scoffs at His goodness! how he denies His word! He manifests in his ways that he will not have God, however God may act in grace, giving His own beloved Son to die in his stead, that he might be pardoned in righteousness; but man will not be pardoned. He prefers to die as he was born, and take his chance. He is born in sin, and if he dies without believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, he dies in his sins.

No one wants eternal punishment, so now man denies that there is any. Easily denied! but not so easily escaped if we die in *our sins*. Every man knows well, deep down at the bottom of his heart, that one day he must meet God, and give an account of himself to God.

¹ Rom. viii. 11.

² Col. ii. 3.

³ Eph. iii. 10.

But through the grace of God we may meet Him to-day; *we have the PRIVILEGE of giving a true and honest account of ourselves to God to-day*, and God will freely pardon through the blood of His own beloved Son; for "He looketh upon men, and if *any say, I have sinned*, and perverted that which was right, and it *profited me not*; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."¹ "If *we confess our sins*, HE is *faithful and just to forgive us our sins*, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*."²

Now, we have a very serious matter to consider before leaving the subject of the Church, viz., ITS RESPONSIBILITY. While God has His own eternal purposes and counsels in connection with the Church, which He will assuredly carry out for His own eternal glory, He has been pleased, in His ways with man, to set it up upon the earth as a witness for Himself. Israel was God's witness of old—a witness of THE ONE TRUE GOD, in contrast to the many gods of the nations; but the children of Israel, the Jews, utterly broke down and failed in all their responsibility, giving up the true God for idols, and at last rejecting JEHOVAH their GOD come in grace, as *their MESSIAH and KING*, in the PERSON OF JESUS, the SON OF GOD. Therefore Israel is set aside under judgment by God for the time being.

God then turned to the Gentiles, and has set up a Gentile Assembly, or Church, for a testimony for Himself upon the earth. It is called in Scripture "THE HOUSE OF GOD, which is THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth." And its testimony is, "Without controversy

¹ Job xxxiii. 27, 28.

² 1 John i. 9.

great is the mystery of godliness : GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”¹

In connection therefore with this aspect of the Church, viz., its responsibility, the Apostle Paul says, “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”² The foundation upon which Christianity is established is Christ Himself, and no other foundation can be laid ; therefore whatever is built is built upon this foundation. “But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” *Herein is responsibility.* “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man’s work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”³

Here we get the character of the materials that would be, and have been, built upon this foundation—gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; these materials have been built into the building by the workmen ; but every man’s work will be made manifest, and the fire of God’s judgment shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If it cannot stand the fire, it will be consumed ; if it does, it will abide. Wood, hay, and stubble will surely be burnt up ; but gold, silver, and precious stones will remain. Therefore, “If any man’s work abide which he hath built there-

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

² 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."¹

Note here it is man's work—that which has been done by man in connection with Christianity since it became an established system on the earth, be it good or bad. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward, that is, a good workman with good work will get his reward.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire." Here, again, we have a good workman, but bad work; he himself is saved, but his work is burned up; he did not do his work with God. This is all very simple.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."²

Here we have another workman, who defiles the temple of God, an unconverted man, who takes a position in the professing Church as a minister or workman, but not really saved himself; his work is therefore bad, as well as himself, and he meets with destruction.

What gave rise to the Apostle writing in this way was, that failure was already creeping into the Church at Corinth. One was saying, "I am of Paul," another, "I am of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ," and there was "envying, strife and division," so that Paul asks, "Is Christ divided?" He solemnly tells them to take heed to what they are doing, for everything will be tried and tested by the fire of judg-

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15.

² 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

ment. To say "I am of Paul" and "I am of Apollos" is to deny the unity of the body of Christ! to deny that we are all ONE in Christ Jesus! Therefore he says, "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." The foundation is Christ. Man's work (which should be true Christianity) in connection therewith which is built upon the foundation will be manifested, and abide or be burnt up.

Now, if we look around, it is plain enough that the professing Church as a testimony set up upon the earth by God and for God has failed, as all other testimonies have.

What was creeping into the Church at Corinth is *full blown to-day*. One says I am of A, and another, I am of B, I belong to the body of C, I belong to the body of D; and if the Apostle were here, he would say, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" Was A crucified for you? Were ye baptized in the name of B? "By one Spirit are we all baptized into *one body*." Why say you belong to another body, which is not the body of Christ? And the Apostle would further say, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."¹

What characterizes the professing Church to-day shows that it is still in its infancy, it is but a babe, it has not yet entered into God's thoughts and purposes. Alas! it learns from science instead of the Word of God. It boasts of the wonderful advances it has made, of the light of this nineteenth century. It is getting

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

too wise, and receiving so much light from the discoveries of science, that it needs not to be instructed by God's Word; in fact, it has found out that all who have gone before have been quite mistaken in believing the Bible to be the *inspired* WORD OF GOD.

In confirmation of these remarks I will now show *from* THE BIBLE that the very state of the professing Church to-day is all foretold plainly and simply there, and what must be the doom of the Church which *rejects* CHRIST and GOD'S WORD.

The Church learns from the world to-day. What is science but worldly wisdom? Hear what God says: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."¹

Christianity had its commencement in the world as an established system by the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus, sowing *good seed* in the field—the world; for He says: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field." "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man: the field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom." "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." "The tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil." "But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow *good seed* in thy field?

¹ 1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

from *whence then* hath it *tares*? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." "The harvest is the end of the world (or this age); and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."¹ This is the parable and explanation of the tares of the field given by the Lord Himself.

Hear another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."² Leaven characterizes *evil*, that which *corrupts*; it has entered in a *deceitful* way into *Christianity*, and will go on until all is leavened, that is, *all corrupted*. I need not quote further. The Lord plainly showed here that Christianity as a system upon the earth would become a *mixed system*, having in it that which is *good* and *bad*, "*wheat*" and "*tares*." Is not this manifested to-day? The Lord also stated that the *evil* which *corrupts* would

¹ Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43.

² Matt. xiii. 33.

spread, until *Christianity* as a *system* would become a *corrupt system*.

Christianity as a system embraces the whole of Christendom, and is connected with Gentiles; the Jews, having been set aside by God because of their unbelief, have become a testimony to the severity of God's judgments; but *Gentiles* stand *by faith*, and if they give up the knowledge of God revealed in Christ, God manifested in the flesh, *they also* will fall under *the severity of the judgment of God*.¹

The Lord likened the kingdom of heaven also to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. The wise had oil in their vessels with their lamps, but the foolish took no oil with them.

This is what characterized Christianity at the first: those that embraced it went forth to meet the Bridegroom. No doubt some of them were truly converted, and others were not; some had received the Holy Ghost through faith in the Lord Jesus, others had only the lamp of profession. *But* the Bridegroom tarried, and they *all* slumbered and slept; *then*, "while men slept," the enemy sowed the tares. It was in a deceitful way that the leaven of evil was introduced into the three measures of meal, and darkness set in—spiritual darkness—so that the servants said in their hearts, "The Lord delayeth His coming," and they began to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken. We have but to read the history of the professors of Christianity to see how all this became positively true in *course of time*, and the *state of Christendom* became one of *midnight darkness*, and

¹ See Rom. xi.

there was no thought of the Bridegroom's return, for the virgins *all slumbered and slept*. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone (or going) out." The midnight cry has gone forth, the virgins have arisen and trimmed their lamps, and many mere professors of Christianity have found that their lamps are going out, getting more and more dim, no oil to feed them. The wise have oil (the Holy Ghost) in their vessels with their lamps; they are ready to meet the Bridegroom; but they have no oil to spare, each one has the Spirit of God dwelling in him for himself, and all must obtain it from the same source. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."¹ The foolish virgins go to buy the oil. "And while they *went to buy*, the Bridegroom came; and they that *were ready went in with Him to the marriage*: and the door was shut." The coming of the Bridegroom is the next thing, because midnight is past. The cry "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" has been made and heard, and the virgins have arisen and trimmed their lamps, and now are simply waiting for the Bridegroom, and it will soon be said "the Bridegroom came."

Now, this may have a broader application than simply to the Church. It may not apply directly to it, because it is connected with the kingdom of heaven; nevertheless, it *does apply directly to this dispensation*.

The foolish virgins say, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" the answer is, "I know you not. Watch, therefore,

¹ Rom. viii. 9.

for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."¹

In connection with the history of the professing Church, the Apostle Paul said, "*I know this*, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall *men* arise, *speaking perverse things*, to draw away disciples after them."²

Jude said, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should *earnestly contend for the faith* which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men *crept in unawares*, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."³

This is how the evil commenced in the professing Church. Grievous wolves entered in, not sparing the flock; men arose speaking perverse things; certain men crept in unawares, and the leavening work commenced.

Signs of the last days were visible before the *Apostles passed off the scene*, and that which would characterize the *last days* in the professing Church is made known to us by the HOLY GHOST *through the Apostles*, before they departed to be with Christ.

"Now THE SPIRIT *speaketh expressly*, that in the latter times *some shall depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons); speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created

¹ Matt. xxv. 1-13.

² Acts xx. 29, 30.

³ Jude 3, 4.

to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For *every* creature of GOD is good, and *nothing to be refused*, if it be received with *thanksgiving*: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.”¹

“*This know also*, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”²

“For the time *will come* when *they will not endure sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”³

“There shall come in *the last days scoffers*, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”⁴ “*But, beloved, remember ye the words* which were spoken before of *the Apostles of our LORD JESUS CHRIST*; how that *they told you there should be mockers in the last time*, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, *having not the Spirit*.”⁵

What Scripture states in the passages I have quoted is manifested in the professing Church to-day! A great mass of professors of Christianity have *turned from the*

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 1-5.

² 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

⁵ Jude 17-19.

truth, given up the written WORD OF GOD, and turned to fables, to listen to the imagination of man's heart, which, God says, "is only evil continually."

It is *higher criticism*, which robs the Church of its foundation, and turns the heart from the truth, leaving it to the will of him who has the largest imagination, and the most presumptuous, and says, "Our standard of authority is the conscience enlightened by the Holy Ghost." What is this but the imagination of man's heart? Who can tell whether a man's conscience is enlightened by the Holy Ghost? OUR standard of authority, that is, the CHRISTIAN'S, is THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD, and THE HOLY GHOST tells the enlightened conscience by that WORD, in plain language, "If they speak not according to THIS WORD, there is no light in them." Whatever the boast may be of an enlightened conscience by the Holy Ghost, no conscience is enlightened but by the WORD OF GOD, that is, THE BIBLE! "For the entrance of THY WORD giveth LIGHT." And it effectually works, by the Holy Ghost, in the hearts of those *who believe it*.

According to the Scriptures, there are three distinct states of man in the world—spiritual, carnal, and natural, and there is that which characterizes each. They are spoken of in 1 Cor. ii., iii.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; comparing spiritual

things with spiritual. But the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But *he* that is *spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. And I, brethren, could not speak unto *you* as unto spiritual, but as unto *carnal*, even as unto *babes in Christ*.¹

Now let us look at that which characterizes each, and I will ask the reader to bear with me. "He that is *spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." The *spiritual man* is one who has the HOLY SPIRIT dwelling in him; as being a *true believer* in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, he has not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; and he knows the things of God by the Spirit of God, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, that is, by THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD, comparing in *that* WORD spiritual things with spiritual. *This should be the normal state of every Christian.*

The *carnal man* is one who has *not risen up to his privileges* as a CHRISTIAN, as stated above, or he may *perhaps have given them up*, as the Church at Corinth were doing; the *carnal* form associations and parties, which do not express what is really true of Christians as members of "the body" of Christ. The *professing Church in its outward manifestation to-day is CARNAL*; it has formed numerous sects, parties, and divisions, which practically deny *the oneness of the Church*

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 11-16; iii. 1.

of God, which is the body of Christ. There is envying, strife, and division in the professing Church to-day, *everyone forming his own association according to his own idea*, and to those who did this in the Apostle's day, he said, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" And a carnal man is but a babe in Christ.

The *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. This is an unconverted man; in his natural state he simply rejects the things of God as revealed in the Word of God.

We have, therefore, among professing Christians to-day, the spiritual, the carnal, and the natural state. Those who bow to the authority of the Scriptures, and by the Holy Ghost enter into God's thoughts and purposes in Christ as therein revealed; those who form their own thoughts and opinions, and go to the Scriptures to establish them; and those who do not receive the Scriptures as the Word of the living God.

It is well known by those who bow to the authority of the Scriptures that we have in the Revelation a *prophetic history of the Church in its responsibility*. The Lord is seen in the first chapter in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, in the attitude of judging. It plainly states that the seven candlesticks are seven Churches. The Son of Man, the Lord Jesus, is clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; His head and His hairs are white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters.

He is in the midst of the Church, taking notice of all that is there.

"I know thy works" is repeated seven times, once to each of the seven Churches in Asia. To Ephesus the Lord said: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Here the Church falls from its dignity, deserting Him to whom she owes everything. "Remember, therefore (says the Lord), from whence thou art fallen and repent."

What characterizes Smyrna is "tribulation and poverty," but there is devotedness, and they are encouraged to fear none of those things which they shall suffer, and be faithful unto death, and they shall receive a crown of life.

To Pergamos: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." This is association with the world. They held fast the Lord's name and did not deny His faith, but they dwelt "where Satan's seat is," and they left off judging evil; they had those there who held false doctrine; they are called to repent.

First, the Church left its first love, then persecution set in, which always results in blessing to the faithful; then the Church loses its separate character, gets associated with the world, and the Church and State become united powers.

In Thyatira worse evils come in, but the Spirit says, "I know thy works," and, "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will

cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

What we have here characterizes Romanism, and God had a controversy with the Romish Church at the time of the Reformation, and He gave her space to repent, and she repented not. She is rearing up her dignified head to-day just as if nothing had happened.

To Sardis: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God." What followed Romanism was Protestantism, and this is God's estimate of Protestantism; and may we not ask, What life is there in Protestantism to-day? Are its works perfect? No, it has not wholly given up Romanism. Surely it is manifest that it has a name to live, but is dead. Protestantism is another aspect that characterizes the professing Church to-day.

To Philadelphia: "I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." This is what is really of God in the professing Church, and embraces every true child of God—all who have been by the one Spirit baptized into the "one body." This, therefore, is another aspect that characterizes the professing Church to-day.

To Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot:

so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." That which we have presented here is *no heart for Christ*. The professing Church is boasting of what it has, but Christ Himself is outside. "Behold, *I stand at the door, and knock*," says the Lord; it is really rejection of Christ by the professing Church, therefore Christ will reject it, He will not own it as His—"I will spue thee out of My mouth." Luke-warmness or no heart for Christ is another aspect that characterizes the professing Church to-day.

It will be noticed that, while we get a general idea of the character of the professing Church in its outward manifestation in these four last churches, and of the perfect knowledge that the Lord has of all that is going on, He being in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, He does not only speak of the evil that is there, which must come under His judgment, but what He can approve of He does, and He holds out every encouragement to the overcomer, that is, to the one who overcomes the difficulties that are present in the professing Church at this present time.

It will also be noticed that the coming of the Lord is brought prominently forward as that which is *the very next thing to come to pass*.

We will look, therefore, a little at these two things in detail—that is, the encouragement to the overcomer, and the Lord's coming in connection therewith. In this aspect of things the individual is addressed, so that *everyone* who names the name of the Lord is *expected to be faithful to his LORD and MASTER*, notwithstanding the difficulties that surround him.

“ But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have hold fast *till I come*. And he that *overcometh*, and keepeth My words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers ; even as I received of My Father. And I will give *him the Morning Star*. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.”

Romanism, as we have seen, is that which is presented in Thyatira. “ Unto you I say,” that is, the angel of the assembly, “ and unto the rest . . . as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak,” that is, the Romish doctrine, and the depths of Satanic power which characterize Romanism. “ I will put upon you no other burden.” The Lord, ever gracious and mindful of the weakness of His saints, will not add to their present burdens and difficulties, “ but that which *ye have hold fast till I come*. And he that *overcometh*, and keepeth My words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations,” etc. Now, this is just what the Papacy has ever sought, not only power over the souls of men, but “ power over the nations.” It has had it, and no doubt will have it again, but only to meet its final doom ! But the overcomer will reign over the nations with Christ, and sit with Him upon His throne ; yea, more than this, “ I will give unto him the *Morning Star*.” “ I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star.”

Jesus will give Himself to the overcomer just as the midnight darkness passes and the Morning Star shines. Blessed prospect! Let us, dear fellow Christians, overcome and keep His works unto the end, watch, and hold fast *till He come*.

“If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.” In Protestantism, which Sardis represents, there are a few who have not defiled their garments, although, as a system, it has but a name to live, and is dead! But “he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and *I will not blot out his name* out of the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.” This is in contrast to that which is manifested in Protestantism.* As a system, it is divided into numerous sects, each one having its own doctrines as the ground of communion, and names are enrolled in the “Church books”;

* Every thoughtful man would own that the Reformation was of God; it came at a time when the darkness and superstition of the Romish Church were so great that men were forced to turn to the plain written Word of God, which brought light, liberty and blessing, and dispelled the darkness of Rome. The cause, therefore, of the Reformation was the going back to what was written in the Scriptures, and this was so manifest to Rome that the Pope had the Bible burnt! Protestantism is a system that has developed out of the Reformation, and, as such, has degenerated; in fact, those who, in the professing Church, now say the Scriptures are not the inspired Word of God—or, in other language, say, “Hath God said?”—are the children of the martyrs who shed their blood for what God has said in His Word. The question is therefore, Which is worse, to burn the Bible, or deny it?

but it is a blessed thing to have our names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and to overcome the difficulties that are presented. To him that overcometh the Lord Jesus says, "I will *not blot out his name* out of the *Book of Life*, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." This is enough for any soul that is satisfied with the Lord's own words. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The Lord presents Himself to Philadelphia as "He that is holy, and He that is true," in contrast to all that is unholy and untrue in the professing Church to-day. He knows all that is going on. There are those who say that "they are Jews, and are not, but do lie"—that is, those who lay claim to the promises made to Israel, but have no title to them. But amidst all the confusion manifested in the professing Church, "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."¹

But the question is, If the judgment of God is to come upon that which is not of God in the professing Church, how will the righteous escape? for "judgment must begin at the house of God!" If the Church in its responsibility refuses to judge that which is evil in its midst, God must take the matter into His own hands, and execute judgment Himself. The professing Church is made up of two parties: one of true Christians—those who are really children of God, having redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins; they are one body in Christ; the other, of Christians by profession only, who have never been truly converted, not having accepted Christ by faith.

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

In the address to this Church, the Lord speaks to the former, and says, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Another translation reads thus, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial which is *about to come* upon the whole habitable world to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly," etc.

What is spoken of here as "the hour of temptation," or "hour of trial," is known in Scripture as "THE GREAT TRIBULATION" which is about to come upon the world to try those that dwell upon the earth; and so great will be the affliction of these days, and the severity of God's judgments in providence, that unless they are shortened, no flesh will be saved, but for the elect's* sake they will be shortened.

The true Church of God, the body of Christ—that is, all who have been baptized by the Holy Ghost into the "one body"—will be taken away from the earth before this time of tribulation comes; and this is held out by our blessed Lord as an encouragement to the hearts of His own loved ones who have but little strength, but have not denied His Name. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial or tribulation. I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown"; and we have seen how plainly Scripture tells us how

* "The elect" spoken of here are the godly Jews, a remnant of Israel who will be looking for the coming of their Messiah and King. See next chapter.

this will come to pass. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."¹

This will end the true Christian's earthly pilgrimage; it will end for ever his connection with the old creation. He belongs to the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem! Well may we encourage one another to "hold fast" and "overcome." "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and My new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

From that which is pleasant, and makes the heart of the Christian rejoice, in anticipation of all that which is set before him, we have now to turn to Laodicea, that which presents the awful state of the professing Church at this present moment—lukewarmness, no heart for Christ! And I ask the reader to bear with me while we look around, and see what is presented by the Church to the world—the Church, which is God's light-bearer in the world; but, alas! the Church which says, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." But what has it? Its "plays," its "choirs," its "concerts," its "music," its "bazaars,"

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 16-18.

its "fairs," its "pleasure parties," etc. In fact, it has got what belongs to the world, and has need of nothing from God; it only needs *the world's funds* to keep it going! Such is the outward picture of the professing Church. In connection with these things the Apostle Paul said that in the "last days" professors of Christianity would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." I ask, Can Christ identify Himself with these things? and has He no feeling in connection with what is going on to-day in the Church? Indeed He has! He says, "I would that thou wert cold or hot." He would have it manifest one way or the other. Is the Church for the world or for Christ? It is lukewarm; it does not professedly belong to the world, but it is worldly in its character; it is between the two—the world and Christ. Who will own it? Will Christ? No, He will not; for He says, "*So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I WILL SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.*" He

that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."¹

The Lord Jesus Christ has *not yet* given up the professing Church, although He stands outside the door and knocks. He will by-and-by *disown it, spue it out of His mouth!* But there are those still in it whom He loves, His own; and He calls for *individual faithfulness*, that the *Christian* should hear His voice in His Word, and open the door, and blessing will follow; and the overcomer shall sit *with HIM*, when HE *sits on HIS OWN THRONE*.

The very next thing that is to take place, and which will change God's ways with man again, is THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS FOR HIS CHURCH—the Church which HE *has built upon the ROCK*, and which the gates of hell cannot prevail against. When this has taken place, when every true believer in the Lord Jesus shall have been taken from earth to heaven, then, and not until then, will the Lord reject the professing Church, which has utterly broken down in its responsibility, and has proved to be a COMPLETE FAILURE as a LIGHT-BEARER FOR GOD TO THE WORLD.

It will *then* develop in its apostasy, and have a name written on its forehead, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."² She will become *then* "the woman" that will be "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication"; and she will become "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of

¹ Read Rev. i.-iii.

² Rev. xvii. 5.

Jesus." She will "sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns," for "the woman . . . is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

All Christendom will be united, under the woman that will be arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, in that day. Her glory will be great, but her destruction will be greater! "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." And He will call upon the nations to "reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city, Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen. . . . The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and

scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.”¹

This is the end and the judgment of God upon Gentile responsibility in connection with Christianity; it *will come to pass* in “THE GREAT TRIBULATION,” from which the true Church of God will be taken away before it comes.

What I have just written is not pleasant but painful, very painful; but one must be faithful, and there is no necessity for the reader to come into the judgment of that day, for the Lord still says, “Verily, verily, I say unto *you*, He that heareth My WORD, and believeth on Him that *sent* Me, hath everlasting life, and *shall not come into condemnation (judgment)*; but is passed from death unto life.”²

¹ Read Rev. xvii., xviii.

² John v. 24.

VII.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL. DISARMAMENT AND BLESSING OF THE NATIONS. THE END OF THE WORLD, AND THE ETERNAL STATE.

WHEN God has gathered out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name, and has accomplished His eternal purpose and counsels in connection with the Church, having glorified it with Christ in heaven, He will then turn His attention *again* to ISRAEL, *and will accomplish that which concerns the JEWS*. This is plainly stated in Acts xv. The Apostle Peter said, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe." Then the Apostle James said, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them* a people for His Name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My Name is called, saith the*

Lord, who doeth all these things. *Known unto GOD are all His works from the beginning of the world.*"¹

The question, therefore, that naturally arises is, How will all this be brought about? The answer is, *It is made known to us in THE BIBLE*, and it should be of the *deepest interest to every heart that loves the LORD, because it concerns HIS GLORY and the maintaining of HIS RIGHTS in a world where He has already been rejected and crucified.*

This rejection makes it necessary for God to raise two questions with the inhabitants of this world. First, with THE JEWS: How is it that you have rejected and crucified your MESSIAH and KING, when He came to fulfil the promises? Second, with THE GENTILES: How is it you went hand in hand with the Jews in rejecting and murdering the Son of God, when the Father sent His Son to be the SAVIOUR of the world?

These are solemn questions, but questions that must be raised and divinely settled before peace can be established upon the earth in righteousness. Peace is what the nations or great powers are trying to maintain; but righteousness is not a principle upon which they act. What people say to-day is, We want a stable Government that can maintain peace; and very soon such will be found, and they will say, "Peace and safety," vainly thinking they have secured all they want, and that man can live happily without God.

But the Apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Ghost, says, "But of the times and the seasons, *brethren*, ye have *no need* that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief

¹ Acts xv. 7-18.

in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”¹

“THE DAY OF THE LORD” is the next dispensation; the present dispensation is THE DAY OF GRACE, for *now grace reigns “through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*² The present is a day in which God has revealed Himself according to all that He is; therefore without distinction of nationality, without respect of persons, without raising any conditions whatever, He graciously pardons any and every sinner that comes to Him as such through the blood of Christ, believing that Jesus is the Son of God!

This present dispensation is so *positively a day of grace* that an infidel, although he may defy God in a most blasphemous way, may not immediately be overtaken with judgment.

But this day of grace will not last for ever, *for the day of the Lord is at hand.*

The day of the Lord is when GOD *will openly manifest HIMSELF* as a GOD OF JUDGMENT, and then as JEHOVAH—THE MOST HIGH GOD, POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH—will reign in righteousness over the whole earth; and it will then be manifested that GOD is none other than JESUS HIMSELF! for all the *fulness* of the GODHEAD has been *pleased to dwell in HIM BODILY.*

The purpose of God in the Creation was that man should have dominion over the works of His hands; but the first man failed, and brought all into confusion and ruin through his sin, and the whole creation came under the power of Satan. But that the purpose of

¹ 1 Thess. v. 1-3.

² Rom. v. 21.

God should be accomplished, and His glory maintained, the Son of God comes into the creation itself, and becomes MAN; and as such restores to God His glory, accomplishes redemption, sets the power of Satan aside, and will bring the whole creation into order and blessing. This we have seen in detail in the foregoing pages, and it can be known and understood now by the Church, through faith in the written Word of God; the Church having the mind of Christ, and possessing the Holy Ghost.

But God is about to make this known openly to the whole world, by bringing in "THE DAY OF THE LORD!"

We have seen that God "hath purposed in Himself that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."¹ The Church will be the centre of the heavenly glory because Christ is the Head of His body, the Church, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."² Israel will be the centre of the earthly glory because "JEHOVAH'S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."³

To the Church God has made Himself known as "FATHER"; to Israel God has made Himself known as "JEHOVAH." He is Father in relationship with Christians; *as children of God*, their home and destined place is the FATHER'S HOUSE *in heaven!* He is Jehovah in relationship with Israel; *as the people of God*, their home and destined place is PALESTINE, with JERUSALEM as its centre.

The blessings that belong to Christians are heavenly; the blessings that belong to Israel are earthly. All this

¹ Eph. i. 10.

² Eph. i. 23.

³ Deut. xxxii. 9.

is of deep interest, and gives us to understand God's ways with man.

Now in connection with Israel—that is, THE JEWS—there are promises that belong to them which have never been fulfilled—unconditional promises that God made to Abraham, the fulfilment of which only depends upon what God is in Himself as a faithful and unchanging God. “For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.”¹

The promises made to Abraham embrace two characters of blessing—spiritual and heavenly, national and earthly—that is, “celestial” and “terrestrial.” The spiritual blessings are those that are being dispensed in the present dispensation, through the promised seed of Abraham, which is CHRIST, and through faith in HIM believers are brought into the family of God, where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be Christ's*, then are ye *Abraham's seed*, and heirs according to the promise.”² Christ Himself is the Heir, and believers are joint-heirs with Him.

But God made promises concerning the natural seed of Abraham, and said to him, “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. . . . In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”³

¹ Heb. vi. 13, 14.

² Gal. iii. 28, 29.

³ Gen. xv.

We have seen how God has acted with the Jews because of their unbelief, and that the Lord said to them when here, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."¹ **DESOLATE INDEED IS THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL!** Scattered among all nations under God's chastening hand, the Jews await him who will come in his own name—that is, the Antichrist—whom they will receive, and manifest their rebellion and apostasy against the God of their fathers for the last time; but for this they will return to their own land in unbelief, when they will pass through that terrible hour of trial which will come upon the whole world. To the Jews it will be the "hour of Jacob's trouble," for God, notwithstanding all that man is and has been, has acted in perfect goodness towards man ever since the Fall; but there is a moment close at hand when God will withhold His goodness, and the power that restrains the wickedness of man will also be taken away, and the whole world will be plunged into distress and anguish, because it will be entirely under the power of Satan.

This period is called in Scripture "**THE GREAT TRIBULATION**," and it precedes the day of the Lord. The tribulation that is to come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth will be caused by the upsetting of the physical and moral order of things as established by God.

The powers that be are ordained of God, and He is with the governments of this world in maintaining order. Government is now in the hands of the

¹ Luke xiii. 35.

Gentiles. God also does good, and gives us "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."¹

Ever since the Flood God has, in faithfulness to His covenant (the token of which is the bow in the cloud), given "seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night,"² and "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."³ And although God will not destroy every living thing again by water, yet His judgments will be upon the earth, for man has *not* appreciated the goodness of God; and the very way in which man acts will bring in this time of trouble, when the restraining of the lawlessness of man by God on the one hand, and the maintaining power with the governments of the world on the other, will be withdrawn; and there will be pestilence, famine, and earthquakes, wars and bloodshed, for peace will be taken from the earth.⁴

But God, ever faithful, remembers His elect, His beloved people—beloved for their fathers' sakes. They are under His chastening hand, it is true, about to be passed through the fire; but a remnant shall be saved. The angel having the seal of God will cry, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."⁵ For "it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die;

¹ Acts xiv. 17.

² Gen. viii. 22.

³ Matt. v. 45.

⁴ Rev. vi.

⁵ Rev. vii. 3, 4.

but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”¹

Thus we see that before the tribulation sets in God remembers His covenant and the promises made to the fathers, and He has sealed for *preservation through the trial*, and *salvation at the end*, those who shall be saved; for “though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a *short work* will the Lord make *upon the earth*.”²

The tribulation, which embraces the last period of Daniel’s “seventy weeks,” is the time when the wickedness of man will reach its height, and the “man of sin” will be revealed, “the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God . . . the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him (the man of sin) whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”³

¹ Zech. xiii. 8, 9.

² Rom. ix. 27, 28.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 3-10.

This spirit of lawlessness already works, but the Spirit of God, being present upon the earth, restrains the wickedness of man. But when the Church is taken away, then the Holy Ghost will go too, and the restraining power of God will be removed ; *then man will give full vent to his wickedness, and there will be no power on earth that will stop his lawlessness !*

The immediate sphere of this Satanic rebellion will be Jerusalem, where the king, the false prophet, the man of sin, the Antichrist will be ; but he will be *there* in *alliance* with the head of the great Gentile power that will then exist, of which power the Apostle John wrote when God gave him a revelation of these things. And he said, " I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion : and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed : and *all the world* wondered after the beast. . . . And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth ; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake like a dragon. And he exerciseth *all the power of the first beast before him*, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the *first beast*, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast ;

saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”¹

Here we have two distinct individuals. To the first beast “power was given over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations”; he is a king! the head of the great Gentile powers that will exist at this time, and all the world will wonder after him; he will make war with the saints—that is, he will be opposed to that which is really of God on the earth. The second beast has two horns like a lamb, but he speaks like a dragon; he will be the head of the Jews at this time, “the king (that) shall do according to his will,” but he will cause all who dwell on the earth to worship the first beast and his image, and will deceive all who receive his mark or his number; and although religious, he is just as much opposed to that which is of God, because it is “Anti-christ,” and the two combined do not go beyond what man is, because the number of the beast is the number of a man, which is SIX, SIX, SIX, a threefold

¹ Rev. xiii.

character of evil: HUMAN! RELIGIOUS!! and SATANIC!!!

Daniel has spoken of these two individuals, who, being in alliance with each other, are Antichrist. The second beast, with horns like a lamb, but who speaks like a dragon, will exercise all the power of the first beast, which power will be satanic, for the dragon will give him his power, and the second beast will represent the first beast in Palestine; and "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:*" and in the midst

* It should read, "Confirm a covenant with *the* many for one week." This is the unfulfilled period of Daniel's seventy weeks, weeks of years, seventy times seven years, 490 years. This is well known, because 483 years had been fulfilled to the letter at the time the promised Messiah came. The prophecy runs thus: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (Daniel's people, the Jews) and upon thy holy city (Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing (margin): and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week" (Dan. ix. 24-27).

It is not my object to unfold Scripture, or teach, but just to quote passages of Scripture, placing them in their various connections. But the above seems to want a little explanation, so that this part can be better understood. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people." Here weeks are weeks of years, 490 years; "thy people" are the Jews. From the going forth of the commandment there would be seven weeks; that is, forty-nine years; then, to the coming of the Messiah the Prince, threescore and two weeks; that is, 434 years, making 483 years when the promised Messiah came to make an end of sins and reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, that the prophecy

of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator."¹

"Many," or "the many," spoken of here are the mass of Jews who will have returned to their own land in unbelief, and when there, the lamblike beast, who will turn out to be "the false prophet," will come in

¹ Dan. ix. 27, margin.

and vision might be sealed up, that is, fulfilled, and He the most Holy anointed.

All this was positively done in faithfulness on the part of God. The Messiah came, as we have seen, and said, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand"; but from the very first He was rejected. He rode into Jerusalem, according to the prophecy, as the King of Israel coming in the name of the Lord, but instead of being anointed as the most Holy, He was crowned with thorns and crucified, and the Jews said, "We have no king but Cæsar."

It is true His death was needed to make atonement and reconciliation for the sins of the people. This He did, but returned to heaven as the rejected Messiah; then the Holy Ghost came down, and through the Apostles charged the nation of the Jews with the murder of their Messiah; but He gave them credit for doing it in ignorance, and then called upon them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out, and that the times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord; and He would send Jesus Christ back again (read Acts iii.). Here the Messiah is presented to the Jews again, in resurrection, when atonement had been made, and all was fully accomplished on the part of God; but they still rejected Him, and closed up their iniquity in stoning Stephen.

The Jews refused to be reconciled; they refused to have their sins blotted out, therefore everlasting righteousness *could not* be brought in, and the most Holy *was not* anointed. Their house, therefore, was left unto them desolate, for their Messiah was cut off, having nothing of the glory of the kingdom, at the end of sixty-nine weeks; for the week that should have brought in everlasting righteousness in fulfilling prophecy was cancelled. This leaves, therefore, "one week," or seven

his own name and present himself to the Jews. Him they will receive, according to the word of the Lord Jesus: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."¹ And he will make a covenant with *the* many for "one week," and in the midst of the week he will break his agreement, and cause the sacrifice to cease, and will set up the image of the beast for

¹ John v. 43.

years, yet to be fulfilled; for time ceased to be counted when the Jews rejected their Messiah, and their house was left unto them desolate. This left them in the hands of their enemies, and the people of the prince that came destroyed their city and the sanctuary, and there was a flood, and, at the end of the war, desolations. This was done by the Romans under Titus at the destruction of Jerusalem; and the Jews have been left desolate ever since, but are now stirring themselves to go back to their own land, when the latter part of this remarkable prophecy will be fulfilled.

The present dispensation of God's grace, which the foregoing circumstances made a way for God to introduce, has no limit, because we do not know how long the house of Israel will be left desolate. Therefore "ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh"; and no calculations can tell us, the Father having kept this secret. But we do know He may come at any moment: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

There remains, then, one week or seven years yet to run its course before the prophecies can be fulfilled, and everlasting righteousness brought in. These seven years will be a time of trouble; but the first half will be only the beginning of sorrows, the last half will be characterized by the presence of Satan upon the earth, for "Woe unto the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. xii.). It is when the devil is cast out of heaven, and the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel is set up in the holy place, that there will be great tribulation, the time of which is spoken of in various ways in the Scriptures, as "twelve hundred and sixty days," "forty-two months," and "a time, and times, and half a time," all meaning the same period—three and a half years.

all to worship, and those who will not worship this image will be killed.

It is most interesting and remarkable that the Lord Jesus has left instructions Himself how His own faithful ones must act in this trying day, saying, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :) *then* let them which be *in JUDEA flee into the mountains* : let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house : neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes . . . for then shall be GREAT TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."¹

Just at this moment there will be sharp persecution ; all must worship the image of the beast or be killed ; there will be only just time to get away, and they are to pray that their flight be not in winter or on the Sabbath day. The Lord is over all, and will manage all for His own elect, and those who "endure to the end shall be saved," and the days shall be shortened for their sakes. "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."²

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after

¹ Matt. xxiv. 15-22.

² Matt. xxiv. 24.

those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."¹ It must be remembered that all this will come when God leaves man to himself, and all this distress and sorrow comes through the wickedness of man—man led on by Satan to do his own will.

Everything that God has committed to man he has corrupted, and nothing more so than Christianity, for, instead of having what God has made known simply in His Word, man has introduced all manner of inventions, thereby making it a corrupt system. It is therefore *at this time of TRIBULATION* that it comes into remembrance before God for judgment, for it has become "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Romanism, as a system, is a little picture of it; but all the theological systems of men will then be united in one vast religious power positively opposed to God.

Now the way in which this antichristian system will meet its doom will be by the great Gentile powers, with the beast, with its seven heads and ten horns, stamping it out of existence. For "the ten horns which thou sawest (God said to John) are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. . . . These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful. . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest upon (and) the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn

¹ Luke xxi. 25, 26.

her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."¹

And all who have committed fornication, and have profited and made themselves rich by this corrupt system, will "bewail her and lament for her when they shall see the smoke of her burning," and, "standing afar off for the fear of her torment," shall say, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come . . . thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."²

Although God uses the Gentile nations that are under the power of the beast to execute judgment upon the whore, and to stamp out the existence of Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, yet these nations themselves are opposed to God; for "these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings." Now, the centre of the possessions of the Lamb, the Lord of lords and the King of kings, is Jerusalem, the holy city, and it is to this centre that the nations will turn their special attention at this time. Already the eyes of the nations are turned there, and THE HOLY LAND troubles the Great Powers even now; but soon the nations will gather together around Jerusalem, for God has said, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For *I will gather all nations against JERUSALEM to battle; and the city shall be taken,*"³ etc.

All this will increase the troubles of Jerusalem, but it will be the last of God's judgments against His people,

¹ Rev. xvii.

² Read Rev. xvi.-xviii.

³ Zech. xiv. 1, 2.

the Jews, before their final deliverance comes ; for the Lord said, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the SON OF MAN coming in the clouds of heaven with power and GREAT GLORY.*"¹ "*Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations.*"² God showed all this in a vision to John, who said, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and He that sat upon him was called FAITHFUL and TRUE, and in righteousness doth HE JUDGE and make war. . . . And out of HIS mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it HE should smite the nations : and HE shall rule them with a rod of iron : and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. . . . And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against HIM that sat on the horse, and against HIS army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth : and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."³ "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."⁴

¹ Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.² Zech. xiv. 3.³ Rev. xix.⁴ Zech. xii. 9.

This, then, is the *destruction* of the confederate Gentile nations gathered together under the beast, the head of the then existing nations. For "power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," and *he himself* is cast alive into a lake of fire *with the false prophet*! Solemn and awful moment! But what else can be done with *those who oppose GOD and rise up in opposition to all HIS proposed plans of blessing for man?* *The false prophet* deceived those that dwelt upon the earth when he *opposed and exalted himself* above all that is called God or that is worshipped, *and as God sat in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.*¹ And the beast, the head of the Gentile power, went hand-in-hand with him.

But it must be remembered that when the *true* PROPHET came, of whom Moses spake, "both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together";² and they crucified Him. HE *now returns* and judges both the apostate Jews and Gentiles.

At this time also shall Satan be bound a thousand years, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season.³

At this time will come to pass *the touching scene* which will take place *between the* LORD JESUS CHRIST and the remnant of godly Jews, who will have been brought through the great tribulation, and will have been expecting their Messiah.

The Holy Ghost says by the mouth of the prophet,

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 4.

² Acts iv. 27.

³ Rev. xx. 1-3.

the Lord's "feet shall stand *in that day* upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem."¹

The Lord said when here to the Jews, "Ye shall not see Me, *until the time come when YE SHALL SAY, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.*"²

It must be remembered that, although time rolls on, *facts* do not alter: the Jews' Messiah has already been here, and has been rejected, leaving, as we have seen, one week or seven years of prophetic Jewish history still to be fulfilled. When, therefore, the circumstances above narrated *have become facts* in the history of this world, *then* the seven years will have run their course, and the Lord Jesus, the Jews' Messiah, *will have returned*, and having executed judgment upon His enemies, will bring in "everlasting righteousness" in bringing into actual result all the blessings promised to the Jews, who are God's chosen people, in order that Gentiles may rejoice *with* His people.

The Spirit of God, therefore, will have made a remnant of Jews ready to receive JEHOVAH *their* KING, and just as Joseph made himself known to his brethren, *so will* the LORD JESUS *make* HIMSELF *known to Israel*, for He says, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon ME *whom they have pierced*, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. *In that day* shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem,"³ etc. "And one shall say unto HIM, *What are these wounds in Thy hands?*

Zech. xiv. 4.

² Luke xiii. 35.

³ Zech. xii. 10-14.

Then HE shall answer, THOSE with which I was wounded in the house of MY FRIENDS."¹ And they will say as one man, in the language of the Psalmist, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness."²

Yes, it will be but a small remnant of the Jews in their own land, with their hands yet stained with the blood of their Messiah, Who will be *then* in their midst, to WHOM they will say, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O GOD, Thou GOD of my salvation." And the LORD JESUS *will answer them* and say, "Come now, and let us reason together . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."³ "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for MINE OWN sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put Me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against Me. Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches. Yet *now* hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. . . .

¹ Zech. xiii. 6.² Ps. li.³ Isa. i. 18.

Thus saith the LORD the KING OF ISRAEL, and his Redeemer the LORD OF HOSTS: I am the first, and I am the last; and *beside* ME there is *no* GOD. . . . Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant: . . . thou shalt not be forgotten of Me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.

“Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD *hath* REDEEMED JACOB, and GLORIFIED HIMSELF *in* ISRAEL.”¹

Then shall ISRAEL say, “Surely HE *hath* borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But HE was *wounded for our transgressions*, HE was *bruised for our iniquities*: the chastisement of *our peace was upon* HIM; and with HIS *stripes* we are *healed*. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on HIM the iniquity of us all. . . . HE *had done no violence*, neither was *any deceit* in HIS mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, HE shall see HIS *seed*, He shall prolong HIS *days*, and the *pleasure* of the LORD shall prosper in HIS *hand*. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied,”² etc.

It is the *goodness* of GOD that leadeth man to repentance. God manifests His goodness to the remnant of Israel, notwithstanding their sins, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”³ God does

¹ Isa. xliii., xliv.

² Isa. liii.

³ Rom. xi. 29.

not repent of anything He has said He will do in the blessing of mankind.

God has said, "I will bless the house of Israel, I will bless the house of Jacob." And "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? . . . He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them . . . according to *this time* it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!"¹

All the Word of God must be fulfilled! It may take a few thousand years to accomplish and bring into actual result all that God has purposed in connection with this creation, but "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise."² He does not live in the world's passing events, but in His own eternity.

It is in the way of the Scriptures that the Lord Jesus will so touchingly make Himself known to the remnant of the Jews, who will be saved through THE GREAT TRIBULATION, for it is those that endure to the end that shall be saved, and the days will be shortened for their sake.

When this has been done, the Lord having scattered the nations that come up to Jerusalem to battle, He will then gather all His elect people Israel *from the FOUR quarters of the earth*. For "thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have

¹ Num. xxiii. 19-23.

² 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

called thee by thy name ; THOU ART MINE. . . . Fear not : for I am with thee : I will bring thy seed from the EAST, and gather thee from the WEST ; I will say to the NORTH, *Give up* ; and to the SOUTH, *Keep not back* : bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth."¹ "For thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered ; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of *all places* where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and *will bring them to* THEIR OWN LAND, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel,"² etc. "Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, RETURN, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord ; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you : for I *am merciful*, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy GOD.*"³ "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform *that GOOD THING* which I *have* PROMISED unto the *house of Israel* and to the *house of Judah.*"⁴

"*In those days* the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel."⁵ "And I will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and *one KING shall be KING to them all* : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all : neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their

¹ Isa. xliii.² Ezek. xxxiv. 11-13.³ Jer. iii. 12, 13.⁴ Jer. xxxiii. 14.⁵ Jer. iii. 18.

detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions : but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them : so shall they be MY PEOPLE, and I will be THEIR GOD.”¹

“ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a KING shall reign and prosper, and shall execute JUDGMENT and JUSTICE in the earth. In HIS days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely : and *this* is HIS name whereby HE shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; but, THE LORD LIVETH, *which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the NORTH COUNTRY, and from ALL COUNTRIES* whither I had driven them ; and they shall dwell in their own land.”²

Thus we see that God will gather together again at this time the children of Israel, both Judah and Israel—that is, the ten tribes which were scattered among the nations after the kingdom was divided and the two tribes Judah and Benjamin which were in the land when their Messiah first came, but were scattered among the nations after the destruction of Jerusalem, according to the word of the Lord Jesus.

These having been gathered together in their own land, and JEHOVAH their KING being in their midst, who is the LORD their GOD, He will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah *at this time*.

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 22, 23.

² Jer. xxiii. 5-8.

But it is important to see the character of this covenant which is now made so that God, in faithfulness to His word, may fulfil the unconditional covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God promised to bless Abraham and his seed, which He said He would make as the stars of heaven in multitude, *and Abraham believed God*. God said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Some time after God told Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, whom he loved, for a burnt offering. This command was not connected with promise; the promises had already been made. The question was, How far did Abraham believe God? But Abraham's faith was proved by his works, for "when he *was tried* he offered up Isaac . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." This act of obedience delighted the heart of God, therefore He said, "BECAUSE THOU HAST DONE THIS THING . . . in blessing I WILL BLESS THEE," etc. With all reverence it may be said that the honour and faithfulness of God are at stake all the time the Jews are scattered among the nations, notwithstanding the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai, for God did not make this covenant with Israel to disannul the covenant made with Abraham, but to prove to Israel that if they are blessed it *must be for GOD'S own name's sake, and in the sovereignty of HIS LOVE and MERCY*.

Therefore, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although

I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord : but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all *know ME, from the least of them unto the greatest of them*, SAITH THE LORD : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.¹

Here we see that God puts Israel on a new footing altogether. He forgives their iniquities, and will remember their sins no more. It must be remembered that the ground of righteousness upon which God does this is that Christ, the true Messiah and King of Israel, *has "died for that nation."*

The time having arrived, therefore, for God to act according to the promises made to the fathers, He makes, according to His faithful word, this new covenant with the children of Israel, which covenant depends entirely upon what God is in Himself as a FAITHFUL *and* UNCHANGING GOD. It is *not* a covenant of works, but entirely of grace, and whilst He has already given them a law which is "holy, just, and good," He now puts them in a position to keep it, putting it in their inward parts, and writing it on their hearts, at the same time communicating to them a new life. As the Lord said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And, again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."²

¹ Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

² John iii. 3-5.

When these things which I have recorded from the Scriptures take place, God will then fit His own people Israel both to *see* and to *enter into* HIS KINGDOM, which will then be set up *upon the* EARTH. Nicodemus ought to have known all about it, but he did not, although a master or teacher of Israel, for he said, "How can these things be?" He ought to have known, because Ezekiel had spoken of it in various ways. God says by that prophet, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall *dwell in the* LAND that *I gave to your* FATHERS; and ye shall be *My people, and I will be your* GOD," etc.

Again, God said unto the prophet, when He had set him down in the midst of the valley full of dry bones, very many, and very dry, "Son of man, *can these bones live?* And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again He said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, *hear the word of the Lord.* Thus saith the Lord God *unto these bones;* Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye SHALL LIVE. . . . Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, **THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD;** Behold, O My people, I *will* open your graves, and

cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and *ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.*"¹

Thus the LORD OF HOSTS will bless His people Israel, and will sit upon His throne of glory at Jerusalem, and when there will gather all nations before Him; for "When the SON OF MAN shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the KING say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink. . . . Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? . . . And the KING shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these MY brethren, ye have done it unto ME. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat. . . . Then shall they also answer

¹ Read Ezek. xxxvi., xxxvii.

Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it *not to ME*. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”¹

It must be noticed here that this is a *judgment* that takes place on *the EARTH of the living nations*, and they are dealt with according to the way in which they have treated those whom the KING owns as *HIS brethren*, no doubt the Jews; and this is the fulfilment of the first promise made to Abraham. God said to him, “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will *bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee*: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”² Therefore the nations who have treated the Jews with kindness will enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

This is what *God has prepared for man* upon the earth. The others who are cursed because they cursed the nation whom God had blessed go to the place prepared for the devil and his angels, *not the place prepared for man*. GOD *never prepared “everlasting fire” for MAN*; he will find himself in it because of the way he has acted. *Solemn truth!* God ever had it in His heart to bless man, and He will never be satisfied until there is *universal peace established upon the earth*; but it must be *peace in righteousness*, and all the wickedness of

¹ Matt. xxv. 31-46.

² Gen. xii. 2, 3.

man must come to the light for it to be judged and set aside.

Now, this is brought out by God's ways with man, His ways of goodness. But man will not learn righteousness by these ways, therefore we read, "*When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*"¹

God must teach righteousness, and man needs to be taught it. For when Pilate said, "I find no fault in this Man," that is, the Lord Jesus, he condemned Him to death; that was not an act of righteousness. God has raised Him from the dead; this is righteousness. This great unrighteous act of the world and this righteous act of God all the world will be brought to own in God's own time; but *every tongue should confess now that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.*

God will judge the nations, and He will bring those that are spared into blessing through His people Israel. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and HE *will teach us of HIS ways*, and we will walk in His paths: for out of ZION shall go forth *the law*, and the WORD OF THE LORD from JERUSALEM. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

¹ Isa. xxvi. 9.

neither shall they learn war any more.”¹ “But they shall sit every man under his *vine* and under his *fig-tree*; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.”²

At this time, “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD*, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and **HIS REST shall be GLORIOUS.**”³

At this time, then, there will be a GENERAL DISARMAMENT OF THE NATIONS, and UNIVERSAL PEACE brought in by GOD HIMSELF, and established in RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, . . . Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people.”⁴

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”⁵

Thus God will establish His kingdom upon the earth in righteousness. Israel, the despised of the nations, but now the centre of the earth for blessing, will be in

¹ Isa. ii. 1-4.

² Micah iv. 1-4.

³ Isa. xi. 6-10.

⁴ Rom. xv. 8-10.

⁵ Zech. xiv. 16.

their own land in peace and quietness, having David's Son, yet David's Lord, sitting as KING and PRIEST upon the throne at Jerusalem—the once Despised and Rejected of the nation owned as LORD OF LORDS AND KING OF KINGS. The gates, the everlasting doors, having been lifted up, the KING OF GLORY has come in. And when one asks, "*Who is this KING OF GLORY?*" the answer is, JESUS, "*THE LORD OF HOSTS, HE IS THE KING OF GLORY.*"¹

But more than this, He is Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek—that is, the eternal Son of God having become the Son of Man, He can reach up to God and down to man for blessing. He, having subdued all His enemies and established peace in righteousness, says, "Blessed be Abram of THE MOST HIGH GOD, POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH: and blessed be THE MOST HIGH GOD, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."²

At this time the heavens will be in association with the earth. The Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth, the Father, Lord of heaven and earth, having given all things and all power to HIS SON,³ who was once the Rejected and Despised of this earth, *but now owned* JEHOVAH OF HOSTS, THE KING OF GLORY, has brought redeemed creation into blessing. THE CHRIST will be the centre of the heavenly glory, displayed in association with the Church, which is His body and Bride. The friends of the Bridegroom having been called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, the marriage having taken place—all is now in open manifested glory, in order that the LORD JESUS CHRIST may

¹ Ps. xxiv.

² Gen. xiv. 19, 20.

³ Matt. xi. 25-27.

be admired in all them that have believed¹ in this present dispensation. The whole creation having waited "for the manifestation of the sons of God,"² is now delivered from its groaning state, and Jehovah is rejoicing in the blessing of His earthly people.

For "in that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."³ "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto Me in the earth: and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God."⁴

Thus, God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, the Eternal Source of all goodness and blessing, will rest in His love, and will satisfy His own blessed heart in bringing all heaven and earth around Himself, filled with His goodness. *His own beloved Son*, having brought all back to Him as Redeemer-Heir, now occupies the highest place in heaven and upon earth in manifested glory.

From Jerusalem, therefore, the centre of all the earth, blessing and peace will flow to all the nations, so that "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the GLORY OF THE LORD*, as the waters cover

¹ 2 Thess. i. 10.

² Rom. vii. 19.

³ Zeph. iii. 16, 17.

⁴ Hosea ii. 21-23.

the sea.”¹ The Apostle John, seeing all this in a vision, said, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . These are they which came out of (THE) GREAT TRIBULATION, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”²

Again he said, “And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.”³ These, no doubt, are the redeemed, who sing the new song, telling of the value of the blood of the Lamb to redeem out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation, for they are kings and priests, and they reign over the earth, the heavenly saints—the Church, no doubt—for St. Paul says, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” and “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?”⁴

But the Apostle John further says, “And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”⁵ This is the resurrection of those who will be slain for their faithfulness during THE GREAT TRIBULATION: they are now raised from the dead, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

¹ Hab. ii. 14.

² Rev. vii. 9-14.

³ Rev. xx. 4.

⁴ 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

⁵ Rev. xx. 4.

“This is the first resurrection”—that is, the end of it. For “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”¹

The first resurrection commenced with Christ being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Christ is the firstfruits, then they who are Christ’s at His coming. The coming commences with the rapture of the saints, when the Church is taken from earth to heaven (then the marriage of the Lamb takes place), and it will end (that is, the first resurrection) with the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth; when Christ and His bride will sit upon His throne, and the faithful ones, who have been killed, between the time the Church is taken to heaven and the coming of Christ *with* all His saints to the earth, to set up the kingdom, will be raised to share in these infinite blessings. Therefore, says John, “BLESSED and HOLY is HE that hath part in the FIRST RESURRECTION: on such the SECOND DEATH HATH NO POWER, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”²

The second resurrection takes place at least one thousand years after the first, for “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”³ The Lord Jesus spake of these two resurrections when He was here, although He did not say there would be one thousand years between them. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (the first resurrection); and they that have done

¹ Rev. xx. 5.

² Rev. xx. 6.

³ Rev. xx. 4.

evil, unto the resurrection of judgment"¹ (the second resurrection).

When the kingdom of God has been set up here upon the earth, the first part of the above Scripture will have become an accomplished fact; then all the righteous, from Abel to the last one who shall die in THE GREAT TRIBULATION, will have been raised; having had part in the first resurrection, their blessings, whatever they may be, will be eternal.

We have now to return to Genesis to look once again at the purpose of God in the creation of man, which was that man might be God's representative upon the earth, having dominion over all the works of His hands. Adam the *first man* failed, and broke down in his responsibility to answer to the purpose of God. It was therefore necessary, for the glory of God and the good of mankind, that a SECOND MAN should come and take up the ruin and broken responsibilities of the *first man*, and glorify God as to it, defeating and setting aside the power of the enemy of God and man—the devil, who is the source of all the evil and its consequences in this world—and restore order and blessing, according to God in righteousness upon the earth.

This the Son of God undertakes to do by becoming the Son of Man, and as such HE is appointed HEIR OF ALL THINGS BY GOD. He therefore restores all, and brings all back to God as REDEEMER-HEIR.

God had all this before His mind from the very first, and could see it all accomplished according to His purpose: yet it takes time to bring it all about in actual result, because the *next thing* to God maintain-

¹ John v. 28, 29.

ing His own glory, which is an absolute necessity, being God, is the SALVATION and BLESSING of MYRIADS of HUMAN BEINGS, these blessings being ministered to man, who is in *deep need* through the *ruin* of the *first creation*, God manifesting Himself as a God of love in doing it!

My desire, therefore, in bringing so many Scriptures before the notice of the reader is that he may enter a little into the thoughts of God for man, and that by the grace of God *he may confess* that JESUS is THE SON OF GOD—"THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE," GOD OVER ALL BLESSED FOR EVER; and that he may know that when he meets GOD, when he sees GOD, he will meet HIM, and see HIM *only in* JESUS, the *once* "MAN OF SORROWS."

When these Scriptures have been fulfilled, then God will have reconciled all things unto Himself, both which are in heaven and on earth, He having gathered together in one all things in Christ, who will *then* be *manifested* HEAD *over all things* TO THE CHURCH, which is HIS BODY, the *fulness* of HIM that filleth ALL in ALL.

And as SON OF MAN HE will have dominion over the *whole creation*, for everything was made *by* HIM *and for* HIM.

He will therefore reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords a thousand years in righteousness, maintaining government according to God upon the earth, for "the GOVERNMENT shall be upon HIS SHOULDER: and HIS NAME shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF

PEACE.”¹ And “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For THE KINGDOM is THE LORD’S: and HE is GOVERNOR among the nations. . . . They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people *that shall be born*, that HE HATH DONE THIS.”²

Thus God will *fulfil this Scripture*: “What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? for Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!”³

And THE MOST HIGH GOD, Possessor of heaven and earth, will manifest that HE is LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; for all creation will join in saying, “Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was, and is, and is to come,”⁴ and will give glory and honour and thanks to HIM *who sits upon the throne*, who liveth for ever and ever. And all the *redeemed* will fall down before HIM that sits upon the throne, “and worship HIM that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, THOU *art worthy*, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for THOU hast *created all things*, and for THY *pleasure* they are and were created.”⁵

¹ Isa. ix. 6.² Ps. xxii. 27-31.³ Ps. viii.⁴ Rev. iv. 8.⁵ Rev. iv. 10, 11.

And heaven and earth will say, "*Holy, HOLY, HOLY, is the LORD OF HOSTS: the whole earth is full of HIS GLORY.*"¹

And there will be the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, yielding her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree [are] for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. . . . These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants THE THINGS which MUST SHORTLY BE DONE. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."²

Thus, GOD *will*, according to His purposes of grace, bring the whole world into blessing; but judgment must first be executed, because of the positive opposition the world has maintained against God and all that He has proposed. He therefore now commands "all men everywhere to repent: because HE hath appointed a day, in the which HE *will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom HE hath ordained*; whereof HE hath *given assurance unto all men, in that HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.*"³

¹ Isa. vi. 3.

² Rev. xxii. 1-7.

³ Acts xvii. 30, 31.

God has also given a detailed account of that which is to take place *after the MILLENNIUM* :

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”¹ Nothing alters the heart of man: it is enmity against God. The nations, although blessed a thousand years, when tested again, rise up against Jerusalem, the beloved city, but the fire of God’s judgment will devour them. This is the final destruction of the ungodly nations.

The devil who *deceived them*, and *who has deceived man ever since the Fall*, now meets with his *eternal doom*; he is “cast into the *lake of fire and brimstone*, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for *ever and ever*.”²

The next thing is the second resurrection and judgment of the dead. John said, “I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which

¹ Rev. xx. 7-9.

² Rev. xx. 10.

were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”¹

God has now done with the responsible earth and heaven ; they flee away, and no place is found for them ; but all the dead, having heard the voice of the Son of God, have come forth to the resurrection of judgment, to be judged according to their works, and hear the sentence passed upon them *by HIM* who said when here, “I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.”² HE was the SAVIOUR *then*, but *now* HE is the JUDGE. “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son : that all men should *honour the SON*, even as they honour the Father. . . . And HE *hath given HIM authority* to execute judgment also, *because HE IS THE SON OF MAN.*”³

“THEN COMETH THE END, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. *For HE must reign, till HE hath put all enemies under HIS feet.* The last enemy that shall be destroyed *is death.* For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, *that GOD may be ALL IN ALL.*”⁴

¹ Rev. xx. 11-15.

² John xii. 47.

³ John v. 22-27.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

Thus everything will be subdued under the feet of "THE MAN CHRIST JESUS," for HE must reign, as THE SON OF MAN, until HE has put down all rule and all authority and power. And when He has done this, He having glorified God in every position in which He has placed man upon the earth, right from His entrance into this world as a Babe, "the Child Jesus" being subject unto His parents; then when coming to years, enduring temptation, keeping His position of absolute dependence upon God His Father; learning obedience by the things which He suffered; His life being taken from the earth for righteousness' sake; returning to the Father as the Rejected One of this world, of whom He receives the kingdom; therefore having come forth "with power and great glory" as the *rightful* HEIR to the throne of the world, He subdues all His enemies; then, sitting upon the throne of David at Jerusalem, the centre of all the earth, He as the Son of Man has dominion over all the works of God's hands, maintaining righteous judgment and government according to God, having supreme power, reigning as KING over all the earth: "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" manifesting that He is KING of kings and LORD of lords. I say, when He has done this, then, but not until then, will He as the Son of Man deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that GOD may be ALL IN ALL, the GODHEAD still dwelling bodily in HIM.

This commences THE DAY OF GOD, the eternal state; and "we [true Christians] look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."¹

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 13.

The Apostle John saw it all in a vision, for he says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And HE that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And HE said unto me, IT IS DONE. I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the BEGINNING and the END."¹

"THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD."²

"I JESUS HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL TO TESTIFY UNTO YOU THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES."³

¹ Rev. xxi. 1-6.

² Rev. xix. 9.

³ Rev. xxii. 16.

THE END.