
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>





COMMUNION

LONDON AND LEAMINGTON
ADDRESSES

No. III.



BY

J. DENHAM SMITH

LONDON

S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW

DUBLIN : 10 D'OLIER STREET



PRICE ONE PENNY.

DUBLIN STEAM PRINTING COMPANY,
MIDDLE ABBEY STREET.



COMMUNION.

GENESIS xviii.

I WOULD like you, with the Word in your hands, to follow me in a few thoughts as to what thus occurred between the Lord and Abraham, and to see if we have anything like it in our own Christian life.

First, mark the place where the Lord appeared to him; it was Mamre, in Hebron, the meaning of which is fellowship—Communion. This is significant, for, truly, Abraham was in communion when the Lord came to him. It is when you, in the presence of the Lord, have your hearts, shall I say, open towards the Lord, that He delights to have to do with you. It is blessed when our minds are calmly responsive to what is in His mind. Beloved, are we thus in communion with God?

I believe there are many Christians who pass through their whole life-time on earth who know but little of communion; many, indeed, are but ill-informed as to what it is which constitutes true communion.

I need not tell you that prayer, however precious

in itself, is different from communion. Prayer is all on our own part—it is simply asking for what we ourselves want. It is a blessed attitude, a Divine privilege, daily to draw out of the fulness there is in God for our constant need, to ask, in fact, for what we need; but what would you think of a child who was always in want—always asking, as we have lately said; always pressing his want; always saying, *I want this, and I want that, and I want the other.*

Ah! you would say, he never seems to *have!* never seems satisfied! How much better were he to come and say—

“Father, I do indeed want, but I speak not of *that*; I know what is in *your* mind, I know what is dear to *you*, and I am, come that I may speak with *you*—have communion with *you*.” How pleasurable to such a father! They now enjoy that which is common to them both.

I repeat it, a man may be professedly praying to God all his days and yet know but little of communion with Him.

Again, intercession is different from communion. Intercession is asking or pleading in behalf of others, as Abraham for Sodom, the Lord Jesus on the cross for his murderers, or one believer for another believer; a parent for a child, a child for a parent; a husband for a wife, a wife for a husband. Pre-

cious privilege! to bear the burdens of others, or our own, concerning others, before the Lord; but it is not communion.

Confession is different from communion. Oh, it is a blessed privilege to come before God with our own failures and sins, to tell out the burden that is on the soul and conscience, knowing and believing the promise, "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;" but mark, how you may have all these and not be in simple communion.

Worship even is not communion. Worship is all on your part.

Communion is that which is *common* to both parties. Sin is not common to you and to God. Confession is not common to you and to God. When a child comes to his parent simply craving and longing, it is not common to both. Communion with God is that which is common to the believing sinner and his Father in heaven. We *know* the purposes of His grace towards us, in and by His Son; these form themes in His presence for communion. Hence communion is a far higher thing than prayer, or confession, or intercession. Prayer, and confession, and intercession will cease with earth; they will have no conveyance with us into heaven. But our communion will be eternal; as God's grace towards us in Christ are more and more known, our

communion with God will be more and more full. Hence communion is that which God pre-eminently delights in.

But in what attitude was Abraham when the Lord came to him? This is of deep interest. Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. On leaving his country and kindred he went out in quest of a country and of a city out of sight—a heavenly one. As a mere traveller, he needed nothing to encumber him. He had seen, as it were, heaven opened, and a city was revealed—a heavenly city; hence his calling was a heavenly calling. He was not called to any dominion here, as was Adam in Paradise. He was not to reign on earth, as David or Solomon. His calling was not to earthly possessions, though his seed would possess the earth; his calling (and in this he was our great predecessor) was, that the God of glory had appeared to him—a God of heavenly glory—with promise of a *heavenly* city. He could have sung, as to this earth—

“No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness,
A poor wayfaring man.”

What Abraham had was a tent. This was according to his character as a pilgrim. Another thing he had, which was an altar. That was according to his character as a worshipper. His portion

was *God*; but not God in some abstract form, unattainable to faith, and unapprehensible to the mind, but a *God of glory*, whom having seen he loved, and obeyed, and enjoyed; who had told him what to do and what he would have. Now, God has not appeared to us as a God of *visible* glory. It is through His Word He has appeared to us. He has told us, in Ephesians, that He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Church and Christ are one; He the head and they the members. God hath chosen them *in Him* before the foundation of the world, that they 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, wherein He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, *having made known to 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 on earth, even in Him, *in whom* also we have obtained an inheritance.

You will mark the words "*in Him,*" and "*before Him,*" and "*in whom.*" They all indicate the scene of our blessedness. It is not as was Adam's *Eden*. It is not as will be Israel's in the latter day—*Immanuel's land*. It is not as was Israel's after the wilderness—the *land of Canaan*. No; our place is *in Christ*, the character of our position is the same as His, the measure of it the same as His. Christ is now before God; God is His portion, He is ours also. He is God's *Beloved*. We are accepted, pleasant to God *in Him*. He has died, ascended, gone up far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named. "And we who were dead hath He quickened together with Christ, and hath raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In all this God has put us in the same circle and on the same level with His Son. As He is not of the world, so we are not of the world. As He is in heavenly places, we are there likewise, seated in Him. As He lives possessed of the Father's love, so do we. We are heirs with Him of the like glory. He would, as partners of His joy, see us seated with Him on the same throne. Oh, beloved, this is the portion of every saint. God has given us a place in Christ, His own *Beloved*. His portion is also ours. It is our possession of Him that makes us pilgrims here. As our calling

is a heavenly calling, so our hope is a heavenly hope. All things here are secondary; the world, in comparison of it, is a wilderness world. Our hope is a heavenly hope. As with Abraham, so with us; we have a tent, for we are pilgrims; we have an altar, for we are worshippers.

On the occasion before us, Abraham was sitting in the tent door. He was there, at leisure, as if unhampered and unhindered by circumstances, having a mind at perfect peace. It was in the very heat of the day; the sun was at its meridian height, when it is natural to man to long to breathe more freely. This, we may imagine, was the attitude of his soul; and surely, sometimes at least, it is ours. Oh, how sweet to be sitting, longing, and panting after God! yea, for the freer breathings of the soul in communion with God. Sweet such soul breathings! as we sing—

“Each moment calls from earth away
 My heart, which lowly waits Thy call;
 Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
 ‘I am thy life, thy God, thy all.’
 To know Thy power, to hear Thy voice,
 To feel Thy love, be all my choice.”

Abraham, we may suppose, was in the calm noon of communion with God. He was simply waiting, as it were, the special visit of the Divine Being; and mark what he saw—“Three men stood by

him." They were there *before* he saw them. Oh; if we had but eyes to see!—I mean when we are longing for God—the Lord would be seen as visibly with us. Abraham just lifted his eyes, and there was *God!* and His child was in the very presence of God! How precious! how blessed! And oh, how sweet is it thus, when in communion, to know that the Lord *is* blessedly with us! Thus, in our dying moment, when the soul is released from the body, which now cannot see God, we shall be simply present with the Lord. What an image is it, beloved, of how faith, in one moment, may be changed to sight!

And now mark, here, the intelligence of Abraham. He addresses the three as *one*. He says—"My Lord." I do not say that he was fully intelligent of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—but with singular utterance he speaks to three persons as "*my Lord*." The whole Godhead is in Christ.

It is our privilege to know that the *Son* is in Him; the Father in Him; and the Holy Ghost in Him. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And the Father has been manifested in the Son; and we know, and have abiding in us, the Holy Ghost, who reveals to us God, and who shows us what is in the Father and in the Son. It is a delightful employment to trace what a full growth of manifestation there has been from the

first of God. The whole Godhead has been gradually revealed, and we gaze upon the several glories with unveiled face. What a word is that!—"It pleased the Father that in Him should dwell *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*" It was pleasant, blessed, for the fulness of God to dwell in the human body of the man Christ Jesus. No man had ever seen God—the only begotten, He *hath* revealed Him. Up to *that* revelation there was no such knowledge of God. Till then angels approached with covered faces—never after They gazed on Him at the incarnation. One of their company ministered to him at Gethsemane; others were in the scene of His burial robes, as if they had carefully taken them from Him, and folded them, as we have seen, on the morning from the tomb. He could say—and oh, blessed word!—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father:"—His love, the eternal love; His grace, the eternal grace; His holiness, the eternal holiness.

These, as we have seen, were among the things which form the life of God; the eternal life that was with the Father, and which we now have—even the life of God—of Christ. It is this life which forms ours. Says Paul, "that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our bodies."

But how gradual has been, from the first, the growth of what we now see! In the beginning it

was God,—simply, sublimely, *God*,—who made the heavens and the earth. But when man was formed, it was the *Lord* God—an advanced truth of His name. Afterwards to Abraham He is a *God of glory*, which was much additional. Then *the Almighty*. Then his shield and exceeding great reward. Afterwards the everlasting God. (Gen. xxi. 33.) That is, not the God of any one age only, but of all ages, for ever and ever. Then the name Jehovah. Israel had sinned, and may expect to be destroyed. No, says God; you have not till now known me by my name *Jehovah*, which means unchangeable. You change—I do not. It is my purpose to bring you into the land: my purpose, whatever your sin may be, cannot fall through. Blessed truth for us!

But who, in the days before Christ, ever knew *the Father* as we know Him? or the *Son*, as such? or the Holy Ghost, who is with us, and shall be in us, for ever. How blessed to trace it all out!

Now Abraham, when he saw the Lord, ran to meet Him. Oh, the readiness of his heart! being in communion. If the Lord were suddenly to appear to you, it is running *away* you might be. If you were brought suddenly and at once into the presence of God, would it be your joy, your delight? But Abraham had seen the God of *glory*, and thus had known what He was; he knew the love which,

had given him his portion: and "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." We are never afraid to meet with those we love. The moment his eyes were lifted, and he saw God, he ran to meet Him. Is that your attitude, beloved? Are you delighting in the nearness of God—speaking to Him as a man speaketh with his friend? And when He presents Himself as He may, at death—when the mystic soul is revealed, separated from the body, will it be yours to—

"Run up with joy the shining way,
To embrace your dearest Lord?"

It was in the broad noon the Lord appeared in Mamre; yet was it eventide with Lot in Sodom. The light was fast diminishing there. The day was far spent, and the night was at hand. Lot must pass through tribulation, and be saved so as by fire. And if the righteous scarcely, or with difficulty, be saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? *Where*, alas! When they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them: "for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." "For if God

spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds): the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

It was no fast declining day, or terrible coming night with Abraham; it was high, broad noon. The Church will have had *its* night, made such by the previous absence of the Lord, when He comes to take vengeance on all who know not God, and obey not the Gospel. She will be with the Lord *taken away*, as 1 Thess. iv., before the judgments descend, and when He comes *in* judgment she will descend with Him. Among the many reasons why the Church will *not be in* the tribulation, this one sufficeth me—that when the Lord comes in judg-

ment, and to execute His wrath, the Church will come with Him—will, in fact, be spectators of that wrath.

And now said Abraham, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in Thy sight, pass not away I pray Thee from Thy servant." Let me hold Thee, says Abraham; now I have got Thee. But for why? Was it merely for himself? No. "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts. After that ye shall pass on, for therefore are ye come to your servant."

Do you understand this? "For *therefore* are ye come." What words! What intelligence of God! What a secret! For "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Truly the Lord had come for this very thing: not so much to give, though He would give, but to receive, yea, to be *feasted*; not to feast, though He does feast us, but now Himself to be feasted. How wonderful! and how precious to the soul that knows and loves it! Surely His delights are with the sons of men, and His rejoicings in the habitable parts of the earth. That it was the Lord who had come the whole statement shows.

If you have any difficulty as to this, you find Him saying, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing

which *I* do?" Then giving the promise of Isaac, and telling the doom of Sodom, showing how palpably it was the Lord. How marvellous the Patriarch's intelligence! Said Abraham, "Let not the Lord haste away; I will prepare a feast." It was as if Abraham knew what was the desire of God—as if he had said, "I know His joy in me. I know that in which His soul delighteth. Blessed be His name! He has, indeed, fed *me* with both bread and wine, and filled *me* with that which He alone could give; so I needed not to take the spoils taken from the kings in the Vale of Siddin; and now in my turn I will feast the Lord." Bold, but true utterance; "for therefore is my Lord come."

Think of God, beloved, who long afterwards found a cup of refreshing from the woman of Sychar saying, "*Give me to drink,*" now coming to Abraham to be refreshed by him; yea, coming to be *feasted* by him! Hence Abraham orders "three measures of meal and a calf from the herd." It is the fifteenth of Luke reversed. There the returned son is feasted by the father, who prepares for him the fatted calf; here it is the returned son preparing the feast for the Father. Who can doubt that the feast in both cases was Christ? Ah! this is what God likes, that we should bring Him Christ. He complained of Israel, that they had brought Him no small cattle, no lamb or kid of their burnt

offerings. What God wanted was "the sweet cane" and the "fat"—that which set forth the preciousness—yea, the very perfectness "of the Son of His love." I am speaking concerning believers, but it is true concerning the sinner. God says, "You have not brought me Christ; you have brought me your sins, your difficulties, your doubts, your cares, your burdens, your sorrows, your bereavements; for these surely I care: but you have not brought *my Son*. Were you to bring *Him*, the sins once on *Him* are gone! the condemnation which He took is overpast! With no sin or doom in *Him* you are free, accepted as He in my presence! This is what He died for. This is what I love."

Ah, beloved, is this your sense of what Christ is to God, and of what He is to you? Is this your soul's delight before God? Do you see Jesus as inexpressibly precious to God, as the one who, in dying for us, has given *Him* highest glory? Do you see that, through *Him*, God, who is a consuming fire as to sin, has had His way in saving us by consuming sin on the cross, and in showing, in us, the exceeding riches of His grace? O how sweet is it in His presence to hear *Him* say, "*My beloved Son*," and for us to respond, "and *my beloved Saviour*." This is *communion*. The ineffable love which the heart of God has towards His Son; you see it, tell God of it, speak to *Him* about

it, and of your own delight in Him, and indebtedness to Him. This, I repeat, is a far higher thing than all prayer or confession; it is *communion*—fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Christ Jesus.

But where did Abraham feast God? Was it in a palace or in a tent? No, indeed. It was under a tree. Suggestively here—a tree represented the cross. It was a tree, when cast by Moses into bitter waters at Marah, that made them sweet. It is the cross which has turned all our bitter into sweet, all our death into life, our hell into heaven. We owe all to the cross. We could not have been in the presence of God, saved from death and hell, nor ever have known Divine grace or holiness, but for the cross. When God met Christ on the cross, who was there for the sinner, Christ must die. But because of that cross where the Saviour did die we can meet God and live. It is through the cross that God justifies the ungodly—makes us His righteousness—subjects of His highest joy—children of His family and home. It is when we see this that God is well pleased. God might have said of Abraham, “He remembers me. He knows me. He knows my heart, my mind, since I appeared to him in Ur of the Chaldees. He knows my thoughts how I know and love him.” Dear friends, does He say this of you? Does He

never say of you, of me, yea, of some poor, lowly, solitary one, such as Abraham was, "He remembers me; He knows me; He is got into the thought that was in me before all worlds; yea, with that which was the joy of my soul from all, all eternity?" Yes, beloved, some of us are in this. We are in the secret of His love—in the love that was eternal in HIM; and we see ourselves in the purpose of that love, that it associates us with the Son, of whom we can say, "I am my beloved's," from whom none can separate. Oh, truly, this is communion.

And, beloved, in the estimate God forms of it, does it go for nothing? Verily, no. Though God infinitely delights in receiving, He ever infinitely gives. He will not be our debtor. In this He is like any other father. Were your child to come to you and say, I know what you love—your mind, your purposes, what would be the effect on you? Would you not say, is not this love to be requited? is there anything I can do for him? Thus God says, shall I hide from Abraham what I am going to do in Sodom, or can I keep from him my purpose as to Isaac.

Beloved, what does He not delight to reveal to us? He has not called us servants, for servants know not what their master doeth. He has called us *friends*. The word, which is His revealed mind, shows

His love in the eternal past, and what are His purposes for the future. The Spirit of God, who searches the deep things of God, dwells also in us, and reveals them to us. The record containing them is complete. There is no new or further truth to be added. Full light has He shed on the coming doom of the Sodom of this world, on Lot's deliverance, and on the Church, whose calling is heavenly, and who, ere the judgments fall on this present evil age, will be saved from the coming wrath, caught up, as it is said, into the air to be for ever with the Lord. Oh, it is whilst in communion that the Spirit brings all to our remembrance, helps our memories, and makes powerful and blessed in our life what He teaches through the Word to the soul. Blessed Spirit! let us not hinder or grieve him. In true communion there is no hindrance. In Mamre, *away* from Sodom, and not *in* Sodom, is the scene of His unfettered fellowship.

And now, beloved friends, what seeds of precious things are there in this theme. How suggestive of many personal practical inquiries. And, first, are *we* in communion? Try yourselves by your recollection of this very day. What was the character of your secret moments this morning before God? I do not ask *had you* such moments; but, having them, were you in *communion*? or were you hurriedly, and it may be confusedly, asking, *asking*?

saying, "Lord, give me this, or I want that; or, Lord, I confess this or deplore that?" Has this been the character of your approaches to God? "Ah yes," some may say, "I never seem to know any other." Years and years pass on, and I am always in doubt, or fear, or want. *I* know but little of what Abraham had—unhindered fellowship with God. Alas! many pass their lives, and (though saved) are simply paupers, ever hanging on upon God, as it were, as if in sore want. Do I make light of prayer? No, indeed. Prayer is blessed—confession is blessed. But why not communion blessed? Is there never to be a mind at such perfect peace with God, and such leisure from its own wants, that it can speak to God of what is dearer to Him than all other things—even of the Son of His own love—presenting to Him Jesus, Jesus, Jesus only, saying, "for therefore is my Lord come."

For the soul to enjoy communion there are many things needed.

Knowledge is needed.

True, there may be much knowledge and little communion; and there may be much communion with little knowledge. Yet God, in indulging us with so much of His own knowledge, shall I say His own secret mind, intended that our intercourse with Him should be commensurate therewith.

Accordingly, to be in communion with God, one ought to know fully what God is—that He is *love*; and what are His eternal purposes of love towards us. That love was a special love; it was such a love as had never before been known to be in God—a love which embraced man as a child, providing for him the best things God could give. The best robe had never been worn by angels; the fatted calf never provided for *them*. Man, as a special child of God, or the Church specially with the Lord, will be a theme of their wonder and joy throughout all ages. When I know what are the thoughts of God towards me, my communion will be according to them, according to their exceeding riches in grace.

If we would enter in some measure into the love of the Father to us who are saints, we must look at the love which, before all worlds, found its one object in Him who is the Son of that love; for, wondrous and vast as is the thought, *that* is the very love which now, by virtue of our oneness with Him, He lavishes upon us. Did you ever think of it, that whilst bestowing upon us such infinite blessings and privileges, God withholds not even this,—the very same love which from everlasting had centred in Him? That such is the fact is shown by the words of the Lord Himself, in John xvii., where He prays the Father “That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be *in them*.”

There are two kinds of love which every believing sinner enjoys, or ought to enjoy, concerning God; viz., first, the love of God which He uniformly exercises towards His creatures; for example, He loves all those bright beings above. They are His own creation. He could not but love them. And then, too, He loved man, as made in His own image. Ah! yes, and He loves sinners, *as they are*, in all their sinfulness and alienation from Him. The truth is, that supposing one whom I am addressing is dead, unconverted, utterly careless, yet, O sinner, God loves thee at this moment—as thou art. Yes, God, we are distinctly told, “so loved *the world* ;” not the world as it was—not saints merely—not the world improved—oh, no; but the world of *sinners*. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us.” It is this love of God to the *sinner* which He commends to us, since it prompted to the wondrous sacrifice of His own Son. How plainly do we see *this love of God to the sinner* brought out in Luke xv. Look at the joy with which the Good Shepherd carries upon His shoulder the poor, wretched, wandering one whom He has found. He rejoices over it more than over those who are safe in the fold. Then look at the parable of the *lost son* ;—another picture which the Lord draws, to unfold this love of God to sinners. That love did not begin when the

prodigal had returned, and was within the home. No; throughout the whole course of his wanderings his father's thought had followed him; his father's heart had yearned after him. Thus with God's love: it had not its beginning when the sinner turned to the Lord, but existed during his estrangement from Him. Yes, even from before all ages, the sinner has been in the thought and love of God. And I may suggest it to you in passing, those three parables in that chapter may, perhaps, represent to us the interest which the whole Godhead take in the salvation of the sinner: that of the prodigal unfolds the love of God; that of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep unfolds the love of Christ; and that of the lost piece of money sought for by the woman may show the Holy Ghost seeking, through the truth, or through the Church, to save the lost. But the love of which I am led specially to speak, and concerning which our souls may enjoy the very highest and sweetest communion with God, is not this, not the love of God for the sinner—not the love to the world spoken of in John iii.—not the love of the shepherd to the lost sheep—not the love of the father to the erring prodigal—not the love of the woman to the missing piece of money—but the very same love which hitherto had been possessed only by His own Son. I go back to before all ages, ere creature or world was made, and there I see the

Son in fellowship with the Father, and the Father in fellowship with the Son, and that Son I see the one and sufficient object of all that Father's love. What love!—an ocean without a shore. O the depths of it! Well, beloved, that love—and such love as that—now rests and delights in me, in you. Well may we say with John, who in highest communion exclaimed, “Behold, *what manner of love!*” What manner of love is this wherewith the Father hath loved *us*? Beloved, may you and I see it. It is the very love wherewith He loved *His Son*. Ah! dear saints, this subject allies us to the blessedness bound up with the very existence of God. For that which made existence so blessed for God was His Son. He shared with the Father a primal, Divine, rank and love, which, since He was God, knew no beginning, and will know no end. As I said to some of you elsewhere, what goes to make up my life? A little joy and a little sorrow, a little labour and a little rest. But what was the life of God from all eternity? Infinite love *to* the Son; unbroken communion and fellowship *with* the Son; and now *I am in* that love, and can never be separated from it. “Who, *shall separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?*” It was part of the life which was in God, the love He had to His Son. How wonderful is all this! and that we should have eyes to see it, and hearts

to enjoy it, and souls filled with communion with it. It is a life this which goes beyond all other life. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

But another truth here, and truly blessed again is it for communion; having this love—the *Father's* love, it has shown itself in calling us sons. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called *sons of God*." Not saints, merely separated, which we are; not servants only, which truly is much; not children merely, which we were by creation; but *sons*—raised to the same rank, the Godhead excepted, with Him who is Son and Heir. Are there any besides redeemed sinners on so high an elevation?

And more, because I am a son, I have the Spirit of His Son in my heart, saying, "Abba Father;" and because I have the Spirit of His Son, I know the Son, also the Father whom the Son reveals; and I know eternal life; and am a partaker of the Divine nature; what was, and is, in God is also in me; love, truth, holiness, righteousness—these all have an infinite source in Him, and now they are the life of God in me. And how is it that all this love can flow forth to me? The simple answer is, God foresaw us in Christ. Through Him, in His eternal purpose, He saw us invested with the holi-

ness, light, life, and beauty which also were in Him. It was thus He saw us fit objects of His highest love; having removed all obstacles which our fallen and corrupt condition as sinners had placed in the way. This He did by the death of the cross; by which holiness, truth, righteousness have not only been vindicated, but gloriously displayed, in colours which otherwise they never could have worn. Through these, or as the result of such display, the sinner *is the righteousness of God in Christ*, and can stand eternally in God's presence, and have communion with all that he can find to be in God. Ah! beloved, when I know this grace in which, as a believing sinner, I stand, I see it is all in Him; it is all there, *there*—in a once crucified, but now risen Jesus—it is all, all, all in Him.

And then, further, this love supposes rank corresponding to the position. It is not *every* child of the family that is an heir; the rank of heir is the exclusive privilege of one. But that glory was not enough for us or for Him, so He brings in *adoption*, and thus makes us "sons" by emphasis—*heirs*—heirs of what? Heirs of the whole inheritance of Christ, viz., God Himself—"heirs of God." Oh, beloved, in God are realms of love—realms of grace—abysses of love—deep, unfathomable abysses of grace; and we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: our rank corresponds with our posi-

tion. And we have, moreover, a *hope* corresponding to this rank—"We are to be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Oh, what a *hope*!—"like *Him*." Yes, beloved; and when you and I look upon Him, the God-Man, we shall not see Him with visage marred, but with countenance resplendent with glory. And think of it—we shall be "like *Him*"—formed after the pattern of His beauty—His holiness, His righteousness, His glory. Oh, what communion, beloved, may not the heart now find in the knowledge and blessedness of this hope!—a hope full of glory. And what a life! I must see to it, that my daily life in everything corresponds to this blessed anticipation of being *with* Him and *like* Him for ever. Oh, bethink with yourselves, when He comes, we shall come with Him; when He reigns over this redeemed world, we shall reign with Him; and when He is seated on His throne—having put down all rule, having reconciled all things unto Himself—we shall be with Him, knowing His joy, and sharing His glory. Again I say, need communion with Him be a form, a name, when a hope like this is ours? Well, indeed, may we say, What manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us! No angel was ever loved with love like this. But as for you, oh, believing sinner, He will surely make you to sit down with Him on His throne. But the throne is not *Himself*. You will have *Himself*!

Oh, I am tired of not realizing it! All I can do is, to say, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly;" for why want Him to tarry a day, or an hour, but for one thing—that such as some of you may be saved? But at any moment He *may* come—come into the air yonder, made radiant by His presence, to reveal Himself, and to gather up His saints together to Him there; quietly, and unperceived to the world, He will arrive there, and His saints will disappear. "Where are they?" will be the exclamation by and bye on every hand; it will be a little while's wonder to the world. Said the blessed Lord when He was about to leave those sorrowing disciples—"I am going away, but I will come again;" "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again, and take you unto myself*" (you disciples, saints of this whole age, who have believed on Him, owning Him during His rejection, both Lord and Christ), "*that where I am, there ye may be also.*" The Lord Himself, says Paul, referring to this promise, will descend from heaven *to the air*, to which scene He will take us up; those who sleep in Jesus will be raised from their graves, and we who are alive and remain will be caught up together to the Lord in the air; and so we shall be for ever with the Lord. Hence, as I believe that coming will not be a public one—will not be to the earth at all—but a coming merely

to the air, to take home His saints; when He comes publicly to *this earth*, then they will all come with Him: "for when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall *ye also appear with Him in glory.*" But they must first go to Him ere they can come *with* Him. What a time! we shall be taken away, and shall all enter into the same glory *together*: not one of all the loved members of His body will be missing—not one absent; no, nor yet one in the glory before another; the widow will again embrace her son, and together they will enter into the glory; and the child will enter into the same glory with the parent; and the Head will enter the glory with all His members—one body—one Christ: not the Head even in glory before the members, nor yet the members before the Head. Seeing, then, that such blessedness is ours, what communion may we not enjoy! what fellowship with the Son! Well may John say, "These things write I unto you, that your joy may be full." Well may he declare that "it doth not *yet* appear what we shall be." No, the glory is so great, the happiness of that hour so transcendent, that we do not know what it will be, or what we shall be; we only know, and that, for the present, is enough, that we shall be *like Him—like Him—like Him.*

Some seem to doubt whether we shall know each other there. Well, indeed, sometimes I think we

shall, and sometimes that we shall *not*; yet surely it will be passing strange if we have less knowledge there than here. We cannot imagine that for a moment; but, at the same time, will not every eye there be set gazing upon *One*? If you have ever stood upon deck, out at sea, and watched the billows, you would have noticed that they all roll in one direction; that though they clap their million hands together, and are many-voiced in their mighty roar, yet their faces are all looking in *one* direction. So, beloved, will it be up there: so wonderful, so blessed will it be to gaze upon His face, to behold His glory, that we shall be, as it were, oblivious of all else; and on, and on, and on we shall gaze, thinking only of Him, looking only at Him, ravished only with Him; and so much so, beloved, that although I may have been standing side by side for ages with friends long known and tenderly loved down here, yet there had been no recognition, no thought of each other, and still no want, no neglect, no loss; for we were all occupied only with HIM!

And believe me, beloved, all this blessed hope of ours is indeed much for communion. The Father's love; sonship; heirship; likeness to the Son in the glory; for ever with one another and the Lord. Oh, dear Christians, will you, after this, be conformed to this world? will you ever again talk of

how much of the world you *may* give up? or how much you may keep? No; rather let your testimony be that of a dear friend who declared, "People talk of giving up *the world*, but *I* never had to give up the world; the truth is, very soon after my conversion, on going into society and speaking of the Lord, not liking *Him*, the world very soon *gave me up*." Ah! if you still wish to be buried in the world and its pleasures and sins—if the world *be* your portion, do not pretend or flatter yourselves that this blessed hope and this communion with the glory are yours; but, oh! if you live in communion with Christ, and rest only in Him, He will take you out of the world, by making Himself so incomparably precious and lovely in your sight, that all else in comparison will be but a thing of nought.

Oh, beloved people, may the Lord give you to know more and more, and more of *Himself*; may you seek or desire nothing but *Him—Him—Him—* to know and love *Him*—to be in communion with *Him*, till we see Him face to face in the glory.

Meanwhile, to be in communion, besides the love and purpose of God, I should know the value of the blood of Jesus; what it has done, having put away sin; and that because of it, in God's presence—

"All is rest, and rest for ever;
All is perfectness above."

Moreover, we must know our place. Some, indeed, never seem to know their place as inside the veil. They knew of Christ's being before God; but not that they are in the light as He is in the light—in the same scene, with the same right and title; and that as He is, so are they. What communion may we not have when the Spirit who is in us gives us, through Christ, who is in us, to realize our standing in Him in the holiest. How blessed to be conscious of Divine life in the soul, and through that life to have fellowship with the Father.

It is our privilege as believers to see our place as already in heaven, with sin gone, death conquered, and the grave emptied! Many Christians do not see this. They are like the two and a half tribes who were content to remain on the Egypt side of Jordan, albeit the promises made to the fathers, and looked forward to for ages, gave them the land flowing with milk and honey. Instead of that land they were content to remain in one which they said was "good for cattle." Singular that an inducement apparently so low should have led them to forego their divinely-appointed inheritance. Yet so it was. And so it is now with many a true saint, who, although saved, is not living in the scene to which Joshua-Jesus, our risen Head, has brought us. They have a hope of heaven, but they are not consciously sitting down with Jesus,

in the heavenlies. They are out of this world, but they cannot say, "we are in the land." They can pray, but they are not intelligent worshippers, having communion in the true sanctuary. They are much exercised about themselves as to what they are *here*, on earth; but they know little or nothing of the joy there is for them in Christ, which is full of glory. And the scene of such joy is where Christ is, seated in the very presence of God, in true rest for us—a rest never, as was *Eden* rest, and *Canaan* rest, to be lost or broken. He is there in the power of an actually accomplished salvation. It lies beyond the cross, and beyond the tomb, and beyond self, and sin, and the sorrows of the wilderness.

The wilderness is past,
 And Jordan's depths are o'er;
 We've reached that bright and blessed place,
 Where we shall die no more.

He brings us in as free
 From sting of death and hell;
 Shows us 'tis life and peace to be
 Where He Himself doth dwell.

With old corn of the land,
 He doth our spirits feed:
 The Son—*His* rank, *His* life, *His* peace,
 Are wondrous food indeed,

Oh to be always free
 In spirit from this earth,
 To eat and drink, dear Lord, from Thee,
 Thou food of priceless worth!

Angels ne'er eat of this,
 They are not one with thee ;
 They have a bright angelic bliss,
 But *Life of God* have we.

His life—the life of God ;
His peace—the peace of Son ;
His home—*His rest*—and His abode,
 He says are all our own.

O vast, eternal love !
 And grace beyond degree !
 That, Lord, Thy Church—below, above—
 Should thus be one with Thee.

Beloved, what a place is ours ! and what a God
 is ours ! O to know Him more !

But there can be no knowledge of *God* without
 the Spirit. He is in every believer. He is there, the
 promise of the Father, to reveal through the word,
the Father. He is there, the Spirit of Christ, to reveal
 Christ. He is there, the Spirit of the Son, to reveal
 the Son. Because we are *sons* He hath sent the
Spirit of His Son, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
 Who that would know the Son must have the
 Spirit of the Son. Such knowledge is needful for
 communion ; also *obedience*. If I walk in defilement,
 trifle with conscience, or neglect the *word*, the soul
 must suffer loss ; and a chief form of that loss will be
 want of *communion*. Ah, then ! what misery, what
 loss of peace ! It is well we know to whom to go.
 Only *One* can make and keep us clean. Beloved,
 are we in *communion* ? Do we now know what it

is? and *where* its scene? and what its power in our words, and affections, and life?

Communion with the Lord!

'Tis not on earth the scene,

'Tis on the throne th' Incarnate One
In perfectness is seen.

The place is in the light,

Yea, light ineffable!

Where Jesus, precious in His sight,
Doth with the Father dwell.

'Tis there unveiled we gaze,

On love before unknown;

Where eye of angel ne'er was raised,
Or cherubim looked on.

There, glorious place within,

We commune with our God,

Who sees us as He sees His Son,
Accepted through His blood.

For there before the Throne,

'Tis not what we may be,

But all according to that word,

"As He is, so are we."

There we adore the grace,

The vast, unfathomed love;

Whilst Jesus tells us of our place,

As one with Him above.

O what a height is this,

For soul once dead as mine,

To find in God so great a bliss,

Eternal and divine!

O for the sweetest lays

That e'er thine ear hath heard!

O for the long eternal days

T'adore and praise the Lord!

8 NO 67

is? and *where* its scene? and what its power in our words, and affections, and life?

Communion with the Lord!

'Tis not on earth the scene,

'Tis on the throne th' Incarnate One
In perfectness is seen.

The place is in the light,

Yea, light ineffable!

Where Jesus, precious in His sight,
Doth with the Father dwell.

'Tis there unveiled we gaze,

On love before unknown;

Where eye of angel ne'er was raised,
Or cherubim looked on.

There, glorious place within,

We commune with our God,

Who sees us as He sees His Son,
Accepted through His blood.

For there before the Throne,

'Tis not what we may be,

But all according to that word,

"As He is, so are we."

There we adore the grace,

The vast, unfathomed love;

Whilst Jesus tells us of our place,

As one with Him above.

O what a height is this,

For soul once dead as mine,

To find in God so great a bliss,

Eternal and divine!

O for the sweetest lays

That e'er thine ear hath heard!

O for the long eternal days

T'adore and praise the Lord!

8 NO 67