

THE
UPPER CLAPTON
SERIES.

BY

J. DENHAM SMITH,
T. SHULDHAM HENRY,
AND OTHERS.

LONDON:
JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

CONTENTS.

I. IMMEDIATE SALVATION.

By J. DENHAM SMITH.

II. RUTH ; OR, COMMUNION.

By HOWARD JOHNSTON.

III. THE COMING OF THE LORD : FOR AND
WITH HIS SAINTS.

By T. SHULDHAM HENRY.

IV. ABIDING IN CHRIST.

By J. DENHAM SMITH.

V. THE NEW BIRTH.

By T. SHULDHAM HENRY.

VI. MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE ; OR,
WILDERNESS REST.

By J. DENHAM SMITH.

VII. WHAT HAST THOU DONE ?

By HERBERT WILBRAHAM TAYLOR.

VIII. ABIGAIL; OR, DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

By J. DENHAM SMITH.

IX. GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

By T. SHULDHAM HENRY.

X. SUBSTITUTION.

By J. DENHAM SMITH.

XI. REDEEMER AND REDEMPTION. TOGETHER
WITH NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON
ELDERS AND RULE.

By the late W. H. WILLIAMS.

XII. SEPARATION TO GOD.

By J. G. McVICKER.

IMMEDIATE SALVATION.

BY

J. DENHAM SMITH.

Twenty-first Thousand.

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IMMEDIATE SALVATION.

LUKE xxiii. 39-43.

THE words, beloved friends, on which I am about to address you, are specially the last which I have read, where the Lord says to that dying and penitent robber, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." I do not think we are half alive to this history, with its wondrous teachings. There is something so remarkable in the blessed Lord, amid the unutterable anguish of His dying moments, having a mind at leisure from Himself to listen to and sympathize with the wants of another. And then, if we turn to that other—the penitent one at

His side—there is something so wonderful, so sudden in his conversion; there he is, like a withered leaf, all but detached from the tree of existence, and hanging over the very borders of what appears an inexorable hell; and yet, in one moment, the Lord lays His hand on him, quickens him to new and spiritual life, so that his tongue which before blasphemed against the blessed Sufferer hanging beside Him, now openly owns Him as “Lord.” No other conversion recorded in Scripture is like this one. Not a single action that could be termed a good work *before* conversion, and he lived not long enough to manifest the reality of that conversion by any lengthened subsequent life.

We shall dwell on three *persons*, and then upon three *things* suggested by the words “to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” First, there are three persons hanging and dying on those three crosses—the two malefactors, and Jesus in their midst. Looking at those two thieves, we see that one of them was saved, the other lost! The one went to

perdition, the other to paradise. They had both the same time for preparation, the same opportunities for salvation. As we look at them, let your eye also rest on Him who won the faith of that dying penitent, and as you behold *His* dying, say—

“ I do believe, I will believe
That Jesus died for me ;”

for the same instant you believe, He *is* yours ; you have Him as *your* Saviour. It may be that I am speaking to one who for long years has been a great sinner, to one who is an old, grey-headed sinner. You have come to the very margin of death, there is but the narrowest remnant of time dividing you from the woes of an eternal hell. Ah, look yonder ! there hangs one to tell that—

“ While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.”

Yes, as it were, not at the eleventh hour, but at the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute did that dying robber embrace his dying

Saviour. Oh, you who have been living without God and without prayer, without your Bibles, you who are standing on the shores of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, who are well-nigh lashed away, swept down into that gulf of *eternal buffetings*, how can ye endure the torments of that bottomless pit? How can ye stand those eternal lashings, that endless fury? Better never to have been born; better, infinitely better, to have been strangled at the very dawn of existence, than thus to spend an eternity of woe. Oh, I only want you to know that there is a moment *now* for you, that you are not yet in hell, that you are not yet in the hand of the devil, that you are not yet beyond the sweet chimes of the gospel, not yet off the rich plains of gospel grace on which the rays of the sun of God's love are still beaming; there is yet hope for you; as yet there is "life in a look!" Salvation is now provided; the garment hangs ready, and waits but for the putting on; and the ring of His eternal love is

ready ; and the shoes, the preparation of the purchased peace, are ready, in which you may tread the glorious golden pavement of yon heavenly places. Are you penitent ?

He says : “ I was wounded for *your* transgressions, I was bruised for *your* iniquities,” not for mine own. *I* never had sin. For *you* I bore sin. For *you* I put it away. “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Ah, friends, I would like to tarry here for one moment ! Though the greatest sinner, or the oldest sinner, in London be here to-night, “ though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Though deep as crimson, yet the blood of Jesus is of a deeper dye. Oh, there is a power in the crimson of the blood of Jesus which can destroy the crimson sin, and leave a clean page with—“ I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins !” And all, dear friend, is for faith *now* ; all is for you. As you sit there

you may pass from alienation and death into the blessed condition of one who is calmly resting on the value of the blood, and is satisfied, fully, divinely, and for ever satisfied with the Lord Jesus.

And now look again ; there hangs another malefactor ; and if from the one we are taught not to despair, from the other we are warned not to presume.

Dear friends, never count upon a dying hour for salvation ; you may never *have* a dying hour. Death may bear you away in an instant ; so it carried one away who, to the request of his sick wife that he would just fetch in some coals, replied, “ If you ask me to get in coals again, may God take me.” Not long after, his poor wife, being still feeble, asked him to fetch her some coal. He went, but God took him at his word. For there, stretched over the coal, lay his corpse !

Oh, my hearer, never presume upon a dying hour ! God may take you in a moment of time. Truly you may say—

“ Only this frail and fleeting breath
Preserves me from the jaws of death ;
“ Soon as it fails, at once I ’m gone,
And plung’d into a world unknown.”

Alas ! there is a fearful uncertainty hanging over the wicked. You may meet with some accident ; or your mind may reel from its throne, and you may become a mere wreck, and may droop a lunatic over hell’s bottomless chasms—a sight upon which heaven may gaze with pity, and hell look on with fiendish exultation. Oh, I wonder, I marvel that you can dare such a risk, such peril, while God is alluring, and Christ is inviting, and the gospel messenger is beseeching you to be reconciled to God !

But look now on that middle Sufferer ! There *He* hangs, who is verily the Lord of life and glory, and yet is suffering there as the sinner’s substitute. Oh, to fill one’s eyes with *that* sight ! His brow is bleeding from the thorny crown which cruel hands have in mockery wreathed about His temples ; His hands and His feet are torn,

torn with the three nails ; and but a little while later from His side flows the double stream of water and blood, fraught with living power to atone for sin and to cleanse from all its stain and defilement ; and these proclaim the twofold truth, that “without shedding of blood is no remission,” and “without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” And as I gaze there and see His bowed head, what do I hear ? “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ?”—“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken *me* ?” And why is He thus forsaken of God ? What unutterable blot is that for which God is thus pleased to bruise His own—His beloved Son ? Oh, beloved, stand in awe, and doubt not ! That intolerable load and blot under which the Son of God is thus groaning is the sin of the world, is the sin of whosoever can take the place of a sinner. Do you believe it ? He says : “As for Me, I am a worm, and no man ; a very outcast among the people. . . . All my bones are out of joint ;” “they stand staring and looking upom Me.” “He

was wounded for our transgressions ; He was bruised for our iniquities." *Believing in Him*, every voice against me is silenced. A few more moments and there falls from those dying lips, "It is finished !" — punishment finished ! atonement finished ! all the claims of righteousness fully met, so that now love and grace can have full scope : a way has been made by which God can embrace the sinner. Oh, clap your hands, all ye angels ! Howl, all ye devils ! Rejoice, all ye sinners ! for can ye not responsively exclaim, "Christ has died for sinners ; and if for sinners for *me*. God is satisfied, I am satisfied."

" 'Tis *done*—the great transaction 's done—
I am 'my Lord's, and He is mine."

And think not by way of merit to add anything to this finished, this complete salvation, as we sing—

" Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no ;
Jesus did it, did it all—
Long, long ago.

“ When He from His lofty throne
Stoop'd to do and die,
Everything was fully done.
Hearken to His cry—

“ ‘ It is finished ! ’ yes, indeed,
Finished every jot.
Sinner, this is all you need ;
Tell me, is it not ?

“ Weary, working, burdened one,
Wherefore toil you so ?
Cease *your* doing ; all was done
Long, long ago.”

Oh, I could linger on and on with you here, gazing upon that middle Person : very Man, that He might *suffer* for you ; very God, that He might *satisfy* for you ; very Man, that with human life He might stand in your stead, that your sins may all pass away with the passing away of His life ; very Son, that He might come up out of death in resurrection—all sin left at the cross or buried in His grave. Oh, ascribe ye glory to the atoning Lamb, the Lamb that was slain ! “ Glory, honour, praise, and power be unto the Lamb for ever.”

And now, dear friends, having looked at the three persons, let us glance at the three things.

1. First we have a *present* salvation. “*To-day shall thou be with Me.*” What a wondrous salvation ! and what a change effected ! In the morning of that day he was a child of wrath, even as others—at enmity with God, even as others—a wretched, doomed criminal, lying there in that cell as ignorant as a heathen of Jesus, the Son of God, as untutored as if he had been born in outer darkness. And then as the day grew on he was led out to death ; and having reached the place of death, the nails were driven into his hands and his feet ; and then amid those deep, excruciating agonies, wrung from every nerve and muscle of his frame, he became a public blasphemer. With only power to move his head, he turned round and said, “*If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.*”

But now, as the day wore on, that head, that mind so antagonistic, suddenly changed and sank into more than halcyon rest. See,

what a revulsion ! As one gazes on his face one seems to read it there. Perhaps some word from that Middle One had pierced his soul ; perhaps His tender exhortation, " Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children," had revived upon his memory. Again the head moves, but it is to address his companion in sin : " Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation ? And we indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this Man hath done nothing amiss." *True confession ! work of the Spirit in him.*

How wondrous ! All that sea of turbulence hushed to rest ! all that din and turmoil of soul rocked to peace ! Divine love and grace had dispossessed his heart of its fiendish occupants, and the railer upon the cross became a loving disciple fit for paradise. How sweet ! People talk of faith and regeneration as if they were long and gradual processes ; but indeed they may be the fruit of a moment of time. Is it not indeed a change of heart, as people say (the old heart is

never changed) but another heart, when a vile blasphemer becomes a public witness for a dying Saviour? Many talk too of a new heart, and of a new mind, and of a new life, without knowing much about them. The penitent thief had all these, and at once, in a moment, as he was a-dying!

Had he not a new heart, or, as I would rather put it, *another* heart? the old one; alas! that is, the old nature, still remaining. From having derided the blessed Jesus, he now desires, may I not say loves, Him. But it was not with the old heart that he did this. Ah, no! he has quite another heart, a new heart, which says, "Lord, I am a sinner; I am nothing but sin. Thou art Lord, and Thou hast a kingdom; Thou art to reign in it. Lord, remember me. I would like to be remembered. Oh, *may* I be remembered!" Blessed change! Precious heart to have toward such an One! Work, again, of His own divine Spirit.

Beloved friends, when unconverted you had but one heart, but one nature; but the

converted man has two. As one has said: "I found on conversion that I had a heart and a will to come to Christ against my old heart and will." Do not mistake me. If you are a child of God, you will find out that you have two natures—two contrary principles within you. The same also with *repentance* or *another mind*. Repentance is a changed, or, more correctly, an *after* mind. It is not a mere sorrow of mind, as many imagine, else had Esau repented. He could find no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully *with tears*. Else also had the three thousand under Peter's sermon undergone repentance, for they were *pierced to the heart* in deep sorrow and contrition for the sin of having crucified the Prince of life. Repentance includes a sorrow for sin, and our penitent malefactor had it. It includes grief at having offended God, and he had it. But it includes much more. The prodigal had quite *another* mind when he saw and felt the *unchanged* love of his Father. His sin was judged without reserve, and home, himself,

and his Father were all seen in their true light. Ah! in an hour like this one loves to think of the repentance here. He who was dead to his sins, dead to the fear of God, dead to Jesus, who in a spirit of infidelity attacked the dignity of the blessed Lord, *must* have had another mind. How it prompted him boldly to own Him "Lord!" And no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. And oh, in this hour, in such a scene as this, I love to think that many a like revulsion may be taking place; that many a heart hitherto fast closed against the Lord is now opening to know Him; that many a one is inwardly saying, "Shame that I never loved *Him* before." Beloved, the blessed Lord knows the unuttered breathings of your heart. They are a very feast of joy to Him, work again of His own Spirit.

But perhaps some are thinking that repentance must come first; but if you *have* another heart, a *mind* changed toward God, longing to know Him; toward Christ, longing to love Him; and toward sin, longing to

deepen in your sense of its evil, and longing to be rid of its load in your soul, especially if you can see God's love in giving His Son to die for your sins, *you have* the truest repentance. Just as that thief had another than his former mind. Before, he had said, "If Thou be the Son of God." Before, no fear of God, no sense of sin. Before, his soul was hard as adamant; now perhaps weeps streams of tears, so wondrous changed is he, that instead of railing on the Lord, he desires Him; yea, prays to Him. And think what did he ask for? Why, he asked for about the least thing that the Lord could give him. He only asked for a *thought*, only asked but a *remembrance*. "Lord, *remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.*" What intelligence is here! Divine knowledge in a new mind growing apace! As if he had said, "I know you are Lord; I know you are going to get a kingdom. I know that a vile sinner like me may have a place in your thought there." Yet he did not know *Paradise*. It is as if the Lord had said, "Kingdom is not

yet—postponed for a little while. Paradise is *now*. It is that which lies between the present and the kingdom, between the grave and the glory.” What a change! What a conversion! Truly “old things had passed away; all things had become new.”

And had he not *a new life*? People would have said He did no good works, but I deny it. Was there ever a good work like this? There in the midst of that millioned-peopled city, where the voice of the multitude derided and scorned Jesus of Nazareth; there where even His own disciples had forsaken Him, and of those one had publicly denied Him; and even John, who had lingered the longest behind, and who therefore alone writes of the water and the blood—in such a scene as that, I repeat it, he boldly and openly avowed Him. The devil might have tempted Him to reason thus: “If I still join them in railing on Him, perhaps they will take me down.” But no; he would not disown Him whom he now knew to be *Lord*. Again I say, “What boldness!” Was it not indeed

a proof of genuine conversion? And was he not *saved*—saved at the eleventh hour—and saved by faith?

And what more *assurance* could he need? “To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise;” not the kingdom, that is too far off for my love to wait for thee. My love cannot wait for that. “To-day, this very day.”

What a day! In the morning a child of hell; but ere its close he was in Paradise! The morning found him in darkness, at enmity to God, fit only as a brand for the burning; its later hours witnessed to his blasphemies; but ere the day has fled, he was yonder, leading the angels’ song. Blessed, wondrous change!

2. The second special feature of this salvation is, that it was a *perfect* salvation. The Lord did not say, “To-day thou shalt be saved;” “To-day shalt thou have peace;” or “To-day thou shalt be a *son*;” or “To-day thou shalt have a new nature.” Oh, no! something immeasurably beyond all this. “To-day shalt thou be WITH ME.”

Behold, then, what a word is this ! “Thou shalt be *with Me—with Me.*” The Lord knew that he loved Him, and that of all things it would be his joy to be WITH HIM. Christianity is not a set of dogmas, however valuable ; it is the knowledge of and the love for A PERSON, and that Person the Lord Jesus Christ. I may have all knowledge, yet if I do not know Him, or love Him who is Love, incarnate Love, I have *nothing*. I may understand all prophecy, all tongues, yet if I do not understand God in Christ, if I have never known the love of Christ for me, it will all prove as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Though I had traversed the whole universe, and had surpassed in my affections all others, yet if I had never said—

“Now I have found a Friend,
Jesus is mine !”

I have no peace in my soul, no peace before God ; I may be yet in my sins, yet undone. Alas ! many are religious without God ; many have Christianity who never have had

Christ ; many have the name without the nature, the profession without the possession of Christ.

Beloved, is the Lord Himself dear to you ; or is it only of being *saved* you think ? That were as if the rescued voyager cared only for his escape, and cared not for him who saved him. Have you ever said : “ I am longing to *see* Him, to be *like* Him, and to be *with* Him ” ? It is love ; oh, it is love, love, love, that endears the object, the person ; and the Person who is the object of our love, it is *Him*, it is all *Him*. And as our love needs Him, His love needs us. Like our own, His love must have an object. It was not good for Him to be alone. What a connection between Genesis and Ephesians ! Adam *was* alone ; but it was not good, because he had been created with a *capacity* for loving. In like manner, as shown in Ephesians, it was not good for Christ to be without the Church ; it was not good for God to be without the sinner. God had perfections which no angels had ever displayed. He

displays and satisfies all in Christ by the cross, where His love, grace, righteousness, holiness, and truth, are all for the sinner. To preach this is to preach *the good news of God*. To reveal the sinner to himself is something, and to show that God's way of saving him is a way consistent with his own character is something. But it is far more to show that God needed the sinner; how His grace, and His holiness, and His love *must have* a means of displaying themselves, and that salvation is not a new thing, but the manifestation of an eternal thing, and that over and above what the cross is to the sinner, it is the full, complete, and eternal manifestation of God Himself. Learn, then, the value of that ME!—of Christ to God and to the sinner. Oh, there is a very heaven in that little word "*Me!*" All the Godhead, the love and grace, are contained between those two letters M and E. All doctrine of the eternal righteousness and holiness, and all example, all the circles of glory, have their centres in Him; all the

promises of the Promiser draw their fulness and preciousness from *Him*. There is an infinite heaven in the very thought of being with *Him*—the great Revelator of God! the loved Revelator of the Father! Without Him, without the Lord, heaven itself would be no heaven. As we sing—

“Were I in heaven without my God,
It were no heaven to me.”

3. And now, lastly, we have here a *personal* salvation. What if all others be in heaven, all others gathered to the home above, and *you* not there? Every house must stand on its own foundation, every vessel on its own basis, every soul on its own ground; none can repent for another; none can believe for another; none can be lost for another; no man can go to heaven for another. “Except *ye* repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou, thou, thou*, shalt be saved.” Let me spell it over to thee, dear father, dear mother, dear sister, dear brother—“T-H-O-U.” Ah, how many a precious “*thou*” do we get in the

word ! Said the Lord to the man at the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt *thou* be made whole?" Wilt *thou* have the cure? Wilt *thou* have it from *Me*? Wilt *thou have it for nothing*? And he, as it were, responded, "Lord, it is the very thing I am waiting and longing for." "Then have it." And he was made whole. And then again that man who, having been born blind, received his sight from the Lord. The Jews cast him out for owning Jesus, but the Lord found him, and said unto him, "Dost *thou* believe on the Son of God?" According to the measure of knowledge which he possessed, he had believed in Jesus; and had witnessed for Him. And now increased light is given. Thus, we believe God for one thing, He gives us another, and so on. And so we have it here. The man had owned the despised Nazarene, but knew not He was *Son*. Jesus owns him in his rejection, for he had been *cast out* by the Jews. The rejected Jesus meets the rejected disciple, and finds deepest fellowship with him, and gives him deepest truth.

He asks, "Dost thou believe on the *Son of God?*" Never before that hour had he recognized Jesus as *the Son of God*. "Who is he, Lord," he asks, "that I might believe on Him?" Said Jesus, "I that speak unto thee am He." He received the Lord's testimony; he believed; he worshipped. What a change must have taken place in that mind! And in a like calm and quiet manner the Lord comes to souls present in a scene like this, and to one and another He puts the question, "Wilt thou have *Me* as thy Saviour, I who am Saviour, Son?" You have to die yourself, or to procure a substitute. *I* have died for you; wilt *thou* have my dying instead of thine own? Wilt thou believe on *Me?*—that I have died for thee? Say, what is your soul's reply? There must be atonement, because there has been sin. Christ has made full and complete atonement; are you satisfied? Do I hear you say, "I am satisfied; I can, I do take Christ as my salvation, my all?" Are you saying:

“ Just as I am—and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come !

“ Just as I am—Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down ;
Now to be *Thine*, yea, *Thine* alone—
O Lamb of God, I come !”

Perhaps some one says : “ I thought I ought to become better before I could be saved.” But no, as I said in another place this morning, the blessed Lord did not go to Lazarus whilst he was *sick*, not until he had been *dead and buried*. For the Lord does not cure *half-dead souls*—*improved* people, who think to do something themselves in the matter of salvation, and that then He Himself will come in at the end and make up their deficiencies. Certainly not ! The Lord raises the *dead*. He came to seek and to save” (to save entirely Himself, and not to *help* to save) “ that which was *lost*.” The first thing a dead soul, one lost to God, has to do, is just to submit to God’s way of

finding and saving him. Christ has done all; you are a mass of corruption; and what can corruption do but send forth its stench of death? He has met our case. This He has done by setting the sinner who is thus dead completely aside; he is as water spilt on the ground, never again to be gathered up. In him, in us, is no good thing. Having done this, *He* by dying for us is our salvation. *He* has put away sin. *He* has taken the punishment due to it. He is God's beloved, who associates us with His own righteousness, His own acceptance, His own peace. We are thus His own precious blood-bought ones. Oh, these moments are very precious! moments, I trust, when many a seeking soul is meeting with a seeking Saviour. "'Tis eternal life to know Him." Do you not know Him—know Him now?

The gospel spreads from Eden to the cross. As in Eden it was *God* who had put the flaming sword between man and Paradise; man could not re-enter it without taking death. So now as to Christ.

It was God who gave Christ, who *on* the cross took that sword into His own person, and having taken it, could say, Paradise is now open; there is now no more sword between it and you.

This is salvation, yea, complete, immediate salvation to every one who believeth. Dear people, to you I proclaim this salvation of God; and you may have it by taking it, may have it *now*--IMMEDIATE SALVATION!

But are you saying, "I indeed know that I am a sinner, and I long to know God; I want to be saved." God is working in your soul. Only God could have shown you that you are a sinner, and He will show you a Saviour. And is another saying, "But I can't make myself believe." God does not ask you to make yourself believe. He does not ask you to think of yourself, *your* feelings, *your* faith, your anything; but just to know and see *His* love, and to take the salvation which He gives. When *He* tells you, how can you help believing? You believe the word, you trust the word of

man, your very presence here to-night proves this. You get a letter from Dublin, saying I hope to have meetings with you on such days in such a week, you believe forthwith, the printer works, the notices are published, and at the appointed hour you come here. All the result of faith ! faith in the letter, faith in me. And God sends you *His* word, and the Bible is *His* letter, and you are questioning, hesitating, doubting. Shall it be so any longer ? Will you continue to doubt that word, His word who cannot lie ? Oh for a thousand *believers* to-night ! And what makes *believers* but believing in Christ ? Simply looking to the Saviour ! Knowing and believing that He has borne and blotted out all your sins according to His own word, you have peace—full, settled peace ; and for you there is “no condemnation ;” the apostle does not say there is no *sin*, but there is no “condemnation,” for the presence of sin still tarries in us, though its doom and guilt are gone ; and when we go from this world and mount yonder, then we shall not

have the *presence* of sin, then we shall have salvation from sin as to its very presence. How blessed ! But do *you* see this, do *you* believe it ? Oh ! I feel humbled to have to ask you if you *believe God*. Let me not have such an indignity to offer God as to ask Him to become candidate for your faith. Nay, rather as we now all rise and sing, let the outflowing response of your souls be—

“ I do believe, I will believe
That Jesus died for me ;
That on the cross He shed His blood,
That I might happy be.”

May the Lord bless you !
May God bless you !

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LONDON: JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
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RUTH;
OR,
COMMUNION.

Notes of an Address.

BY
HOWARD JOHNSTON.

SIXTH THOUSAND.

LONDON:
J. E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
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RUTH; OR, COMMUNION.

Notes of an Address.

IN calling your attention to this interesting narrative, I will not attempt to treat it so much in its *typical* character, but rather as *illustrative* of precious truth, which it is my earnest desire to be the means of conveying to you for our Lord's glory. And oh that it may be the means, in His hands, of drawing each and all of us who are saved into closer and more constant communion with Himself!

In the Book of Ruth seven persons

are introduced to us, and the name of each is very significant. Boaz means "in Him is strength." Surely here we are reminded of Him who is indeed "a mighty man of wealth," who said, "I have strength" (Prov. viii. 14); and of whom it is written, "In Him should all fulness dwell;" and again, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Oh, how wealthy is our divine Boaz! His "riches" are unsearchable; He has been appointed "heir of all things." (Heb. i. 2.) His power is illimitable. (Matt. xxviii. 18.) It is only as we abide in *Him* that we shall be strong, and have power to do His will. A beloved brother has said, "Companionship with Jesus is power for service, and strength for testimony."

Boaz had some kinsfolk in poverty and trial, dwelling in the land of Moab. These were Elimelech and Naomi his

wife, their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, with their wives, Orpah and Ruth. Death enters the little family, taking the father and two sons. The mother is left with her daughters-in-law. In the midst of their bereavement and sorrow, the glad tidings of there being bread in the land reaches them. Naomi arises to return to Judah, and Orpah and Ruth accompany her; but she bids them return to their mother's house. And now how deeply interesting is the scene on the way to the land of bread and blessing! "They lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her." What a picture of helplessness and dependence have we in these three tried and sorrowing widows! And may we not see in them a picture of ourselves?

But let us specially follow Ruth, and see in her history an illustration of what

our course should be in growing intimacy and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. Both Orpah and Ruth were as nearly related, the one as the other, to Boaz, that rich and wealthy man. They both had the same rights and privileges ; one embraced them, the other rejected them. They both professed ; but one failed to possess and enjoy what the other did. And, dear friends (I speak to those who believe in Jesus), I would have you remember for a moment the time when you, like Orpah and Ruth, wept and longed for comfort and peace, and when you, by faith, saw Jesus, and professed faith in Him as your Saviour, and, so were brought into happy relationship with God our Father ; when you for the first time could joyfully sing, “*Jesus is mine.*”

I want to ask you to-day, What have you been doing since your conversion ?

Has your life been one of communion with God? Ah, see these two! Orpah wept, she kissed her mother-in-law, she made a great profession; but she was content to go back to her country. Are you content to return to the world? Have you gone back unto your own country? How solemnly this reads (chap. i. 15): "Behold, thy sister is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods." Alas! how many dear people of God are just living in the world as those who are of the world—sleeping among the dead! Oh, am I speaking to such? The light of God's truth comes to *you*, and that light says, "Arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Are you satisfied? I pray you do not rest as and where you are. Arise! arise! arise! and see how much happier Ruth's portion was than Orpah's. The meaning of Orpah's name is "naked-

you go and join affinity with this world? How can you be in fellowship with a world that crucified your Lord; that despised and thrust out the Lord Jesus Christ, when you know that if he were here now, and walked through these streets, He would have no better reception than He met with then? The people would be still against Him. Again would the cry be raised, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Can you make the people of the world your friends? Can you join affinity with those who crucified the Lord of glory? Oh, let the longing of your hearts be, "Where thou diest, will I die." Where Jesus was crucified, there let the believer be crucified practically day by day. Said Paul, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Dead to this scene down here—alive to God. "To know Christ and

the power of His resurrection," was his desire.

Then, as the result of death, there is burial. "Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Ah, what power the cross of Christ has over the believer when rightly apprehended and understood! As Paul has it in the epistle to the Galatians, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." "Not I, but Christ." The old man is reckoned as dead and buried with Christ; but the new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him.

How sweet it is to know that the God of Jesus is the God of the saint. You remember what Jesus said on the morning of the resurrection, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; unto my God,

and your God." You want to know what you are to do. Have faith in the living God; put the world behind you. In 2 Cor. vi. 17 it is written, "Touch not the unclean thing." But do not stop there. No. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Yes, if you give up the world, you will have the blessed knowledge of having God as your strength and deliverer. God could not show Himself as Israel's deliverer while they were in Egypt, so He comes and brings them out into the wilderness.

In verse 19 we read, "They two went until they came to Bethlehem." I do not say that Naomi (signifying "beautiful or agreeable") is a type of the Holy Ghost, but her ways are certainly illustrative of

how He leads. Naomi leads Ruth over to Bethlehem ; she did not leave her to find it out herself. God says the Holy Ghost leads us. How far do we know what it is to be led by the Holy Spirit in all our ways and actions ? We do not know the power of that blessed Scripture, "Led by the Spirit of God."

Oh, dear believers, you may learn truth without the Holy Ghost ; but you can never learn Christ, but as the Spirit reveals Him. "They two went until they came to Bethlehem." Ruth had given up her own country ; she had given up a great deal. Yes, but Bethlehem means "House of Bread," plenty for the needy one—plenty for the helpless one—fulness for me—enough to meet all my necessities. Yes, blessed be God, in the path of faith we find all the fulness of Jesus ; we come to the house of bread. In the sixth of John we see that Jesus is the

True Bread—the Bread from heaven ; the Bread of God ; the Bread of Life ; “ He that eateth of this bread shall never hunger,” for there is in Christ a fulness of supply to meet our daily and our deepest needs. The ever recurring abundant supply of the manna in the wilderness was but a type of the yet richer supply to be found in Christ, for the necessities of His saints in all ages ; and, dear friends, if you have much fellowship with Jesus, you will have fulness to meet all your desires ; as He says again, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink ;” and notice also, in the 22nd verse, that “ they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest,” th *beginning* of plenty.

Have you on the Lord believed ?

Still there's more to follow.

Of His grace have you received ?

Still there's more to follow.

Oh the grace the Father shows !

Still there's more to follow.

Freely He His grace bestows,

Still there's more to follow.

I want you now, dear friends, to observe that the next three chapters seem to illustrate the varied character of our communion with the Lord Jesus. *First*, in chap. ii., *Communion in service*; *second*, in chap. iii., *Communion in rest*; and *third*, in chap. iv., *Communion in relationship*. In chap. ii. Ruth says, "Let me now go and glean;" in chap. iii. Naomi says, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" and in the last verse of chap. iii. Naomi says, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." In the 2nd chapter you have Ruth in the field; in the 3rd you have her in the house; and in the 4th you have her as the wife of Boaz. We are so near, so very near to Christ, our blessed, blessed Head, that we are one body with Him; not only as the wife

is related to her husband, but as the members to the body.

I. Let me ask you then first notice, in the second chapter, how Boaz meets Ruth in such wondrous grace and love. In verse 11, he said unto her, "It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband." Boaz knew all about Ruth, when she knew nothing about him. He knew where she had been living, and what she had been doing; and, dear friends, the mind of Jesus holds every believer and everything relating to him. Jesus says to-day, "It hath been fully shown to Me how you have been walking, how you have been serving Me." The mind of Jesus holds each of His children; He knows everything connected with us individually, and, remember, we may serve the Lord Jesus in serving others of the household; in our conduct

to our parents, or our children ; Jesus takes count of all these things, and all done to Him will be manifested. Everything you do here is chronicled above. Have any acts or words of yours been chronicled for you up there ? Are you spending your energies, and your strength on yourselves, and not on Him ; not for His glory, not for His precious name's sake ? Oh ! do not you long to have your page filled with the blessed records of what you have done for Him ?—the cup of cold water to one of His little ones, or a word in season to an unconverted soul. Oh ! remember that there is such a thing as building upon the foundation wood, hay, stubble ; and there is such a thing as building upon it gold ; silver, precious stones. God says, the field is the world. Ruth is out in service in the world. Boaz says, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee

of the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Not only Boaz will reward, but a full reward will be given thee of the *Lord*. Are you going forth seeing the full reward? Paul was not satisfied with the crown merely, he was not satisfied with merely running the race, but he wanted so to run, that he might get the crown from the very hand of Jesus. Is that your desire, dear child of God?

Then notice that even in the field she gets rest: "She sat beside the reapers, and *he* reached her the parched corn." Oh, we might dwell on that parched corn, supplied to her in her weakness by the hand of Boaz. Dear believers, do not you long, day by day, so to work with Jesus that you shall see His hand stretched out to help and bless you?—"And *he* reached her parched corn, and she did eat and was *sufficed*, and left;" and thus she

verified her name "*satisfied.*" Then we see what she had left: "She brought forth and gave to her mother-in-law that she had reserved after she was sufficed." Those who walk with Jesus, not only have enough for themselves, but for others also; and what she had left of what she received when in communion with Boaz, she was able to impart to her mother-in-law. (Verse 17.) "So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned." And what should be the result of your going to hear God's truth, dear child of God? Are you satisfied in getting truth second-hand without proving it for yourself? You know that God pronounced those animals that did not chew the cud, nor part the hoof, to be unclean. The clean chewed the cud, and divided the hoof. Dear friends, do you chew the cud? do you roll it over again in your minds till it reaches your hearts?

Oh, seek to be in close fellowship with Jesus, and then beat out what you glean. Let what you glean from Him go right down into your hearts, and then go forth and live it out in the power of that communion.

In verse 21 Ruth tells Naomi what Boaz has said to her, "Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have finished my harvest." And is there not a word of instruction here for us? Until Jesus comes, we are to be engaged in His harvest work, in seeking precious souls till the harvest is ended, and the last sheaf gathered in.

II. In chapter iii. Naomi is the one that acts. She says, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz one of our kindred?" Now it would have been very presumptuous and very wrong for Ruth to do what she did if

Boaz had not been of her kindred. The Holy Ghost testifies that we are one with the Lord Jesus ; and so it is not presumption for us to lean on His breast and sing—

“ Both Thine arms are clasped around me,
And my head is on Thy breast ;
For my weary soul hath found Thee,
Such a perfect, perfect rest.
Dearest Saviour,
Now I know that I am blest ! ”

It would be presumption in us if He had not made us one of His kindred, if we had not been brought into such close relationship with Him. Like Ruth, you may mark the place where He lay down. Oh, dear children of God, have you marked the place where Jesus lay ? He lay down upon that rugged cross on Calvary's hill. He who said, “ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where

to lay His head," rested not until He reached His Father's throne on high. And now what says the apostle? "Set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Mark the place where He now rests; and do not try, dear believers, to find rest in any place short of that. There, and there alone, will you find perfect and blessed rest.

And Naomi said to Ruth, "Thou shalt mark the place where he lies, and lay thee down." Let me refer you to verse 3, where Naomi says, "Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee." When Jesus said to Peter (John xiii. 8), "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," He did not mean, You will not go to heaven, Peter; He meant, You will not know what it is to have communion with Me. And there may be a child of God here who does not

know what it is to have communion with Jesus, because you may have done what you know to be wrong ; you may have gone contrary to the word of God ; and so you are down in the valley when you should be on the hill of frankincense. But Jesus, our great High Priest, sits to wash His people's feet still ; and He says to you to-day, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

Oh, dear friends, if you have done wrong, come and confess that wrong, come and confess that sin, and let the hand, the loving hand of Jesus, pass over your poor soiled feet. He is ready and willing to cleanse that defiled conscience, and to bring you into fuller and deeper communion with Himself.

Verse 10, "And Boaz said to Ruth, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter : thou hast showed me more kindness at the latter end than at the beginning."

He valued Ruth's zeal in finding Him. In the field he said, "I have heard of thy kindness." Oh how sweet is the going out of our heart to Jesus! He longs to see the pouring out of our hearts to Him. And when the believer longs for Jesus, for deeper and closer communion with Him, our blessed Jesus counts that as kindness done to Him. How He values our affection! We value His; but how He values ours!

Oh, dear friends, will you not give your hearts to Jesus? Will you not yield them wholly to Him, that He may have joy in you? In verse 11, notice the promise that Ruth gets: "Fear not, my daughter; I will do all that thou requirest."

"If ye abide in Me," said Jesus, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Here we see Ruth beneath the same roof with Boaz, in fellowship with him, and he says, "Fear not, my daughter; just tell me your desire, and you shall have everything you require." Then said he to her, "Lie down until the morning." Oh, let us each and all seek to have closer communion with Jesus while the night lasts. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Until it breaks, oh let us know what it is by faith to lie at His feet! In verse 15, we see she receives and carries home to her mother-in-law what she did not earn, as much as she could carry, freely bestowed, without service.

In verse 18, her mother-in-law says to her, "Sit still, my daughter: for the man will not be at rest, until he have finished the thing this day." Dear unsaved one, just as Ruth was brought into relationship, so you must be saved.

For our divine Boaz rested not until He finished the work of salvation for us.

III. In the fourth chapter what a wonderful word we have! "Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat there." He is determined to have Ruth, to claim her as his own; and what does he do to claim her? He goes and sits at the gate of the city. "Gate," in Scripture, is generally in connection with judgment, "door" with mercy. Jesus went without the gate; He suffered without the camp; He died instead of sinners; He went down to the *gate*, that sinners might come in at the *door*. Then, you remember, Boaz called unto him *ten* elders to bear witness that all was right.

Does it strike you that God gave ten commandments, and Jesus satisfied them all for you? Boaz said to the ten elders, "Come and sit down with me." So

Jesus went to the cross and bore our sins, made atonement for us in our stead ; and the believer trusting in the finished work of Jesus, comes up in the power of that first verse of the eighth chapter of Romans. The poor, helpless, lost sinner, in the power of that blessed truth, can say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That which the law could never give, Jesus gives me by His death and resurrection.

And then there is another thing. He calls one who had more right to Ruth than he had, the nearest of kin, and said, "Turn aside, sit down here." And then he says, "Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's : and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people.

If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it : but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know : for there is none to redeem it besides thee ; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance." That was just what Boaz wanted. He wanted to hear that the nearest of kin would have nothing to do with her. Boaz did not mind what she was ; he loved her. And just for a moment, dear friends, will you look at this ? (I do not mean to say it is a type ; but we can look on it as an illustration.) Justice would have nothing to do with you ; he said you were a sinner—a sin-

ner that would mar heaven : he had a claim on you ; by that claim you must have gone down to hell, and have been lost for ever. Yes, justice would have shut you down there—would have kept you out of heaven for ever, because you are a sinner ; but Jesus came down and satisfied justice ; by dying He put away all your sin ; and now, because He died for you, you (believing on Him) become His, and can come into heaven through Him. Jesus went down into the place of judgment, into the place of death : He satisfied all that was against us ; He fulfilled the ten commandments ; He satisfied justice ; and having put away the sinner's sin, He sat down at the right hand of God ; and there at the right hand of God He now receives all who come unto Him.

“ Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall : for the

man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." "It is finished!" "It is finished!" What is finished? Sin is finished. That cup of wrath which I must have drunk, Jesus, my substitute, drank to the very dregs. "It is finished!" The wrath is finished. Sin is passed away. God's anger against sin is spent. "It is finished!" Jesus drank damnation's dreadful cup. Nothing remains for you—nothing but love. The Saviour at the right hand of God—One near of kin, who longs to have you near Himself, dear sinner, longs to fold you in the arms of His love. Yes, blessed be God, the work of redemption is finished, and our divine Boaz, strong in His resurrection, invites you to come unto Him. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rest, because I had no rest on the cross ; blessing, because I bore the curse ; heaven,

because I endured the wrath of God ; life, because I have died.

Oh, dear friends, is not this the gospel ? Is it not enough, dear sinner, that you have a Redeemer ? that He suffered and died for you, to bring you near unto God ? Can you not say with Job, “ I know (not I hope) that my Redeemer liveth ” ? Oh, say it, dear friends, say it in faith—“ I *know* that my Redeemer liveth.” He is yours when you simply take Him as your Saviour. Put the finger of your faith on Him to-day, and you can say, “ I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth.” Oh that you may be able to say so ! Look up and see Him there, with those wounded hands, those pierced feet, ever living to make intercession for you. Dear unsaved one, come now ; “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Jesus! Thou needest me—

E'en me, Thou Light divine!

Oh, Son of God, Thou needest me!

Thy blood needs sins like mine.

Thy fulness needs my want—

Thy *wealth* my poverty;

Thy healing skill my sickness needs—

Thy joy my misery.

Thy *strength* my weakness needs—

Thy grace my worthlessness:

Thy greatness needs a worm like me

To cherish and to bless.

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THE
COMING OF THE LORD:

FOR AND WITH HIS SAINTS.

BY
T. SHULDHAM HENRY.

Eighteenth Thousand.

LONDON -

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.



THE
COMING OF THE LORD.

FOR AND WITH HIS SAINTS.

BELOVED,—There are three epiphanies or appearings of our blessed Lord in Heb. ix. 24–28. He has once appeared to put away *sin*—to remove the awful barrier between God and man. His primary object in coming into this world was not to save sinners, but to *glorify God* in the putting away of sin; and on that ground to stretch out His hand to the sinner, and beseech him to be reconciled to God. He did more. He came to bear the sins of His people. We should never forget the double aspect of the death of Christ.

First. Godward, "to put away sin."

Second. Manward, "to bear the sins of many."

Having finished the work God gave Him to do, He went back to heaven, there to appear in the presence of God *for us* as our glorious High Priest and Advocate; but more than this—our Representative. He was our *substitute* on Calvary; He is our *representative* now in heaven. Having satisfied on the cross all the claims of a righteous God, He goes back to heaven on all the principles of divine righteousness for His people; and *in* Him we are accepted, complete; and *to* Him we are united as members of His body by the baptism of the Holy Ghost; so that we can say, with Martin Luther, "As Christ is before God, so am I." As soon as all the members of that one body are gathered out of the world, and gathered into Christ (for this is the object of the gospel of His grace, and not the conversion of the world), He will come again, that Head and members may be visibly one, and form the *one new and*

perfect man, and be associated with Him in all those scenes of coming judgment and glory. Thus we get two distinct aspects of the Lord's coming—1, *for His church to the air*; 2, *with His Church to the earth* in judgment. Let us use an illustration. Suppose Scotland rose in rebellion against our Queen and Government. Her Majesty sends messages of peace and goodwill again and again. They are treated only with contempt and scorn. She exhausts every means in her power to win back her rebellious subjects to their allegiance; all to no purpose. At last she adopts her final resource, and leads an army against the rebels. She sends word to all her loyal subjects in Scotland to meet her at York, and, associated with her, to go back and take vengeance on her foes. This world is in rebellion against its rightful Sovereign, and owns a usurper—Satan. He has sent, and is still in long-suffering sending, messages of peace, beseeching rebels to lay down their arms of rebellion, and own Jesus as their Lord and

Master. With what scorn and contempt these messages have been received by the many ! Long-suffering waits, but will not endure for ever. He instructs His servants to warn the rebels of a righteous retribution near at hand. He tells His loyal subjects He will soon come again, and that they are to meet Him in the air, and return with Him to “take vengeance on those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus.”

I. Let us, beloved, refer to a few of the many passages of the Word that unfold to us these precious and solemn truths. *The promise* (John xiv. 1-3)—how cheering, how comforting—“I will come again !” He does not say, “I will send for you,” or, “You will come to me when you die ;” but—how definite—“I will come again !” “That,” says some one, “means He will come at death, and take them home safe.” Never once in Scripture is Jesus said to come personally to His saints in death. If the Lord meant it

He would have said so. He surely did not say one thing and mean another. The Word is very definite about the saints falling asleep in Jesus, and His coming again for them. See the case of Lazarus. He was carried by angels; also of the thief on the cross, when Jesus did not say, "I will wait for you, and take you to paradise;" but, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Again, Stephen looked up, and saw Jesus at the right hand of God, and cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." *Never* is death put before the child of God as a hope; but the second coming of Christ *always*.

Look at Acts i. 10, 11. This is to my mind the most forcible and unanswerable Scripture on this subject. The blessed Lord was about to leave this earth and His dear disciples; and bringing them to His favourite resort, the mount of Olives, He gave them His parting commands, and was taken up from them into heaven. Two men, perhaps the same that were witnesses

of His resurrection, stood by them, and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus*" (mark well the words) "which is taken up from you into heaven, shall *so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.*" How did He go? Who witnessed His ascent? He went, literally, personally, visibly, the very same person who had just been talking to them, whom they had handled, eaten with, looked on after His resurrection. Well, then, "He shall so come in like manner." Who saw Him. Did the world? Never did an unconverted sinner lay eyes on Jesus after the great stone was rolled on His tomb. The last look the world got of Jesus was when He lay on the cross a bleeding, mangled, crucified man. The next look the world will have of Him, when "every eye shall see Him," will be when He comes forth as King of kings, and Lord of lords, to tread the rebels beneath His feet. Those only whom He loved saw Him go. His loved ones only shall

see Him when He comes again to the air.

In this precious testimony, sent home to their wondering and sorrowful hearts, what a blessed reiteration of His promise, "I will come again!" "This same Jesus shall come." "*This same Jesus.*" No stranger; oh, no; but the same loving, sympathizing, gracious friend, who was taken from them, shall so come, unseen by the world, as they had seen Him go.

Why comes He again? In John xi. the Lord reveals a blessed truth to Martha, which she failed to see, like so many in the present day, namely, the resurrection *from among* the dead, and the change of the living, when He comes as the resurrection and the life. The resurrection of *the dead* was an article of the Jewish faith, as recorded in Heb. vi. 2; but the resurrection *from among the dead* was first made known to His disciples in Mark ix. 9, 10, where they express their astonishment at the new doctrine, and questioned what Christ rising *from among the dead*

meant. Then to Martha He says: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead (fallen asleep), yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"—that is, whosoever is alive and a believer, when I come as the resurrection and the life, shall never pass through death. These two truths are referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. In verse 23 we read: "*But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.*" Again, in verse 51: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; *We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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 shall be changed.*"

Martha had no higher, no other thought, than that of a general resurrection of good and bad at the last day. None other had been revealed. But, beloved, are you not surprised at Christians in these days of light and truth, with the precious

word of God in their hands, still adhering to that old Jewish doctrine of a general resurrection? In these Scriptures, then, we have the great object brought before us of the Lord's so coming in like manner as He went, to *raise the sleeping saints, and to change the living ones.*

Look at the words in Phil. iii. 20, 21 : "For our conversation is in heaven," &c. Our "conversation," that is our "citizenship." A most important word this. It means that this is our heavenly calling; that we are citizens of heaven. We were once citizens of this world, but God has given us a heavenly citizenship. That is the true meaning of *πολίτευμα*, which our translators have rendered "conversation." Our Head is in heaven; our expectations are in heaven; our hopes, our peace, our glory, all are in heaven; everything we have, or hope to have, is in heaven. We have nothing here but the little tent which we nightly pitch as each day brings us nearer home. "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for

the Saviour." You see it is not said that we are to be looking for *death*. Eighteen hundred years ago people looked for something brighter than death. Paul did not look for death, but for "the glorious appearing." Time made no difference to him. There might have been thousands of years before the coming of the Lord. The apostle was looking for the Lord's coming; that was his hope; he did not hope for death. We are to "look for the Saviour," he says, "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Again in 1 Thessalonians i. When Paul first went to Thessalonica he found the Thessalonians in a state of idolatry, bowing down to the work of their own hands—stocks and stones. He was with them only three weeks, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles. He had not, therefore, much time at his disposal for the building up of the souls of those who were converted. He preached the word to them, and instructed them in the blessed truths of Christ. He had but three weeks to teach everything;

but you will find that he did tell them something about the Lord's coming. He told them to wait for it. It *only* was to be their hope. He did not tell them to look for death, but "to wait for the Son from heaven." And when death did come to these Thessalonians, how dismayed must they have been! We find from the 9th verse that "they had turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait"—What for?—death? No! "to wait for His Son from heaven." That was the grand hope he set before their minds—the coming of the Lord Jesus. He told them to wait for the coming, and yet some fell asleep without seeing the coming of the Lord. Paul did not tell them that perhaps some would fall asleep without seeing the coming of the Lord. When, therefore, the Thessalonians saw their brethren fall asleep one after another, they grew disturbed, because they thought these sleeping saints would be left in their graves till the general resurrection at the last day, and not be in the glory with them. It was to meet

this troubled, agitated state of mind that Paul wrote that precious fourth chapter of his first epistle. He says, in the 13th verse, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep," &c. You see these Thessalonians could not understand the matter, and so Paul told them that their departed friends had simply fallen asleep. Asleep in Jesus! What a precious word that is. Asleep! like a little child in its mother's arms. Of all emblems of death none is more beautiful. Sleep has all the semblance of death, but it is not death. You see a little child sleeping in its cradle, and it is so still, scarcely breathing, and you almost think it is dead. You have seen a wearied person sleep, and you have thought the same. It is not death, only sleep. Think of this in connection with the departure of the believer; he does not die; he simply falls asleep. What a comfort that is! When the saint lies down to die, it is as if he were pillowing his head on the bosom of Jesus and going to sleep there. Paul tells these

Thessalonians that it is all well with their departed brethren; that they also who sleep in Jesus will God bring WITH Him. He says this by a word of direct revelation from the Lord. But observe, before Jesus can bring them *with* Him, they must first have been caught up *to* Him. "We which are alive shall not prevent them which are asleep;" that is, we shall not get the start of them; "*we shall not be in glory and they left behind;*" we shall not "come before" them; that is the meaning of "prevent," from Latin "*prevenire.*" The sleeping saints will not lie in the dust until the end of the world, until what is called the "*general* resurrection." Oh, no! "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout." "The Lord *Himself;*" "This same Jesus shall so come as ye have seen Him go." "The Lord Himself shall descend with a shout"—the shout of triumph and victory; for He will then have triumphed over death. It is then that we shall shout the triumphant word, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" for we

shall share in His joy. "The dead in Christ shall rise *first*:" and we which are "alive and remain"—what shall become of us? *We shall be "changed."*

We have dear ones lying in their silent graves; but they are all waiting for the glorious change at the coming of the Lord Jesus. The mighty sea shall give up its sainted dead; not one shall be kept back. We who are alive shall be changed and made like unto His body of glory; and then "be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Ah! it is only to the *air* that Jesus comes, not to the *earth*. *He will come to the earth with His saints; but now only to the air for His saints.*

Again, in 2 Tim. iv. 6–8, we find Paul saying, "I am ready to be offered," &c. Here was Paul quietly seated in the Roman prison staring death in the face: but he has no terrors for Paul. He knew that he had no mercy to expect from Nero. His death-warrant was signed, but, writing to his "son Timothy," he says, "I am ready to be offered, and the time of

my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." He loved the appearing of the Lord, though he knew that in two or three days' time he would be led forth to be executed. He thinks very little about this, however; for it was the Lord's appearing that he thought most about. Also, in Titus ii. 13, do we find the apostle presenting death as a hope? No; he speaks of that "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God," &c. This was the blessed hope of Paul. In John, too, we have the blessed hope spoken of, not referring so much to the *coming* of the Lord, as being *like Him*: "Beloved, now are we the sons 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." (1 John iii. 2.) John's hope is that of

being *with* and *like* Christ. There is the blessed hope that Jesus is coming; but there is another aspect of it—that we shall be *like Him*. John, you see, did not hope for death. His hope is the hope of salvation spoken of by the apostles: “Now is your salvation nearer;” “We are saved by hope”—the hope that these bodies shall be changed and fashioned like the glorious body of Christ. Some people, when they talk about hope of salvation, do not know what they mean. It is the salvation of our bodies, not our souls, that we are to hope for. Now, we *are* saved or not saved. We cannot hope that we *are* saved. I do not hope for a thing I possess—I have it. So with salvation. You have it or you have it not. But there is a blessed salvation yet to come, and we hope for *it*—a hope which God puts before us, that we shall be raised above the body’s humiliation and corruption, and be made like Jesus.

II. I would now briefly put before you, beloved, the other aspect of this truth—the coming of the Lord *with* His saints.

This dispensation is one of long-suffering and grace. God, by His Spirit, through His word, is *gathering out* the members of Christ's body; when that is completed, then Jesus comes. Long-suffering waits while the testimony is being given, but judgment always follows. As it was in the days of Noah and Lot, so shall it be in the day of the coming of the Son of man. As soon as the Church is caught away from this scene, judgment descends on Christendom for rejecting the testimony of God's grace, ending in the second coming *to this earth* for what may be called His warrior judgment, as in 2 Thess. i. and Rev. xix. A new testimony will be given, even the "gospel of the kingdom which is to be preached in all the world (*οικουμένη*) for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. xxiv. 14.) What end? The *sessional* judgment of the Son of man, for the rejection of the testimony of the kingdom by those He calls the goats (Matt. xxv. 31, 32), and for receiving into the kingdom blessing those who believed

it. The testimonies are distinct; so are the judgments. For those who in these days of His grace receive not the gospel, neglect salvation, and reject the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be no salvation, no pity, no mercy. Once the Church is taken away, the Master of the house will rise up and shut to the door, then "too late, too late!" shall be the cry. Oh, what agony, what despair! What an awful discovery—Christ has come, the saints are gone, loved ones taken! Wives taken, husbands left behind; husbands taken, wives left behind; parents taken, children left behind; children taken, and parents left behind, and so on. Fearful truth! dreadful reality! Left behind for what? The wrath of the Lamb. In Jude 14 we have Enoch's prophecy of this event: "Behold, the Lord cometh *with*" (mark *with*, not *for*) "ten thousands of His saints" (*lit.* holy myriads), "to execute judgment," &c. How solemn! In 2 Thess. i. 7: "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."

Vengeance on whom? Those that know not God—no matter how much they *profess* to know Him—and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—not the gospel of the kingdom, but the gospel preached now. "Obey not." "*God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*"

Sinners are responsible to obey. To disobey is to be lost. They are called "children of disobedience"—"children of wrath." On such the wrath of the Lamb will fall. Men who never prayed before will pray, and what a prayer-meeting they will have. (Read Rev. vi. 15-17.) Will they call to God for deliverance? Oh, no! They will pray to the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and *from the wrath of the Lamb.*" It must be either "the blood of the Lamb" or "the wrath of the Lamb." These are the two things so clearly brought out in the book of Revelation. Solemn alternative!

We shall now, in conclusion, beloved, bring before you the practical bearing of these precious and solemn truths ; for none are more practical or, if held in power, more calculated to influence the lives and service of God's dear children.

1. For *comfort* to cheer the drooping hearts in the Master's absence. How the precious words in the Lord's farewell to His disciples in John xiv. have fallen on burdened and weary ones, like refreshing showers on the parched and thirsty soil. "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself." Suppose some one wins the affections of one of you sisters in Christ ; you are betrothed ; but circumstances not permitting you to be espoused, he says, "I'll go to Australia and prepare a place for you ; I will write you comforting letters, and soon come back and receive you to myself, when we shall be happy together." The Lord Jesus by His Spirit has wooed us and won us for Himself. He is gone to get ready the place where we shall

dwell with Him; He has sent us many precious epistles to cheer and encourage us in His absence. When He was going away He said, "Don't be troubled in heart; I'll soon come back. Be of good cheer, and be always looking out and expecting my return." What comfort! Blessed Master, hasten thy coming! For those who are mourning the loss of loved ones, what comfort to think, in that glorious morning of resurrection, there will be a reunion, never again to be broken. Dear child of sorrow, dry your tears; that husband you so dearly loved, that wife you so fondly cherished, that child you so tenderly cared for, torn from your embrace by the cruel hand of death, will, on that morn of the Master's return, be united to you once again, and that for ever.

2. For *steadfastness in work*. In 1 Cor. xv. 58, the apostle winds up that blessed chapter of resurrection truth with these words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the

LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Perseverance in the Lord's work is greatly needed in these days. We see so many take up work so earnestly, so diligently, for a time. Difficulties and disappointments arise, and they become discouraged, and after a while they give it up. Now this is deeply to be deplored. In the first place we ought to be sure that we commence the work "*in the Lord*" and for the Lord. Discouragements ought then to drive us more to seek His guidance and help. Then be not faint-hearted, but persevere, and He will bless, and you will know your labour is not in vain in the Lord. I would urge this upon the Lord's children taking up work, that it be begun, continued, and ended "*in the Lord*," and it must succeed.

Again, *steadfastness in walk*. In Phil. iii. 20, 21: "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look"—for death? Oh, no!—"for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body (body of humiliation),

that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (body of glory), according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so *stand fast in the Lord*, my dearly beloved." He does not urge them to stand fast in their principles or in the truth merely, needed as it is, but "stand fast in the Lord." Our walk as well as our work is to be steadfast. In fact, the latter depends on the former.

3. There is another practical truth in Phil. iv. In verse 5, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." It means, let your "*yieldingness*" be known. We are not to contend with or before the world for our mere rights, as the Lord, who is so soon coming, will see to it that we are righted. We are not to resist.

4. *Patience* is taught in James v. 7. *Be patient* in the midst of scenes of persecution and trial, where you are misunderstood, misrepresented, and re-

viled. Remember our blessed Example, "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again;" but who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." *Be patient* as regards the coming of the Lord, should He tarry in long-suffering to sinners, knowing that "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Time should make no difference to faith. We should love, as well as patiently wait for, His appearing in glory. We should live as if He were coming to-night.

5. In 1 John iii. 2, 3: "Beloved, now are we the sons 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 (*lit. on*) Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." It is not yet manifested to the world what we shall be—*our hereafter*—but we know. The world should know *our present*. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." What love, what righteousness, what purity marked His path in the

world! These should mark ours. We should be the epistle of God to the world, every line of which ought to spell Christ. Thank God, we shall be like Him, morally and spiritually, when we see Him. Oh, what a glorious future is in store for us—*like* Him, and *with* Him! Well may John add, "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself." What could be more hallowing, sanctifying, separating, than this blessed hope? Suppose the one who was betrothed to the man who had gone to prepare a place in Australia, talked and wrote a great deal about her love, but yet went to places *she knew* well he did not approve of, and did and said many things that *she knew* would displease him, what would you think of her love? If she really loved him, would it not be the study of her life to do what pleased him? Ah, beloved, we talk about *our love* to our absent Lord, and yet how often we go to places we know He would not approve of, and where we would not wish Him to come and find us. Is this

love? "If a man love me he will keep my words." Moral separation from the world is the path of those who love and look for the appearing of Jesus—he purifieth himself. He does not say, "You must not go here, you must not do that," that is law; but He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Love must affect the heart, and the heart must influence the life.

6. And lastly, we have a blessed link between the cross and the glory in the Lord's Supper: "Ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." From the table of the Lord we can look back to Calvary, and remember His love, sufferings, and death, and look forward to the glorious morning of resurrection, when we shall see that riven side, those pierced hands and feet. *Faith* will then end in sight, and *hope* in full fruition, and *love* will have full scope for its development and its enjoyment throughout the countless ages of eternity. Such, beloved, is the Christian's hope; and God has given it a large place in His word; and He means us to give it a large

place in our hearts, and not merely in our heads. May we be morally ready as we are spiritually so when He comes, and may He revive in all our hearts this blessed hope, so that we may be as men that wait for their Lord.

“A LITTLE while!” Our Lord shall come,
And we shall wander here no more :
He'll take us to our Father's home,
Where He for us has gone before ;
To dwell with Him, to see His face,
And sing the glories of His grace.

“A little while!” He'll come again !
Let us the precious hours redeem ;
Our only grief to give Him pain,
Our joy to serve and follow Him :
Watching and ready may we be,
As those who long their Lord to see.

“A little while!” 'Twill soon be past :
Why should we shun the shame and cross ?
Oh, let us in His footsteps haste,
Counting for Him all else but loss !
Oh, how will recompense His smile,
The suffering of this “little while !”

“A little while!” Come, Saviour, come!
For Thee Thy Church has tarried long;
Take Thy poor wearied pilgrims home,
To sing the new eternal song;
To see Thy glory, and to be
In everything conformed to Thee.



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ABIDING IN CHRIST.

“In Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.”—1 JOHN iii. 5, 6.

NOT that we have *no* sin; for that would imply absolute perfection, and would be contrary to the Word. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” What the passage says is, that “whosoever **ABIDETH** in Him sinneth not.” The word “abideth” is the chief one in the sentence, and determines its meaning; namely, that **ABIDING** in Him, which is our true position, we do not practise sin.

The evil root, however, is still in us. And if our souls are joined to the evil root, sin will be the fruit; but if abiding in Christ, we shall not sin; this is the plain statement. The two scriptures must be taken together: "In *Him* is no sin; and whosoever *abideth in Him* sinneth not." The truth is, that joined in communion *to Him, from Him* can come no sin.

The doctrine, *practically*, I believe to be, that the soul abiding in Christ will not *actively sin*; being alive unto God, we are dead to sin: sin in the flesh will not only have no dominion over us, but for the time (would that it were always!) it will *lie in abeyance*, its deeds *mortified*. The soul for the time, whilst in communion, is applied *only to Christ*, and only Christ can *flow forth through it*.

This surely sheds light on John xv., where the Vine is Christ, and saints are the branches. Their true condition is to **ABIDE** in Christ, as branches in the Vine. If they *do*, fruit from Christ will flow forth through them. There is no life for believers but in Him, risen above the power of death—the true Vine. Those who are not living that life, not abiding in Christ, cannot bring forth fruit. They are like those dead branches, which the Lord declares are worthless—“Cast forth as a branch, and withered.”

It is as if He had said, “You know men’s estimate of *dead* branches, and what they do with them ; fit only for the burning, they cast them into the fire.” Not that *saints* are to be cast into the fire ; but that the casting into the fire shows how useless for fruit the dead

branches are. So the saint is utterly useless for service, unless he be *abiding* in Christ. Let him lose his communion (the deep connection which his soul has with Christ in communion), and at once he ceases to bear fruit. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself." It must have connection with the tree.

A tube, for example, is useless to give sweet water, unless applied to the sweet spring. Let it be applied to a bitter spring, and it will give forth bitter water. So if the soul be applied to the flesh, or walk according to the flesh, the result will be corruption. If, in realised communion, it be applied to Christ, the result will be according to Him. Such rendering of these passages leaves us without the difficulty of putting any construction on them other than what they plainly

and absolutely say; namely, that if we *abide in Christ, we sin not*—sin will not have dominion over us; and that if we abide in Christ, *we shall bear fruit*.

This does not involve absolute perfection; for sin in the flesh—the evil nature *is still in us*, and if *allowed*, would act as ever. Sin, *in us*, is never *absolutely* dead. One of Paul's holiest moments was when he had just emerged from the third heaven; yet it was then a thorn in the flesh was given him, *lest he should be exalted* above measure; that is, lest he should *sin*. No exercise of faith on our part can do away with fact, the fact being that the flesh is still in us, as Paul says in Galatians, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." It is never *subject to the law of God*; therefore is never changed. Nor

does it come of our crucifying the flesh. We are never told to crucify the flesh. We are told to *mortify*, which supposes it to exist still; it was crucified, that is, *judicially* dealt with, at the cross by Christ, who endured its curse and bore its doom. *But this happy condition of fruit-bearing, and in which sin is in abeyance, comes of our living that life that flows into us whilst in communion with Christ; as Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."* It is not an abiding for salvation, for all Christians *are* saved; it is an abiding for personal holiness, for fruit-bearing—for manifesting the life of Christ which is already in us. This is of immense practical value, as our Lord shows.

First, it is of value to *Him*. The vine has no way of showing its life or its

fruit but through the branches; Christ has no way of showing His fulness but through His members; as Paul says of "the church, which is His body, the *fulness* of Him that filleth all in all."

It is of value to us; as He says, "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is, beloved, whilst joined to Him in communion that the blessed Spirit begets prayer in us, the answer to which is *sure*. It is the same as to *joy*; joined to Him, as the tube to the spring, His *joy* flows into us; as He says, "That my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." The same also as to His love. Moreover, joined to Him, in the power of a conscious communion with Him, whatever we receive we can speak of, so "ye also

shall bear witness." Hence a single word, spoken whilst the soul is in communion, will have more power than volumes of words when the soul is out of communion. This is the great lack in the present day. How much is being said and done; but, alas! with what little power, and with what little result! Anything that comes from us that is not of this abiding in Him, such as when our souls are out of communion, may be counted by *us* as service, or work, but it is *without power*, and *without blessing*, and fit only for the burning. As to sin—and, alas! how careless are many believers even respecting sin—it is evident, in such abiding in Him, it must for the time be *in abeyance*, though of course the measure of our abidance, even at best, is so low that we must ever fail or fall short of the

divine glory. Oh the immense importance then, beloved, of true communion—of this true abiding in Christ! Our thoughts, and words, and actions will be either full or empty of Christ, as we are, or are not, in communion, and our own true blessedness in the divine life will correspond with the same.

May not this subject throw light on this professedly difficult text in 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin"? No one who knows himself or the Word can affirm that it means that we are *actually* perfect, intrinsically sinless. Some indeed have affirmed this to be a Christian *attainment*; but Scripture gives no warrant for it. There *is no such actual attainment*; we are complete *in Christ*; but in no sense else. It is true that the new nature in us (being

intrinsically holy) cannot sin; but that does not answer to the "whosoever," which implies that it is a *person* whose normal condition as a Christian is, that being born of God he sinneth not—does not practise sin. We say his normal condition; for he is supposed by God to be walking *not according to the flesh*, but according to the Spirit; and the walking, like the abiding, ensures a practical denial of sin. For if we walk in the Spirit, we *shall not* fulfil the lusts of the flesh; we shall not do the *evil* things that we otherwise would, but shall mortify, deny them. Sin in us will be *subdued*, and its power, practically, will be denied; the absence of which, in other words, the absence of the walking and the abiding, would leave even Paul himself, *as to service*, like a branch fit only for the

burning, or, as He Himself says, “*a castaway.*” May the Lord, dear friends, give us understanding in this; for how few, alas! are living in its knowledge or its power.

Hence the next thing to be considered is as to how the soul is to be in this condition. You are already asking—*How are we to abide?* It reminds one of the question, How are we to believe? As believing is simply taking God at His word, so with abiding; it is taking Christ at His word. We are simply to abide (to *remain*) in Him. “Let that therefore *remain* in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall *remain* in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.” (1 John ii. 24.) Beloved, we must simply do this or suffer

loss; of course, it is by faith; for it is by faith we take the place He has given us—by faith it is we are consciously in communion with Him, joined to the Lord, as the branch to the vine. It is this abidance which connects with so much blessing the realisation by faith of our *oneness* with Jesus at the right hand of God. Faith *brings* us into it, and can alone *keep* us in it; it is sin, unbelief, or disobedience, which at any moment may take us out of it. Our warrant is His blessed word, “Abide in me;” the same warrant which we had at first for believing is that which we now have for abiding. Observe, there are two things, as we have seen, consequent upon this abidance.

The first is, that “we sin not.”

The second, that “we bear much fruit.”

The first is simply negative—"we sin not;" for it is whilst the soul is abiding in Christ sin lies in abeyance. It is *subdued*, treated as dead; the easily besetting sin, along with any undue weight of sorrow or care on the soul, are laid aside. Sin, however, is still within us, and may at any moment secretly work against faith, against the truth; in fact, against God. But during the precious time the soul is fully abiding in Christ, sin has no dominion over us; the soul buried deep down in the Lord's grace and love, we are dead to sin. All this, though it be only negative, as I have said, is truly much for us to enjoy. We have victory over evil, dominion over sin, not merely on the cross, where sin and our evil nature were condemned and set aside by God, but *in ourselves*, where, whilst we

are in communion, the secret working of God is such that, through the blessed Spirit who is in us, our walk will be conformable to that word, "holy and without blame before Him in love."

But besides the not sinning, there is a more positive consequence of abiding, as described by our Lord in the chapter before us: "If we abide in Him we shall bring forth *much fruit*." Oh, how blessed is it, beloved, for our souls to know this! The branch being in connection with the Vine, its "much fruit" flows into it. The truth taught is, not that every *Christian* will bring forth much fruit, but that every *Christian abiding in Him* will do so. If we abide in Him, only what is in Him will flow into us. Apply the pipe to pure water, and only pure water will flow through it; apply it to the impure, and

the impure will flow into it. Thus, when our souls are applied not to self, or sin, but to *Christ, only Christ* will flow into us—blessed fruit! *His* joy, *His* love, and *His* peace, and all else He can communicate. Especially we are to abide in His love.

And His love to us begets love, our own love to Him. We are to abide in His love, that personal, deep, unchanging love of His. Abidance, like obedience, is the result of love. “If a man love Me,” says Christ, “he will keep my words.” And what love is that in which we are to abide, but that which we first of all at conversion saw and believed? “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.” Who can tell the measure of the Father’s love, His everlasting, infinite love to His Son? Yet such is Christ’s love to us. It is that

love, His own love, in which we are to abide. How do we know this love but by His *words*? He says, "If ye abide in Me, and my words abide in you." By His words, then, we know His love; also His Father's love. Ah, beloved, we had never known the love He hath for us, the love which led Him to die for us; we had never known His present thought of us in having gone to prepare a place for us, or His purpose to come again and take us to Himself, or the glory which is to follow (John xvii.), were it not for His *words*. And the words are but the expression of what His *Person* is: faith in His word is the path through the Spirit by which the soul finds her way into *Himself*. Thus, after all, simple faith in His truth is the thing needed; and hence any truth, such as completeness, oneness, adoption, heir-

ship, glory, apprehended by faith, will give the soul the needed power for abidance; just as faith apprehending the value of the blood gives the soul the power of salvation; only in each case it is not the truth itself, so much as the fellowship into which it brings us with the Lord of whom it speaks. Oh for such faith! and oh for such power! This is what we need, beloved.

And now, further, what a truth is here! "If a man love Me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Mark it well—"We will come unto Him." Hence the Father also abides in us; we know that He was in Him who said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." For all the Father is in *Him*, that blessed One, and all this sweet double

abidance, beloved, may be in us. How wonderful! How precious! Do you understand it? It comes of *simple obedience*, which obedience comes of simple *love*. For "he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him."

Moreover, it is our happiness to *know* this. For "hereby know we that He abideth in us, by His Spirit which He hath given us." That Spirit is the Spirit of knowledge, by which we know the Father and the Son through the Word. He is the Spirit of the Son; so that we have fellowship as the Son with the Father. He is the Spirit of God by which we know the love God hath to us. But if we walk in darkness (of sin, or ignorance), we may indeed be Christians, but we are not in obedience, and have no

fellowship, no abidance ; and as a consequence, we have no practical holiness, or power against sin, and consequently no peace. This is the condition, alas ! of how many at this time who are the children of God.

Oh, beloved, who can overestimate the importance of all this, especially in relation to our personal holiness. For, first, it is by abiding in Him that we get a salvation from *the daily power of sin*. Not, as we have shown, from its presence ; for that is still within us—nor from its doom ; *that* has been once taken by Christ alone on the cross, and never needs to be repeated ; but from its power, its dominion over us. Alas ! how many strive after this, but obtain it not because they strive amiss. They are not freed from sin. They are not delivered from its every-day

power; sin has still mastery over them. It is only by *abiding* in Christ, by remaining in Him, we are distinctly told, we shall not sin. It would seem, therefore, that our aim should be, not so much deliverance from this particular sin or that, but simply by faith to *abide* in Him. Living and acting in such abidance, sin lies in abeyance. Thus we see, that when sin seeks to assert its power, with what power to oppose it. Our strength is in *abiding in Him*. We have long since found that our own power is vain—that of the new nature as well as the old. It is only in Him that we can ensure success. We having no strength of our own; our own fighting has ended only in defeat. Our conquest must be obtained where our salvation is obtained. Our salvation was obtained simply and only in Christ, and

unless Christ come into the scene of our conflicts, we are sure of no victory.

This is the great truth taught us for conflict, as well as for salvation, in 1 Sam. xx. So long as the battle was between the Philistines and Israel the people trembled. As long as they and the enemy were set in battle array against each other they were sore dismayed. But when it was no longer merely *themselves* and the enemy, but *David* and the enemy, Israel, in David, obtained the victory. *David* did it all. He not only levelled the foe at his feet, but *stood* on him, taking off his head with his own weapon. So Christ, using no weapon, but that used by the enemy, *by death* overcame him who had the power of death. But this you will say was for salvation from the doom of sin. Yes, and it must be by the same trusting to

David—the same looking to the Lord, to the power and efficacy of that death, by which He died for sin, also to the power of *His resurrection*—that we can have daily victory over its dominion in our ever-recurring conflicts with it.

The battle is the Lord's, and He loves to be trusted with our cause. He came to Joshua, and declared Himself as one to fight Israel's battles, saying, "As Captain of the host of the Lord am I come." When Israel owned Him as such, what victories! When not (as at Ai), what defeats! They, at Jericho, simply walked around the city, and allowed the Lord to conquer. They did nothing else. What power it was to them that *the Lord* was engaged for them! They abode in the thought of *Him*, and our strength, beloved, in conscious weakness, is to do the same,

trusting to Him, referring all to Him, and abiding in Him. Ah, beloved, were we to do this we should find that the sin which so easily besets would lose its hold, and the temptation which assails us its power, so that we should not sin. Thus, when the enemy comes in like a flood, and inly torments us with his wiles, we should say, "Lord, here is another sin; I am not able for it—another temptation; but remaining in Thee, I am learning how Thou alone canst conquer. As David against the Philistine, undertake for me. The battle is thine; the praise is thine!" And just as in salvation at first I *believed*—for *believing* was mine—so in conflict, looking off unto Jesus to deliver me from its power, as before He delivered me from its guilt, *I lay aside the sin which so besets me.* I say "*I*," for this again re-

sponsibly is mine. Beloved, do you understand ! The sixth of Romans shows that sin before death *had* a claim upon you. But since death for sin has transpired, sin has no claim. He who in Christ is dead, and dead *to* sin, is freed from sin, and doth not, while in abidance, actively sin. Remember, it is *whilst* we are abiding in Him that we sin not ; and, moreover, it is whilst we abide in Him that we bear fruit. For from whence the rich grapes on the branches, but through the vine ? The riches of the vine flow into the branches. Were they not united to the vine, there would be no fruit. Apart from Him we have nothing ; but abiding in Him we are, in our experience, dead unto sin, but alive unto God. His peace, His love, His joy, and His life, all flow into us. This as to our own blessed-

ness. It is the same as to our work for the Lord. If engaged in service, the power, unction, blessing must all come from Him; nay, He Himself will flow forth through the Word; thus, in beholding sinners saved, or saints blest, you will see that it was *the Lord* who was out (so to speak) among them, according to that promise, "I, IF I be lifted up, will draw all to Me." Oh how little is there of such service in this age of work and activity! There are journeys many, efforts many, and words many; but how little of the Lord Himself, manifestly in power, drawing unto Himself and into God.

And now as to the true scene of all this. The scene of our abidance in Him is simply where He now is, risen and ascended far above all principality and power in heavenly places. There, *where*

He is before God, *we are*; and as He is, holy, accepted in the Beloved. We are raised and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are in Him *there*. He is in us, our life, our rest, our power *here*. Satan would keep us out of the heavenly places; wicked spirits would keep us out; hence, when at times we fail to realise our place there, and through sin lose our sense of the grace which, notwithstanding, gives us a right to be there, it is hard to regain the true sense we should ever have of the fact that it is our place.

In conclusion, as to this whole truth, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness—what fruitfulness from such a source! what power, what blessings *from* the Lord! And, oh, what rest, what joy! And what setting our affections on

“things above,” the effect of which is personal holiness! For just in proportion as we are in the enjoyment of the “things above,” do we “mortify the members which are upon the earth.” And the doing so is not so much a labour or an effort (though we do *mortify*), as it is the simple blessed effect of the enjoyment itself. Is there no room for confession, beloved? Have we ever lived as we ought in the constant power of this abidance? Where, alas! in these days is the “*much fruit*” and the “*more fruit*” from this blessed Vine? And, beloved, let me admonish myself, and you. As for me, truly I am humbled; for in speaking of it even, one is reminded of what another has said when asked that some of his sayings may be published.

“I only grieve,” he said, “to think how

little my own attainments have corresponded with the blessed truths I have taught!"

So here, beloved, do I feel on this wondrous, precious truth of abiding. How does it condemn one for all those hours and days of life in which its blessed power has been so little known.

A SONG OF ABIDING.

ABIDE in Thee, in that deep love of Thine,
 My Jesus, Lord, Thou Lamb of God divine,
 Down, closely down, as living branch with tree,
 I would abide, my Lord, my Christ, in Thee,
 And Thou in me.

Abide in Thee, my Saviour-God, I know
 How love of Thine, so vast, in me may flow,
 My empty vessel running o'er with joy,
 Now overflows to Thee without alloy,
 My best employ.

Abide in Thee, nor doubt, nor self, nor sin
 Can e'er prevail with Thy blest life within;
 Joined to Thyself, communing deep, my soul
 Knows nought beside its motions to control,
 Thou hast my whole.

Abide in Thee, dear hiding-place secure,
 May oft deep purging for my sins ensure,
 But branch, when pruned, is nearest to the hand,
 Though bleeding much, 'tis what Thy love hath
 planned.

Shall I withstand?

Abide in Thee, 'tis thus I inly know
The *secrets* of *Thy mind* e'en while below,
All joy and peace, all knowledge of Thy Word,
All power and fruit in service for the Lord,
It doth afford.

Abide in Thee, *one life* is mine and Thine;
All *fulness* that's in *Thee* is counted mine,
As branch must bear the life-fruit of the tree,
So thus to show Thyself, Thou needest me,
As I need Thee.

LONDON :

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W. ;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

THE NEW BIRTH.

BY

T. SHULDHAM HENRY.

Fourteenth Thousand.

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THE NEW BIRTH.

“Ye *must* be born again.”—JOHN iii. 7.

BORN once, die twice; born twice, die once. There are two births, there are two deaths—the natural birth and the spiritual birth, the natural death and the spiritual death. If a man has only been born once, the natural birth, and dies in that state, he dies twice; the body dies, becomes food for worms, and the soul dies, which is eternal separation from God. If a man has been born twice, spiritually as well as naturally, he only dies once, the natural death, the death of the body, if the Lord

delays His coming. Over him the second death has no power. By birth man is introduced into the earthly family. By birth he *must* also be introduced into the heavenly. "Ye *must* be born again." Dear friend, how do matters stand between you and God? Have you been born again, born twice, "born of God," "born from above"? (See margin.) Are you a member of the royal family of heaven? Are you a child of God, a son, a daughter of the Lord God Almighty? The Lord is very emphatic about this. Yea, very dogmatic. "Ye **MUST** be born again." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye **SHALL NOT** enter into the kingdom of heaven."

It comes to this, Unless you are born of God, converted to God, you *shall not* enter into the kingdom. Jesus says it, who has power to keep you out. He does not say "ye must not, ye may not." He says "ye shall not, ye cannot."

Hearken to Him. See that ye refuse not Him that speaks from heaven.

I. Let us consider the importance of the new, the spiritual birth. Without it man cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a master of Israel, a man of no mean pretensions or position in the religious world, heard Jesus inculcate His heavenly precepts, and saw Him perform His superhuman miracles, and felt within himself how far short he fell, as a teacher of the people, when measured by such a standard, and how ignorant he was in comparison with such a teacher. He therefore determines to hear more, and comes to Jesus to be taught, as an inferior to a superior teacher. It was not anxiety about his soul that brought him. It was not conviction of sin. He came to be taught. "Rabbi," he says, "we know that thou art a teacher *come from God*: for no man can do

the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus, as it were, stopped him short, and said, "Except a man be born again" (*i.e.* from above, see margin), "he cannot *see* the kingdom of God;" as much as to say, the first thing to be done before you can see, be taught, understand anything about the kingdom is, that "you must be born again." I cannot teach you till your eyes are opened. I cannot instruct you in your natural state, for "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." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Before Nicodemus was entitled to take his seat at the feet of Jesus, and learn the lessons of grace from His lips, "he must be born of God." This is God's order. "The grace of God must bring salvation to him before grace can teach him." (See Titus ii. 11, 12.)

Again, the new birth is all-important, because without it there is no introduction into the heavenly family. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot *enter into* the kingdom of God." (v. 5.) A child by baptism, or rather water-sprinkling, may be introduced into the outward, professing Church, but it is only by spiritual birth that any one can be introduced into the Church of Christ or family of God. You may have been baptized, you may have been received as a member of a Church, and have never been born again, never made a member of Christ's Church. How is it with you, dear reader? Are you a member of a Church merely? for if you have not been born of God you belong not to His Church, you belong not to *the* Church. "Ye must be born again."

II. Before entering upon the consideration of what the new birth is, we must endeavour

to show what it is *not*. It is needful to do so in these days, when so many false views are abroad and openly preached about salvation, regeneration, and atonement.

First, the new birth is not the gradual improvement of the old Adam nature under the influences of the Holy Spirit, as some wrongly teach. Those who hold this view err sadly with respect to two cardinal truths of God's word — (1) that the old nature is totally unimprovable, and (2) that the Holy Spirit is not an influence but a divine person.

As to the first, let us read Gen. vi. 5: "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" (*every day*, see margin). But you may say, this was man before the flood, he is not so bad now. Has the world improved? let me ask you. It is true there is *more* improvement, socially

and intellectually ; but is there moral improvement ? There is more refinement, because more restraints ; but has man's heart changed ? It is still the same, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it ?" In Ps. xiv. we find God taking a look at man hundreds of years after the flood, and what is His record ? How does He find him ? "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, and seek God." (v. 2.) Does man by nature understand God ? No ; the reverse. He *mis*-understands Him. He thinks God hates him, God is angry with him because he has sinned. He thinks God a tyrant, an austere man, and so misunderstands Him. Does man by nature seek God ? No, never ! He seeks sin, self-gratification, and indulgence ; seeks pleasure and amusement, but God he does not, he cannot seek ; yet God in His infinite grace and love seeks him, and this

is the gospel : "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

What was the result of God's looking to see if there were any that did understand and seek Him ? (Read *v.* 3.) "They are all gone aside : they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, NO, NOT ONE." How solemn ! Men may be kind, generous, philanthropic, religious, but all his works *before* salvation, or *for* salvation, are "reprobate" (Titus *i.*), "dead works" (Heb. *ix.*) ; they are useless and worthless before Him who has said, "None doeth good, no, not one." Job tried for many a day to improve his old nature, but had to give it up in despair, and exclaim, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one." (*xiv.* 4.)

: Just one passage more (Matt. *xv.*), where we have the Lord's own testimony of man's heart. In verses 8 and 9, we find *where* man's heart is. "This people draweth nigh unto

me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; *but their heart is far from me.*" How true of many at the present day! They go to their "places of worship," repeat prayers, join in singing praises, worship God as they think, but where is their heart all the time? In their speculations, their business, their money, their pleasures, their sins, their dress and appearance—far from God. Christ says, "In vain they do worship me." (v. 9.) No unconverted, unsaved man, *can* worship God. I state it boldly. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. viii. 8.) Professor of religion, you may go through your religious services in private or in public; you may have the form of godliness, say prayers, sing hymns, honour God with your lips, and never, never worship Him who must be worshipped, and can only be worshipped, in spirit and in truth. In verse 19 you will see *what* man's heart is. "Out of

the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Awful description of what man's—every man's—heart is. These may be kept down by education and refinement, but they are there. John Bradford, the martyr, one day seeing a poor criminal pass his house on his way to the scaffold, exclaimed, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God!" Sin, in its various forms and aspects, is but the outflowing of the human heart. It is the fountain-head, the source, the spring of all evil. You may dry up many of the streams; viz., the drunkard may give up his drunkenness, the blasphemer his blasphemy, the immoral man his evil ways, and others leave streams untouched, and the fountain-head unreached. Until this is reached, and cleansed, and purified, every stream will be tainted and impure.

Human nature is totally unimprovable and bad, and man's condition utterly lost;

and therefore nothing good can be expected in the thoughts, feelings, motives, or actions. Human nature is so hopelessly bad, that God had to set it aside, and put it out of His sight as worthless, as that which never could be improved. How vain the effort, then, to bring good out of what is only bad; to expect good fruit from a bad tree. Take an illustration. I want to fill my orchard with good fruit-trees, which will produce fruit fit for use. How do I proceed? Do I say to my gardener, "Order in from the nurseryman a good number of crab-apple trees, and plant them in the orchard. Make the ground very rich, prune them, dress them, look well after them, and no doubt we shall have a good crop of fruit?" Suppose he does so. Spring comes round—beautiful type of resurrection—the buds begin to open, and the trees send forth their blossom. I say to the gardener, "I think we may expect some fruit this year." Autumn arrives.

I visit the orchard. Some nice-looking apples are upon the trees. How tempting they look ! I pluck one and taste it. Bah ! how sour ; how unpalatable. " These won't do, gardener ; you must cultivate them more highly. Give them another trial. Use all your skill, devote all your time to them, for I am anxious to have good fruit." Another year passes away. Again I visit the orchard. The trees are laden with fruit. They are certainly larger in size and better in colour under the skilful care and treatment of the gardener. I congratulate myself that at last I have succeeded in having a plentiful supply of fruit fit for my table. I pluck an apple and taste it. Bah ! it is more sour than ever. Skilful care and treatment have certainly produced a fairer object for the eye to rest on. Improvement there is, but the nature is unchanged. Do what we would, we could not make the crab-tree produce good fruit. The crab-tree will be the crab-

tree still, even though brought to the highest state of cultivation.

And so it is with human nature. You may cultivate it, educate it, refine it, make it moral, virtuous, religious, but it will be still the same; unfit for God's presence, producing nothing but bad, sour fruit; for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing."

Secondly. The "new birth" is not making a profession of religion, or saying you believe on Jesus. We live in days of great profession, but of very little vital godliness. The form is fashionable, but the power of God denied. It is religion without reality; religion without God. What is it worth? It is a religion built on the *sand*—very beautiful in its external appearance, but all for the eye of man. There may be zeal and earnestness, but they are often mistaken for—as they often put to shame—true Christianity. There may be leaves, there

may be blossom, but where is the fruit? There may be the shell, but where is the kernel? "Leaves only" is the divine testimony of mere profession—the fashionable religion of the present day. Dear reader, are you religious *to be saved*? or are you religious because *you are saved*? This makes all the difference. Religiousness will never save you. "You must be born again."

Works are all right in the place God has assigned them—from salvation, not *for* salvation. We are justified by faith alone, yet by faith which is not alone; justified by faith without works, in order that we may work. God justifies the sinner on the principle of faith alone, in order that the believer may justify God by His works—his holy life, walk, conversation. The works of the flesh are the fruits of a corrupt tree (Gal. v. 19); the works of the Spirit are the fruit of the divine life in one "born of God."

If you had all the good works, so called,

that ever were performed, all the vows ever made, all the tears ever shed, all the sighs ever heaved, they could not blot out a single stain from your conscience, or give you a solid ground of peace in the presence of God. How long it takes to convince people of the worthlessness of all their efforts because they won't believe that there is nothing good in them, and therefore they toil and labour to make themselves fit for God! It seems so strange to be told that there is no title to Christ but our utter ruin, and that we have no need to wait to get better or to prepare ourselves; that every step in self-improvement is a step in the wrong direction, inasmuch as self can never be mended. Religious, pious flesh is as far from God, as far from righteousness, as far from heaven, as flesh in its grossest, vilest form. What is needed is not reformation, improvement, but a new life altogether, and that the life of God.

III. We shall now consider what this "new birth" is.

It is the engrafting a new nature, the implanting a new principle, the imparting a new life, the formation of a new man. (Read 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; and 2 Peter i. 4.)

Let us return to our illustration. Having given up as a hopeless task our endeavours to improve the crab-apple trees in the orchard, I give orders to my gardener to cut down the crab-trees, leaving nothing but the stems, to get some grafts of different kinds of fruit-trees and graft them into the crab-tree stems. This he does. Soon the grafts grow, blossom, and bear fruit—beautiful fruit, pleasant to the eye and grateful to the taste. We have now two natures in the one tree. How careful the gardener must be not to allow shoots to grow on the crab-tree stem, as grow they will, if allowed. They would injure the new grafts. They must be kept down with the pruning-knife.

The old nature remains in all its distinctiveness, and the new is introduced in all its distinctiveness. The new nature has its own habits, desires, aspirations, affections, tendencies. They are all heavenly, spiritual—"of God." Its aspirations are ever upward. Water seeks its own level, so the new nature proceeding from God—the source—seeks to rise to whence it came. The old nature remains the same, but the new is introduced. "The elder shall serve the younger," is a divine principle applicable to the subjection of the old to the new nature by the power of the Spirit which indwells. The old is to be kept in the place of death. God counts it as "dead," and we are called to "mortify," subdue, and deny it in all its thoughts and ways. God has *put* it out of His sight, and should *keep* it so. What a relief to the soul that has been struggling for years to improve self—nature; also to the one who, breathing after holiness, has

looked on holiness as consisting in improving that which hates holiness and loves sin. How liberating and joyous it is to know that God is not looking for any improvement in nature, that he sees *it* as dead, and *us* as alive in Christ—one with Him, “accepted in the Beloved.”

IV. How is the new birth produced? “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (v. 5.)

Water is used by God as the type (1) of the Holy Spirit, and (2) of the word of God. As to the first, in John vii. 38, 39, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit.” As to the second, read Ephesians v. 26: “By the washing of water by the Word.” What does it mean in John iii.? Is it possible it *could* mean that when a child is sprinkled with water it immediately receives the new

birth—it is born again? Surely not, though taught so boldly and made the foundation-stone of human systems of religion? Well, does water here mean the Spirit typically? If so, it would read thus: “Except a man be born of the Spirit and the Spirit.” Would the Lord use tautology? Surely not. Then we must look to the other thing of which water is the type—the word of God.

The Word is God’s mighty instrument in the production of the new birth—as in James i. 18: “Of His own will begat He us *with the Word of truth* ;” and in 1 Peter i. 23: “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God* ;” “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the *Word of God*” (Rom. x. 17); “He that heareth *my Word*, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*.” (John v. 24.) It is by the word of God that dead souls are called into life. He who said, “Let there be light,” must say, “Let

there be life." When it is necessary to amputate a limb, there are three things necessary. 1, The operator, the surgeon ; 2, The instrument, the knife ; 3, The subject, the man to be operated on. So in the new birth these three are necessary. The Spirit is the operator, the Word the instrument, and the poor dead sinner the subject.

How many can point to the very verse in the word that God used to give life? It is God's word applied by the Spirit. It is all of God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them *that believe on His name : who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (John i. 12, 13.) From this we see that every one who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus is born of God. All who rest their souls on Christ and His finished work possess a new life, are born *from above*. The Lord, in dealing with Nicodemus,

answered his "How can these things be?" by bringing before him the familiar lesson of the brazen serpent. The old nature is under judgment of death, being incapable of amendment, as we have seen. The old man *must* be laid aside, the Son of man *must* be lifted up. Instead of His trying to ameliorate the race of the first man, He is to be lifted up in judgment, to die on the cross, to give up the life of man, bearing his doom. Judgment being executed on the Son of man, God can give to the believer a new life, even the life of the risen Jesus. It is not flesh made spirit, but an everlasting life brought in by God's Son bearing the judgment, making an end of the old man on the cross, and rising out of the grave as the head of the new creation. He imparts His life to all the sons of Adam who believe on Him. The brazen serpent lifted up by Moses is the illustration used by the Lord to show "the ruler of the Jews" this truth.

The Israelites murmured against God ; they sinned. God is righteous, and must punish sin. He sends among them fiery flying serpents. They bite them. Many died. Others are dying. Moses could not cure them. Physicians could not heal them. The poison coursed through their veins, hurrying them on to death, the consequence of their sin. Moses prayed to God to take away the serpents. Had He merely done so, all the bitten ones must have died. In His infinite grace He provided a remedy, a means by which the bitten ones could be saved. He commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass, and *lift it up* on a pole that all might see it, and that whosoever looked at the serpent of brass would be cured. The moment he looked he lived. Life in a look. Dying a minute before, he stands on his feet a living, saved man.

Dear reader, as the Israelite had the poison of the serpent coursing through his veins, so

every unsaved sinner has the poison of sin in him, hurrying him on to endless death. No human remedies can counteract its power or save the sinner. "The soul that sinneth it shall die" is the sad consequence.

God, in His infinite love, has provided a remedy for man's ruin, a means by which the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, may yet live. The Israelite was not told to look at his wounds, though it was the sense of them that made him look. Moses cried, "*Look and live.*" Not a moment was to be lost. Men all around are gasping their last breath. "Dying men, look at the serpent of brass lifted up on the pole," was the cry. No hope in human efforts, in waiting to get better, to feel more. A few moments will settle it one way or another. Some look, they spring upon their feet new creatures, and point others to the serpent of brass. Mothers bid their little ones to look. Aged parents are lovingly upheld by their chil-

dren, that they may look and live. Men and women are *in earnest*. All the living are engaged in trying to save the dying. *All* who looked got life. *None* who neglected God's remedy escaped. The uplifted serpent was the savour of life or death. Dear friend, if you are out of Christ you are dying. You have not a moment to call your own. "This night thy soul may be required of thee." Where then, oh! where are you going to spend eternity? As that serpent was uplifted to save the bitten Israelites, so the Son of man has been lifted up on the cross to save poor guilty sinners. "You *must* be born again." The Son of man *must* be lifted up. You cannot save yourself, you cannot redeem yourself from going down to the pit. God has provided a Saviour, a Redeemer; His Son lifted up on the cross. The bitten Israelite was healed by simply *looking* at the serpent of brass. You can only be saved by *looking* at Jesus on the cross. You are not

told to look at your sins, though it is the sense of your sins that will make you look. "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." One look at the serpent saved the Israelite, one look at Christ will save you. The Israelite had not to go through a long process before he was fit to look. Neither has the sinner to do anything to make him fit for God's salvation. What was *his* title to look? His wounds. Your sins are alone *your* title to look and live. It was not the *way* in which they looked, but the *object* looked at, that cured the Israelites; so, dear sinner, it is not the *way* you look, but the *object* you look at, the Son of man, that saves you. "Look unto *Me*, and be ye saved."

The moment the Israelite looked, he lived. The moment you look at the Son of man lifted up on the cross for you, that moment you have everlasting life, you are saved. Jesus says it. Look not at self, sin, feel-

ings. Look at the Son of man and live. "Looking," "coming," "receiving," all mean one and the same thing—believing *on* Jesus. Man sinned, he fell under the judgment of death. This is his doom : Not merely the death of the body, but the death of the soul, which is eternal separation from God. Judgment must be borne (the righteousness of God demands it) either by the sinner or by the sinner's substitute. Man, who is under it, cannot be exonerated, but on the ground of another bearing it. This Jesus did on Calvary : "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

"He bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the surety and sinner are free."

There was no way of delivering us but by undergoing the judgment. This has been done. God's claims are satisfied, and now the sinner can be saved. Without the cross there could be no escape from judgment, no

entrance into life. God's controversy now with the sinner is not about sin; that was settled between Him and Christ on the cross. It is this, "Will *you* be satisfied with that which satisfied ME, the cross of Christ?" The resurrection is God's testimony to the sinner that judgment due to sin is past, and on this ground the vilest sinner can be saved. The moment you believe God's testimony, the moment you see your escape from judgment because of the cross of Christ, that moment you HAVE eternal life—you live. Do you see this, dear reader? "So *must* the Son of man be lifted up: that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish, but HAVE eternal life." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not come into judgment*; but is passed from death unto life." Look and live. Believe and have everlasting life. This is to be born again.

· But some may say, "I believe, I always believed." Multitudes are under the impression that they do believe, and when we preach that people have only to believe to be saved, they have an idea that it does not apply to them. The fact of the matter is, people mistake assent for consent, believing *about* for believing *upon*. They mean by believing that they give their assent to all the truths of Scripture; in other words, believe the Bible from cover to cover. They believe all about the creation, the flood, the history of the children of Israel, the birth, life, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus. They may believe; that is, they may assent to all these, and much more, and go down to dark perdition unsaved. No amount of assent will save the sinner.

This sort of assent is nothing more or less than a cold, icy, traditional, historical belief, upon which thousands are depending, under

the fearful delusion that it is salvation to their souls. This is the reason one sees so many who profess to believe on Jesus, walking after their own lusts, there being no change of life or conduct. Reader, be not deceived. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things have passed away ; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) If you say you have believed in Jesus, and show it not in your life, you are labouring under a most awful delusion. The faith, the belief that saves the sinner, is not intellectual assent to truths or doctrines, but consent of the heart to God's testimony about yourself, that you are a lost, guilty sinner, and about Jesus that He is God's remedy for your ruin ; that He is the one that took *your* place on the cross, satisfying God's claim against *you*. In fact, it is appropriating to yourself Christ, and all the benefits, blessings, and results of His finished work. "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.*" (Rom. x. 9.) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*" (Acts xvi. 31.)

The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified Lord,
His pardon *at once* he receives—
Salvation in full through His blood.

LONDON :

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W. ;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

MY PRESENCE
SHALL GO WITH THEE;

OR,

Wilderness Rest.

BY

F. DENHAM SMITH.

Eleventh Thousand.

LONDON:
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WILDERNESS REST.

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”—Ex. xxxiii. 14.

AS suited to the present moment, when sorrow comes over us in our separations—and with many perhaps, as to this life, for ever—let me direct your minds to these comforting words of the Lord to Moses: “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” Moses asked for two things: that the Lord would show him His way and His glory. But these the Lord denied him.

But what He did was a far better thing. He gave him the assurance, “My PRESENCE,” or, as we shall see, “My faces shall go with thee.” It was in wisdom it was denied, for, as to the way, was he able to look upon all

that which lay between the beginning and the end ; that great and terrible wilderness ; the enemies he had to encounter ; the evil heart of unbelief in Israel ; his own self-will in altering the divine word, striking, instead of speaking, to the rock, by which also he lost the land. Was he able to see and to drink this cup ? and are we better able than he ? We have taken up the cross, but to know the whole cost at one glance would be too much for us. For truly

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”

Ah, no ! our sorrows and disappointments, with all the conflicts with evil in our own wretched hearts, and it may be downfalls and sins, with the evils and failure of others, all these would be too much for us. As to the glory, he who was king in Jeshurun had it on the holy mount ; but then it was where his eye could see without being dazzled, and his heart enjoy without being overwhelmed.

More suited now than a sight of the glory was it that, in such a wilderness, Moses:

should nestle in the bosom of Him who said, "My PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE." Not dazzled, but nestling, resting, comforted, helped, with nothing to want for fellowship, not alone, not without divinest company, even of Him who taught His *ways* unto Moses, those blessed ways of His grace, righteousness and love. And so better for us, that instead of being dazzled with the sight of what would be too great a burden for this body of humiliation, and instead of knowing all that lies before us in an untrodden future, in which so much evil is, that we should rest in the presence—lie, as it were, in the bosom—of our unchanged God. Oh, blessed promise this! "My presence shall go with thee." "There is something sweet," said the Countess of Powerscourt, "in spelling out of a book, the leaves of which are cut by Him;" but I add, How much more precious is the page, every line and every word of which has been inscribed for us by Him?

The whole history, by which we arrive at

this promise, is of deep value. It shows us the power Moses, through His truth, had with God, and the great grace which God manifested in His dealings with His people—grace abounding over all sins.

In chap. xxxii. we read that in the absence of Moses, when he was in the mount with God, Israel, instead of being awed by the thought of his being there, became guilty of two immense sins. Turning their backs upon Him who *was* their God, they made a molten calf, worshipping it, sacrificing unto it, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." And the reason they gave was scarcely less evil than the deed itself. They said, "As for this Moses, this man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt." What! did *he* bring them out? was it *Moses* who had filled Egypt with the mighty wonders, and the mightier deliverance? Besides, as an instrument of God, was he so despised that they could speak of him as "*this man*"? After such a deliverance, with such a denial

of the Most High, who can have any confidence in the flesh? Ah, friends, this is a picture of what *man* in himself is—vile, rebellious, unmindful, never to be trusted; this is a picture of ourselves. Well was it for Israel that there was grace beyond all this, and well, dear saints, for us. We wonder at Israel, but, alas! may we not rather wonder at ourselves? Have we never rested in some poor senseless thing, some poor idol of our own making, something that we could see, that the mind was bent on? Have we never, turning our back upon God, rested in some creature aid, or in some creature love? What is this but the sin of Israel? Ah, said I not that this picture is of great value to us? for whence oftentimes our own weakness, our own low condition of soul before God, and our own feebleness before men? Is it not that we have oftentimes chosen to find our rest in what was as utterly unable to meet our wants or satisfy our souls? It is well to learn in what is our strength. Is it in our love? No; Peter had that. Is it

in our confidence? He had that also; yet he failed: he denied his Lord. What he wanted was not love, not confidence, not strength, but a true sense of weakness. Satan sifted him, and brought out the dreadful result of his denying the Lord.

It is only when we are consciously unable of ourselves to keep ourselves, and can cast ourselves only upon the Lord, that we are safe. Not only were they little children that the beloved disciple addressed, but may we not say that they, *knowing* they were such, in all weakness and dependence, would "keep themselves from idols"?

But mark now the jealousy of God. He cannot share His glory with another; either with the idol or Moses. So, handing them over, as it were, to Moses, He says (*v. 7*), "Go, get thee down; for *thy* people, which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. . . . Now therefore let Me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation."

Remark how the Lord tells Moses, "They are *thy* people," and "*thou* broughtest them out of the land of Egypt." This surely was a fiery dart, not now from the enemy, but from God Himself. But in the issue it fell harmless upon His saint. How? By Moses holding up to God His own sure word; as we may say, by presenting God to himself. This way of meeting the blows that may befall us was as old in the knowledge of Moses as that wonderful day of Gen. xv. Abraham had been sore afraid; some soul-disturbance, of what kind we are not told, only we know he was troubled; some gloomy foreboding; some loneliness, it may be, in his pilgrimage; some weakness after service in battling with the four kings—like another Samson, dying as it were of want after immense victory; for he has to be fed by the very hand whose victory it was, as Samson from the very bone which had been the instrument of slaying a thousand.

The Lord comes, and from His very word to him we know of his sorrow. "Fear not,

Abram ; be not afraid." "I know," as if He had said, "the blows are heavy, but I am thy shield." The shield is a moveable part of armour ; it can be lifted in the very face of a blow, can be removed to receive it from what quarter soever it may come. Thus, should the enemy assail you with the fiery darts of unbelief, telling you that you are a sinner, you have only to hold up God as your salvation. Should he cast a doubt on account of your failure, of your being saved, show him the grace abounding ; show him God ; who gave Christ for us, who hath brought us to God.

"'Tis all of God, who makes us meet,
Which makes salvation feel so sweet."

It is God Himself who is the shield, and who is an answer to every blow which may befall us. Oh, how divinely taught was Moses ! as if he had just been reading Abraham, with whose faith in God he was familiar. Against the "*thy* people," and the "*which thou* hast brought," he simply lifts the unchangeable truth that they were not *his* but

God's; that *he* had not brought them out of the land, but that *God* had done it, who had said, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates." Again, "Why doth thy wrath turn against," not *my*, but *thy* people, which *thou* has brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, "For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against *Thy* people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swearest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever."

With what preciousness of faith and assured confidence did he use God's own words, shall

I say, against all such denial on the part of God of His people. "Make of *me* a great nation! the promise," says he, "was made to Abraham, and not to me." Besides, like the greater than Moses, *could* Moses take the whole blessedness, independent of the people? It was in the midst of *His* deepest agony, when hanging on the tree with the darkness of divine judgment on His soul, that, with leisure of affection, He could say, thinking of His Church, "Deliver my darling"—my "*only one*"—"from the power of the dog." (Ps. xxii. 20.) No; not Moses at the expense of the nation, and not Christ apart from His Church.

Said Moses to the people, for God must be vindicated as to His holiness and His character, "I will go up unto the Lord, *peradventure* I may make atonement." Ah, there is no "*peradventure*" with us! No "*peradventure*" as to *our* atonement, or *our* acceptance, or security. We are not going on the ground of some mere *peradventure*; our blessed Saviour has made atonement.

It is a finished work. "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." By His own offering He has done this, so that no sorrowful peradventure can ever impose itself on our souls, or awaken in our minds a single doubt as to the holy and precious grace in which we righteously stand. But as everything here was owing to the mediation of Moses, God heard the intercession which he made; so, beloved, all for us is made to depend upon our precious Saviour, who is for us in the presence of God. He is the sure nail on which all the vessels are hung; the small and great alike are safe there; their safety being not in what as vessels they are, but in what the nail is on which they all hang. Precious rest this to the soul of one who, not looking at self, sees Jesus only, who "of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "Ye are complete in Him." This, dear friends, is lifting God's own shield, God Himself, in the very face of the terrible blows of the enemy.

As to the covenant God made with Abraham, I may say He delighted in covenants, as if they were His blessed pastime with His servants. After the lamp (Israel, we may say) had passed through the smoking furnace, safely and brightly, in virtue of passing between the pieces of the sacrifice, we find one of these, a precious covenant, all on the one part, not God *and* Abraham parties to the keeping of it, but God ONLY, without any condition, as without any responsibility on the part of Abraham, saying, "Unto thy seed have *I* given this land." Sample of the security in which we stand in Christ; all things being ours, not because of our responsibility or merit, but all laid at our feet as an absolute, an unalterable gift, to faith.

Dear friends, have you ever seen God thus? Have you ever said to the Lord, "*Thou* hast promised; it is *Thy* word"? No peradventure; sin put away; glory vindicated; the value of atonement all placed by God to the account of the believing sinner; perfected for ever; no more conscience of sins; shall not come

into judgment ; accepted in the Beloved ; a son and heir—heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ—all things ours ; foreknown, predestinated to be conformed to the image of His^a Son ; to be raised or changed, in resurrection or in living glory ; all founded ON HIS WORD, the gift of God to faith ; the answer of the soul, as with Moses, against all disturbance and all difficulty. Oh what a God is this to be with us ! Who is saying to us, “MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE.”

And now, what is the next word ? “And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” The Unchangeable changing His mind ! the intercession founded on the grace and truth of God has prevailed. What a rest to our souls is such a God, who cannot deny Himself ! And remember, it was not Israel who was the intercessor, but Moses. Not ourselves, but Christ, on whose intercession within the veil is founded that security against all change which may come upon us, either from our

own wayward hearts, or from the world and the enemy without.

Is it any wonder that with such ways of God Moses wanted to know more of such a God? Hence the prayer, "Show me now Thy way."

Did he mean God's own way, or did he mean the way which God had for him? Doubtless both of these; for with such knowledge as he had of God, how he must have awaited further discoveries. God would teach him in the desert, what the God that he had found. He had known much of that God, of His ways, from the very beginning. All the dispensations, so to speak, had been under his anointed eye, and had been recorded by his hand. He whom he communed with face to face at the door of the tabernacle, he had seen at the beginning in the garden rehearsing His human glory in the shrine in which His godhead would dwell, as He said, "Let us make man in *our own* image." He had seen the first sweet gleam of grace and love after man sinned

he had traced out the sacrifices as showing how he was saved; he saw how, amid human apostacy, one man had found glory without dying: then the great and terrible judgments which spread over the whole world, when only Noah and his family were saved: he had seen God uniting Himself to a solitary one of Mesopotamia, how He came to him, not in judgment, but as a God of glory; then Israel; then his own call; the bush that was burned but not consumed; the salvation of Israel; the Red Sea and the wonders of the wilderness; with divine grace working all along through righteousness in the much shedding of the blood of the substitutionary sacrifices. Was it any wonder that he wanted to know all that he could of such a God? Is it not our own deep longing? It is true, and it is *not* true, that verse which, as a favourite, we like to sing—

“Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows.”

For the vail has been removed, and we *do* know His love; nay, we know beyond all

that we could ask or think. It never could have entered our thoughts—the deep, blessed knowledge of the Father: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, show us the Father?” Yet there are heights and depths which we have never known—

“We see FROM FAR His beauteous light”—

and from what we know are sure of more—more of Himself, more of His love and of His grace, in which he infinitely rests, so that—

“We inly sigh for His repose.”

Did Moses know, beloved, as we? We like to look at him, a poor sinful man, like as we are in ourselves, having found grace, but dependent every moment on God, and needing constant fresh discoveries and fresh supplies. Often doubtless, after some trial like the present, he went anew to the fountain of supply, saying, “Show me now thy way; show me more of Thyself; I want more—give me more”—the deep, sweet craving of one who knew too much to be content with having no more. But God has many distinct

ways for His children. Moses perhaps wanted to know the way God had for him. What a way was that which He had for Abram ; and how distinct, again, the way He had for Abel. Enoch, too ; nothing had been like the dealing of the Lord with him. Noah, also ; and Abraham, with the rest of the patriarchs. Did he see in God's ways with Adam, as with an anointed eye, the life forfeited and the divine life which was given ? did he see God's way of sacrifice with Abel ? did he see acceptance and glory in Enoch ? did he understand resurrection in Noah ? divine calling in Abraham ? pilgrimage with Jacob ? son in his own house with Isaac ? rejection, suffering, inheritance, glory in Joseph ? "What more for me ?" he might have said. "Lord, show *me my way*. What a beginning ! but a beginning to what ?" He wanted to know. How natural that, with such a God, who had taken him up as His instrument, and with such a cause as lawgiver and judge, he should want to know his way. And how natural for us. Do you never find yourself

forecasting the future? wondering how it will be with you ten, twenty years hence? how it will be with you when too old for service, with all things around you submitting themselves to change, and you left, it may be, like the last tree of some widespreading forest, branches torn, leaves gone, not uprooted, but a monument, it may be, of weakness, or isolation? How the heart will peer into the future, and how needlessly, for it never may be trodden. We may imagine a thousand things which may never come; and if they should, is it not love which hides them for the present? Could we bear, as we have said, to know the end from the beginning? the bereavements one by one; the long separations; the failures; the sufferings; the sins? No; the veil is wisely between us and such future selves. How much better, not to be looking *on*, but looking *up*; not to be looking *in* or looking *back*, but looking *heavenward* to that bright and blessed home! Our goal is not any future in time, our hope is not any portion here; the mark for which

we are pressing is not the grave, not death, but, "I go," said Jesus, "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." Paul said, "This *one* thing ;" not "This one thing I do," for that is not the text ; not *doing* for salvation. "This one thing," he says : what is the one thing ? He had been apprehended, laid hold of, and so would apprehend or lay hold of that for which he had been apprehended, which was to be with Christ, to be like Christ, who would change his body of humiliation and fashion it like unto his body of glory ; which glory he had seen when the Lord appeared to him, and said, "I am Jesus." This is no uncertain future ; this is the way which *has* been shown us ; the other is denied us, as we said, in love. Where we may die if He should tarry ; what our *sorrows* and what His denials we may not know ; as he denied Moses, so He denies us. He will show us His glory.

But then, as to the present—flesh and blood cannot enter the glory, neither can corruption inherit incorruption; or, as another has beautifully said, God does not show Himself on the way so much as afterwards. For example, how could you ever have imagined, whilst on the way to the cross, even through one past eternity, what that cross would be? So on the way to the glory. Moses was not on the way to it in the holy mount, he was in it, as we also shall be.

“Him, eye to eye, we soon shall see;
Our face like His shall shine.”

As the way would frighten, so the glory may dazzle. As we said, more suited to him than a sight of the glory was it that in such a wilderness he should nestle in the bosom of Him who said, “My PRESENCE shall go with thee,” or, as we have said, “*my faces* ;” all His divine perfections going with him. Thus mercy, flowing from the heart of God through the precious blood of a thousand sacrifices, could look out from the cloud upon the tented flock, and, notwithstanding sin,

grace would abound. Same with righteousness and truth, all vindicated by the blood,—through which they were accepted. All this was blessed. God had said, “My Angel;” but Moses could not have done with an angel unless that angel were Jehovah-Jesus. No! it was “*my faces.*” Thus, beloved, to whichever way you may turn your eye there is a face looking upon you. If backward, what meets you but the loving-kindness of our God? if before, there is God leading you, saying, I am with you, “My faces shall go with thee.” And is not this enough? Has not the Lord pledged Himself—“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;” “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world”? What may be our days or years, makes no difference. Christ has taken us up, and is responsible for us, or rather, has laid responsibility on the Father, who will do it according to righteousness. “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me.” And just as He knew His way to the Father, so you may know

demonstratively that the Father will show you. And the very feet through which the desert may assoil you He is engaged to keep. His divine advocacy and the efficacy and continued action of His precious blood will take from you all assoilments. The thought in John xiii. is not, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me, in the sense of communion, though that is true; but, as sure as you *have* a part in Me, I must keep you washed. Blessed provision for such a way as ours, through a world of sin and with such an enemy seeking to devour.

These are sweet thoughts, beloved friends, for long separations, dying days, or dark dispensations, when the sky, which was all bright, is clouded over with one *long* cloud with seemingly no silver lining; but with such a presence with us there is no night, no want of fellowship, no want of a guide; all this soon to bring us where there will be no sin, no sorrow, no separation, no farewells, no dying, no death.

But this is not all; there is the promise,

“And I will give thee rest.” And what a rest! “There is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand.” This is where we are—in Christ the riven Rock—safe in Jesus; resting in divine communion, put down on His riven side, whence flowed the water and the blood. “Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified.” Blessed rest! As we sing:

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Lo I *hide* myself in Thee;
Where the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Are of sin the double cure,
Cleansing from its guilt and power.”

And there His hand covers me, as I may say. His pierced hand, that hand which in realised communion is under my head, pierced for me—the sufferings the basis of the rest—whilst the right hand doth embrace me. In such condition, how sweet to know that His glory is passing by; faith sees it, hope expects it. And when the hand is

taken away, "thou shalt see my back parts ;" or rather, as it is, "after *that* thou shalt see," just as *after* the cross we see what we never could have seen in mere anticipation. So, beloved, when by faith we have rested our little while on the riven side of Jesus, we shall see as we are seen, and know even as we are known. Meanwhile, how I would put you down upon that side. These hands would do it ; but, dear friends, He can do it. There rest as in green pastures, by the still waters, near to His beating heart, close down in His love, where you can hear His voice, saying, "My love, my undefiled ;" and where He too will hear your voice, saying, "My beloved." And now, that which is for a saint to enjoy, is for a sinner to receive. This is his rest, rest from the burden of sin ; for Christ died for our offences, on the ground of which He can say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Moreover, it is the saint's rest. There doing God's will as Christ did, not so much wishing to alter circumstances,

but to take them as the will of His Father in heaven. This was the yoke to which He voluntarily submitted, and concerning which He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of 'Me.'" This, beloved friends, is *wilderness rest*. The promise, you will remember, was not for Canaan, but for this world—the long desert path which lies through it. So that you may always reckon upon Him—"My presence"—*for yourself*. Oh, what deepest intimacy may you not have with God, knowing His mind, listening to the whispers of His love, seeing, as it were, the directing of His eye. Nay, more; dwelling in Him, and He in you, according to that sweet word in John xiv., where the Lord says, "My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode*"—*mansion*—"with him"—same word as in "In my Father's house are many *mansions*." Beloved, in parting, I leave this word with you, this twofold word, "My presence shall go with thee," and, "I will give thee rest." What a present help in time of trouble!

Earthly friends may fail or leave you, but “*my* presence shall go with thee.” The dearest human presence—husband, parent, child, friend—may be taken away, or the greatest earthly support may fail, but this remains—“*my* presence.” Your path may be lonely, but being a child of God, He will never leave you. Each step you may hear Him say, “My presence!” “I am with you!” If in trouble what a help! what a guide in difficulty! Better than the creature eyes of an Hobab; the Lord Himself, as it were serving us, saying, “I will guide thee,” “*My* presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” How does He give it? Christ gives us rest of conscience in the blood; no matter what load of guilt, His blood cleanseth from all sin; only believe, only trust. And He gives the heart to rest in Himself. We rest where God rests, as we sing—

“My God, what perfect rest is thine,
Thy rest is in Thy Son;
'Tis all unspeakable, divine.
Thy rest and mine are one.

Inside the circle of Thy love,
Joined to His life I am above;
How sweet with Thee, my God, to share
The joy which is Thy portion there."

And then there is the rest that remains. That rest again will be God's own rest. He rested from His good work after creation. We shall rest not only from all evil and sorrow, but from our labours or works, the holiest here. We shall rest as God rests, and in His own dwelling. For think of the Presence now with you, where is it leading you? Whither, but to His own bright home! even that home where the Son Himself is.

He could say, "I go *my* way to the Father." It led blessedly to Him; and to His home, the Father's house where there are many mansions. One with Him—His rest is to be our rest—His home our home—"I go to prepare a place for you." Ah, dear friends, what reunions there! what an unending communion there! Soon it may be. He says, "A little while, and I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." Till then, beloved, *farewell! farewell!*

REUNIONS.

“We shall see Him as He is.”—1 John iii. 2.

Oh! for the songs of gladness,
Sweet sounding through the air;
Oh! for the no more sadness
Of all the ransomed there.

Oh! for the long long meeting
Of Jesus with His own;
Oh! for the loved loved greeting
Of pilgrims in their home.

Oh! for the sweet reunion
Of friend restored to friend;
That loved and long communion
That never more can end.

Oh! for that life immortal,
For bodies like His own!
Oh! for within that portal,
Which leads me to His throne.

Oh! for the no more dying,
The no more oft distrest;
The sweetness there of lying
For ever on His breast.

Oh! for the joy of being
“*For ever with the Lord;*”
The long, long joy of seeing
How perfect was His word

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WHAT HAST THOU DONE?

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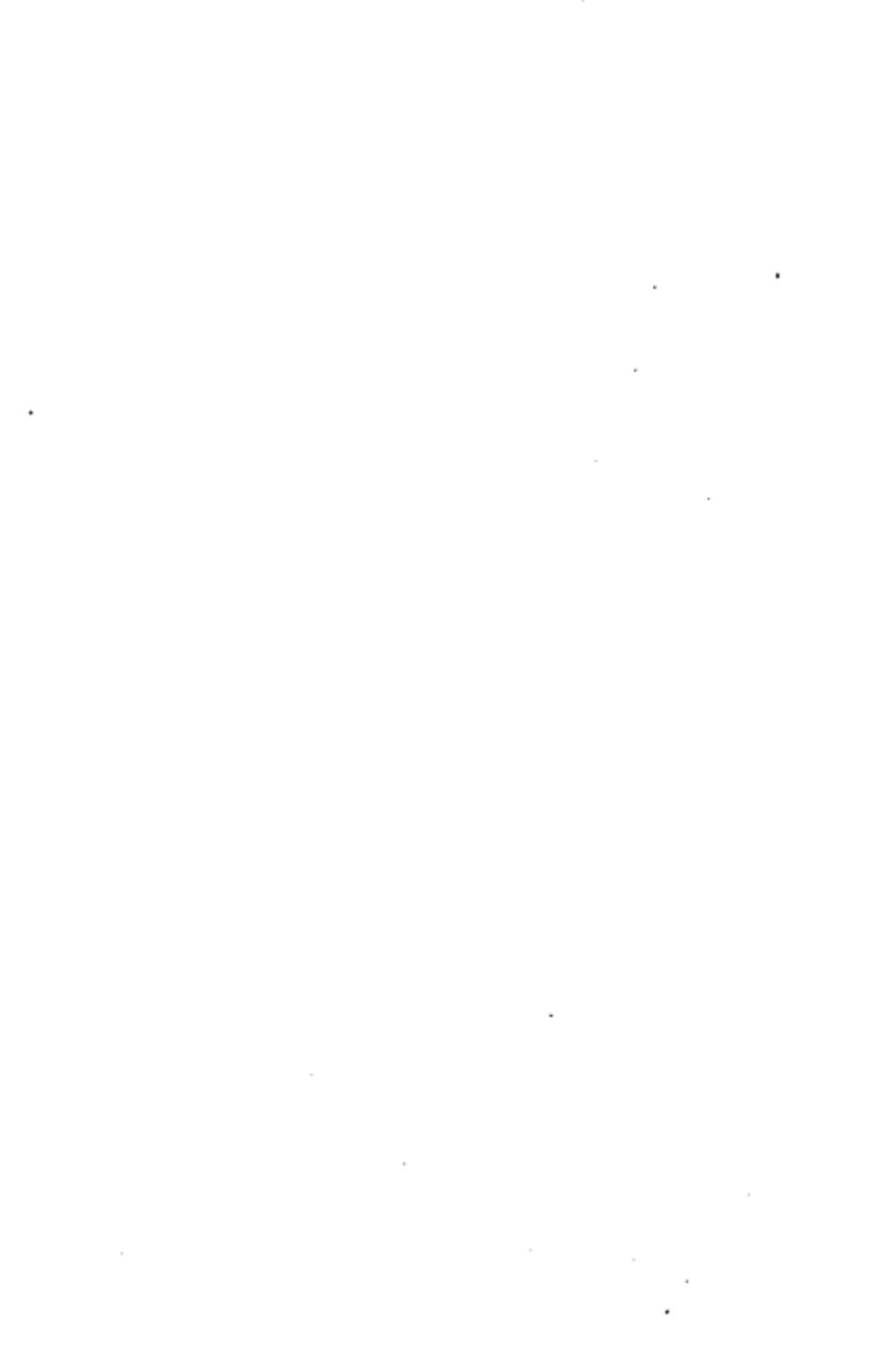
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WHAT HAST THOU DONE?

A PRISONER stood bound before the Roman judge. Many things were witnessed against Him; and the clamour and tumult of the multitude demanded that He should die. Some cried one thing, and some cried another; but all united in this condemnation, "He is worthy of death." Bewildered and confused, the governor turned to the prisoner, that by His own lips He might bear witness against Himself. He asked, "What hast Thou done?"

Four thousand years of the pages of this world's stained and blotted history had passed since a poor, sinful woman had been asked by

the Supreme Judge, "What is this that thou hast done?" The Lord God was heard walking in Eden in the cool of the day. Ah, what a day was that! What a day to man! What a day to that "old serpent, the devil!" And, oh, what a day to God!

As Adam and his wife are summoned with the serpent before Him against whom they had sinned, the Lord asks of Eve, "*What is this that thou hast done?*" Searching, piercing, thrilling question addressed by Him who reads the secrets and thoughts of the heart—"Woman, what hast thou done?" Little did she know in that sad hour the extent of the evil she had committed, or how the bright sky had become clouded. After near six thousand years, *we* are better able to answer that question, and to perceive the full meaning of it. In that day was the sowing to the wind, and we now reap the whirlwind. Like the traveller who thoughtlessly brought those few seeds from the American shore which have now so rapidly

covered our English ponds and lakes with the troublesome green weed impossible to eradicate or destroy, so the one seed sown in Eden has covered the earth with the fruits of sin.

You have watched some boy push open the lock of yonder canal, and the water, with a leap and a rush, needed something more than the little child's strength to check its torrent. The garden of the Lord lay in its beauty and verdure, but one who was put therein to dress it broke through the hedge, and made the gap by which the wild beast entered with his ravages and desolation, till the once fair scene became the blighted and barren waste. We look around and we see the result; the sin and the grief that show themselves speak loud enough in telling us what was done in that fatal moment when the deceiver's voice was listened to and God was disobeyed. The woman considered not the mighty, awful results when she put forth her hand and

plucked of the fruit of that tree. Her eye could not see, and her thoughts could not reach into the long ages of the then future. She could not trace the development of the seed then sown ; each successive age unfolding increasing depths of sin and horror. The outward manifestation in theft, murder, drunkenness, profligacy, idolatry, and war, till men's feet are swift to shed blood, and with their mouth, which is an open sepulchre, they use deceit, with the poison of asps under their lips. Let the poverty, the squalor, dirt, and wretchedness of the poor drunkard's home, with his slatternly wife and beggared children, let such answer God's searching question, "What is this that thou hast done?" Our prisons, our lunatic asylums, our hospitals, and our workhouses, with crime, despair, pain, and penury, tell better than words the fruits of sin. The startling fact that more of our fellow-creatures at this moment lie buried in our churchyards and cemeteries than walk the

face of the earth, only gives more solemn weight to the inquiry, "What is this that thou hast done?" And as the world has been peopled and re-peopled so many times in its history, each succeeding generation in its sin, adversity, mourning, and death has ceaselessly answered the same question; every death as it occurred, afresh giving Satan the lie, inasmuch as he said, "Thou shalt not surely die."

But if Eve foresaw not this *outward* ruin, much less did she foresee that *hidden* evil of the heart which in its hatred against God would spread further and deeper than the mere manifestations upon which the eye rests. The moment the question arose in her mind between Satan and God, which was to be believed and which was to be doubted; which loved her and which hated her; which desired her happiness and which sought to destroy her peace; or, in other words, which was for and which against her; at once she leaned

the wrong way, the balance was in favour of the enemy ; she decided then and there for Satan—rejected the God of truth for “the father of lies”—the Life-giver, for the “murderer from the beginning.” And he from that time became “the prince of this world,” and not only so as to outward control (which we have already seen), but also he was enshrined henceforth as “the god of this world,” the object of this world’s worship and homage. Before, the citadel had been secure and the enemy could find no entrance, but now from within the traitor had thrown to him with her own hand the fortress key. “Now,” said God’s creatures practically, “we will not have God, but we *will* have the devil ; we will believe *what he says, and we will not believe what God says ; we will have confidence in the devil, but none in God ; we will serve, honour, and obey him, and we will not serve, but will dishonour and disobey God.*”

Oh, fearful choice ! Well might the Lord

God Himself interfere; well might He demand, "What is this that thou hast done?" Hapless, wretched creatures, ye have indeed sold yourselves for nought. From that moment how real and deep-set was the estrangement of heart from God. Satan was admitted, the barrier was erected, and God was shut out. This was not partial declension from God, but *total* depravity. It was not, as all carnal worshippers imagine, a short step taken from God which might easily be retraced, but there was the gulf which no effort of man could ever span, though for near threescore centuries he has not ceased his endeavours. It was the irreparable fall and the entire loss, as far as man was concerned, of all things. The heart of man from that instant became "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Though man has prided himself on all the inventions he has sought out, yet from that day to this his heart has been as the cage of unclean birds, as the spring sending forth

bitter water and not sweet ; for out of it “ proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies.” In that memorable day when man’s eyes were opened by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he forsook the good and ever after chose the evil. And now all these seeds of corruption and death are in the heart of *every* man by nature. Alas ! what can better describe him than “ dead in trespasses and sins ;” with morality, “ dead in trespasses and sins ;” with education and refinement, “ dead in trespasses and sins ;” with religion, hating the very sound of those above-mentioned evil words, still “ dead in trespasses and sins.”

How could such an one be anything else than opposed to God ? So that we may well understand that “ the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Yet when God gave His holy law, man had pride and boasting enough to say, with all this wicked-

ness dwelling and reigning in his heart, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do." Here then was another occasion for the display of what man was, for no sooner was the law given to him than he broke it, and took pleasure in so doing. If prophets and messengers from God were rejected, what more could be done? "Having yet one Son," God sent Jesus when the fulness of time was come. But this was the opportunity, the occasion of occasions, for man to show what he thought of God. The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, received from man, who was full of sin and guile, despisings and rejections without measure. The cry of the human heart was, "We will not have this *man to reign over us.*" *What was to be done?* Man could not keep his Sabbath till the Lord Jesus Christ was laid a corpse in the tomb! Religious and irreligious thirsted to imbrue their hands in His blood. And if we want to learn what man is, the place to learn it is

the cross. There all the hatred and malice and venom and vice in the heart of man towards God were let loose, and poured forth in a mighty torrent, as fiends from a living hell, upon God's Son. Man would howl and jeer and laugh round about the cross, and find his very amusement in watching and deriding the death agonies of that blood-stained body. And then the huge stone rolled to the cave's mouth, the Roman signet put upon it, the guard of soldiers; so he would think and thus he would hope to keep a dead Christ from ever rising. *The fashion* has changed, and the world in lewd wickedness has taken the name of Him it murdered, and now calls itself "*Christian*;" like Hazael, king of Syria, who, having murdered his master Benhadad, called his son by his name. But what lies underneath the blasphemous mockery of this hypocritical garb? *The natural heart* of man is still unchanged, and, in spite of all his profession, there exists the same bitter hatred

against the Lord Jesus Christ. Christendom only takes His name to silence the voice of convicting conscience, and as a hollow refuge of lies under which it may carry out its own wicked desires. God only knows the depths of the sink of pollution and the well of filth in that heart estranged from Him. Alas! O woman, "what hast thou done" that he who walked in paradise and found his highest joy in his Creator should thus be fallen so immeasurably low?

Before closing this sad part of the subject we must look on still into the future. If the centuries of the past as well as the present scenes reply in some measure to the inquiry, "What hast thou done?" may not the still and ever future eternity more fully answer the question put by God to Eve?

When the great white throne shall be set up, and He sits upon it from whose face the earth and heavens shall flee away, then shall be gathered that great crowd to stand before

God. Who can read the ghastly thoughts of appalled horror that shall seize on and tremble every mind? Those thoughts shall all be read by the eyes of fire; which flames shall kindle in each breast the everlasting burnings of remorse and despair, as "whosoever is not found written in the book of life" shall be "cast into the lake of fire." Let this scene of final judgment, when the sea, death, and hell deliver up their dead, answer the question of lost Eden, "What is this that thou hast done?" In the caverns of the damned, in the pit that is bottomless, in the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, in the worm that never dies, and in the outer darkness, in the everlasting punishment and in the wrath of God, we hear as if from the ceaselessly eternal moan of the lake of fire the answer which Eve so little thought of or expected.

There have been other occasions in the Bible history on which a similar question has

been asked. The first man born outside Paradise needed to be asked by God, "What hast thou done?" Sad proof of the evil reigning in the natural heart! when his act of self-willed worship was followed by his base act of self-willed murder: where love should have been there was hatred. No strange behaviour however for the child of parents who had sold themselves to him who was a "murderer from the beginning."

Has this nothing to say to the child of God? Does it not remind us of "the message that we heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother?" (1 John iii. 11, 12.) A grievous spectacle is seen by a world that should have learned to know the God of love from the oneness in heart of His children. (John xvii. 21.) Little is there left of that loving spirit which called forth the exclamation, "See how these Christians love one another." Instead of being

followers of Cain, who slew his brother, we should be followers of Him who "laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Ah, Christian, ask thyself, or let God ask thee concerning this matter so near to His heart, "What hast thou done?"

The next occasion recorded is when Abraham, having journeyed toward the south country, sojourned in Gerar. Surrounded by heathen, he denied his wife, saying she was his sister; so that the servant of God is rebuked by the man of the world, and "Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done?" (Gen. xx. 9.) If in Cain's murder of Abel we saw the *failure in love* of one brother towards another, so, alas! here we see the *failure in testimony* of a child of God towards the world! What a melancholy picture Christians present when they have recourse to low, scheming practices, descending beneath the level of the uncon-

verted to suit their own ends, under the name of expediency. Alas! when the light is so extinguished that the ways of Christ are not perceived in us; that the witness for our absent Lord is forgotten, and the worldling reprovingly inquires, "What hast thou done?"

We pass on from this breakdown in the Father of the faithful to an incident in the life of Jacob. (Gen. xxxi.) By a vision in the night the Lord had appeared to His trembling servant, saying, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land and return unto the land of thy kindred." It is well for God's people when they have a word from Him forthwith to act upon it. He who has spoken knows better than we imagine the consequences of following His directions, and with the command gives the strength to obey. However, most of us are very like Jacob, and,

humbling as it is to confess it, we are too apt to turn to our own understanding and to our own devices and plans instead of trusting God. So Jacob, as a cunning deceiver rather than a trustful servant of the Lord, steals away, taking an undue advantage of his father-in-law. After three days, when he is pursued and overtaken, Laban demands of him, "What hast thou done?" as much as to say, "You make your profession of believing in the living and true God, why could you not trust Him now, and why have recourse to such mean, underhand craftiness?" Surely this is like the sin of unbelief "which doth so easily beset us," over which we all mourn, and in consequence of which we need often to pray, "Lord, increase our faith."

From Jacob's *failure in trust* we go on to a scene of worship in the life of king Saul. We read that the Philistines were gathered against Israel as the sand upon the sea-shore in multitude. (1 Sam. xiii.) Saul was at

Gilgal waiting for Samuel to come to offer the burnt-offering. But as the prophet tarried day after day, the king's patience would sustain the delay no longer, and so, regardless of the demands of God, he offered the sacrifice himself. But the blood had scarce ceased to stream down the altar sides, and the flame had but just kindled about the victim, when Samuel appeared, and with the sword of truth thrust home to his conscience the unthought-of question, "What hast thou done?" Here, then, was *failure in obedience*, for the worship was not according to God's mind, or God's commands, and therefore even the basis of it was disobedience. And when the desires of Him who is the professed object of worship are not thought of, what can be the value of such sacrifice in His eyes? The result was, that for this act Saul lost his kingdom and his crown.

Hitherto we have been asking of *man*, "What hast thou done?" And each suc-

cessive answering has given us fresh unfoldings of deeper depths of sin and failure. Though the question has been addressed to man in his high degree, we have seen that he is altogether vanity. We have begun by asking Eve, "What hast thou done?" And we have the reply in a world flooded with iniquity. We have asked the first man born into this world, and we find he is a murderer. Abraham, the friend of God, must acknowledge sad, God-dishonouring failure. The father of the Patriarchs, too, tells us of that common sin of unbelief; and the king of Israel's choice is made to blush, conscience-stricken by the question of the prophet.

When we look at man, be he whoever he may, we must of necessity be occupied with a dark picture. But from all this we may turn our eyes to Him who stood in the hall of judgment; and, with perplexed and wondering Pilate we ask Jesus, "What hast *Thou* done?"

The angelic hosts who worshipped at His feet had delighted to herald His entrance into this world with such heavenly strains as these, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men." Their joy had burst all bounds on that happy morning, but now He whose praise they shouted is seen standing for judgment, bound and accused as an evil-doer. For darkness could not comprehend the light: even when He casts out devils, the people say, He does it by the prince of the devils; and when He is so earnestly seeking their good that He has not "leisure so much as to eat bread," they say, "He is mad." Truly, "men will praise thee if thou doest well to thyself," but they cannot understand *self-emptiness*; they call it self-interestedness. Oh, the contradiction of sinners which He endured! there was not one to understand Him but His Father in heaven. Yes, "Jehovah knoweth the righteous;" it was in the consciousness of this

that He could go on, content that every act should be misinterpreted by man. He was not careful to be judged of man's judgment ; He could always say with confidence, "He that judgeth Me is the Lord." His was a way altogether foreign to the notions of the world ; so of course it must have been, for how could the Eternal Life be at home in a scene of death and sin ? He says, "Blessed are" the very ones whom man would pity, and "woe unto you" where man would envy. But the principles He gives are those which He Himself displayed. How wonderful it is to hear Him saying, "To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other," and then to follow Him, constantly wronged by those He was benefiting, and at last giving His back to the smiters, and His cheeks (not one only, but the other also) to them that plucked off the hair. We find Him saying, "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again." Yea, truly, for His love He

got adversaries; but He loved on still, though the more abundantly He loved, the less He was loved. The multitudes had cried "Hosanna!" and the soldiers had borne witness that "never man spake as this man," and Pilate's wife had sent to him that very morning, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just person." Yet the chief priests and the elders desire that He may be put to death, so that the judge seeks of the prisoner Himself an explanation of what He has done. What crimes? What deeds of revolt and violence? What outrages upon society, and what infringement of the laws? "What hast Thou done?" But none of these could be brought to *His* charge, "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth."

Man had seen that life; and when the blind eyes were opened by His finger's touch, and the deaf were made to hear His voice, it caused the lips of the dumb to sing His praise, and

they were constrained to acknowledge "He hath done all things well." And as the serpent's fiery eyes had once gazed in Paradise with malicious interest upon the first man, so now he set himself to track the course of the last Adam. Choosing his opportunity when sore pressed, he plied Him with temptation, thereby to *prove* Him. But, like the sword of genuine metal, when subjected to the severest test, it is only seen to be so far superior to any other. And so Satan tried Him, but found nought in Him to correspond to the temptation. And yet another eye, more constant than man's and more searching than Satan's, was ever upon Him. That piercing eye read Him through and through, and God would declare concerning Him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Father's law was hid in His heart, and He delighted to do those things which were pleasing to Him. He, above all others, was that "Blessed Man" who walked not

in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. He was tried as gold is tried, but there was no dross. There was only in the Lord Jesus that which gladdened the Father's heart. There was purity in the inward parts of Him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled.

Thus He was tested of man, Satan, and God, and He could in truth say, "Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing." (Psalm xvii.) In Him was found nothing for man to censure, nothing to please Satan, and nothing to grieve God. David, speaking of this "Blessed Man," vehemently exclaims on the part of Jehovah, "*Why* do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Here, then, the One who was the delight of God, was the object of man's rage. Let us turn to Him and inquire, "What hast Thou done" that this tumult and strife of tongues is raised against *Thee*? Oh, may His answer to our

question "drop as the rain," and may His speech "distil as the dew!"

More than words could tell us, we read in His actions, "I have loved you." Yet He could say, "They have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love." But that love which brought Him down from the highest pinnacle of glorious blessedness into the lowest depths of the cursed death of the cross, would not be turned aside from its resolute purpose of reconciling enemies, of saving the lost, and of justifying sinners.

Oh, unchangeable and matchless Lover! For all our hate, Thou hast given of Thy love double. The highest heights of the throne cannot scale the heights of that love, neither can the bottomless abyss search its depths. From that memorable morning, when the inn of this world significantly refused admittance within its gates to the unknown and unwelcome stranger; from that day on, we read of a life of untiring

toil and sympathy. Relieving the needy, healing the sick and demon-possessed, weeping with those who wept, and joying with those who rejoiced, so He passed through this world, the rays of that glory that dwelt in Him shining out in every act.

He was like that long-wished-for cloud which first was seen from Mount Carmel. Six times Elijah's servant had looked towards the sea, but had seen nothing, however the seventh time a little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, appeared in sight, and before very long the heavens were black with clouds. For the space of three years and a half it had not rained on the earth, and drought and famine prevailed. Here then was the joyful sign of that for which kings, prophets, and people had cried, prayed, and fasted. In Him to whom wise men brought their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and upon whose cheek worshipping shepherds let fall a tear of gladness—in that babe of the lowly manger,

we see the great antitype of yon little cloud, so small, so insignificant, yet sent from God to bless, yea, Himself full of all the blessings of God. Promises had been given, and prophets had foretold the coming of this Blessed One, yet these were but as the servant's six times of disappointed looking; but now the fulness of time had come, and the highest expectations of the watchers were all to be realized. Eight days after, the aged Simeon declared that child to be Jehovah's salvation; and some twelve years more, and we find the cloud growing larger, until at the age of thirty years He could not be hid. Verily the heavens were again black with clouds of blessing, and we see the first droppings of that saving shower when a blind eye is opened, or a leper is cleansed, or an only son given back by a resurrection-touch and word to stay the tears of a widowed mother. Such were the harbingers of blessing, the first big drops of the summer rain. But if this were the case, what

might be expected, when the lightning flash should rend that cloud, and the copious rain descend? What mean those words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I *straitened* till it be accomplished!" And when it was accomplished at the cross, the grace was then no longer pent up, the salvation was no more reserved, but rivers ran in the desert, and streams gushed forth. For had we only in answer to the question, the story of gracious words and deeds that flowed from Him during the years of His ministry upon earth, we should find nothing that could meet the sinner's need. But there is far more than the mere display of holiness, beauty, and loving-kindness; *this* is not all that He has done. He came to make known the Father; and nothing short of the putting away of sin upon the cross could have done this. There He vindicated the holy character of God, and satisfied the claims of His justice. Oh, what a sacrifice was that when the victim was none

other than the Son of God; when the One who in Himself was spotless, bowed His head beneath the load of our guilt, and offered Himself to God! Infinitely more than man's sin ever outraged God did this sacrifice glorify Him.

Did we find in answer to the question asked of Saul, that he brought dishonour upon Israel's God by his disobedience? Here we have the obedient One who could say, "I do always those things that please Him."

Have we seen Jacob doubting the faithfulness of Jehovah? We may now hear the voice of Jesus saying to His Father, "I will still trust in Thee."

If Abraham's testimony failed in the day of trial, here we have the "Faithful and true witness," "the Amen" of God.

For Cain's hate (oh, wondrous contrast!) we have the unquenchable flame of love burning in the breast of Him who came, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

But what shall we say as our eye rests once again on the scene in Eden? If there we find death, in Him we find life. If there blessing was lost, in Him overflowing blessing was bestowed; for "where sin abounded, there grace did much more abound." Not Eden's blessings restored, but riches of grace and glory, which could only spring from the wounded side of the crucified Son of God. Not the recovery of man's innocence, but the believing sinner made the righteousness of God through the One who was made sin for him. Whatever man had done of sin and hatred was here outbalanced by the cleansing blood and eternal love of Jesus. Sinner, as you have been asked by God, "*What hast thou done?*" and have been made to realize that all *your* goodness is only sin, and *your* righteousness as filthy rags, let the word now come forth from your heart as you view this crucified and risen Saviour, "What hast Thou done?" and add to the question the two little

words, "*for me,*" which shall bring the answer home personally to meet your own need, "What hast Thou done *for me?*"

"Was it for *crimes that I have done*
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree."



LONDON :

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

ABIGAIL;

OR

DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

BY

F. DENHAM SMITH.

Tenly Thousand.

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ABIGAIL,

OR, DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

1 SAM. XXV.

THE whole picture of Abigail shows how God hides things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes. How else did she know that David was the Lord's anointed, that the anointing oil had been poured upon his head? To all outward appearance, David was despised, and rejected, and in want in the wilderness—without a home and without a kingdom. How did she know that his house was “a sure house,” and that though now in rejection, he was yet to reign in a kingdom of his own. Even

David himself, it would seem, kept it a secret. Some vessels, as another has said, have to *hide* as well as to hold their treasure, as Joseph did before he revealed himself to his brethren, and as the Lord now does before a world ignorant of Him. David seems to have *veiled* his glory till this daughter of Israel, by faith, had owned it. But well did she know it, and by faith treasured it up in her heart. She *believed* in the anointed one. She knew that after the present sufferings there would be the glory. Beloved, how do we know, but as God hath revealed to us by His Spirit? for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. Blessed knowledge, the knowledge of God, of Christ; oh, to what a height of wonder are we raised when *God's own* knowledge, His *own* secret mind, has been communicated to us! Vessels are we of His ways, His thoughts. How has He disclosed to us the secrets of coming days—His judgments on the earth, His purposes, in Christ, of grace and of glory.

But let us now, for a little, pursue this

history. "David," we are told, "was in the wilderness," (cut off for the present from receiving anything as to his kingdom) "when he heard that Nabal did shear his sheep." The name Nabal, I may remark in passing, signifies "folly" or fool—suggestive of his character, which answered to his name; for though his was a wealthy place, he was mean and selfish, and knew not his true interest, as indicated by his reply to the messengers of David.

How different was it with Abigail!—her name signifying "gift of the father," which truly she was. For who gave her to David? and at such a time, when, as we shall see, she was beyond all price to David. Was she not his solace in trouble, his spouse, his bride, to reign with him in his kingdom, and to share with him his glory? Suggestively, beloved, we are the "gift of the Father." You remember Him who hath said, "Those whom Thou gavest me have I kept." Ah! who of us can tell the value of the Church to Christ, and at such a time when in His

foreknowledge He saw His rejection, yea, saw that, as Messiah, He was cut off, and as to His kingdom received nothing. Separated, cut off from the kingdom, by men, but received by God into heaven, He is there our Head, and we who own Him in this the day of His temptation, His rejection, are members together of His body, being of His flesh and of His bones. Oh, dear friends, do we enter into our joy thus? Are we happy in that love of His in which we specially are, and from which nothing can separate?

But Abigail, moreover, we are told, was a woman of "good understanding;" she had, as we have said, *Divine* knowledge. She knew *him*, David. And although, for the present, it was all night, and dark, and cloudy, yet soon he would have the morning without clouds, soon he would be seen happy and blessed, coming in his kingdom.

"We," suggestively again, beloved, "have the mind of Christ." We know who and what He is. We know Him now as one who is despised by the world but loved by the

Father. The long night which hangs over His path as Messiah, does not prevent our seeing the day which is at hand. We know His purposes ; we know His plans ; we know His long-suffering grace. Are they not all here in His word ? And are we not thereby made partakers with Him of *His* knowledge, having the anointing—an unction from the Holy One whereby we know all things.

But besides this, Abigail “was of a beautiful countenance.” For the most part all the brides of Scripture are represented as beautiful. Fair, lovely, comely, is she of the Canticles. Rebekah was “fair to look upon.” Lovely beyond all telling is that golden Salem—New Jerusalem, the Lamb’s wife, the True bride. The Church in the glory will be all perfectness, for the Lord will “present us to Himself without spot, or wrinkle.” There will be no spot ; that is, no defilement of sin, no assailing of sorrow, no tears. And there will be no wrinkle ; no mark of age, no decrepitude, or decay. The angel, on the morning of the resurrection,

sitting in the tomb of Jesus, was seen by the disciples as “a *young man*,” and yet, as you were reminded, he was doubtless ages of ages old ! How significant of our own glorious, perfect life amid the eternal years—undecaying life ! undecaying strength ! No marvel, forecasting such a state, He who loves us is not ashamed to call us brethren. And why not ashamed ? Because He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one—*of one sort*, invested with His own perfectness, conformed to His own image, nothing more to be desired, nothing more to be added, all being equal to His own ineffable desire, His own ineffable love. Ah, beloved, do we understand this ? Are we in the sweet sanctifying power of this ? Do we, sometimes at least, look at our *true selves* as He from all eternity has seen us in and like Himself ? Oh, happy, glorious consummation ! for all will be consummated in *resurrection*, when we who have borne the image of the earthly, will also bear the image of the heavenly !

“Then we shall be what we should be;
Then we shall be where we would be;
Things which are not now, nor could be,
Then will be our own.”

Dear friends, there was a sweetness, a preciousness in such knowledge as Abigail's! She knew (*oh! I must repeat it again and again*) she *knew* David. She knew the Lord's anointed. She knew the value of David. Often might she have said, her soul being in fellowship with him, “others do not know, but I know.” She knew that his house would be a sure house. How, or by what means, she knew is not said. Had she been among the daughters who sang, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands”? or did she know, through a personal communion with the mind of Samuel, as I may say, the mind of the Lord? David had no attractions for Nabal. Few knew as Abigail knew. Her heart, doubtless, was with those who were with him in the wilderness.

“Drawn by love which knows no measure,”

those few had cast in their lot with him, and preferred being homeless, in a mere cave, with him, than being with Saul in his palace. They would rather suffer with him than reign without him. How it all personates the Lord Himself, who is rejected, despised, and for the present distant from His kingdom; and whose glory is not yet. David, as we have said, veiled his glory until this daughter of faith had owned it. Till then she had locked it up as treasure in her heart; even as a jewel in a casket; which, when revealed to David, was, to change the figure, a cup of joy, and refreshing to his lips. Oh, I repeat it, there was a sweetness, a preciousness, in such knowledge as Abigail's. Favoured Abigail! Yea, favoured thus are all His saints. Blessed Christ! the world knoweth Thee not, yet we know Thee. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God! Oh, how sweet to his heart which throbs with affection for His saints, to know that thus "the secret of the Lord"—His own secret—"is with them that fear Him!"

You will observe, Abigail does not open this treasured casket to *Nabal*. What was treasure to her, was fit only to be despised by him. She could have no fellowship with him as to the Lord's anointed. There can be no fellowship between Christ and Belial, for "whatsoever is not of the Father is of the world." Ah, no! She could reveal all to David; she could tell all to him. Think what a solace such an one was to David! Think of her faith and joy in forecasting the hour of his coming glory; the letting out, so to speak, the secret of her heart to him, telling him of the "sure house" and his being ruler over Israel! Oh, how one covets this heart for the Lord, which Abigail had for David, the keeping of the secret for the time when being told out was greatest joy conceivable, as it gave promise of greatest glory to David. Observe how he held her in his heart ever after; nay, how it was the way for her to his heart, to his home, and to his throne. Who told her? He might have said, How did she know? Dear friends,

“the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”

And all this, as applicable to us, you understand, for of such is our communion with Him whose glory is not yet. Often is it a cup of joy to Him, the forecasting in our hearts the time when He will reign, the time when His house will be the one great reigning house, to rule over all, blessed for evermore. Abigail was, as to Nabal's house, in the scene of abundance and of worldly greatness, but whenever she thought of David it was of one who for the present was rejected of men. And even after Nabal's death, in being outwardly joined to David, she had to leave her position in the wealthy place, and go down with him into the wilderness. But whether in her wealthy place, or when with David in the wilderness, the secret of her heart was what *David* liked.

But now how different as to this picture is it between David and Nabal. “And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel,

and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name : and thus shall ye say to him, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers : now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes : for we come in a good day : give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.”

Dear friends, what a day was this for Nabal ! a day of opportunity ; a day for laying up a good foundation for the time of David's glory. It was a day meet for one who was a descendant of the house of Caleb, which Nabal was. But he knew not David ; he knew not the anointed one. He had to ask, “ Who is David ? and who is the son of Jesse ? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his mas-

ter." Thus he rejected David. He rejected his message. He rejected the messengers. Their way of peace and the time of his opportunity were alike hidden from his eyes. Alas for Nabal! and alas for all who reject the gospel!

For this is the way the gospel comes to the sinner, and is offered for his acceptance—"Peace be to thee." And it is God who offers peace; not God as a Judge, but God as a Saviour. Yet in a sense even as a Judge can He speak peace; for—how wonderful!—we can rest as well in His justice as in His grace. And why? Because as Judge He has nothing more to impute to us. He passed the punishment due to us on Christ. So, as Judge, He says: I have no more charge. "*Sins have been punished; sins are put away; nay, are forgotten; no more to be remembered for ever.*" As Saviour, He can embrace us as His own. What grace! what love! Instead of bringing judgment, He can say peace. He loved the sinner, would have the sinner in His presence, saved, happy, holy, blessed

there. But He could not bear to see his sins ; these are all put away, and instead of sins, *peace*. But, oh, how often, Nabal-like, does the sinner reject this peace ! Ah, friends, if Nabal had but *received* peace at the hand of the young men, and *ministered* to David in his rejection, how he might have shared in his kingdom ! Like Nabal, man still rejects the only opportunity he will ever have of ministering to Him who is now despised and rejected ; and who, by-and-by, will come and inherit the kingdom. Oh ! who here does not take a melancholy interest in Nabal ? And who with a love for souls does not take the same in the Christ-rejecting sinner ? But it wanted the anointed eye to see what Nabal did not see ; but which Abigail saw, and kept as a jewel of preciousness in the casket of her believing heart ; namely, that David was the anointed of the Lord.

Dear, unsaved one, the gospel now comes to you just as these ten men came to Nabal. Eternal happiness is presented to you in Christ Jesus. One look at *Him*, what pardon,

peace, life, joy, are ours! Oh, see that you reject not this gospel as Nabal did the messengers of David! The Lord bring you to a knowledge of yourself as *a sinner*, a condemned, lost *sinner*. And the Lord bring you to a knowledge of *Himself*, the knowledge of God, who is love—God is love—and of Christ, who died for you; so that *you* need not die—need not be lost. How happy to know God, to know Christ; for “this is life eternal, to know Him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.”

But the world does *not* know. Just as Nabal answered, “Who is David?” so the world is ignorant of Christ, blind as to His beauty, saying, “What’s the good?” turning their back madly upon that which alone can satisfy the heart and save from everlasting misery. And *yet* (for this is of present moment) how *near* is the knowledge of God to every one of us. If Nabal had only gone to Abigail, he might have known even as she did. And from how much would he have been delivered. But he remained ignorant of

David, and being ignorant, rejected his messengers.

And now mark the selfishness of the world, the selfishness which characterised Nabal through all his history, when he speaks of "*my bread, my water, my flesh, my shearers*;" all self, self, self. Thus is it with man; self is his centre, self is his aim, self is his end. God is not in all his thoughts. It is all self.

What shall I eat, or what drink, or where-withal shall I be clothed? It is not God, not Christ, he wants, but the indulgence of self, the world; its desires and its pleasures. But, alas! with what result? For here, indeed, the true darkness of this picture now begins.

"So David's young men turned, and went again, and told David also those sayings."

Oh, mark that word! They *turned!* they *went away!* but not as they had come. They came with a message; they had gone back rejected. Oh, I repeat it, what a lost opportunity! and how dreadful! How dreadful for sinners! How dreadful for the world! For we know that Christ will yet reign, when

those who refused Him must give an account. At the now despised name of Jesus, when this day of grace is past, every knee shall bow; for every eye shall gaze on Him whom they rejected, whom they pierced. Now are we the wall of protection to the world, a wall which keeps back the tide of desolation, that which "lets" and hinders the coming indignation. These men were a wall of protection to Nabal. As long as they were with him there was no sudden destruction. Thus in this present time the Church is the light of the world; once taken from it, the world will be left in darkness. The Church, too, is the salt of the earth; but take away the salt, and all will head up in corruption, and "then cometh the end," yea, "sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." Meanwhile Abigail intercedes. There is yet a space in which we have dealings in behalf of the world before destruction.

"And Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures

of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal." As we have already said, no fellowship could she have with him; he knew not the value of David; his eye was not on the coming glory of the Lord's anointed; he was ignorant of what was the treasure of Abigail's heart. Nabal was churlish and evil and rejectful in his ways.

And now Abigail meets David. "And, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them." Like as it was with Rebecca and Isaac, you can never go out to meet your divine Isaac, but he comes to meet you. "And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet, and said, Upon *me*, my lord, upon *me* let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine hand-

maid." Mark, beloved, how she approaches him, and calls him "my lord." What! David, a fugitive, an outcast, and yet "my lord"? She had long since known him as lord, and now her eye seeth him. Oh, how preciously she shows her estimate of him! "This blessing," she says, "which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it be given to the young men which *follow* my lord." "The blessing," beloved, must be "for the young men that *follow* him." Her love for *them* was great, because of her love for *him*. We know Him who hath said, "*Inasmuch* as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

And now mark how the treasure is being unfolded, and how she unveils David to himself. She showed that the long, long night which hung over his pathway had not prevented her from discerning in him one whom the Lord had chosen. Taught by Him she was not of the night, but of the day; she saw clearly that the time was at hand, that the morning for him would be without clouds.

Ah, dear friends, how one lingers over and over again upon this! it was only such as Abigail could understand David. She had made him, in her own retirement, the deep theme of her meditative heart. Beloved, it is only a Christian, an anointed one, who can understand the true David. It is only one taught by the word who can know the secret of His long rejection, or, by the eye of faith, penetrate into the day of his coming glory.

But imagine David needing an intercessor, such an one as Abigail. No type, beloved, can ever be as the antitype. She was as a babe in her own estimation, yet how timely are her words! How they "fall as oil on the troubled and revengeful heart of David." She reminded him, as another has said, that "*a day of vengeance would assuredly come, but that grace now became him as one whom the Lord has so signally blessed.*" She told him that "the souls of his enemies should finally be slung out as in the middle of a sling, but that his soul should be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God." How beauti-

ful, how timely are her words: "And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, *then remember thine handmaid.*" One can almost hear, from the lips that uttered these words, the rehearsal of that sweet utterance at the cross, "Lord, *remember me when thou comest into Thy kingdom.*" For she knew He had a kingdom. She knew he would come to that kingdom. She knew that then his joy would be full. And what faith in her own connection with that joy! "When the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, *then remember thine handmaid.*" And do you not see that as the utterance at the cross was a cup of joy to the Lord in the moment of His rejection and death, so these words, spoken by this

daughter of faith, must have been a solace to the rejected one of Israel.

Little did she know how he *would* remember her ; how that, already, her words had made a way for her into his heart—into the joy of him whose kingdom it was. And now as David heard her words, “anger faded from his mind,” he said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath sent thee this day to meet me : and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.” How beautiful ! this woman of meekness taking the place of counsellor ! and now getting such recompense for her faith. Truly “the meek will He teach His way.” Here indeed was reward for Abigail, a recompense of blessing, to be ever after a solace in her heart of sorrow. How true it is that “provision for the *heart* is the dearest thought we can entertain ;” and this provision lies deep down in my own heart here among you this morning. *Jesus* is now the rejected One, and

it is sweet to own Him. But this same Jesus is soon coming in glory. He is not long to be without His kingdom. Oh, how we shall love to own Him as King of kings, and Lord of lords; then every eye shall see Him. We shall be "eye-witnesses of His majesty," and one with Him in His glory! We shall reign with Him, yea, sit down with Him on His throne, as He is now seated on the Father's throne. Oh, glorious moment of manifestation! when our Jesus shall be owned by all! seen by all! loved by all! when no more sin, or death, but this "corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, and the saying brought to pass which is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory!*"

And now mark here how the charm of David's character was, that he left all with God. Blessed example for Christians, to whom the word is, "*Avenge not yourselves!*" He did not avenge himself of Saul. To have done so with Nabal would have been a blot on his name. It was to prevent this that Abigail interposed.

“So David received of her hand that which she had brought him,” and said unto her, “Go up in peace to thine own house ; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.” Having ministered in her intercession to David, fruit of her love to him, and because she knew the secret of him which had been hid from others, she now retires to the place of her sorrows again. But for all her ministry, David had ministered blessing in return. Sweet words ! how they lingered on her ears ! “Peace ; go up in peace.” David had hearkened to her voice, had accepted her person, and had spoken to her of peace. Thus when the sinner owns Jesus as *Lord*, the person is accepted, the countenance is comely, he is “accepted in the Beloved,” and truly this is peace.

But judgment, though long in coming, would be sure. “And Abigail came to Nabal ; and, behold, he had a feast in his house, like the feast of a king ; and Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. But it came to pass that she told him nothing

less or more *till the morning light.*" Dark and dreadful is the shadow which falls upon our history here. The night of the feast passed, and the day had come when Abigail must tell him of David. To find that the rejected one is both lord and judge, was anguish to Nabal. The whirl of pleasure was now past. Oh, friends, we know its joy gives no satisfaction; it only intoxicates. Nabal *was* merry—he *was* "very drunken." Soon the night of the world's intoxication will be past, soon its pleasures will be *gone*—gone for ever. Its last glow-worm glimmer will go out as the sun of eternity breaks over the long judgments of the lost. *Awake, O sleeper!* the night is far spent; surely it is *high time for thee to awake.* Eternity cometh! The heart and conscience will then be laid bare before the searching, all-seeing eye of God. O sinner, sinner! will you go drunken down to hell? No, you cannot. When that "morning" shall arise "without clouds," and others shall give thanks for their great deliverance, every Nabal-like heart will quail

and perish for ever. There is no wine in hell ! no cheerfulness, no surfeiting in hell ! Poor sinner, you will have no loss of reason, no forgetfulness there ! Ah, what a future ! Oh, consider, ere it be too late—ere “the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and you are not saved !” Oh, ye worldlings, the night of your intoxicating pleasures will soon be at an end, and then the first glimpse of the Son of man in His majesty and glory will take hold upon you as pain upon a woman with child, and your hearts, like the heart of Nabal, will become as a stone ! Oh, horrible manifestation ! dreadful day ! There will be no deception then. It will be sudden destruction. It will be wrath and fiery indignation. It will be the wrath of God, yea, the dreadful and eternal wrath of the Lamb !

Suggestively, it will be after the day of vengeance that He will comfort those that mourn. It was after Nabal was dead that Abigail's life was united to David. Suggestively again, it is when the world, and self, and our own wills, and our vile flesh,

have all, as it were, died—lie in abeyance—mortified—then it is that our souls rest in Jesus. Here begins the true blessedness of Abigail; she is now David's bride—to be with him over his “sure house.” Here we get the joy of relationship which, as in the Song of Solomon (viii. 1), entitles to fullest love. She has no longer to say, “Oh that he were my brother!” He is more, much more. She is now his beloved—a partner first of his sorrows, and then subsequently with him on his throne. The sorrows were those she had never known, but for David. Her joys, in like manner, were all because of him. But if she suffered with him, she would reign with him. Co-heirs, co-glorified ones, are the wondrous words by which we are designated in Paul's letter to the Romans. Thus in principle was it with this child of Israel. Hence it was that she could count all her own “loss” in leaving her wealthy place in the house of Nabal, as nothing compared with her gain. Oh, what a lesson we have here! how Abigail joins herself to David while

in his rejection. She would take the *lowest* place—What! his spouse? his beloved? “Behold,” she says, “let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the *servants* of my lord!” It is, beloved, the very highest place a saint of God can take; “for whosoever among you would be chiefest, let him be servant of all.” Ah! the thoughts of her heart were not on *herself*, but on *David*. And yet how little she knew, though *he* knew, what would be her glory with him when seated with him in his kingdom; like as it was with the queen of Sheba, “the half had not been told her.” Such, however, have all His saints. It should teach us that these hearts of ours should be jealous, not for ourselves, but for His glory. Now all the cravings of her heart, all her foreknowledge of David, all her delight in his person, character, and ways were met; yea, far more than met, when, like another Rebekah, she hastened, and “went after the messengers of David, and and became his wife!” One sweet thought drawn from the love of David comes to our

mind, in the words of another: "God's capabilities of patience are not so much seen in His abstaining from ridding Himself of His enemies, as in keeping silence as to the revelation of His love. Should not we, if we loved any one with the infinitesimal part of His love for us, desire, yea long, to disclose to its object the passion of our heart? What a moment will that be, when, robed in honour and glory, worthy of Himself and His house, the long-loved ones will be owned as His for ever! What a moment when He will present us faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!"

Blessed portion have we, beloved, by-and-by. Our cup of love will be full from His own hand; a cup of love from His own lips; for every sight of His love in those wounds which will remain unworn away throughout that bright and long "for ever" will inspire afresh our own. Ah! then we shall be for ever holy—for ever restful—for ever happy—for ever satisfied. How free, then, from the evil and restless will! how free from the vile

flesh—from what Bunyan calls this “villain self!” Ah, beloved, for more of that sweet value of the *person* of Jesus, which Abigail had for David; then what a surprise! How his grace overwhelmed her! For ever with David—for ever with the Lord.

“Marvel not that Christ in glory,
All my inmost heart hath won;
Not a star to cheer my darkness,
But a light beyond the sun.

“I have seen the face of Jesus;
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have heard the voice of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied.

• “In the radiance of the glory,
First I saw His blessed face;
And for ever shall that glory
Be my home, my dwelling-place.

“From the lowest depths of evil,
To the *throne* in heaven above;
Thus, in me, He told the measure
Of His free unbounded love.”

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Good Tidings of Great Joy.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be to all people.”—LUKE ii. 10.

THE birth of the Saviour was ushered in by the wonderful manifestation of “the angel of the Lord” to simple shepherds as they watched their flocks by night. In the midst of the midnight darkness by which they were enveloped, suddenly there shone round about them a light from heaven, and they were sore afraid. And no wonder. The dazzling blaze of the glory of the Lord is enough to strike terror into the hearts of the unsaved. It shows them what they are, and what the claims of a holy God are against sinners. Job said, “Mine eye seeth Thee,

therefore I abhor myself." Isaiah, surrounded by the light of the moral glory of the Lord, cries, "Woe is me, for I am undone." Paul also, bowed and humbled to the very dust in the presence of this glory, exclaims, "Who art Thou, Lord?" Light convicts and condemns, and leaves the soul conscience-stricken in the presence of God. David says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation." Light first, to expose man's vileness and badness, and salvation to meet the need of the convicted sinner. The shepherds were sore afraid. The fear of the Lord, created by the light of the glory, is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. What sweet music fell on the ears of these poor stricken ones as the voice of the angel of the Lord uttered these comforting words: "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." Guilty fears vanish, clouds and

darkness roll away, and now they are filled with joy and peace. This is ever the effect of receiving the gospel.

The word gospel means "good news," "glad tidings." Not that you should doubt or be uncertain, not that you might still fear, but that you may have "*great joy.*" The mind is always affected by the character of the message it receives, whether of sorrow or joy; so that if you receive the gospel, the glad tidings, the effect must be *great joy.* The gospel, called in Scripture the gospel of God, of the grace of God, of peace, of salvation, of the glory of Christ, is good news from heaven to a sin-blighted world. It is to "all people;" not to a *few*, but to *all* in this sinful world. Let us consider now some of the benefits of which these good tidings speak.

I. They tell us of *freedom for the slave.* The unconverted do not believe that they are the servants of sin, the slaves of Satan,

and the abject subjects of the King of Terrors. Men laugh at the idea, and boast of their liberty, how they can do this, go there, just as they like. Awful infatuation ! Unconverted man, thou art but a puppet in the hands of Satan, the god of this world, and led about "captive by him *at his will.*" (2 Tim. ii. 26.) Mark these words, "*at his will.*" He pulls the strings, he gives the command, and his abject slave must obey. Where is now thy boasted liberty, thou enslaved one ? May God open your eyes to see your true state, poor sinner ! He has different chains for different persons wherewith to bind them to himself and drag them along the broad road that leads to destruction. What a fearful chain is drunkenness ! How many thousands he is now hurrying along at express speed to hell through this ! How few are emancipated from its thrall ! I solemnly believe that by far the largest number of any class of sinners in hell will be "religious professors," and next to them

“*drunkards.*” As the boa constrictor winds itself round its helpless victim, and holds it fast in its deadly embrace, so this love of drink coils itself round many a poor slave of Satan, depriving them of all power of resistance, sending them oftentimes to an untimely grave and a never-ending hell! We must raise our voices against this rapidly increasing social evil, which nowadays has seized hold upon women as well as men.

Another chain is pleasure. It binds the young. It attracts them. The world is very attractive to the young heart just beginning what is called “life.” Ignorant of its hollowness and unreality, they mistake its tinsel for gold and its smiles for happiness, and on and on they are led to their own destruction. “This way to the pit” is written over every entrance of this flowery path of pleasure. Poor votary of pleasure, thou art building castles in the air, dreaming away the short span of life in empty visions of future happiness and

pleasure, and frittering away the precious moments of time that God has given you to prepare for that never-ending eternity to which you are fast hastening. Vanity and vexation of spirit is stamped on all. Awake from your dreamy slumbers, thou child of wrath? Earth's streams will never satisfy thy thirsty soul. It is like drinking the waters of the ocean; the more you drink the more thirsty you become. "Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again," both here and hereafter. Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." These are the good tidings we bring you.

Many more are the chains of Satan, as the love of sin, love of money, religion apart from the sacrifice of Jesus, carelessness about the great salvation. With these he holds the world enthralled, and leads it "*captive at his will.*" "We bring you good tidings of great joy."

Man is also the servant of sin. Read John viii. 34: "Jesus said, Verily, verily, I

say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is *the* servant of sin." Sin is represented in Rom. vi. as a tyrant master giving his servants their wages. All men are servants, either of God or of sin. Who is your Master, my friend, God or sin? Remember, "you cannot serve two masters." If you are a converted man, a saved woman, you are the servant of God. If not saved, you are the servant of sin. God says it. Sin is the ruling, controlling, dominating principle that is in you and on you, and from which you never can free yourself. But "we bring you good tidings of great joy." There's freedom for you.

Again, men are subjects of cruel death. His sway is universal over an unregenerated world. All must own his supremacy. The ungodly must die. He is God's officer of justice, sent to arrest the Christless sinner and bring him before the bar of a holy and just Judge. Sinner, are you *ready* for the summons? are you prepared to meet God?

Death is not the Christian's tyrant, but the Christian's friend, who comes and opens the prison door to let their redeemed and happy spirits go free, and soar aloft to God who saved them. What a bondage, the fear of death ! Thanks be to God, through Christ He hath delivered His people from this yoke, this terrible yoke. "We bring you good tidings of great joy."

There is deliverance for you, and at hand. For years England, as well as the other nations of the world, had large property in *slaves* in her colonies, till the noble Wilberforce put forth his eloquence and his talents on their behalf, and at last succeeded in passing the Emancipation Act, by which all slaves under England's rule, and all slaves who touched English soil, were to be free. It cost England twenty millions of money—a great, a very great price ; but the glory of that act will be for ever emblazoned on her escutcheon. Well may she be proud of it ! The act, having received the king's signa-

ture, was sent out in the fastest ships to the colonies, "bringing the good tidings of great joy" to the poor down-trodden enslaved multitudes there — *Emancipation for the slaves*. No more cruel bondage, or lash, or chain, but glorious freedom. The governors issued proclamations, which were posted everywhere. How many a song of praise went up from many a ransomed soul! How many a prayer ascended for blessings on noble England! It was a time of rejoicing. England rejoiced, Wilberforce and his friends rejoiced, the governors rejoiced, the slaves rejoiced. It was a happy time. As the slaves read the proclamation, were they swayed by different emotions? Did some leap for joy and their hearts dissolve in thankfulness? Did others sigh and say, "Too good news to be true, it is not for me," or "I'm too unworthy," or "If I could only feel it was true I'd believe it," or "If I could only feel I was free I would be all right"? What think you? Ah, no!

it was a reality, this freedom—a thing to be believed and enjoyed. They could not *feel* the fact or the passing of the act, but they could *feel* supremely happy, because by the passing of the act they were free, and they believed it. Had they not believed it they never could be happy.

Well now, beloved friends, the Eternal Trinity seeing you in slavery, bondage, and subjection, unable to do anything to deliver or free yourselves, passed the glorious Emancipation Act in the councils of heaven by which, upon the mighty price of the precious blood of Jesus Christ being paid as a satisfaction for God's claims, liberty and freedom was to be proclaimed to *all* who *would come and believe on this wondrous Redeemer, this Son of the living God.* What think you of the price? Twenty millions was enormous. But oh, the precious blood of God's dear Son shed on the cross! Have you counted the cost of your redemption? Who can estimate its value? Is it not

sufficient for all the people of this world? Yea, for all the people of millions of worlds like this! Then how are *you* to be free? "The truth shall make you free." Believing, thou art free. Believing what? First, that you are a poor helpless slave, unable to save yourself. Do you, can you believe this? If you don't you have no need for the second; viz., that Jesus Christ on the cross, by His precious blood shed, paid down for *you* the redemption-money of *your* freedom from sin, Satan, death. The moment the King of England put his signature to that Act of Parliament, that moment they were virtually free. So the moment the resurrection of Christ gave efficacy to His finished work, that moment your freedom was effected; and now, practically and experimentally, you are free on believing.

"The moment a sinner believes,
 And trusts in a crucified Lord;
 His pardon at *once* he receives,
Salvation in full through His blood."

What had the slaves to do in order to be free? Had they to pay, to work, to feel? Certainly not. They willingly received "the glad tidings," and believing it had "great joy;" their chains were broken, their misery was at an end, and they were free. They did not "hope" they were free. They knew it, they rejoiced and felt very happy. So with you, dear sinner. The moment you believe on the Lord Jesus as the one who "loved you and died for you," as if you were the only sinner in the world He loved and died for, that moment you are saved, are free; the chains, by which you were "tied and bound," fall off, and you henceforth become "the Lord's freeman." You change masters; grace reigns over you now instead of sin; Christ is your Lord instead of Satan, and death is your friend instead of your foe. Happy, joyous, glorious liberty and freedom! *All for you now*, at this moment, friend. Cross the Rubicon! On one side death, on the other life; on one

slavery, on the other freedom ; on one darkness, on the other light. One leads to hell, the other to heaven. Surely this is "good tidings of great joy," and why not for you now—this moment?

II. The good tidings tell of health for the sick, a cure for the incurable.

In Matt. ix. 12, the Lord says : "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Man has within him the incurable disease of sin, hastening him on to death. False teachers may tell you that sin is but a plague-spot on our human nature that can be cured by good works. It is not so. Sin is a fell disease, for which there is but one remedy—the blood of Christ. We have a striking illustration of this in the case of the bitten Israelites, referred to by our Lord in John iii. The bitten ones had the poison of the serpents coursing through their veins. There was no antidote for it. No human skill or treat-

ment could ever neutralize the baneful effects of that deadly poison. Death was the inevitable result to all. They must die. So man, born in sin, shapen in iniquity, has within him the subtle poison of that old serpent, the devil, which no human efforts, means, or remedies can ever reach or cure. Sin is incurable to all earthly appliances, and death must be the result; and this death—the second death—is eternal banishment from God, happiness, and heaven. But “we bring you good tidings of great joy.” There is a remedy for the disease, there is a cure for the incurable. In the case of the Israelites, God did not take away the cause; for, had He merely done so, all the bitten ones would have died; but He sent a remedy by which *all* the bitten ones could be cured. The remedy was infallible to every one who availed themselves of it. A lifted up serpent was the remedy; and the moment they did what God told them, and looked at the uplifted serpent—falling

in with His plan—that moment they were cured and healed. And so for the wounded, sin-sick sinner God has provided a blessed remedy, which has never yet failed in the case of any who have tried it. “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 everlasting life.” Suppose I were to go to an hospital for incurables (those most excellent institutions well deserving the sympathy and support of God’s people), and collect together in a room all the patients—some in the last stage of consumption, others eaten away with cancer, others having heart disease, but *all hopelessly incurable*, everything that care and skill could think of or devise having utterly failed to reach their case. Suppose I stood up in their midst and said, “I have good tidings of great joy for you, dear people. I have come to tell you *all* that I have here a never-failing cure which will *surely*

restore and recover *any* of you that will try it." The eyes of some would brighten at the news, while others would remain listless and careless, the announcement conveying no glad tidings to them, because having tried so many physicians and their remedies already, and all having failed, they think their case is hopeless and beyond remedy. Suppose I say, "Who will come to me for the remedy?" See that consumptive young man how he eagerly comes forward and puts out his hand for it! He takes it in the presence of all, and soon a wonderful change comes over him. He breathes freely now; he has no longer the hollow cheeks and sunken eyes; flesh comes to the emaciated form; he is a new creature. Many others gratefully receive the remedy, and are cured at once. Others refuse, and still continue in their hopeless condition, which soon ends fatally for them. Others slight it and scoff at it, though they see the wonderful change wrought in those who try the remedy: they

perish miserably with the remedy within their reach.

This world is a vast incurable hospital, where men suffer with this fatal disease of sin. There are many men who profess to cure all who try *their* way. Their medicines go by different names—"good works," "sacraments," "charity," "religiousness," "praying," "trusting to the mercy of God," "attend ordinances." How many thousands have been deluded by these miserable charlatans, and instead of getting better under their treatment, only get worse! Many have implicit confidence in their skill, and who never discover their mistake till they find themselves in hell, when it is *too late*. They perish with the remedy within their reach. You may remember the case of the woman (in Mark v.) with the issue of blood. She had an incurable disease, and she went from one physician to another until she had spent all the means she had. None could heal; she only grew worse and worse the

more she tried human remedies. At last all hope was over ; her condition was truly pitiable. She went home to die. Starvation and death stared her in the face ; she had no means of subsistence ; all was spent ; the tide of life fast ebbing away ; she was helpless, she was hopeless. But “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” She hears a tumult of people outside her door ; she asks what it is all about ; she is told that Jesus of Nazareth, who has cured and healed so many, is on His way to Jairus’s house to restore his little daughter, who was at the point of death. “Oh, I’m so glad ! He is the only one who can do me any good. If I can but touch the hem of His garment, I know *I* shall be healed.” It was a matter of life or death with her ; she was *really in earnest*. In spite of the crowd that thronged Him, she made her way behind Him, touched His garment, and was immediately cured. Mark the order. She *heard* the good tidings : she *believed* them ; she *touched* ; and her

hitherto incurable disease yields to the divine power of the good Physician.

So it must be with you, sinner. You must come to Jesus as you are. If you wait to get better, you will only get worse. You have tried those worthless remedies: they have utterly failed to give you any relief. Come at once to the great Physician, who has for all who come the infallible remedy of His own precious blood. Perish not with the remedy within your reach. Whether you believe your lost condition or not, God knows better than you, and He has provided the remedy. You have heard now the good tidings. Will you believe it? Come to Jesus and be healed, cured, saved, and then you will rejoice.

III. "We bring you good tidings of great joy." There's water for the thirsty, and bread for the hungry. Isaiah says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Jesus said, "If any man thirst,

let him *come unto Me, and drink.*" John says, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." All men thirst. Some thirst for gold : it is insatiable. Some for pleasure : it is insatiable. Some for honour : it is insatiable. Some for sin : it is insatiable. "Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again." They intoxicate and create more thirst. They never can, they never will, satisfy. When the blessed Saviour on the cross cried, "I thirst," the pitiless soldiers gave Him vinegar and gall to drink. Unconverted men, unsaved women, this is what the devil will give you ; nothing more he can give. The sins and pleasures of the world may for the present be to your taste like honey, yet by-and-by they will prove vinegar and gall. How bitter your trials, your cares, your disappointments, your blasted hopes ! The whole inner man is soured. How some, with bodies worn out with dissipation and disease, the consequence of their sins, curse

their "hard lot," as they call it, and wish they had never been born. The sweet has become bitter—vinegar and gall. But "I bring you good tidings of great joy." You need no longer drink the waters of Marah, but the sweet reviving streams of eternal life. "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." Jesus says, "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." (John iv. 14.) Come then to Him and quench your thirst. He holds the cup to your lips. Drink! The cup of wrath He drained to its dregs on the cross, and now it is a cup full of blessing held to your lips. Drink and live, and then no more thirst. You have tried earth's streams with no satisfaction. Try these refreshing streams that flow from the heart of God and the cross of Christ. The Rock Christ was smitten there: out flows the water. Drink and live: believe and live.

Again, the hungry soul wants to be fed. There's bread for the hungry. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." What good news! May it be of "great joy" to your soul! Have you a desire for salvation? have you a craving for the things of God? have you an aching void in your soul, that the world has never succeeded in filling up? These are not of Satan's creation; he has nothing to give but husks. It was so with the prodigal son. He was famishing with hunger, and no man gave unto him; all he had was husks, swine's food; no bread there, nothing but starvation and want. So with you, poor sinner, afar off from God, living for the world, all you need expect, for all you will get, will be the never satisfying food of Satan's providing—husks. We have good news for you. You may have instead "angels' food," the manna that came down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. Jesus said,

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;” and “whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.” (John vi.) What is the meaning of this? Certainly not partaking of the Lord’s supper, which is never referred to here. What then? Why simply this, as explained in verse 47: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” So that eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man is simply believing on Him; that is, by faith we obtain all the benefits resulting from His broken body and shed blood; in other words, we appropriate them; and this is life, eternal life. Like the prodigal, “Arise and go to your Father.” There’s bread and to spare in His house. The arms of love are ready to be thrown around you, the lips to kiss you, the best robe of heaven to cover you, the shoes of sonship for your feet, and the ring, emblematic of His never-ending love,

for your finger. Come, and welcome. "Who-soever cometh shall never hunger." These should be good tidings of great joy to the poor hungry sinner.

IV. These glad tidings tell of *pardon for the guilty*. For four thousand years God put man on his trial, and the result was that man only got worse instead of better. He tried him under *'innocence*, and he failed. He tried him under *conscience*, and he failed. He tried him under *law*, and he failed, ending in the murder of the Son of God. This was the climax. The cross of Christ ended the trial of man. No longer is man now under probation, but under condemnation. He was weighed in the balances and found wanting. He was put on his trial, judged, found guilty, and condemned. So that now every unsaved man is under sentence of death, and this world is his condemned cell. Jesus says, "He that believeth not is *condemned* already." (John iii.) Paul says,

“The whole world is become *guilty* before God,” the righteous Judge. (Rom. iii.) Fearful is the doom awaiting you, poor sinner! The sentence passed, “the soul that sinneth it shall die,” is ready at any moment God chooses to be carried into execution. By a slender thread the sword of justice is suspended, over thy soul, ready, upon a word from God, to hurry thee off to thy never-ending destruction. Sinner, you are guilty and condemned. Think on your condition! God says, “He can in no wise clear the guilty.” God is holy and just. How can He exonerate you from guilt? How can He be just and at the same time justify the ungodly sinner? If it depended on you He could not. Nothing you could ever do could so satisfy the claims of divine justice as to enable God to justify you; viz., pronounce you not guilty. The sentence must be executed, justice must be satisfied, truth must be vindicated. Sinner, you must die, or another for you. The sentence is irrevoc-

cable. Some think if they only cry for mercy that they will be saved. There never was any one yet saved by crying for mercy. Don't be deluded.

In one of the northern counties of Ireland, a few months ago, a young man was put on his trial for murdering his brother. After a patient investigation of the case, the jury returned a verdict of *guilty*. Before the judge put on the black cap to pronounce sentence of death, he asked the prisoner if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced. A most affecting scene took place. The wretched man threw himself down on his knees in the dock, and with terrified face and bitter anguish of soul, cried out, "Oh, my lord, have mercy on me! I slew my brother, but I am very sorry for it. My lord, have mercy on me, and don't sentence me to death!" The judge and the whole court were deeply moved, many to tears. All his entreaties for mercy, and his expression of deep sorrow,

could not move the judge. He had but one course open to him, and that was to sentence him to death. Justice must be satisfied, and *justice is inexorable to all cries for mercy and expressions of sorrow*. The condemned man must die. And if it is impossible for human justice to be satisfied with cries for mercy; expressions of sorrow, how much more the justice of God? God is merciful—blessed be His name for ever—but *God is just*. His mercy could not be extended to any at the expense of His justice. Sinner, you have been tried, found guilty, and the sentence of death pronounced. You *now* await your execution. You may be called ere another sun rises upon this world.

Suppose the Queen of England heard of that condemned man, and, having her heart drawn out in pity and love to him, she induced the Prince of Wales to go over to that prison, and say, “My mother loves this poor condemned man, and she wants to have him always with her in court, to bring him

into her family, allowing him all the privileges of the Royal children. She knows she cannot exercise mercy towards him at the expense of justice, so she has sent me to take his place, to bear his doom, and suffer his punishment. Take off his clothes and let him put on mine, and be at once sent to the Queen." Suppose the Prince put on the condemned man's dress, took his place, and died for him, what would the world think and say? What excitement there would be all over the world as the telegraph flashed the news of such a wonderful exhibition of love on the part of the Queen, and of devotion on that of the Prince of Wales, as that! And yet far more wonderful has it been that the Prince of Life, the only-begotten Son of God, came into this world to die instead of the poor, guilty, condemned sinner. Sinner, He died for thee. The guiltless One took the place, bore the punishment of the guilty, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ever-

lasting life." Can you believe He died for *you*, a lost, guilty, condemned sinner? By believing *that*, the execution of the just sentence of God against *you*, a sinner, undergone by Christ on the cross, you are free. It is not that you are reprieved, or your sentence commuted, but that the prison doors are thrown wide open for you to step out a free and justified man. *There can only be mercy on the ground of justice satisfied.* We bring you "good tidings of great joy." There's pardon and forgiveness *now for thee*, the moment you believe on Jesus as your substitute, on the ground of all the claims of a holy God and a righteous Judge, being fully and perfectly met by the death of Christ on the cross. And the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the grave on the third day is God's proof to you, sinner, that His law was magnified, His justice satisfied, His majesty vindicated, and His truth upheld. Will you *now* be satisfied with that which satisfied God—the death of Jesus?

Only believe. God is just, and the justifier of Him who believeth in Jesus. You are guilty; Jesus, Himself guiltless, took the place of the guilty, so that every sinner that believes on Him is pronounced by God as *not guilty*; that is, he is justified by faith, and he has peace with God.

Why, then, not you? Nothing to do, nothing to bring, nothing to pay.

“Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.”

These, then, are the glad tidings we bring you. Freedom for the slave, health for the sick, bread and water for the hungry and thirsty, and pardon for the guilty. All for thee, sinner!

The Lord add His rich blessing. Amen.

SUBSTITUTION.

BY

F. DENHAM SMITH.

Fifth Thousand.

LONDON:

J. E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;

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SUBSTITUTION.

“And it shall be accepted for him.”—LEV. i. 4.

THE first chapter of Leviticus is one of the most precious portions of the Word. I know not how sufficiently to thank our God for the truth it contains. Substitution is the very essence of the Gospel, and Substitution is the burden of this chapter. There are many points of interest in it, bearing on the person and value of the perfect Son of God, as our Substitute and Saviour. He is the sweet burnt-offering sacrifice so blessedly portrayed. And, oh, who is it tells of Him

but God Himself? With what delight and confidence, then, may we listen!

God, we are told, called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. That Tabernacle, we know, was Christ. God speaks to us from out of Christ. If there had been no Christ, no substitute for the sinner, neither you nor I could have been brought to God. Our sins would have kept us from God, but Christ brings us to God.

Men speak of a God out of Christ; but there is no such God. The only God revealed to us is a God who is in Christ. It was in Christ that God was manifested in the flesh. He redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ. To expect salvation out of or apart from Christ, is ignorantly to say that there was no need of Christ. We do not want any other proof of our need of a Saviour than that God has given us one.

But, now, what saith God? "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock." Does it not sound sweetly, that weighty little word, "*any*"?—"any man," inclusive of any and every one who, feeling his soul's need, may desire to bring an offering.

Yes, dear friends, "any man." Are *you* sinful, lost?—dead in sins, corrupt? It is, "any man." Never until now, perhaps, have you cared for your soul, or desired even, the salvation of God; yet you are included. You need not wait, you need not doubt, but may come as you are. The word is, "any man"—like that other mighty human word, "whosoever." "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Hence it is you may see

yourselves in that word "any," or sweetly enclosed in this "whosoever." "Whosoever will, may come," just as any man who would bring an offering may come. Overtaken by some sin, laden with guilt, the recourse was to an offering. The burdened one in Israel had only to bring the offering, and he could always find a priest, God's representative, who would take it, and *it* would be accepted for him to make an atonement for him. Oh, how simple! how ready! "But," you say, "would that I had lived in those days! I, too, would have brought the offering. For *I* am a sinner; *I* am a poor guilty sinner; *I* am a sinner long seeking salvation. Would I had lived when it was thus—*only to bring an offering, and atonement would be sure!*"

But not so; for you may far more readily bring Christ now, God's own appointed Lamb. Not that He must

die; He *has* died—died for our sins—
“was manifested to take away our sins.”
See, then, with what sure warrant may
you bring *Him* to God, and say, resting
on *Him*,—

“Both Thine arms are clasped around me,
And my head is on Thy breast;
For my weary soul hath found Thee
Such a perfect, perfect rest.”

And not now the lamb, not the ox, not the
dove, but Christ! He is your salvation
from all your sins, and from all your con-
demnation. Christ died on the cross for
our sins. An open grave, with sins for-
given, and heaven opened—such is the
salvation we have in Him. Bringing
Christ to God, you bring Him all that He
requires. He has vindicated the whole
character of God on the cross, so that God
can be just, yet justify the ungodly. He
is His perfect Son, who was delivered for
our sins, and was raised again for our

justification. And you may bring Him *willingly*. "He shall offer it," says God, "of his own voluntary will."

But what "will" has a *dead* soul? I shall never forget the first moment in my own life when I felt that I *had* a will to come to Christ. I was reading that passage, "As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I knew I was led. I knew I had a will against my old will. But being led, what then? Why, says God, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God.*"

God Himself it is who makes us willing in the day of His power. How beautifully simple it appears when God works! The man brought the offering, and on the ground of the offering, the man was accepted. Thus, in the first age, "Abel was accepted, and his offering;" that is, he was accepted *because* of his offering. We

are accepted *because* of Christ. God put all our sins upon Him, and gives us the value of His death.

But mark what follows: "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the offering; and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." By putting his hand upon the sacrifice, he owned how he had become identified with it: it was as if he had said, "I have sinned, and death is my desert. Here is a sinless victim, who will take my death." And God said, "And *it* shall be accepted for him." Ah, dear friends, the offerer did not bring himself or his sins merely, or his guilt only; he brought *the offering!* Not so with many. They bring their sins, their guilt, their fears, *themselves!* but do not bring Christ. God complains of Israel, "You have not brought me the small cattle of the burnt-offering"—"the *lambs,*" as the margin reads. They had not brought Christ!

“Oh,” says a creditor, “bring me not the debts, but the payment!—not your gloom or your fear, but a settlement!” Christ is the settlement God accepts.

And now, mark how beautiful these words! One loves to recur to them again and again. “And *it* shall be accepted for him.” “It”—mark it well—not the offerer, but *it*, the offering. A ring of joy is in that little word. It was not the offerer, but the *dove, the lamb, the ox*. It was *not the hands that brought them*. The hands were laid down *upon* the offering, empty, of course, yet filled,—empty of their own, but filled with the offering, filled with Christ. Ah! when David had grievously sinned, forgetting that God was his strength, and so numbering the people, and the Lord sent the dreadful pestilence upon him, what was it that gave him rest? Was it, as we have been reminded, looking at his sin? Surely

not. What gave him rest was looking at the altar in the threshing-floor of Ornan. Seeing our sins only makes us miserable ; seeing Christ makes us happy. Some are always looking at their sins, and so are always sorrowful. The offerer here emptied his hands of his sins, but filled them with the offering. How often do you say, "Nothing"—that is, nothing of our own—

"Nothing in my hands I bring—
Simply to thy cross I cling."

But is it so ? Are you satisfied with Him ? And now will you note how ready to be procured was the offering ? A halfpenny of our money could procure it. The poorest could bring a turtle-dove. You remember how Mary, the mother of the Lord, is spoken of as bringing on the eighth day a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons. She may have been too poor to bring an ox, or a lamb, and so she brought the turtle-dove. But the turtle-

dove as much represented Christ as did the ox or the lamb.

How merciful, and compassionate of our need is our God! Elsewhere, amongst the offerings for the Tabernacle, if any were too poor to bring gold, or silver, or wood, they might bring a few threads of "goat's-hair." But that goat's-hair indicated Christ. Oh, you may but touch Christ—the hem of His garment—and you are saved! All His value is at once reckoned to you. The little dove, common, cheap as it was, was enough. Such was God's beautiful way of showing that no sinner out of hell need get there, and that no sinner out of heaven but might one day be *in* heaven. But He must come in the divinely-appointed way. Oh, ye needy ones, it is not your tears, or your repentance, which God asks; He wants you to bring Him Christ, a Christ whom He has provided for you without money

and without price. Methinks I can say for hundreds of you to-day, "We have been looking at self, we have not been looking at Christ." Gladly would I say for all, "We take Christ now, God wants nothing else, we bring Christ to God." To-night, then, write the word upon your door-posts, for your going-out, and your coming-in; and upon the pillow of your couch, for your lying-down and your rising-up, "*It* shall be accepted for him." "*It*"—the lamb, the ox, the dove—"to make atonement for him."

A poor burdened Israelite might have gone to the priest, saying, "*My* sin is peculiar, I am *such* a sinner!" For there must have been differences in the feelings of the offerers. The priest's instant reply would be, "Bring the OFFERING." And it is most remarkable, that of all the millions of offerings that were presented to God by Israel, not only in the desert,

but also when they were come into the land (as in the days of Hezekiah and Solomon, when thousands, myriads, were sacrificed at a time) nothing is said about the feelings of the offerers.

Dear friends, I want you to bring the Lamb of God's own providing. Truly, if you would only hold *Him* up to God, and say, "*I* deserve wrath, but *Christ* has taken it; death, hell, judgment, but *He* has taken them. *I* am vile, but *He* is holy; unrighteous, but *He* is righteous," then what a substitution, yea, *Substitute, Saviour, Friend!* He is better than a friend. You may tell a friend all your vileness, and he may love you the less. Poor backsliding one, this is for you! Tell your friends, and they might loathe you—not so *this* Friend. Oh, come, as at first, and bring *Him* now! Have you not been saying, "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the

Lord?" What is hindering you from taking Christ into your hands, as you did at first, and saying, "I have been long trying to get something of my own, some feeling, some suffering, some sorrow, some repentance, suited to my backsliding, first; but now, I empty my hands of all else, and I bring Christ. He shall be accepted for me; not *I*, but Christ."

As to suffering—there was enough. "And he shall *kill* the bullock." Dear friends, there was *suffering* in this offering; it cost much, that it may be an atonement. "He shall *kill* the bullock"—ah, yes, *kill it, kill* the offering, instead of the offerer; the offering was harmless, innocent of that for which it was to die. As the offerer would see the sufferings, he would, as it were, "eat the bitter herbs" of a deep inmost regret and sorrow that such sufferings should be occasioned by his sin.

But now, the sacrifice having been killed, "the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation." Everywhere the blood was seen teaching the constant value and efficacy of the atoning sufferings. It was sprinkled round and about the altar, so that there was no approaching it without seeing the blood. Plainly it showed that death had transpired, which had put away sin. It was sprinkled before the door of the Tabernacle, where God was. God was never weary of seeing it, nor shall we; for it is that which has satisfied God, which made purchase of the saved, and will never cease its efficacy, as we sing—

"Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved, to sin no more."

And, yonder in heaven, He is still the Lamb—God's Lamb; and there is not a portion of His Person but tells of the work He has accomplished. That hand, raised in blessing, was once perforated with the cruel nail; that brow, now radiant with life, was once marred and torn with the thorny crown; that foot, which has made Divine entrance for human tread in heaven, is the same once-pierced foot. The blood so precious to the sinner is of infinite value to God. God said, in effect, "Let me see the blood of my Son everywhere." And it was seen everywhere; down by the side, and by the bottom of the altar; *upon* the altar, where God saw it; and round about, where the Priest for the sinner saw it. Both were satisfied—God saying "This is my beloved Son;" and the believing sinner saying to God, "This is my salvation."

And this word "beloved *Son*" opens up another truth; viz., the Person of Christ. Alas! many are anxious about salvation who think but little about a Saviour; they want reconciliation, but do not know, as they ought, the Blessed One who is the *Reconciler*. The true perfectness of Him who is *Son* is blessedly seen in our offering, which is a perfect sweet savour offering. "But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water, and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." That is, Aaron did this in order to its perfectness. Now, God had not to do this with His Lamb, for He, as a person, was *unblemished*. He who bore our sins was, in Himself, before God, sinless, perfect.

In the 15th and 16th verses we read: "And the priest shall bring it unto the

altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar: and he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar, by the place of the ashes" (all that was not perfect in the offering, and in order to its being a true figure of the Perfect One, was to be set aside with the ashes); "and he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Ah, dear believers, it is in this perfectness—in all the value of it before God—that, as believing ones, we are holy, righteous, perfect as He, complete in Him.

Thus the grain in the crop and the least remains of feathers on the bird could not be allowed. It must be a perfect-fitting

image, as I have said, of Him of whom God could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And when a poor guilty Israelite brought his offering, perhaps he may have lamented, "I am sinful; not only have I *sinned*, but I myself, *I* am sinful." Yet the priest would reply: "Look at the offering. *It* has died—has satisfied God," would be the comforting answer. Thus truly, *you* are sinful, *you* are vile; but God is saying, "You, as a sinner, are excluded. Look at my Son. He is holy; He has satisfied." What a sacrifice! what a salvation! for the oldest and vilest amongst you, for the most needy sinner out of hell, if such should be here to-day. You may come, and on the ground of His death take the advantage of all His perfectness, even as once He took upon Himself all your imperfectness. *He* took all that *you* deserved, that He might give you all that *He* de-

serves. And what does *He* not deserve? Does *He* not deserve peace? Yes, peace as Son, and also as Man with God. And does He not deserve joy? the Father's love? the glory? All this is yours. You are as He is. You come to these meetings, and you say "Amen!" and "for Christ's sake!" But do you really know the meaning of these words? "Amen" signifies, "So let it be." Thus God says: "It—*i.e.* Christ, my Son—shall be accepted for you," and you respond "Amen." Christ says: "I did it all as Substitute and Saviour, and for the lost, that you now, for my sake, may be saved." And mark! when you say for the sake of another, the value of that other is taken into consideration. The late Prince might have said to the Queen, "Remember that aged one, the gardener, when I am gone; don't forget him, for my sake." Surely the Queen does for him far more, if

possible, than what the Prince did, and that because of the value to her of him who thus gave the charge. Christ, having died for us, has gone into heaven, and there stands, righteous, accepted, in the presence of God for us, and is saying: "Father, I have satisfied Thee; I have died for the lost. There is a sinner; he is taking ME, as Thy Lamb; he is knowing ME, he is touching ME. Give to him all, everything as to ME, for my sake." God help you, dear friends, if you do not see your warrant for being saved on the spot!—as you are!—for receiving a present salvation!

But another thing here. It was remarkable that nothing was said to the offerer about his faith; to have raised the question of faith would have been to mar the simplicity of the act. He was told to take the *offering*, and was not hampered by any direction as to the state of his own mind.

The perfection of his faith consisted in this, that it was wholly occupied, not with itself, but with the offering; and thus now it is with you. If you are looking at faith, you will not see Christ. If you look at your faith, you will fail to see any other object. Thus, to raise the question of faith, or the right kind of faith, is to take the eye off the Lord Himself. It is He *Himself*, and not faith, who has satisfied God. Atonement has been made! His work is finished! He Himself has been received at the right hand of God; and we are received in Him. It is impossible to separate salvation, or the true spiritual enjoyment of a Christian, from the perfect offering which Christ Himself is in the presence of God. The moment our souls separate themselves from Christ to feed upon our *faith*, there is no enjoyment. It is the Holy Spirit through the truth which leads the soul thus into the true

knowledge of the value, the blessedness, the freeness, and the sufficiency of Christ Himself.

There are some, indeed, who say that we do not, in preaching, thus sufficiently honour the Spirit; but surely nothing could more honour Him than that which honours Christ. The Holy Ghost never witnesses to faith but to Christ, as in John xv. 26, where it is said, "He shall bear witness concerning Me;" and again (xvi. 14), "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew (*announce*) it unto you." He, then, it is who brings the message from God concerning Christ, and the simple act of the sinner is to receive the message—to believe the message. "He that believeth on the Son" (mark that word—hath it now) "*hath everlasting life.*" (John iii. 36.) Such, then, is Christ, and such is the Gospel, and such is faith, and such also the work of the Spirit. How blessed!

how simple ! What then have you to do ?
Oh, if you have never done it before,
just do this, repeat with me—

“ My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.”

But is confession all ? Surely not—

“ My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And *knows* her guilt was there.”

But how know it ? Simply because
God hath said it. Hence, repeat again—

“ *Believing*, I rejoice,
To see the curse remove,
I bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love.”

And now, in a subsequent chapter, we have allusion made to the fire upon the altar which was “ never to go out.” So that the Israelite could never be found

bringing his offering at a moment which was not an acceptable time. Whenever he might need to bring it, the fire was there. It was not only that *whosoever would* might bring; but "*whensoever*" as well as "*whosoever*." What does this say, but that "now is the accepted time"? Oh, then, how wonderful were we all to put our hand down upon our offering now, and, thus identified with our sacrifice, hear God saying to us now, "And it (Christ) shall be accepted for you!" But further, and this is important, you cannot really say,

"Believing, I rejoice,"

without being born again. None not "born again" can rejoice in Christ. Does a soul delight itself in the offering? then is it regenerated. Nor can it see and feel the sufferings caused by its sin, permitted—nay, inflicted—by God on Christ for the sinner, without repentance.

Repentance is *another* mind, which all have who have seen God's view of sin, and God's love to the sinner in giving us His Son. Peace and assurance also are here—not as resting on any feeling or experience of ours, but upon the simple *written* Word of the living God.

Imagine an Israelitish person (as in chapter iv.) having come with his Sacrifice, and having left it with the Priest, he is now on his way home *in peace*—believing that his sin is *gone*. I ask you, dear friends, what warrant had he that his sin was gone? He came *with* sin on him. How did he know that it was gone? There is only one warrant; God had said, "*His sin shall be forgiven him.*" Four times in this chapter is it said, as if God could not assure us enough—"*And his sin shall be forgiven him.*" Simply believing, therefore, he went home, and told his tented family—told every one,

in fact, interested to know—“*My sin is forgiven me.*” I ask, How did he know? Dear friends, he had no other knowledge than that *God had said*, “HIS SIN SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM.”

Oh, ye weary ones, ye anxious ones, ye Christ-seeking ones, do not go beyond Christ, but take Christ on His own truth. That truth connects salvation with believing. “He that *believeth hath everlasting life.*” How simple! how blessed! But some may say, “It comes then to this, *that I have nothing to do.*” Just so, nothing to do for salvation; but being saved, much to do for Christ, in love, gratitude, service. Am I preaching too free a Gospel?—is there such a thing as too free a Gospel? To speak of “too free” a Gospel is like talking of too free a pardon for a criminal; why a pardon in its very nature must be free. The Gospel is free. Grace is grace. All grace is free.

The Gospel comes to give, the law comes to demand. But law cannot save—cannot make perfect. Satan's way with conscience is to tell it to keep the law. The result is despair or indifference. No, the Gospel is this: You are a sinner; Christ has died to save. And now put your hand of faith on Him, own what you are, and what He is, and your sin is forgiven. *Can* any gainsay this? I charge the gainsayer that he does not yet know the Gospel if he puts one thing for the sinner to do but to *believe*. Let no man fix his faith on man, but on the immutable truth of God. If you believe God's truth *now*, you may go to your homes *justified, saved now*.

I know of some who journeyed one hundred miles, saying, "We have come to find Christ." These were the words which the Spirit of God used for their salvation: "And it shall be forgiven

him." They heard—they believed—they were saved. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Dear friends, it is faith now—it will be sight soon. Our life is now hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. We shall see Him then, and be like Him, and be for ever with Him. He is not here now, but has ascended to the heavens. The Gospel leads us from the open sepulchre to the opened heavens, where through Him our sins and our iniquities are no more remembered. Sins and iniquities we have, and conflicts many, in ourselves; but up in heaven, where Christ is for us, we are as He is—holy, accepted in the Beloved. Oh, if we think of our sins, we may hesitate to be happy; but if we think of Him, of what He now is for us, we have rest and peace. It is in *risen life*, as dead and

risen with Christ, that we have perfect peace, which we could never have in ourselves. There are two sides to the cross—the one from Gethsemane to Calvary, where all is sorrow, suffering—a cup to be drained of its death and sin; the other from Calvary and the Garden onward into heaven, where there is no sorrow, no suffering, no sin. Such is our place by faith through Him who appears there in the presence of God for us, as we sing—

In spirit I have passed
This desert world below;
I rest in heavenly places, where
Eternal comforts flow.

No fear of judgment now;
“’Tis finished,” Jesus saith;
My home is where the Lord hath gone,
The other side of death.

As one with Him, I’m raised
Above this earth and sin,
From all that outwardly attracts,
Or sorrow gives within.

Ah, yes! in risen life,
Beyond His emptied grave,
Is only perfectness and rest,
Which all His members have.

Then why, my soul, the thought
To earth and self oft given,
When all below is wilderness,
And all above is heaven?

Soon shall I reach where now
My spirit is on high,
Dwell in the deep eternal love
With Jesus ever nigh.

LONDON :

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W. ;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

THE
Redeemer & Redemption.

TOGETHER WITH

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

ON

ELDERS AND RULE.

BY THE LATE

W. H. WILLIAMS.

LONDON:
J. E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.



THE

REDEEMER AND REDEMPTION.

IT is to be observed, that while, in our English Bible, the word "Redeemer" occurs at least eighteen times in the Old Testament, it is not found in the New. In the original languages this is still more striking; for there the Old Testament gives us at least forty-five occurrences of the word, while the only passage in which we have the corresponding expression in the New is Acts ix. 35, where it is rendered "deliverer." Again, while, in the original, the word for "redemption" in the Old Testament is almost wholly applied in the sense of "purchase," the use of the corresponding term in the New opens up a vast and glorious field of doctrine. These facts are full of interest, as giving us

a characteristic difference between the two portions of the book of God—the Old teaching what is implied in a Redeemer; the New, what is involved in redemption: the former, a Person typified; the latter, a work accomplished. We therefore naturally turn to the Old Testament Scriptures to elucidate the first part of our subject, and to the New for the second.

First, then, the use of the Hebrew word translated “Redeemer” presents to us our Lord Jesus Christ in five aspects:

1. The “Kinsman.” Such was Christ, not only to the children of Abraham, but also to us Gentiles. Verily He took on Him the seed of Abraham, as shown us in the gospel by Matthew; but as truly did He become the Son of man, descended from Adam, as is the theme of the gospel by Luke. So He became the Kinsman of the whole human race. Not that this of itself brought man into *union* with Him; on the contrary, while He was here in human flesh He but made manifest the distance there was between Him, the Holy One, and us sinners. It is

only through His death, and in resurrection, that union with Christ becomes an accomplished fact for those who believe, and this too only by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Nor did His Kinsmanship ensure the salvation of all to whom He was Kinsman. It rather makes inexcusable those who believed not. It is indeed one ground upon which He will yet execute judgment, according to the word in Acts xvii. 31 : "Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained ;" as also in John v. 27 : "And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, *because He is the Son of man.*" His death and resurrection truly also constitute the ground upon which He will judge, but it is as Son of man He does so ; and the fact that He in grace became their Kinsman, will never shield in that day those who refused to trust Him.

2. We pass at once to a second sense in which the word is used, that of "Redeemer." See Leviticus xxv. 25 : "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his

possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold ;” and again : “ If a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family : after that he is sold he may be redeemed again ; one of his brethren may redeem him : either his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him.” (*vv.* 47, 19.) Here we learn that in Israel, whenever a person sold himself as a slave, or mortgaged his property, he, or the property, or both, might be redeemed. In case he could not do so himself, his next of kin had the right. The Kinsman was to be, if he chose, the “ Redeemer.” How precious thus becomes our Lord Jesus Christ to us ! We had sold ourselves for nought, we had forfeited our heritage ; but the One who became our Kinsman paid down (oh, so willingly !) the vast ransom, that we might rejoice in a new-found freedom, and (as further revela-

tion shows) enter upon even a more glorious inheritance than we had lost. He "gave Himself a ransom for all." He who, in incarnation, became our Kinsman, declared Himself our Redeemer in resurrection.

3. But again. Doubtless because the kinsman, in redeeming his brother, relieved him from the power of a master, we find the thought of *deliverance* largely presented in connection with the use of this expression in the Old Testament scriptures. The Redeemer was the "Deliverer." Indeed this seems to be almost entirely the thought attached to the title in the Psalms and Isaiah. God's people were in bondage, groaning under the power of tyrannical masters. More than once were they in such a case, and more than once their God interposed on their behalf, and delivered them. He had not yet, truly, revealed the righteous ground upon which He so showed His mercy; but nevertheless they learned both to look to Him as their Deliverer, and again and again to count upon His answering their cry. *We* were in worse than Egyptian bondage; *our*

souls were oppressed by worse enemies than Canaanites, Midianites, or Philistines; but our Redeemer was mighty. Willing to shed His blood for us, He was also able to rescue us. And believers who already, in spirit, have seen their Egyptian enemies "dead upon the sea-shore," may repeatedly sing His praise as, by faith, they daily prove His delivering power.

4. But another duty involved in kinsmanship now claims our attention, presenting, as far as human figures can, the tender love of our Redeemer, and the intimacy of our union with Him. If the Israelite, reduced to penury, died, leaving a widow childless, the kinsman who redeemed the property was, if he chose; to marry the widow, and "raise up the name of the dead upon the inheritance." This is the special subject of the book of Ruth. There the wealthy one, Boaz, both redeems the property of his relative, and brings into closest union with himself the destitute and childless widow. Has this no voice for us? Israel doubtless, in days yet to come, will

learn this for themselves with unspeakable joy. But does not this claim the affectionate recognition of those who, in destitution and widowhood, have been brought into a union with Christ, closer than Israel will ever know, and only faintly symbolized by the relationship between Boaz and Ruth? It does speak to us, and may well call for the adoring gratitude of those who have such a Redeemer.

5. Lastly, the word is also rendered "Avenger." In the days immediately after the flood God's unchanging fiat had gone forth—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. ix. 6.) Under the law this was solemnly sanctioned. The "Avenger of blood" was to slay the murderer. Whether the violent death was accidental or not, the sword of the avenger was drawn, and was only sheathed either when, in the case of unintentional homicide, the slayer was sheltered in a city of refuge, or when it had been bathed in the life's blood of the murderer. There is a day at hand when the accumulated crimes of this

present evil world, added to the murder of the Son of God, will meet with swift and unmitigated judgment. The One who once meekly gave Himself a ransom for all, will in the day of wrath come forth as the "Avenger of blood," and with "the sword that proceedeth out of His mouth" will smite the wicked. Then those who never fled to Him who was the ready refuge even of inexcusably guilty sinners, will have to feel the full vengeance of Him who "treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 15.) First (see Rev. xix.), the Kinsman-Redeemer, the greater than Boaz, in the joy of His heart, amid the glories of heaven, celebrates His nuptials with His Church; and then the same Redeemer, in His awful character of Avenger, in flaming fire takes vengeance on "them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh, reader, where will *you* then be found? Will it be sitting at the marriage-feast, under the sunshine of His smile, or one of the terror-stricken host calling upon rocks to fall

upon them, and mountains to cover them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb?

The *second* part of our subject—Redemption—is presented in the word of God under three aspects, having reference respectively to the past, the present, and the future. While in one sense we look upon redemption as already accomplished, in another it is being wrought out day by day, while in another it is only manifested in a period still future. In one respect believers *are* redeemed; in another they *are being* redeemed; and in yet another they *wait for* redemption.

In opening out redemption in its first aspect three passages come before us—Rom. iii. 24, Eph. i. 7, and 1 Peter i. 18. In Rom. iii. it is presented in connection with justification. “Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Guilty before God, we had no plea of ourselves; every mouth was stopped. As far as man was concerned, there was no hope; for man could never propose any ground upon which He could

be accounted righteous with God. It is then that God reveals the fulness of His grace in setting forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood. Not only did He thus declare how it was He righteously passed over the transgressions of His people in former times, but He also manifested Himself *now* as just while justifying him who believes in Jesus. Here we regard redemption as from God's standpoint, set forth by Him as that which perfectly satisfies His justice when He justifies a guilty sinner. Here is the "mercy-seat," claiming the full confidence of anyone who desires a solid ground of peace with God. In Eph. i. 7 we have the joyful and grateful recognition of this on the part of the believer. "*We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*" The propitiation set forth has been eagerly and thankfully trusted in by those who longed for forgiveness of sins, and joy and peace are the consequence. 1 Peter i. 18 presents redemption as *purchase*. It speaks in terms which bring

us back to Old Testament scenes. One would expect this, when the apostle of the circumcision is the writer. Not silver nor gold, corruptible things, are now the ransom price; but the precious blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot. At such a price ye were redeemed—a price beyond all computing; therefore “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” Let godly reverence characterize those for whom so vast a ransom has been paid. Thus in these three passages believers are looked upon as *justified*, *forgiven*, and *purchased*. The last is pressed in order to have its solemnizing effect upon the walk of those who believed it. And all three passages, however otherwise different, bear the same characteristic of this first aspect of redemption, speaking as they do with unwavering certainty of a fact accomplished. “*Being justified;*” “*We have redemption;*” “*Ye were redeemed.*” Thus, as to the past, redemption is a completed work, which requires no other hand to be put to it, no addition to be made to it. Those who have it can rest in the abso-

lute assurance that neither condemnation nor wrath can ever come upon them.

But glorious as this is, redemption in its second aspect has also its own glory, disclosing as it does the *present* resources of our gracious God and Saviour for the daily help and deliverance of His people. This is the special force of Titus ii. 14: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." His giving Himself for us is not so much here presented with a view to bring us into peace with God as to redeem us from all iniquity, and so to make His own a distinctly holy people in practice as well as by calling. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus" is the word of the angel to Joseph; "for He shall save His people *from their sins*." As has been well said, redemption is by *power* as well as by *blood*. Israel, who had feasted at perfect peace within the blood-besprinkled houses on the night of judgment, proved soon after the grace and power of their Redeemer when He delivered them

from their enemies at the Red Sea. And not only so. The forty years in the wilderness, and the earlier days of their Canaan warfare, testified again and again that the grace which had *sheltered* them at the first from the 'destroying angel was strong to *deliver* them from all their foes. The Son of God, our great High Priest, in the power of an 'endless life, is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. We who have rejoiced in forgiveness and justification through the peace-speaking blood of Him who died, can surely count upon the all-subduing power of Him who lives. If He has saved us from wrath, condemnation; and bondage, He can and will save from evil temper and worldliness. As we trusted Him for the one, we may trust Him for the other. Our Redeemer did not exhaust the meaning of His name in bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, or in purchasing us for His own. Daily His grace avails as our living Deliverer to give us victory over temptation.

But this is not all. The past is surely bright to us, as we learn the completeness of the redemption by which our justification is secured, our sins are forgiven, and our ransom is paid; the present is surely bright, as we daily prove the delivering power of our living Saviour; but as we look onward, the future is lit up with a glory which surpasses all that has gone before. Two passages especially treat of this last aspect of redemption. They are Romans viii. 23 and Ephesians i. 14. Rejoicing in redemption as finished, and daily proving its present meaning in our lives, we yet look forward to the most glorious display of it that God has been pleased to reveal. "*We wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*" Happy as our present portion is, we yet groan in this body, being burdened. The eternal life which dwells within is pent up in a mortal body of humiliation. One more manifestation of God's power and grace in redemption is yet to be known. This will be displayed in the day when "He will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned

like unto His glorious body." Then, and then only, shall we fully prove what redemption is. And what a proof it will be! What a change! Sometimes we have seen in winter time, thrown into a corner of the greenhouse, a heap of withered-looking roots. No beauty is there, no life seems there; and yet in their season, by God's power, by skilful treatment, these same roots send forth that which expands into the exquisite beauty and glory of the tulip or hyacinth. And so now, in this corner of God's creation, beings withered by sin, and, as to bodily appearance, giving no evidence of the glorious life which yet is there, shall in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, display in their bodies, before wondering myriads, the glories and perfections of the sons of God. "We shall be like Him." Can human words express what this little sentence implies? We ask, "How can these things be?" The answer is simple. It is "according to the power whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

But even this does not fully present the

glory for which we look. Ephesians i. 14 remains to complete the picture, to bring forth the headstone of God's glorious purposes of grace. Believers are not contemplated as individuals only; they are members of a Body, members one of another. Ever since the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, those who believe in Christ are linked together by an indissoluble bond. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) The Church is not only compared (Matt. xiii.) to "treasure hid in a field," the treasure being a number of coins, separately and individually precious; she is likened also to "*one* pearl of great price," to purchase which the "merchantman" sold all that he had. The early days of the Church saw this truth carried out and manifested, perhaps, as far as it could be manifested while God's people were in mortal bodies. We now mourn over the sad change. We mourn over divisions which too early came in, too widely spread, and which went on increasing in the Church's history. But we know well that still those truly Christ's were

none the less, and are none the less, members of His body, indwelt by the same Spirit who, in patient grace, although often grieved, yet seals them “unto the day of redemption.” The expression for “purchased possession” is rendered “peculiar” in 1 Peter ii. 9, where believers are called “a peculiar people,” or, as it has been well interpreted, “a people for possession.” In the verb form we have it in Acts xx. 28, “which He hath purchased,” speaking of “the Church of God.” Thus we have the full force of Ephesians i. 14. The “purchased possession” waits and longs for “the day of redemption”—waits for the summons which calls her away from a pilgrimage to a home, from strangership to a city which hath foundations, from suffering and rejection to a throne with her Beloved. What we hope for is the day when not only will the sons of God be manifested *individually*—each like Christ, in glory with Christ—but when the whole Church, the one Body of Christ, will shine forth in a lustre peculiarly her own. And surely we shall not have to wait long. Is not the “little while”

nearly run out? Is not the promise, "Surely I come quickly," soon to be fulfilled? It will be; and then before the whole universe will be declared what hitherto has been known only to faith—that the Church is one, as the Father and the Son are one, and that the Church is loved as the Father loves the Son. The pure white light of day, so necessary to our existence, so pleasant to our sight, is the blending together of seven distinct colours. Each colour has its own beauty; the combination of the seven has, as we well know, its peculiar beauty too. As God's power alone can give to each colour its brilliancy and purity, so God alone can so combine them as to present the pure white light which surrounds us by day. So in the day of redemption, while from one point of view the children of God will be seen each in his own peculiar glory (like the twelve foundations of the holy and heavenly city), whenever and wherever God chooses to display the oneness of the body of Christ, individual glories will combine to present the one surpassing glory of the "purchased possession."

ON ELDERS AND RULE.

“MINISTRY and rule in the Church of God” is an expression we often hear; and although I am going to speak of the latter rather than the former, I would place ministry before rule as being the more important. In the original Scriptures the words in John xxi. 15, 16, 17 vary thus: 1. “*Feed My lambs.*” 2. “*Shepherd* [or tend, or rule] *My sheep.*” 3. “*Feed My sheep.*” (The word in the middle verse is the same as “rule” in Rev. ii. 27.) For once that the Lord tells Peter to rule or tend, He *twice* bids him *feed* the lambs or sheep. It has been truly remarked, that men now-a-days pay more attention to rule in the Church than to feeding; and the result is the divisions which are so rife in Christendom.

Let us then look at the passages in the New Testament about *rule*; and to this end

let us trace the occurrence of the word *elders*, and seek to learn who they are, how made, where they come from, &c.

Acts xi. 30. Here we get the first mention of elders *in connection with the Church*. Before this we simply read of "elders of the Jews," "chief priests and elders," &c. Money collected by the Gentile believers at Antioch for the poor saints in Judæa was sent by the hands of Barnabas and Saul to "the *elders*," men evidently known as such in the church at Jerusalem.

Acts xiv. 23. "And when they had ordained them *elders* in every church." Paul and Barnabas, as apostles (*both* are so called in verses 4, 14), by divine power *ordained* elders in every church. See how much light we get in this one verse. 1st. That there were more elders than one. 2nd. That elders were ordained by divine authority, and not appointed or chosen by the church. There is no thought of people electing them. 3rd. That in *every* church elders were ordained. Elders are necessary to the *well-being* of a church, and should be in *every* church; but

they are not, as some say, necessary to the *existence* of a church. There must be a church first, and *then* elders. It was on the return journey, when the apostles came back to confirm the churches, that these elders were ordained. Let souls be saved, and then God will raise up elders. There may be sheep without a shepherd; but a shepherd is necessary to the *well-being* of the sheep.

Acts xv. Here we find that the brethren at Antioch send up to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem regarding the question of circumcision, which had been brought in by certain men from Judæa. In verse 4 we have a general meeting of the church, the apostles, and the elders, to welcome the messengers, who included Paul and Barnabas. Evidently all the saints were present; but (v. 5) as soon as the question about which they came begins to be *discussed*, we see (v. 6) that a *special* meeting is held: "The apostles and elders *came together* for to *consider* of this matter." Much "disputing" follows, one and another speak, &c. This

would not have been edifying for young converts. Experience as well as Scripture teaches how undesirable it is to discuss questions before an assembly of men, women, and children. But when a conclusion is arrived at (v. 22), all again meet, and "it pleased the apostles and elders, *with the whole church*, to send forth chosen men," &c. These things are important. On the one hand, they check the republican spirit that leads people to think "one is as good as another, and everybody is to do everything;" and on the other hand, the aristocratic tendency to override everybody, and decide all questions without the consent of the church. All are *not* called upon to investigate regarding questions, but all should be *intelligent*. The youngest believer should seek to know from the Word what his or her place is, and would surely find that he or she had no part in the *discussion* of questions, though they may be and should be intelligent about the matter when stated to them.

Acts xx. 17. Again we find elders known and recognized. Paul does not send for the

“saints” or the “church” at Ephesus to come to him (though it was not far from Miletus), but to *the elders*, the responsible men. I would say here that the *foot-notes* at the end of the epistles are *not inspired*, and the one at the end of 2 Timothy has led to wrong conclusions. It is said there that Timothy was the *first* bishop (or overseer) of the church at Ephesus; but in Acts xx., when Timothy was quite a young man, we find he was *with Paul* at Ephesus, at the time when several elders and *overseers* (or bishops) came from Ephesus to meet Paul!

Acts xxi. 17. Here Paul and those with him were received at Jerusalem by *all the brethren*; but the day following (v. 18) there was another special meeting of Paul with James, “and *all the elders* were present,” to consult together about Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, &c.

From this point we do not meet with the word “elders” until we come to the first epistle to Timothy.

1 Tim. v. 1. From the connection with “younger” men, and elder and younger

women, I think that the command, "Rebuke not an elder," refers chiefly to an elder *in age*.

1 Tim. v. 17. "Elders that *rule well*." "Rule" here means, to take the lead; but it is the same word as in chap. iii. 5, and therefore, though in a less absolute sense than a father in his own house, an elder does rule. But, lest any should attempt to be a "lord over God's heritage," the word is changed and softened in verse 5: "For if a man know not how to RULE in his own house, how shall he TAKE CARE of the Church of God?" There are, so to speak, "elders *and* elders." Some rule "well," some not so well. If well, they are worthy of double "honour;" it is scarcely likely to mean "pay" here, though the word sometimes has that meaning. From Acts xx. 35 we see that elders are encouraged to diligence in the things of this life: "So labouring *ye ought* to support the weak," &c. Though some elders might "labour in word and doctrine," and if so, were to be "specially" honoured, yet a man *might* be an elder without ability for this.

1 Tim. v. 9. "Against an elder" be very slow to receive an accusation, very slow to impugn the character of one so prominent in the church; wait for proof.

Titus i. 5, 7. By comparing these verses you will see that elder and bishop are the same thing. Paul speaks about ordaining elders, and adds, "*for a bishop,*" &c. Acts xx. 17; 28 also shows that elders *are* "overseers," and this is *the same word* as "bishop." They were made or ordained *by the Holy Ghost.* (v. 28.) Their appointment by the apostles was in truth the Holy Ghost's appointment; but none can pretend to *this* power now, any more than any one now could sit down to write an inspired epistle. Also notice, it is "the flock *in* which" (not *over* which) "the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (or bishops), "to *feed*" (or shepherd) "the Church of God."

1 Peter v. 1, 2. Elders are to feed and *oversee* ("taking the oversight," the same word as "looking diligently" in Heb. xii. 15). It is "the elders which are *among* you." They are not to take the oversight as "lords

over God's heritage," nor by constraint. It is not, "No one else does it, so *I must*;" nor is it to be undertaken as a hard task, but as a delight, "willingly." Neither is hope of gain to be an object, but there must be the promptness of a "ready mind." Some one may think it is much easier work to look after God's people than to work at his trade, but he does not know. It is work to be delighted in, but it is no easy work. This passage in Peter is the last in which "elders" on earth are named. The word occurs again in the book of Revelation, where the elders are spoken of as before the throne, &c.

I will now briefly mention the Scriptures that give the qualifications of an elder or overseer.

1 Tim. iii. 1. One who *desires* to take oversight should be apt to teach, not necessarily in public, though it may be so. He must rule his own house; he must *not* be a novice or young convert; he must have a good report of them that are without, &c.

Titus i. 7, 8 again gives his character. He

must be *sound* in doctrine, able to exhort ; but this *might* be privately.

1 Peter v. 2 also gives the characteristics of an overseer.

Ruling is the work of elders and bishops, and we get a reference to their work, though they are not named, in Rom. xii. 8 : " He that ruleth, *with diligence*," a very important point, for lack of which evil greatly spreads. Ruling is a gift. See " governments " in 1 Cor. xii. 28.

At first, as we have seen, elders were appointed by the apostles ; but in Titus i. the apostle says to him, " For this cause left I thee in Crete, that *thou* shouldest ordain elders in every city, *as I had appointed thee.*" Titus was not an apostle. The apostles had divine power to single out in a new assembly those fit for rule, and here we see that Paul gave Titus authority to do so. But in this epistle and in 1 Timothy the Holy Ghost lays out in full the qualifications of an elder—lays open, as it were, what was before locked up in the mind of an apostle. *As soon as the apostles go, the Word is left to*

us. The mind of the Holy Ghost is thus stereotyped for ever, for our use ; as Job would say, "with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever." And just in proportion as there is continual appeal to that Word, there is prosperity in a church. If we have not the laying on of hands, we have the inspired word of God. Bring the man to the word of God, and if he answer to the test, he *is* an elder. We do not now need living apostles ; we must watch the development of God's gifts, and as obedient children we must bow to those who have them.

1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16 gives us a picture of rule, and how suitable that these "first-fruits," these first converted ones in Achaia, should *addict* (or, as it might be, *ordain*) *themselves* to this work. How suitable that those longest converted, unless disqualified by incapacity, should do so. There was here a readiness on the part of the house of Stephanus to give themselves to the work, and there was to be a readiness to submit to such, which is very beautiful ; and it is so simple. An evangelist feels he must speak

to souls ; he begins in a quiet, unobtrusive way to use the gift God has given him, and then gradually will get recognized by his brethren ; and so with teachers and elders. The church needs nearly as much rule and care as teaching ; and when ability for rule is developed, we should submit to those who exercise it, not by any wonderful ceremony and procession, but by just recognizing what God has bestowed.

Lastly, we notice four precepts respecting our behaviour to those who thus rule or guide :

1. "*Know* them which . . . are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) This implies that time and care are needed to recognize them.

2. *Remember* them when taken to be with Christ, and follow their faith. (Heb. xiii. 7.)

3. *Obey* them while you still have them. (Heb. xiii. 17.)

4. *Salute* them *all*, even the last raised up. Greet them with affection, and yet with respect, not as those possessed of some

dreadful power, but as those who are known lovingly to care for the flock, and to watch for souls. (Heb. xiii. 24.)

JESUS IS COMING.

“JESUS is coming—the long absent Master,
Account of our stewardship then to receive,
Praise for each servant, reward for all service,
More than our hearts can conceive.

“Jesus is coming, the one Lord, one Ruler,
Coming to reign in His wisdom and love,
Oh let us walk as obedient children,
Having our portion above!

“Jesus is coming, then patiently waiting,
Let us continue our labours of love,
Following Him wheresoever He leadeth,
Till we shall meet Him above.”

Mrs. H. W. TAYLOR.

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SEPARATION TO GOD.

“The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.”

NUMBERS xxiii. 9.

GOD'S special witness on earth, in Old Testament times, was a nation separated in many remarkable ways from all other nations. In the New Testament we find another people taking their place as God's witness, meant to be as separate from the world as Israel, but separated from it in a different manner and on different principles. In Rom. xi. the one is represented by an olive tree, clothed in its natural branches; the other, by an olive tree, the same in root and stem as the former, but with the natural branches broken off, and others grafted in, on the principle of personal faith. “Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.” (v. 20.)

Now, in 1 Cor. x. 11 we are told that ‘the things which happened to Israel happened to

them as ensamples [or, typically]; and they have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' The object of the following pages is to apply this principle to some of the remarkable peculiarities by which God distinguished His Old Testament people from every other nation, regarding these distinctions as instructions from God on the subject of separation from the world, conveyed in a typical form to His New Testament people.

Before doing this, a few words on the direct teaching of the New Testament on this subject of separation may be useful; also on the difference between Jewish and Christian separation. For though the one is typical of the other, they are essentially different.

In speaking of His New Testament people, our Lord Jesus Christ says, in John xvii., that His Father gave them to Him out of the world; that He sends them into it again; but that, though in it, they are not of it any more than He is of it Himself. In 1 Peter ii. 11 they are spoken of as strangers and pilgrims, passing through the world as through a strange country to heaven their fatherland.

The Jews were not to be mixed up locally with other races. They were to cut off the Canaanites, and to dwell in the land alone. Christians, on the other hand, are to remain among the ungodly as lights and as salt. In

the parable of the tares and the wheat, they are forbidden to do what Jews were commanded to do. The tares must be allowed to grow with the wheat in the field—that is, in the world—till the harvest.

But this mixture of tares and wheat is not to be permitted in Christian Church-fellowship. Churches are to consist of “those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” (1 Cor. i. 2, *et al.*) They are to receive those only who have already been received of Christ. (Rom. xv. 7.) If ungodly men creep in unawares, as they are sure to do, they are to be put out as soon as their true character is manifested. “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” (1 Cor. v. 13.) In 2 Cor. vi. 14–16, spiritual fellowship between believers and unbelievers is declared to be impossible; and in verse 17 the command is given to believers, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” The difficulty of separation in these days, when there is much profession and little reality, has been foreseen. It is provided for typically in Nehemiah and Ezra, where Ammonites, Arabians, Samaritans, and other races are seen dwelling in the land of Canaan, with only a small remnant of Jews, lately returned from Babylon, in their midst. And even then the Jews are strictly forbidden to intermarry with them, or to suffer them to take part in building

God's city and house. It is provided for directly in such a passage as 2 Tim. iii. 1-5, where the peculiar feature of these last days is described as evil covered over with a form of godliness; in other words, that numbers destitute of the power of godliness would take the name of Christ on them. The course for real Christians in such times is distinctly marked out: "From such turn away."

While therefore the separation of Christians from the world is not to be national or local, it is yet to be outward and manifest. Still, it should never be forgotten that the root and essence of it is to be spiritual and inward. An outward separation that does not spring from and rest on what is spiritual and inward, is in the highest degree hurtful, because hypocritical and false. "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." (Jude 19.)

The truth on this subject is strikingly set forth in John x. The Jewish people are described there as locally separated from the world, shut in as by the walls of a fold. Christ forms His flock, first by going into this fold, and leading His own sheep out of it; then by calling other sheep that are not of the Jewish fold, and forming all into one flock. They are still separated from the world, but not now by the walls of a fold. The word "fold" in verse 16 ought to be

“flock”—“that there may be one *flock*, and one Shepherd.” The essence of their separation does not lie in locality, or race, or doctrines, or discipline, or religious forms; it lies, as the only church unity worth having lies, in their all having heard and followed the one voice, and all having gathered round the one Shepherd.

But all this will come out in greater fullness and variety as we proceed. We shall attempt to point out the instructions for Christians contained in—

I. Some broad, general distinctions by which Israel was separated from the other nations.

II. Some religious distinctions.

III. Some social distinctions.

IV. Some political distinctions.

I. Among broad, general distinctions, consider—

(1.) The principle on which God chose Israel for His people. “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (the Euphrates) in old time, . . . and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham,” &c. (Josh. xxiv. 2.) God, therefore, did not set His love on them for their fathers’ righteousness. Neither did He choose them for their own; for they were ever stiffnecked and rebellious (Deut. ix. 6); nor because they were the greatest of all people; for they were the least. (Deut. vii. 7.) All His reasons for

loving and choosing them were in Himself; not one in them. Compare with this the principle on which God chooses those whom He incorporates into His New Testament people. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Cor. i. 26-29.) Let no one ever make the mistake of thinking that when God put him among His people He paid a compliment to the excellence of his natural character.

(2.) Israel's separation, on the day it took its place as a nation, by redeeming blood. "I will put a redemption between my people and thy people." (Ex. viii. 23, *mar.*) The blood of the lamb saved the first-born of Israel when the first-born of Egypt perished; and the blood that saved them was to separate them: "On the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto Me all the first-born in the land of Israel: mine shall they be: I am the Lord." (Num. iii. 13.) So in the case of

God's New Testament people, "the church of the first-born" ones. The blood of Christ which saves them, of which the blood of the passover lamb was only the type, separates them, sanctifies them, to God. "Christ sanctified the people with His own blood." (Heb. xiii. 12.)

(3.) The 'actual presence of Jehovah in Israel's midst. "Whereby shall it be known here," Moses said to God, "that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." (Exod. xxxiii. 16.) God personally dwelt in the midst of Israel, first in a moving tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple at Jerusalem. "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exod. xxv. 8.)

May we tread reverently as we trace the parallel in the case of God's New Testament people. Shortly after our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, He sent the promised Holy Spirit, that all believers might be baptized in Him into one body, and that He might dwell in them. (Acts ii. 1-4.) All the Scriptures that follow prove that His presence continued afterwards; and that it was meant to continue, as Christ had promised that it would (John xiv. 16), till the

church is completed and taken to heaven. So that God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, as literally dwells on earth in the midst of His New Testament people as He dwelt on earth in the midst of Israel.

But it is most important to notice the difference. He dwells now in no place or building as He did then. When the disciples left the upper room (Acts ii.) the Holy Spirit went with them, and the room was no holier than it was before. The consecration of buildings, and the notion that God dwells in them, is an entire denial of the special character of God's presence in this dispensation. His temple now is a living temple. (1 Peter ii. 5.) (1.) To each believer it can be said: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1. Cor. vi. 19.) (2.) To the church of God, which the Holy Spirit has formed into one body, Jesus Christ being its living Head in heaven, it is said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) "An habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.) (3.) When believers assemble in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, He Himself is present in their midst, revealed by the Holy Spirit. (Matt. xviii. 20; John xiv. 19.) (4.) In such assemblies His voice ought to be heard (for they do not

gather to worship a *dumb* idol) through spiritual men who wait on Him for His message. (1 Cor. xii. 2, &c.) When Christians sin, they act against the first of these; when they join a sect, or gather as members of any other body than the one body which the Holy Spirit is forming, receiving those whom He excludes, or excluding those whom He receives, they act against the second; when they conduct their assemblies as ordinary public meetings, just as though the Lord Christ's presence in their midst was not real and all-sufficient to meet their needs, they act against the third; when they choose their own teachers, appoint one man or more to offer their worship and conduct the ministry of the Word, make college training and not spiritual gift the essential condition of public ministry, they act against the fourth. Christians ought to ponder these things much. The presence and operations of the Holy Spirit form one of the great glories of this dispensation. All over Christendom He is practically shut out. Whole nations are made into Christians without Him; men make churches without Him, for He makes only one; ministers are made without Him, by college training and a human ordination which notoriously confers no spiritual gift; worship and ministry are conducted without Him by the will of man. Men's proud wills, owning a God far off in heaven, hate the

practical recognition of a God present on earth, in their hearts, in their midst, controlling and guiding them. Hence the greater need for true Christians to acknowledge and honour a present Holy Spirit; and thus they are sure to be "separated from all people on the face of the earth."

(4.) Israel's separation from the other nations by its being placed in the land of Canaan—"a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." (Deut. viii. 7-9.) In contrast with this, the New Testament people have no earthly inheritance promised them. In all countries on earth they are to be "strangers and pilgrims," cross-bearers, following Jesus. Their country, their fatherland, is heaven. (Phil. iii. 20.) They are quickened with Christ with a new life, raised up with Him far above any earthly position, and seated with Him in heavenly places. (Eph. iii. 6.) Therefore they are to set their affection on the "things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God." (Col. iii. 1, 2.) They are "partakers of the heavenly calling." (Heb. iii. 1.) Citizen-

ship in heaven, enjoyed and acted on, is separation from the world.

(5.) Israel's separation by its hopes. From the beginning God promised them the Messiah. (See Deut. xviii. 15, &c.) This promise became plainer and fuller as time rolled on; and the darker the days of their history became, the brighter the hopes by which God through the prophets sustained the hearts of the faithful among them. See how Isaiah (xxv. 9) describes them as at length welcoming their Messiah: "This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us;" and in what glowing colours, chapter after chapter, he paints the happiness of Israel in His days! All the prophets to Malachi bear the same witness. No other nation had such hopes. And in this how striking the parallel! Christians also are separated from a hungry and unsatisfied world by their hopes. They too look for the Messiah, the same Messiah as was promised to the Jews, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the living God; not, like the Jews, to come to them on the earth, to judge their enemies, and put them into earthly blessing. They will not be on the earth when Christ comes to it. They will be caught up first in glorified bodies to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17)—for they are a heavenly, and not an earthly people—and "so shall they be for ever with the Lord." Who can tell the

rapture of that moment, and the blessedness that is to follow it for ever? And when are these hopes to be realized? A professing church, that has got to be at home on earth, persuades itself that the world is first to be converted, and a millennium to roll itself out. Christ's own words are, "Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matt. xxv. 13.) There is not a ray of brightness for the Church before Christ returns. The last days are to be evil days. The mystery of iniquity, which was working in Paul's day, is to work on. Any one may see how vigorously it is working in these days. What follows? The world's gradual conversion and a millennium? No. This hidden working of evil culminates in the man of sin,—Does a millennium come then? Again, No. The next event is the personal coming of Jesus,—“whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thess. ii. 8.) Then follow “the times of the restitution of all things,” the thousand years' reign. (Rev. xx.) Thank God, there is no wide gap between this moment and the coming of “the Lord from heaven.” Some may be living now who shall see Him without dying; for “we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” (1 Cor. xv. 51.) If Christians, meditating much on this “blessed hope,” only grasped

it in their hearts more firmly, how careless about "heaping treasure together in the last days" (James v. 3) would they be! how free from discontent, how satisfied, and how separate!

II. Consider some of the religious observances by which Israel was distinguished from other nations.

(1.) Circumcision, which began with Abraham (Gen. xvii.), and in which he was united, not with Isaac, the type of his believing or spiritual seed, but with Ishmael, the type of his fleshly seed. (v. 26.) To him personally it was a seal of the righteousness acquired by his previous faith; perpetuated among his fleshly posterity, it was entirely independent of their personal faith. It could not be a "seal of the covenant of grace" unless every Jewish man-child was in the covenant of grace. It was a national distinction. Once the whole nation were circumcised at the same time, at Gilgal (Joshua v.); and this place of the great circumcision became the door by which they entered Canaan, and the centre from which they went forth again and again to fight their enemies, and to which they returned after gaining the victory. There also in after years Agag, the king of Amalek, was hewed in pieces before the Lord. (1 Sam. xv. 33.)

God's people in this age are still to be distinguished as the circumcised people; but their circumcision is "of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." (Rom. ii. 29.) It does not consist in cutting away a portion of the flesh and burying it. Their whole flesh was judged and cut off in the person of their Substitute on the cross. And their circumcision consists practically of their acceptance in their inmost hearts of this judgment of death against their flesh already executed on Christ. This is what gives its deep significance to baptism. It is a burial. (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.) The believer in being baptized accepts the sentence of death suffered for him by Christ, renounces all confidence in the flesh, as in a thing reckoned dead and buried, and proclaims his only hope to be in his risen Saviour. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) This is to give a character to his whole life. He who understands the cross, who takes it into his heart, who faithfully applies it to the members and actings of the flesh, who translates his baptism into daily deadness to sin, and disconformity to the world, is one of the true circumcision; necessarily separated from a world of men still, religiously or irreligious, living in the flesh.

(2.) The people of Israel were distin-

guished by their festivals. In what other country could such a sight be witnessed as was seen in Israel every spring, summer, and autumn—all the men of the nation streaming up from all parts of the country to the tabernacle or temple where God dwelt, and rejoicing before Him there for a week together? He meant them to be a united, and social, and happy people, Himself the centre of their joy. And is it not to be the same with Christians? Three festivals in the year, however, would never suffice for them. The Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, were kept only once a year. Every first day of the week, the time when the Christian church usually assembles, the Lord's Supper is to be partaken of (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 20), to show that Christ, their Passover, having been sacrificed for them, they are always keeping festival. The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit gives them also a continual Pentecost. They have no holy places on earth to gather to. Pilgrimages to places called holy are poor, empty imitations of Jewish shadows. Everywhere and always the Lord is present with believing souls; He would have them always joyfully feasting at His table. And this will separate them from the world. They have no need for its pleasures and amusements. Having a constant festival at home, why should they go abroad for a feast?

The peace of God in their hearts, joy in the Holy Ghost, intercourse with Jehovah as their Friend and Father, their service of love for their Lord Jesus among men, and the blessed and sure hope of soon seeing Him, and for ever sharing His heart and throne, are enough to make them too happy to endure the tedium of the world's pleasures.

(3.) Israel was separated from other nations by the weekly Sabbath, a day of entire rest after six days' labour. On each seventh day no one in all the land was to carry a burden, do any work, go on a journey, or kindle a fire. (Exod. xvi. 29 ; xxxv. 2, 3 ; Jer. xvii. 21.) The peculiar quiet of such a day must have greatly struck a visitor coming from Tyre or Gaza or Damascus. Christians have the Lord's day—of all days specially His, as of all meals the Lord's Supper is specially His—on which they delight to rest from their daily toil to remember and worship Him, and spread the savour of His name ; and, contrasted with the law and characteristic of the grace in which they stand, a day of rest *before* six days' labour, not after. But this is no more their Sabbath than baptism is their circumcision. Their Sabbath is something infinitely deeper and better. In no one case do the Scriptures ever give this name to the first day of the week. They call the Sabbath a shadow about which Christians

must not allow themselves to be judged, because they possess the body and substance of the shadow in Christ. (Col. ii. 16, 17.) This substance is the Christian's Sabbath. In the midst of this restless world they alone enjoy true rest, rest of conscience and heart, and that not one day in the week, but all the time. (Matt. xi. 28-30.) They are to carry neither sin nor care, are to cease from their own works, abide in their home in Christ, and warm themselves there in the sunshine of His love, and at no fire of their own kindling. Thus their true Sabbath-keeping will make them a separate people.

(4.) Israel alone of all nations was completely set free from sin once a year. (See Lev. xvi.) On the tenth day of the seventh month of every year "all their iniquities, and all their transgressions in all their sins," were atoned for by blood carried by the high priest into the presence of God inside the vail, and were put on the head of a scapegoat and carried away into the wilderness. Lest the high priest should have sinned in his "holy things," he washed his flesh with water before he left the tabernacle. Lest the man who led away the sin-laden scapegoat should have defiled himself by touching it, he washed his clothes and flesh with water before he entered the camp. So also with the man who carried out the sin-offering to be burned. Of course this was but a ceremonial

cleansing, and "sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh." But, so far as it went, it was wonderfully complete. Yet in this it was imperfect, that the very act of cleansing sin yearly brought it yearly to remembrance. How much more perfect than the type is the reality enjoyed now! "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) It goes deeper than the flesh; for it "purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.) And as that blood, by its being once offered, has "purged our sins," and "for ever perfected them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14), no sin-offering is now needed; the very remembrance of sin before God is therefore put away; and in perfect satisfaction with the one sacrifice of Christ He can say, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.)

(5.) Their peculiar mode of worship also distinguished Israel from all other nations. They were strictly commanded to destroy all monuments of the worship of those who lived in the land before them. They were forbidden to imitate the modes of worship practised by surrounding nations, or to invent any of their own. (See Deut. xii. 2-14.) They were not to build altars where they pleased, or choose priests for themselves, or devise new rites or ceremonies. They must worship at the one altar, through the one

priesthood, and according to the one ritual appointed of God.

The worship of God's New Testament people is very different from theirs, but it is as distinctive and separating in its character. It is described in John iv. 21-24 and Heb. x. 19-22 in designed contrast to Jewish worship. It is offered in no splendid earthly temple. The finest ever built is too poor and mean. "We have boldness to enter into THE HOLIEST by the blood of Jesus." What sacrifice is offered there? No offering for sin; for "the worshippers once purged," purged by the one eternally-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, "have no more conscience of sin." But "by Him they offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually." (Heb. xiii. 15.) And who are the priests? Not men ordained by human hands, in peculiar garb, and shut off in some separate place, having nearer access to God than other Christians. All Christians are alike priests. (1 Peter ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6.) All as priests enter the holiest, and draw alike near to God. (Heb. x. 19-22.) Their only high priest is the One at God's right hand, the Lord Jesus. Of the many antichrists that abound in these days, none is more deceitful, none more dangerous, none should be more sternly and watchfully resisted by Christians, than an earthly priesthood, under any form or name, in the church of God. And what is the ritual of Chris-

tian worship? In the Old Testament a most minute ritual is prescribed for Jewish worship; but the New Testament is not only without any ritual for Christian worship, but never even contemplates, much less commands, the use of any. Why? The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian assembly supplies the answer: "We worship God *in the spirit.*" (Phil. iii. 3.) Let any one read the description of a Christian church assembled for worship in apostolic times in 1 Cor. xiv., and he will see that in such an assembly ritual was impossible, and he will see why. The worship was given and guided by the living Spirit dwelling in the worshippers. Thus Christians are separated by a worship that in its very nature excludes an earthly temple, and sin-offering, and priesthood and ritual, a worship offered in the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Lord Jesus, in the heavenly sanctuary, to the Father.

III. Of the social peculiarities by which God commanded Israel to be distinguished from other nations, consider these three.

(1.) Their dress. They were forbidden to wear clothing of woollen mixed with linen (Lev. xix. 19); and through the fringe of their outer garment they were always to have a riband of blue. (Num. xv. 38.) So that wherever a Jew was met he would be known

by his clothing. No doubt Christians should dress plainly (see 1 Tim. ii. 9; 1 Peter iii. 3, 4); but they cannot be thus *distinguished*; a worldly heart and a proud spirit may go about in sackcloth. What is the Christian dress which the world cannot imitate? "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. xiii. 14.) "Be clothed with humility." (1 Peter v. 5.) "Put on the new man. . . . Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." (Col. iii. 10-12.) "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." (1 Peter iii. 4.) All that is seen in Christians, all their ways, should recommend Christ. Their quietness of manner, their courtesy, their meekness and gentleness when provoked, their uprightness and diligence in business, their kindness in ruling, their cheerfulness and faithfulness in serving, the very style of their housekeeping, and the training of their children, ought to tell of a heavenly life within, maintained by communion with God.

(2.) Their food. Leviticus xi. contains a list of the animals which they might eat, and of those which they must avoid. As many of the latter were in common use at Gentile tables, a Hebrew either refused to

eat there, or was known to be a Hebrew by partaking of only such meats as his law pronounced clean. As Christians ought to be careful to dress plainly, they should also be careful, perhaps still more careful, to eat and drink moderately. But, as in dress, so in food, many unacquainted with Jesus may equal His followers in moderation; nay, may gain the reputation of peculiar holiness by "being known to men to fast." The true parallel to the way in which the Jew was known by his food must be sought in that on which the Christian feeds his soul. Much that the world uses freely for this purpose to him is unclean. Its novels, many columns of its newspapers and magazines, much of its favourite literature, would defile him if he read them. He is to "take heed what he hears" and reads. In common with the world, he can quicken and inform his mind by works of science, history, biography, &c.; but these are never his soul's food. This he finds in inward daily meditation on the Holy Scriptures, and in the "flesh and blood" of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom those Scriptures everywhere present to faith. (John v. 39; vi. 47-58.)

(3.) Their kindness to one another. They were not to forbid their neighbour gathering grapes in his hands in their vineyards, or plucking ears of corn in their fields. The gleanings were to be left for the poor.

They were to lend each other money without charging interest ; bring back the wandering ox, and help up the over-loaded ass even of an enemy ; restore pledges of clothing each evening ; forgive the unpaid debts of the poor every seventh year ; share their abundance with the Levite, the poor, and the widow. (See such Scriptures as Lev. xxv. 39-46 ; Deut. xv. 3-11 ; xxiii. 20.) Turning to God's people now, we find love pointed out as their main characteristic. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," not if you loudly profess it, not if you speak confidently of having been born again, not if you are rigidly strict about forms and doctrines ; but "if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 35.) There is nothing that Christ commands so repeatedly, and almost sternly. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." "These things I COMMAND YOU, that ye love one another." (John xv. 12, 17.) Love is costly ; hence it is little "followed after." It cost God His Son ; it cost His Son His life. "He loved us, and gave Himself for us." (Eph. v. 2.) And if Christians were to love poor, faulty, troublesome fellow-Christians as Christ loved them, who can tell what a sacrifice in money, position, patience, and labour it might involve ? Yet without love no one can be sure that he is a Christian at all. "We know that we have passed from

death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.) And in the end it will be found to be worth all its costs. Selfishness is misery; love is happiness. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.) God is "the happy God" (1 Tim. i. 11); and "God is love" (1 John iv. 8, 16); and he is sure to be happiest who is most like God. Knowledge is precious in the church; the understanding of God's mysteries is precious; gifts are precious, and much sought after; but without love they are no better than "sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Faith is great, and hope is great; but love is the greatest of all. (1 Cor. xiii.) It is "the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10); "the end [or main object] of the commandment" (1 Tim. i. 5); "the bond of perfectness" (Col. iii. 14); the first of the fruits of the Spirit in Gal. v. 22; the highest step in the ladder, that begins with faith, and ends in glory. (2 Peter i. 5-7.) It is the very element in which the church of God lives and grows. (Eph. iv. 16.) Without it Christians are nothing. They may be gathered on what is supposed to be the right ground, know all about worship and discipline, be deeply taught in dispensational and prophetic truth, have the most gifted teachers; but if they have not love, and a love that takes in all saints, they are only a caricature of the church of God; for the

church's origin is love, her centre is love, her life is love, her God is love, and her home for ever will be love.

IV. Finally, consider the meaning of some of the political differences between Israel and the surrounding nations.

(1.) The tenure by which they held their liberty and their lands was peculiar. If an Israelite became poor and unable to pay his debts, he might sell himself for a servant; but not for life. He could in no case be compelled to serve more than six years. In the seventh year he went out free for nothing. (Deut. xv. 12.) A landholder—and God seems to have meant every family to have its freehold—might sell his land to pay his debts; but it could not be sold for ever. It must be restored in the fiftieth year. Here is the remarkable law: "Thou shalt cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Lev. xxv. 9, 10.) On that day of days in Israel sin was put away, debt was forgiven, all men were free, and every family

returned to its inheritance. Of many things which this teaches one may be specially noticed : Israel was a people divinely guaranteed in the inalienable possession of personal liberty and their portion in the land. How striking a type in this of God's New Testament people ! They too have been delivered from bondage, and obtained part in no common heritage. Through carelessness or unbelief they may lose the enjoyment of their freedom and portion in Christ for a time. But Christ has given them eternal life, and they shall never perish. By not abiding in Him they may become like withered branches which men are seen gathering and casting into the fire ; but they shall not be cast into the fire. "He restoreth my soul." (Ps. xxiii. 3.) "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John vi. 39.) The son of the bondwoman was cast out when he misbehaved ; but Isaac (and he was all the better son for it) had his place in the family as secure as Abraham. And "we are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free." (Gal. iv. 22 ; v. 1.) Christians may grieve the Holy Spirit of God to their unutterable shame and loss, but He not the less seals them unto the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) The flesh may abuse this truth as it abuses every truth ;

but, received and held spiritually, it is as fruitful in holiness and free, loving service as in comfort.

(2.) The principles on which they carried on war farther made Israel peculiar among nations. (See especially Deut. xx.) They had two classes of enemies : one, the Canaanites, whom they were utterly to exterminate ; the other, " cities very far off from them, not of these nations." To them they were to proclaim peace ; if they submitted, they were to put them to tribute ; if they resisted, to cut off the adult males, and seize the rest as spoil. They were never to measure themselves with their enemies. They were to measure them with God, and fear nothing. What unpleasant, unwelcome neighbours such a people would be if they acted on these instructions can easily be imagined. For a time they did, and were hated and assailed on all sides, but they always conquered. Afterwards they settled down and let their neighbours alone, but fared badly. How does all this apply to God's New Testament people ? They also are to be warriors. One class of enemies, their own corruptions, they are to fight with to the death wherever they appear, taking care to " strive lawfully ;" *i.e.* according to Rom. vi. 6-12, &c. But they have others to assail. They are not to let the world around them go on at enmity with God quietly. As God enables them and

gives them opportunity, they are to "besiege" them; offer them peace through the blood of the cross, seek to slay their self-will, and gain them as spoil for Jesus. When Christians act thus they are sure to be a trouble to their ungodly neighbours. "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." They are sure to be assailed either by persecution or by "all manner of evil being said of them falsely." But their instructions are plain: Return blessing for cursing, love for hatred; but fight on, and fear nothing. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Truly Christ meant His witnessing church to be a separate people.

(3.) Israel was peculiar among the nations by having a heavenly King, whose commands they were bound implicitly to obey. This was as true when they had a king of their own as while they had none but God. Saul and his family were put off the throne because he refused to own the supreme authority of the King in heaven. David was chosen because he would and did own it. (1 Sam. xiii. 14. Cf. Acts xiii. 22.) The command to Israel was, "*Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him.*" (Deut. xiii. 4.) Some of His commandments involved cost, self-denial, exposure to ridicule and reproach. But they were not to hesitate.

They were to have no will of their own. God's will, expressed through the written word, or directly through their prophets or priests, was to rule theirs.

And is it not so with His New Testament people? Jesus Christ in heaven is their Lord, their Master. The spirit of independence and self-will, so characteristic of these last days, is the very opposite of the Christian spirit. It is the spirit of antichrist. The Holy Spirit, by whom the Christian has been born into God's family, and who dwells in his heart, teaches him to call Jesus "Lord." (1 Cor. xii. 3.) "Every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 5.) He is not to dress, or spend time or money, or marry, or read, or choose friends, or talk, or even think as he pleases. As the head rules every member of the body, Christ, who in the flesh Himself perfectly obeyed God, is to rule the members of His body. His will is known (1) by the written word (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17), and (2) by the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 John ii. 27), without whom the written word cannot be rightly understood, and by whom the subject and lowly heart is taught to apply the principles of the word to all the details of daily life, making every act of that life an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus. How little this principle is owned in the hearts even of true Christians

in the present day! Even in spiritual things such as whether they shall be baptized or not on their being born into God's family, whether or not they shall take the Lord's Supper on the Lord's-day, whether they shall own the Holy Spirit as the source and guide of ministry in the church, &c., many care little about Christ's will, and act as they judge most convenient or expedient. And much more in the ordinary details of life, in regard to dress, money, getting into debt, family arrangements, reading, amusements, &c. is Christ's authority set aside, and some form of self-will substituted for it. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges xxi. 25.) Abraham's glory was not only that he believed God, but that "he obeyed His voice, and kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws." (Gen. xxvi. 5.) Paul calls himself a servant (a slave) of Jesus Christ; James, Peter, Jude, and John glory in the same title. And He who never did His own will, or pleased Himself, has said, "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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. xi. 29, 30.) "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John xv. 14.)

These pages have been written in vain if they have not shown that God has divided Christians from the world in the same way as "He divided the light from the darkness." They have to assume nothing, only to be and appear what they are—"the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world." (Phil. ii. 15.)

The world suffers much from two causes : one is Pharisaism, an outward separation from it by forms, while the same idols which it worships are still cherished in the heart ; the other is conformity to its ways by real but half-hearted Christians.

The separation which it needs, in contrast with Pharisaism, is that described in Mal. iii. 16, of men drawn together, apart from an ungodly nation, by their fear of the Lord, and by their value for His name.

It is such separation as Abraham's from Sodom, in contrast to the unfaithfulness of Lot, who, by becoming one of its citizens, became its worst enemy—the separation of a man who was too rich in God to desire any of its wealth ; who, far from thinking himself better than others, knew that he was but dust and ashes ; who sought to his utmost the salvation of the city in which he could not make his home ; and who, only that it was more utterly wicked than he had

any right to suppose, would have saved it by his prevailing intercession.

Higher and better still, it needs the separation which we see exemplified in our adorable Lord Jesus, who was "separate from sinners," who took care in His addresses to divide His disciples from the multitude, and yet who dined with Pharisees and mixed with publicans and sinners to do them good, and lived and died for a world that slew Him because it felt He was so unlike it.



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